

Colombia: Central and Western Andes: December 2-11, 2022
Can be combined with Colombia's Caribbean Coast Venture, Dec 13-21, 2022

Itinerary:

Day 1: (Friday, December 2) - Arrive in Medellin

Please plan to arrive in Medellin anytime today. Transfer to our hotel in the city. ***Night in Medellin.***

Day 2: (Saturday, December 3) - La Romera Reserve, Medellin

This small local reserve is located on the outskirts of the city of Medellín, on the western flank of the central Andes, it is a refuge for birds in the area very close to the city. The Andean and forest patches are loaded with mixed flocks of tanagers and warblers, as well as endemic species such as the Red-bellied Grackle, Stile's Tapaculo, Colombian Chachalaca and the very rare and little-known Yellow-headed Manakin. It's a very easy bird watching place with a beautiful view of the city of Medellin. Other birds we hope to see today include: Andean Motmot, Common Chlorospingus, Three-striped and Russet-crowned Warblers, Black-billed Peppershrike, and Golden-naped and Black-capped Tanagers. ***Night in Jardin***

Day 3: (Sunday, December 4) - Yellow-eared Parrot Reserve and Cock of the Rock lek

The Yellow-eared Parrot Reserve is 1.5 hours from our hotel in Jardín; an attractive town located at an altitude of 5000 feet, producing coffee, bananas and some fruit. Behind it the mountain range rises to over 10,000 feet. The Yellow-eared Parrot is strongly associated with forest remnants with scattered wax palms, all surrounded by patches of lush cloud forests; a place with an incredible biodiversity and magnificent landscapes. As well as Yellow-eared Parrot, we will also look for Tanager Finch, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, Spillmann's and Ocellated Tapaculos, Green-and-black and Barred Fruiteaters, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Rufous and Chestnut-naped Antpittas, and Lachrymose Mountain-Tanager. The Cock of the Rock lek is on a small farm near Jardín and we will spend some time there enjoying the birds as they come into the lek, as well as watching other fruit-eating birds come to the feeders. ***Night in Jardin***

Day 4: (Monday, December 5) - Finca La Bambusa, Bolombolo

This small farm is owned by a local family, which in addition to growing some typical crops of the region such as coffee and plantain, also grows ornamental plants. The owner began to feed the birds in her garden and attracted many birds, so she decided to open her farm for visiting birdwatchers. This is a very nice place to spend a few hours to observe a good selection of birds representative of the Colombian coffee region, enjoy a great lunch, some good coffee and to take some good photos. Although deforestation has significantly affected this territory, remnants of dry forest and secondary growth are still home to many species of significant interest. We will be looking for Red-headed Barbet, Colombian Chachalaca, Blue necked, Scrub Tanager and Black-capped Tanagers, Antioquia Wren, Apical Flycatcher, Greyish Piculet, Black-crowned Antshrike, Speckle-breasted Wren, Black-striped Sparrow, Moustached Puffbird, Spectacled Parrotlet, and Bar-crested Antshrike. ***Night in Manizales***

Day 5: (Tuesday, December 6) - Rio Blanco Reserve

The Rio Blanco reserve constitutes a Colombian important bird area. The High Andean ecosystems have been protected for years by the City of Manizales. No less than 450 species of birds have been seen here with many of them endemic and/or with restricted distribution ranges. The main attraction of this reserve are the antpitta feeders, with this reserve being one of the most famous in the world to see these shy birds. We will look for: Brown-banded, Bicolored, Chestnut-crowned, and Slate-Crowned Antpittas, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Powerful Woodpecker, Long-tailed Sylph, Wedge-billed Hummingbird, White capped Tanager, White-capped Dipper, and Dusky Piha. ***Night in Manizales***

Day 6: (Wednesday, December 7) - Nevado del Ruiz National Park

Located about an hour from Manizales, Nevado del Ruiz National Park is framed by 3 snowy peaks which are active volcanoes: El Ruiz, Santa Isabel, and Tolima. The sub-paramo patches and well-preserved moorland areas are home to an important diversity of bird species restricted to these ecosystems. We will look for: Buffy Helmetcrest, Many-striped Canastero, White-chinned Thistletail, Tawny Antpitta, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Glossy Flowerpiercer, Andean Lapwing, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. Greater Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, and Black-thighed Puffleg. ***Night in Otun Quimbaya National Park***

Days 7-8: (Thursday, December 8 & Friday, December 9) - Montezuma Reserve

Located on the western flank of the western mountain range of the Andes, the Montezuma Natural Reserve is part of the buffer zone of the Tatama National Park and consists mainly of a 14-kilometer road that goes from the reserve's accommodation house to the top of the mountain at the military base of Cerro Tatama, which it is a mixture of the Andes and the chocó ecosystems. Montezuma is one of the best bird watching places in Colombia, as well as being excellent orchids, bromeliads, butterflies, amphibians and reptiles; a place where you can enjoy one of the most biodiverse places in the world. We will be looking for: Black-and-gold and Gold-ringed Tanagers, Munchique Wood-Wren, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, Barred Hawk, Toucan Barbet, White-faced Nunbird, Lanceolated Monklet, Golden-headed Quetzal, Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Yellow-breasted and Ochre-breasted Antpittas, Choco, Tatama and Nariño Tapaculos, Black Solitaire, Tanager Finch, Barred and Orange breasted Fruiteaters, and Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia. ***Night at Montezuma***

Day 9: (Saturday, December 10) - Montezuma to Pereira

We will have another morning birding in the wonderful Montezuma Reserve, before we have to drive 6 hours to the city of Ibagué.

Day 10: (Sunday, December 11) Flight home from Pereira

Tour ends in Pereira.