



HIGHLAND SPECIALTIES OF GUATEMALA

&

TIKAL EXTENSION

February 18 - 27, 2027
February 27 - March 3, 2027

The beating heart of the Mayan world, Guatemala offers imposing architectural monuments, a vibrant and friendly modern culture, and some of the best and easiest birding in Central America. Our main tour, based in central highlands, is followed by a short extension to the greatest of ancient Mayan cities, Tikal, with its wealth of tropical birds.

A new tour to the famed highlands of Guatemala seeks specialty birds in habitats ranging from humid subtropical forests to cloud forest and to inter-mountain valleys of grasslands and pines. When combined with the optional extension to the Maya ruins of Tikal, our bird list will likely exceed 300 species. With its high mountains, deep valleys, and elevated plateaus, the highlands of Guatemala are a beautiful and globally significant birding destination. This region is a part of the North Central American Highlands Endemic Bird Area, owing to the significant number of range-restricted species that occur here. In this zone of cloud forests, pine-oak woodlands, and volcanic landscapes exist some of the most highly sought birds in Central America, led by the near-mythic Horned Guan and dazzling Pink-headed Warbler.



Birding will be among the volcanoes in the Central Highlands © Rick Wright

Our adventure begins in lovely Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its rich indigenous culture, gateway to a selection of forest reserves and sanctuaries. In the foothill forests of Cerro Cucurucho we'll seek a range of seldom-seen upper elevation birds such as Rufous Sabrewing, Blue-tailed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Motmot, Bushy-crested Jay, Rufous-collared Robin, and Bar-winged Oriole. Amid the varied forest types of Los Tarrales Nature Reserve, we'll seek an array of fantastic birds, with Resplendent Quetzal, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Belted Flycatcher, and Azure-rumped Tanager among our targets.



Pink-headed Warbler, one of the highlights of the Central Highlands © Daniel Merida

Near the city of Quetzaltenango, we'll seek two spectacular hummingbirds, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird and Slender Sheartail, while the beautiful and elusive Ocellated Quail beckons from the pine savannas near Sierra de los Cuchumatanes.

An optional extension to the Maya ruins of Tikal will appeal to those interested in experiencing more of Guatemala. Set in a vast rainforest, the pyramids and palaces of Tikal provide a spectacular backdrop for such high-profile birds as Orange-breasted Falcon, Ocellated Turkey, and Gray-throated

Chat, among many others. The species we will encounter in these lowland habitats are more tropical than the highland areas of the main tour.

A variety of lodges and hotels used, ranging from very good to excellent; high quality meals; birding on roads and established trails; travel by van and small bus; physical demands vary from light to moderate; elevations range mostly from 4,000–10,000 feet; mild temperatures expected but could be cold at higher elevation; rain possible.

February 18, Day 1: Arrival into Guatemala City; Transfer to Hotel Boutique Los Pasos, Antigua

Participants arriving in Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport (airport code GUA) this afternoon, upon passing immigration, gathering luggage, and clearing customs, will be met by our local agent and transferred to our comfortable hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. At a time to be announced, we will gather in the hotel lobby for an orientation followed by dinner. Antigua is a beautiful and picturesque colonial city in the central highlands. We do not plan any city tour other than a short walking tour after our first dinner. (note travel time to Antigua from the International Airport in Guatemala City may be 1-2 hours depending on traffic)

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group or missing dinner should consider arriving in Guatemala City or Antigua before February 18 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Boutique Los Pasos, Antigua



Blue-throated Motmot © Brian Gibbons



Ocellated Quail, a gorgeous bird of the grassy pine forests will be sought in multiple locations © Daniel Merida

February 19, Day 2: Birding Finca El Pilar and transfer to Los Tarrales Nature Reserve

After an early breakfast in our hotel, we will drive about 20 minutes to a nearby park, Finca El Pilar, where pine-oak woodlands offer easy and productive birding (Elevation 4,900 to 8,500 feet). Among the species we can expect here are Bushy-crested Jay, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Spot-breasted Oriole, White-eared Ground-Sparrow. Three uncommon species of quail are possible at the edge of the city, but they will all require a little skill and a lot of luck to locate. Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Ocellated Quail, and Singing Quail all roam the hills just outside of Antigua. Twenty species of hummingbirds are possible here too. The specialties we will look for include Green-throated Mountain-gem, Rufous and Violet sabrewings, and Blue-tailed Hummingbird. We might even find the Blue-throated Motmot sitting serenely on a moss-encrusted oak limb. Rufous-collared Robin, Blue-

and-white Mockingbird, Bushy-crested Jay, and Bar-winged Oriole could round out our burgeoning bird list on the first day.

Surrounded by 12,000-foot volcanic peaks, we will return to the delightful colonial town of Antigua for lunch before transferring to Los Tarrales Nature Reserve. The humid Pacific slope from 2,500 feet to montane forests at 9,500 feet will be our birding areas while based at Los Tarrales.

NIGHT: Tarrales Natural Reserve



Belted Flycatcher, another Northern Central American endemic © Brian Gibbons

February 20, Day 3: Birding Los Tarrales Natural Reserve

Birding right from the hotel we will be on foot most of the day. With more than 300 species recorded in the area we will surely keep busy tracking down birds like Crested Guan, Great Curassow, and

Spotted Wood-Quail, some of the more challenging birds we might encounter. The lower elevations will have a decidedly tropical feel with Black and Ornate hawk-eagles possible. Blue-throated Goldentail, a beautiful hummer of tropical forest and edge could be seen around Los Tarrales. Long-tailed Manakin and Chestnut-capped Warbler are indicators of our Pacific slope geography at Los Tarrales.

NIGHT: Tarrales Natural Reserve

February 21, Day 4: Birding Mirador Rey Tepepul Atitlan Nature Reserve



Fulvous Owl is a cloud forest resident in the Central Highlands © Brian Gibbons

Today we will bird the humid montane and cloud forests around 5,900 feet. Highland Guan, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Black-crested Coquette, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, and Slender Sheartail are all possible along the trails here. Perhaps the most beautiful bird in the world, the Resplendent Quetzal, inhabits these moss-covered forests. Another famous resident is the rare Azure-rumped Tanager. A full day in the field will surely net us many great sightings.

NIGHT: Tarrales Natural Reserve

February 22, Day 5: Morning birding Aldea Los Robles, afternoon transfer to Quetzaltenango

Today we will bird the pine-oak forests of Aldea Los Robles at 6,500 feet elevation. Again, we have a chance to spy the near-mythical Ocellated Quail. Similar to our Montezuma Quail of the Southwest US, it is very hard to spot; being both furtive and camouflaged. Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird and Slender Sheartail are two spectacular hummers we will seek today. Belted Flycatcher is a northern Central American endemic and one of two special flycatchers in the *Xenotriccus* genus. Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo is another striking bird of this area. On the ground beneath these great birds are a couple of fine sparrows, White-faced and White-eared ground-sparrows. After our morning birding, we will make the drive to Quetzaltenango.

NIGHT: Hotel Pension Bonifaz, Quetzaltenango

February 23, Day 6: Fuentes Georginas in the morning and Cerro El Baul Municipal Park afternoon

In the cloud forest at 8,200 feet we will seek one of the oddest birds of Central America, The Horned Guan! A spectacular creature with velvety black plumage, white iris, a small yellow bill and a pin-striped, white breast all topped off by a blazing red fleshy horn on top of its head! While it is a rare bird, we will try our hardest to spot this cloud forest denizen. While hunting for the Horned Guan we will undoubtedly encounter many other great birds like the rare Maroon-chested Ground Dove,



The Horned Guan is a denizen of the cloud forests © Brian Gibbons

Fulvous Owl, Guatemalan Flicker (recently split from Northern), Barred Parakeet, the incomparable Pink-headed Warbler, Black-throated Jay, Unicolored Jay, Black-capped Siskin, Yellow Grosbeak, and many others.

NIGHT: Hotel Pension Bonifaz, Quetzaltenango

February 24, Day 7: Volcan Chicabal in the morning the transfer to Sierra de los Cuchumatanes

The cloud forest and the pine-oak zone of Volvan Chicabal are similar habitats to the Fuentes Georginas area we birded yesterday. We will clean up the high elevation birds that we didn't find the previous day. Some birds we may see include a couple of wonderful hummingbirds, the Wine-throated and the large Garnet-throated. Rufous-browed Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-

collared Robin, Black and Mountain thrushes, Yellow-eyed Junco, Yellow-backed Oriole, Elegant Euphonia, Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem, and Northern Emerald-Toucanet are all possible along the trails of Volcan Chicabal. In the afternoon we will make the long drive to Sierra de los Cuchumatanes.

NIGHT: Unicornio Azul, Chancol



"Goldman's" Yellow-rumped Warbler © Daniel Merida

February 25, Day 8: Birding Sierra de los Cuchumatanes

Todos Santos Cuchumatán Regional Park is one of the best places in the world to seek the furtive Ocellated Quail. We will scour the dry pine savanna of the sierra to find this iconic species. Along the way we hope to track down the unique Goldman's subspecies of the Yellow-rumped Warbler which should be split soon. Favoring the Audubon's subspecies Goldman's has more black all over the body with yellow highlights like the Audubon's. The diversity in the dry pine forest is not high, but we will look for our last new birds of the highlands. Maroon-chested Ground Dove, Wine-throated Hummingbird, Pine Flycatcher, Black-capped Swallow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red Crossbill, and Pink-headed Warbler are all possible in the area.

NIGHT: Unicornio Azul, Chancol

February 26, Day 9: Birding the highlands Fly back to Guatemala City

We may have a little time this morning before our short flight back to Guatemala City. We will use our time to take in the dry pine forest of the Sierra de los Cuchumatanes. Perhaps our final view of an Ocellated Quail skulking off the trail will encourage us on to our next birding adventure at Tikal. Flight back to Guatemala City late afternoon, 30-minute flight.

NIGHT: Best Western Plus Stofella Guatemala City

February 27, Day 10: Departures for home if not continuing on to Tikal Extension

Airport transfers will be arranged for people not continuing on to Tikal Extension.

TIKAL EXTENSION

February 27 - March 3, 2027

Set in a vast rainforest, the pyramids and palaces of Tikal serve as the venue for this optional extension to our Highlands of Guatemala tour. The species we will encounter in the forests and woodlands are more tropical than the highland areas of the main tour and include a number of Yucatán regional endemic species.

Nearly three full days of birding and admiring the ancient Maya city of Tikal will round out our Guatemalan birding adventure. Tikal National Park encompasses more than 200 square miles, including the main archaeological site that has been completely mapped revealing 3,000 structures. Mostly covered by rainforest now, there are patches of tropical dry forest in which we will seek a

range of birds more closely associated with the Yucatán region farther north, including Yucatan Flycatcher, White-bellied Wren, Gray-throated Chat, Blue Bunting, and Rose-throated Tanager. Around the spectacular ruins complex we will watch carefully for the amazing and rare Orange-breasted Falcon. Slaty-tailed, Black-headed, and Gartered Violaceous trogons are among the myriad of birds that call Tikal home. Lending to the tropical flare are Red-lored Amazon and Keel-billed Toucan. Our list for this area alone will exceed 100 species and will include a range of hummingbirds, tanagers, manakins, puffbirds, parrots, and aracaris that we didn't encounter in the highlands. Our local guide will take us through the ebb and flow of the Maya civilization that flourished during the Classic Period 200–900 C.E.

As we wander the forested trails, we hope to encounter an army ant swarm, often attended by Tawny-winged and Ruddy woodcreepers, Gray-headed Tanagers, and an array of overwintering warblers. Mexican Black Howler Monkeys and Central American Spider Monkeys occupy the trees above, and White-nosed Coatis rove the forest floor, sometimes in troops of dozens. Tikal is sure to amaze us with its birds, wildlife and ruins.



Tikal is a spectacular Mayan site, add wonderful birding and a magical trip will result © Brian Gibbons

February 27, Day 1: Guatemala City to Tikal via Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

We will head to Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport early where we will board a flight to Flores in northern Guatemala. We expect to arrive in the morning and then drive to Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo National Park for lunch. The Mayan ruins of Yaxhá are among the most important archeological sites in the region; world-famous Temple 216 towers high above the forest canopy, giving views over Lake Yaxhá.

After lunch, we will complete our journey to Tikal, where we will check into our forest-edge hotel. Time permitting, we may do some late afternoon birding around the hotel.

NIGHT: Jungle Lodge, Tikal

February 28, Day 2: Tikal

Rising out of the surrounding rainforest, the temple pyramids of Tikal are some of the most famous monuments in the Americas. We will take the entire day to explore these vast ruins and the rich birdlife resident here. More than 400 species have been recorded in the area, and Tikal is well known for such special birds as Orange-breasted Falcon, Ocellated Turkey, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, Green-backed Sparrow, and Gray-throated Chat. We will also have a chance to explore after dark to look and listen for nightbirds. The avifauna will have a more tropical feel around Tikal. Parrots, trogons, antbirds, woodcreepers, manakins will all be evident, the birds along with the steamy weather will tell us we are in the lowlands of the Maya world. Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Black Hawk-Eagle, fourteen species of pigeons and doves, and Black-throated Shrike-Tanager (flock leader) are all possible in the Tikal area. In Tikal we will be in the realm of the jaguar or b'alam in Mayan. Though we have little chance of seeing the powerful hunter, just knowing they're around is inspiring.

NIGHT: Jungle Lodge, Tikal



Gray-throated Chat, a Yucatan region endemic © Brian Gibbons

March 1, Day 3: Tikal

We will spend this morning exploring Tikal, no doubt adding new and exciting birds to our list. The scrubby area around the Aguada area and the old airstrip hold a few different birds that we hope to track down. Yucatan region endemics are of special note in this habitat, and we will search for Yucatan Flycatcher, the beautiful Gray-throated Chat, Yucatan Poorwill (at night), Yucatan Jay, and Rose-throated Tanager. One morning we will hike for an hour pre-dawn to make our way to the top of one of the temples to take in the sunrise, a sublime experience that the temples have observed for centuries.

NIGHT: Jungle Lodge, Tikal

March 2, Day 4: Tikal morning, afternoon return to Guatemala City



Collared Aracari lends a tropical feel to the Tikal area © Brian Gibbons

After our final morning birding the Mayan world of Tikal we will fly back to Guatemala City. Time-permitting, we will visit the museums in Tikal's visitor center before lunch and our drive back to Flores. The short one-hour flight is scheduled for 4:10 pm, subject to change. A final group dinner in Guatemala City will culminate our amazing tours through Guatemala.

NIGHT: Best Western Plus Stofella Guatemala City

March 3, Day 5: International Departures

Transfers to the airport will be provided for flights home from Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport.

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: Each section will be limited to 10 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADERS: Brian Gibbons and Local leader



Brian Gibbons grew up in suburban Dallas where he began exploring the wild world in local creeks and parks. Chasing butterflies and any animal that was unfortunate enough to cross paths with the Gibbons boys occupied his childhood. A wooden bird feeder kit sparked a flame that was stoked by a gift of the *Golden Guide* and family camping trips to Texas state parks. More than thirty years ago Brian attended two VENT camps for young birders. Birds are now his primary interest, but all things wild continue to captivate him. After college, Brian undertook a variety of field biology research jobs that took him to the Caribbean, the Bering Sea, and the land of the midnight sun, arctic Alaska. He enjoys working with kids, hoping to spark environmental awareness through birds. For many years Brian's fieldwork involved bird banding. His most amazing recoveries were a female Wilson's Warbler that had been banded in Alaska and was captured by Brian in Colorado, and a Sooty Tern that perished after a hurricane on the Texas coast; it had plied the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans of the world for 24 years. Brian's recreational bird-seeking has taken him to Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall in China, the plains of East Africa, and the Himalayas in Nepal. Brian leads birding trips in the United States, Central America, Brazil, and Europe. As well as being a fanatical birder, he loves capturing birds with photography. He lives in Tucson, Arizona with his wife, Lacreia Johnson, and their son, Grayson.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

The fee for Guatemala Highlights: \$6,895 per person in double occupancy or **\$7,725** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, tipping, park entrance fees, flight from Huehuetenango to LA Aurora International Airport at Guatemala City and

guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Guatemala City and return, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The fee for the Tikal Extension: \$TBC per person in double occupancy or \$TBC for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, the flights between Guatemala City and Flores, tipping, park entrance fees, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Guatemala City and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is \$1,000 per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (October 21, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:**

A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)

- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:**

No refund will be provided.

- **Optional add-ons:**

Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees

paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A ***“Force Majeure”*** event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case

of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

About Medjet’s MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Guatemala is required.

VISAS: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance. All travelers must fill out an electronic immigration and customs declaration form before arriving.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of June 9, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: Layering will be crucial for comfort at the higher elevations. Rain is infrequent at this season, averaging only one day in the month, but you should bring a folding umbrella or compact rain poncho just in case. It can be misty and significantly cooler at some of the sites we visit at higher elevations, and a warm jacket, hat, and gloves will be welcome in the mornings. Otherwise, lightweight field clothing including long pants and long-sleeved shirts will be comfortable and appropriate. Sturdy, waterproof boots or hiking shoes are suitable for all of our birding walks; you may wish to wear lighter shoes on our museum visits and for city sightseeing. The sun can be quite strong, and a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and strong sunscreen are essential.

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Bring a camera, if you wish; many of the birds and mammals at Tikal are famously photogenic. Sunglasses, sunscreen, and lip balm are highly recommended. A bottle for carrying water in the field is a good idea. A belt pack or day pack will be handy for books, sunscreen, extra clothing layers, field guides, etc.

Binoculars: We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

CLIMATE: Central Guatemala is very pleasant, with daytime highs near 80° and overnight lows around 50° F. The higher elevations will be quite chilly with lows in the upper 30's possible. Tikal is consistently 10-15° warmer during the day, and it often remains warm all night; the humidity can be expected to be high, and rain is somewhat more likely here than in the highlands. Waterproof footwear will come in handy.

FOOD & WATER: We will always have bottled water and other drinks available in the van

CURRENCY & SPENDING: Your tour fee covers most necessary expenses. However, you will want to have enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as alcoholic beverages, taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, and personal items. Although US currency is accepted by some businesses, especially in Antigua, it is a good idea to withdraw some Guatemalan Quetzales from an airport ATM on arrival. ATMs are also available in Antigua.

ELECTRICITY: Electricity – 120 Volts

INTERNET ACCESS: WiFi is available at all hotels. WiFi is available at the Jungle Lodge in Tikal but limited by a slow satellite internet connection.

LANGUAGE: Language - The official language is Spanish, although English is widely spoken.

TIME: Mountain Standard Time

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available at Hotel Pension Bonifaz, Los Tarrales, and the Jungle Lodge in Tikal.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with vaccinations against a variety of preventable diseases, including the so-called Routine Vaccinations, which comprise the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine. You should also be up to date with your Hepatitis A, or Immune Globulin (IG), and Hepatitis B vaccinations. Ask your physician whether she recommends vaccination against rabies, typhoid, malaria, or yellow fever. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations. Those who are not fit for light to moderate physical activity, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, heart or immune deficiencies, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the trip.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

In general, we recommend that you consult your doctor before taking any immunizations. Health requirements change frequently and often vary from district to district within a country. No vaccinations are required to enter Guatemala.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin):** is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permethrin is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

Zika Virus – This tour visits an area or areas where Zika virus is known to occur or could occur; however, we believe the risk to VENT travelers is extremely low. The Zika virus is a mosquito-borne infection transmitted by mosquitos of the genus *Aedes*, and is related to other tropical diseases: Dengue, Yellow Fever, and West Nile virus. This type of mosquito bites during the day and typically is found in areas of dense human habitation where sanitation and drainage of standing water is poor. Zika virus presents the greatest threat to women of childbearing age. For others who become infected, the effects are usually nonexistent to mild, although some people exhibit symptoms such as mild fever, rashes, joint and muscle pain, and red eyes. If infected, the best treatment is plenty of rest, nourishment, and other supportive care. There is no vaccine to prevent or cure the disease; however, Zika virus is not contagious and, therefore, cannot be transmitted through air, food, or water.

Your safety is our highest priority, and we want to emphasize that the best way to avoid Zika virus (and other mosquito-borne diseases), is to take appropriate precautions to avoid mosquito bites:

- Stay informed about the Zika virus
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, socks and shoes, and a hat*
- Use effective insect repellents (those containing DEET) and reapply regularly

For the latest information and news about Zika virus, please [visit the website of the CDC](#).

***We strongly recommend the use of Insect Shield® clothing.** Insect Shield is a process by which clothing is treated with an EPA-approved formula of the insect repellent permethrin. Such clothing is highly repellent to insects and provides durable and long-lasting protection, even after dozens of washings. Outdoor wear with Insect Shield protection includes name brands such as Ex Officio and Tilley, and can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores such as REI and from a variety of online retailers. In lieu of Insect Shield clothing, you should consider treating your clothes with permethrin, which has the same effect, and that can be purchased at outdoor recreation stores and from a variety of online retailers.

INSECT PROTECTION: Mosquitoes (Culicidae), black flies (Simuliidae), horse and deer flies (Tabanidae), and chiggers (Trombiculidae) are the most common buggers in Guatemala. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are the best protection against bites from mosquitoes, black flies, as well as horse and deer flies. Chigger bites (larvae of Trombiculidae mites) can cause very unpleasant reactions of the skin including intensive itching. The larvae are microscopic and most are invisible to the naked eye. Different species live in grassy habitats, scrub, and forest understory (e.g. under palm leaves). Bites happen especially on body parts with tightly fitting cloths. Spraying shoes, socks, and the end of trouser legs with an insect repellent containing DEET helps to a large degree to prevent chiggers boarding your body and thus their bites. While all these pests are present, our visit in the dry season should limit their presence to some degree.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds

A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America. Oxford: Oxford University Press. An important reference, but inevitably out of date in some details. The book is quite heavy, and

most species that also occur north of the Mexican border are not illustrated, making it necessary to supplement this title with one of the standard “North American” (US and Canada) field guides. Howell, S., and S. Webb. 1995

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Easily portable and up to date. Fagan, J., and O. Komar. 2016.

Lista comentada de las aves de Guatemala / Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Guatemala.

Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. A very helpful bilingual list of Guatemala’s birds, with good discussions of the distribution of rare and endemic species in the country. Eisermann, K, and C. Avendaño. 2007.

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. **Highly recommended.**

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer’s responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin’s Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional “pack.” For this trip, please download the pack Europe. Highly recommended.

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity

which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 9, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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CD: 06/09/26

DE: 06/12/26