COSTA RICA

A Relaxed & Easy Tour
November 14 - 22, 2026



Costa Rica is one of the premier birding destinations in the world and no part of this small and friendly country has more to offer than the Caribbean lowlands and nearby mountains. The sheer abundance of tropical birds in this region is stunning, not to mention their beauty and diversity, or the backdrop of spectacular scenery and lush vegetation. This Relaxed and Easy tour, weekend through weekend inclusive, offers a great introduction to Neotropical birding at a slow pace. Such perennial favorites as parrots, hummingbirds, trogons, toucans, and tanagers are numerous and easy to view here, while top quality birds like Black Guan, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Crested Guan, Great Green Macaw and raptors still survive well in the region and are, in fact, usually findable.

Our tour starts in the lush forest and farmlands along the road to Cerro Buenavista (also known as Cerro de la Muerte). Here, we will get our introduction to hummingbirds, and to our delight, the Talamanca Mountains endemic Fiery-throated Hummingbird will be one of our target species. Also, we will explore the forest edge in search of feeding flocks including tanagers, tyrant-flycatchers, woodpeckers and some Central America specialties as well. But Cerro de la Muerte is also one of the premier sites for seeing the Resplendent Quetzal, the most astonishing of all the five species of quetzals. As we search for viewing this legendary bird, we will have a great opportunity to come across other gems of the forest including Silver-throated Tanager, Flame-colored Tanager, Black-thighed Grosbeak (rare and unpredictable) and Flame-throated Warbler.



In contrast to Cerro de la Muerte, the Sarapiqui lowlands offer a classic tropical experience. Here parrots, aracaries, guans and many passerines assemble in a perfect combination of sounds and colored feathers. On one day, we will take the aerial tram at the buffer zone of Braulio Carrillo National Park where the secretive and difficult-to-find Bare-necked Umbrellabird has been reported. Later, a full morning will be offered to visit the world-famous La Selva Field Station of the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS). We will search for birds not found at higher elevations and include several tyrant-flycatchers, parrots, parakeets and a possibility to enjoy the unique Snowy Cotinga. This tour is one in our series of Relaxed & Easy tours. These tours are appropriate for participants who want a slower paced tour, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and lighter physical activity. For most of the tour, there is a later start in the morning (typically between 6.00 to 6:30 AM), some days with a break after lunch and a shorter afternoon outing. They involve shorter walks, usually less than a mile, and avoid difficult terrain.



Volcano and Fiery-throated Hummingbirds. Photo: David Ascanio



Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Panterpe insignis.
Photo: D. Ascanio ©

November 14, Day 1: Arrival in San José

Participants should plan your flights to arrive San Jose, Costa Rica (Juan Santamaría International Airport, airport code SJO) today. After clearing customs and immigration you will be met by our local ground agent and transferred to the *Hotel Bougainvillea* where a room will be reserved in your name. Because most flights arrive San Jose in the late afternoon, there are no functions scheduled this evening, and participants are on your own for dinner.

NIGHT: Hotel Bougainvillea, Heredia (near San José).

November 15, Day 2: From San José to Cerro de la Muerte

Our first morning birding will start right outside our rooms where pairs of Rufous-backed Wren give a cacophony of calls, while Costa Rica's national bird, the Clay-colored Thrush, hops around. The Hotel Bougainvillea is a great location to start seeing some of the common birds of Costa Rica, at close distance! Among the target bird species, we will focus our search to locate the distinctive Lesson's Motmot and the unique Green-breasted Mango. There will also be Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds, the secretive Cabani's Wren, and certainly a Great Kiskadee will be singing nearby. As we enjoy the gardens, we might see large flocks of Crimson-fronted Parakeet flying to their foraging grounds. After breakfast, we will take the ascending road to the Buena Vista massiff (also known as Cerro de la Muerte) which is part of the Talamanca mountains. This location is known as one of the best sites to look for high elevation Costa Rican specialties, from the Resplendent Quetzal to the diminutive Volcano Hummingbird or the territorial Fiery-throated Hummingbird. We will stop for lunch in Paraiso

Quetzal, where we will enjoy our first encounters with the Talamanca (Magnificent) Hummingbird and Lesser Violetear. The density of the endemic Fiery-throated Hummingbird has been variable as it is common in some years and extremely difficult in other years. Weather allowing, we will explore even higher ground to the antenna road, where we will search for Volcano Junco, Slaty Flowerpiercer, the scarce Timberline Wren and the secretive Peg-billed Finch. We expect to arrive to our lodge by the late afternoon and will have time to relax and enjoy the hotel grounds before meeting for the daily field checklist session followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Hotel Savegre, San Gerardo de Dota

November 16, Day 3: Cerro de la Muerte

A full day in the San Gerardo de Dota area in the Cerro de la Muerte Massif will increase our chances for finding the much sought-after Resplendent Quetzal. We will be in contact with local farmers to learn about the recent sightings and will surely organize our outings to increase the changes of seeing this amazing species. Also, we will come across opportunities to look for Volcano Hummingbird, Collared Trogon, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo (always difficult to see), Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, Dark Pewee, Black-capped Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Black-and-yellow and Long-tailed silky-flycatchers. In previous years we have enjoyed feeding flocks containing Flame-throated and Black-cheeked warblers, Collared Redstart, Silver-throated Tanager and other passerine birds. Depending on weather conditions, after lunch we will explore the higher elevations along the road to look for the secretive Black Guan or the more widespread Sooty Thrush. In some years, we have reported large groups of Barred Parakeet in flight and although they are usually distant, it is exciting to know about the presence of such little-known species. Given that the lodge landscaping attracts hummingbirds in abundance, we will plan to explore this area sometime in the day.

NIGHT: Hotel Savegre, San Gerardo de Dota



Chestnut-colored Woodpdecker, Celeus castaneus. Photo: David Ascanio

November 17, Day 4: From Cerro de la Muerte to Sarapiqui

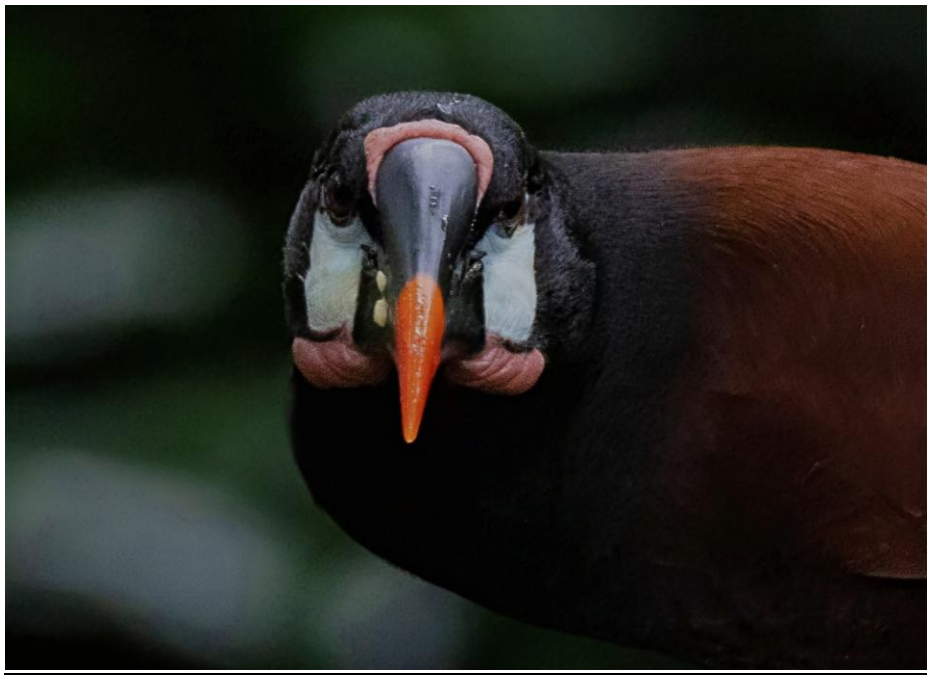
Our day will start with an optional pre-breakfast birding in the vicinity of the hotel. We will be seeking for a feeding flock that usually contains Flame-colored and Silver-throated tanagers. Also, Tennessee Warbler and Acorn Woodpecker. Sometimes, the regional endemic Sulphur-winged Parakeet wanders around, and the active Collared Redstart will be singing while travelling with the flock. Hummingbirds will be abundant with territorial Talamanca Hummingbird and Lesser Violetear defending the feeders. The day will continue with a drive through the highway between San Jose and the lowlands of Sarapiquí. This road crosses an incredibly lush and wet forest and, depending on weather we might stop in a patch of vervain flowers where more hummingbirds will be added to our day checklist. Once we reach the lowlands we will pay a stop in Pierella Garden, where a delicious lunch accompanied by a drip-made coffee will delight our day while the feeders contiguous to the dining room will allow us to add some lowland species such as Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker and a pair of Rufous-tailed Jacamar that wander around (for good reasons!) the butterfly house. A short walk around the property will be followed by a drive to La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, our headquarters for the following three days.

NIGHT: La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, Sarapiquí

November 18, Day 5: La Selva Field Station

The Sarapiqui region, although now largely cleared and settled, harbors the richest avifauna in the country, and birds are generally conspicuous. We will explore the humid tropical lowlands and the contiguous farmlands. Today we will visit the world-famous La Selva Field Station of the Organization for Tropical Studies (near Puerto Viejo). The great diversity of habitats here includes tall lowland rainforest, secondary growth of varying ages, overgrown plantations, successional thickets, riverine forest, and swampy pastures. Within these habitats are numerous specialized niches. All are home to a wonderful variety of tropical birds. Initially we will linger along the La Selva entry road, getting acquainted with the common birds of the open country. Flycatchers, tanagers, and seed-eating birds are abundant and conspicuous in the early morning hours. Later in the morning we will explore a flat and easy trail, trying to see manakins, antbirds and probably a poison dart frog! After lunch at La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, we will enjoy a deserved siesta time, and in the afternoon, we will have the opportunity to visit the boundaries of La Selva or explore farmland to increase our chances to seeing Great Green Macaw.

NIGHT: La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, Sarapiquí



Montezuma Oropendola, Psarocolius montezuma. Photo: David Ascanio

November 19, Day 6: Road to Guapiles and Rainforest Aerial Tram in Braulio Carrillo National Park

Today we will be birding the very first portion of the road that leads to the port of Limones. At sides of this road there are narrower roads that access farms and remnants of lowland humid forest. With the aid of a local guide, we will be seeking for a roost of Spectacled Owl. As we walk along the road, we might be surprised with a pair of Mealy Parrot perched, or a Fasciated Tiger-Heron standing motionless on a boulder in the river. There will probably be parakeets, antshrikes and tanagers. By looking at the tall trees, we will search for the almendro (*Dipteryx oleifera*) in fruit, since that will increase of chances to seeing the mystic Great Green Macaw. Be ready to look for Streak-headed Woodcreeper and the always active Common Tody-Flycatcher. As the day warms up, we will pay a visit to the house of a multifaceted person, Cope. He is a good friend, an artist, an impressive conservationist and gifted naturalist. Entering to his property is like entering into paradise. There will be hummingbird feeders with Long-billed Hermit and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer as well as a bird table where dacnises, honeycreepers and tanagers will be performing at close distance.

After lunch in a local restaurant, we will continue this day of exciting experiences with a visit to the Aerial Tram in the buffer zone of Braulio Carrillo National Park. Created in 1978, the park encompasses a huge band of wet Caribbean foothill forest. In 1987, the road was finally completed, and the park opened to the public. Now birders have access to some of the country's rarest, least known and most restricted species in this fabulous area of steep forested slopes, cloud-filled valleys, and plunging waterfalls. We will devote the afternoon to this area, which will include an unforgettable 90-minute Aerial Tram ride, traversing different levels or strata of this enchanting Caribbean rainforest, to later explore the trails on this privately-owned property.

The forest edge is not far away, and we're sure to spot some spectacular large birds sitting up in the crowns of the trees. These may include Crested Guan, Mealy and White-crowned parrots, Gartered Trogon, Keel-billed and Yellow-throated toucans, Collared Aracari, Snowy Cotinga, Montezuma Oropendola, Yellow-tailed Oriole and even Great Green Macaw. Close to the station itself are dense secondary thickets with young trees and vine-tangled forest edge, the preferred habitat for birds like Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Great and Fasciated antshrikes; Long-tailed Tyrant; White-collared Manakin;

Black-throated and Cabanis' wrens; honeycreepers; Plain- colored, Crimson-collared and Scarlet-rumped (Passerini's) tanagers; or Black-headed and Buff-throated saltators. Hummingbirds visit the flowering shrubs, including Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird and White-necked Jacobin. We will also search for an absolutely stellar line-up of tanagers, such as Emerald, Silver-throated, Speckled, Spangle-cheeked, Blue-and-gold, Black-and-yellow and Tawny-crested, as well as White-throated Shrike-Tanager. Many other birds also occur, but for various reasons, the chances of seeing them are vanishingly small. Nevertheless, just being where they occur and knowing that one of them could turn up is exciting. This remarkable group includes Tiny Hawk, Violaceous Quail-Dove, Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo, Black-crowned Antpitta, and Bare-necked Umbrellabird.

NIGHT: La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, Sarapiquí



Baird´s Tapir. Tapirus bairdii. Photo: D. Ascanio



Collared Aracari. Pteroglossus torquatus. Photo: D. Ascanio

November 20, Day 7: Road to Arenal Volcano

An optional early morning exploration in the lodge will be followed by a drive to the town of Fortuna and furthermore to the vicinity of the Arenal Volcano. Birding options abound here and given the nature of our tour, we will focus our birding efforts to visiting bird feeding stations and hummingbird feeders. Expect to be seeing Crested Guan, Crimson-collared Tanager, Collared Aracari and even an owl roosting at daytime! There have been times when a pair of the secretive White-throated Crake walks across an easy flat trail or we delight our eyes with White-collared Manakin males displaying at the lek. The options today abound and your leaders will be choosing the sites to visit based in the birds that still need to be reported for the tour.

NIGHT: La Quinta de Sarapiqui Lodge, Sarapiquí

November 21, Day 8: Morning at Sarapiqui; Afternoon Drive to San Jose

Because of the incredible diversity of species possible in this region, we will offer an optional early morning birding in the Sarapiquí region. After breakfast, we will start our way back to San Jose but for that we will be using a different road known as *La Virgen.* This road quickly ascends the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica, one of the wettest regions in Central America. This is an incredibly lush and scenic wonderland of rushing water and deep valleys, much of it still covered in a profusion of exotic plants. We plan to stop at the side of the road (Cinchona) where a local family feeds hummingbirds and tanagers and chances for seeing Green-crowned Brilliant, Violet Sabrewing and Coppery-headed Emerald abound. There are also plenty of other birds around the feeders and forest edge including Prong-billed Barbet, Red-faced Spinetail, flycatchers, Silver-throated and several other dazzling tanagers. We will continue our drive to the road entering the Poás Volcano where we will look for the elusive Wrenthrush, and we might come across more tanagers and possibly a feeding flock containing tyrant-flycatchers and foliage-gleaners. Lunch will be on the way down to San Jose in a restaurant that has hummingbird feeders, and this will be our unique opportunity to add two more hummingbird species to our list, the White-bellied and Purple-throated mountain-gems. In the early afternoon, we will continue our drive to our hotel in San José where we will enjoy a farewell dinner.

NIGHT: Hotel Xandari, near San José



Crimson-collared Tanager, Ramphocelus sanguinolentus. Photo: David Ascanio

November 22, Day 9: Departure for Home

Our tour ends this morning with an early transfer to the San José airport for flights departing before noon today. Transfers for flights departing at other times can be arranged in advance at an additional charge. **Please, note that the rooms and the grounds of Hotel Xandari are exceptionally beautiful. You might want to consider staying an extra day by your own to relax and enjoy birding in the area before returning home.** The gardens have a level trail where you may see Rufous-and-white Wren and Chestnut-capped Warbler. A pair of Lesson's Motmot usually hang around and the noisy Brown Jay visits the parking area. There will be also opportunities to see Blue-vented Hummingbird (previously considered part of Steely-vented Hummingbird) and White-crowned Parrot. As the morning warms up, look up in the sky as a pair of Gray Hawk could be soaring around.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to decide to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least three 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 and rooms are available.

RELAXED AND EASY TOUR INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS: Relaxed & Easy (R&E) tours are like "traditional" VENT tours, but set to a slower pace, with somewhat fewer hours in the field and lighter physical activity. They are ideal for participants who prefer a somewhat later start in the morning, a little lengthier afternoon break, and a shorter afternoon outing. Walking is limited to short walks of usually not more than a half mile one-way, avoiding difficult terrain. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 6:30-7:00 a.m., followed by birding until about noon. We will attempt to have lunch every day between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m., followed by an afternoon break (when possible). We will resume birding for a couple of hours in the midafternoon.



Shinning Honeycreeper, Cyanerpes lucidus. Photo: David Ascanio ©

On most days we will attempt to provide about an hour for personal time before dinner which will usually be between 6:00 and 6:30 PM (or right after the daily checklist session). Strenuous physical activity will be avoided, and all walking will be limited to well-marked roads and trails, excluding uneven or rough terrain.

Relaxed & Easy (R&E) refers only to the slower pace of a tour, not to a participant's birding skills or ability. Accordingly, birders of all levels of ability are welcome, as they are on typical VENT tours; R&E tours should not be mistaken as tours for beginning birders. All birders are welcome, regardless of skill level, as they are on traditional VENT tours.

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 10 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: David Ascanio and **Esteban Biamonte.**



David Ascanio, a Venezuelan birder and naturalist, has spent over 39 years guiding birding tours throughout his native country, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, the Orinoco and Amazon River basins, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, the Guianas, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, Cuba, Chile, and Panama. He is especially interested in bird vocalizations and has a private library containing voices of more than 70% of all the birds of Venezuela. David combines superb birding skills with an astonishing command of bird vocalizations. He has published a book for children about bird songs and coauthored the descriptions of two new species, the Rio Orinoco Spinetail and the Delta Amacuro Softtail. David has also published numerous papers about the birds of the *llanos* (plains), Orinoco River Island species, and the pan-tepui endemic species on which he has become an authority. He is the senior author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (2017). David is an excellent communicator, has a great sense of humor, and is tireless in helping others find birds and wildlife. These traits have made him one of the most popular naturalists/guides in the Neotropics.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **$6,995** per person in double occupancy or $7,775 for a person requiring single accommodation.. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 8 accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to San José and return. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The 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 (May 18, 2026). We accept MasterCard and Visa.

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 prior to the tour departure date on June 17, 2026.

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/TRAVEL PROTECTION: 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 Ripcord

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: **ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird;** or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and 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.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

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 MedjetAssist

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 or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR INFORMATION: 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: The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. 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 the most updated information: http://www.tsa.gov/.

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

VISAS: Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of May 1, 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/CLIMATE: As is the case for all of our tropical tours, lightweight field clothing is the norm for Costa Rica tours. Long-sleeved shirts, hat, sunglasses, umbrella and a strong sunscreen are recommended for protection from the sun and rain. Please, be sure to have a pair of good **water-resistant** hiking boots or walking shoes for the field and a second pair of lightweight shoes. Mud boots are **not** necessary, as we will avoid damp trails. **A** thermal top, and warm sweater or jacket are essential for layering on cool evenings. **Do not forget a small umbrella and/or poncho**, as we may get caught out in mist or rain.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt pack or day pack (for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

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: We will be visiting Costa Rica during the rainy season so, although we might encounter rain, we will be visiting Costa Rica during the breeding season of many target species, thus making it a perfect time for birding at a slow pace. Generally, the weather will be warm to hot and humid with daytime highs of 75 to 90 degrees. **However,** it is cool at night at Savegre Lodge (temperatures can be as low as the upper 40s and rarely even the upper 30s. Most days it warms up quickly once the sun is up.

ELECTRICITY: 110/220 volts (same as USA); two-pin plugs are standard.

LANGUAGE: Spanish, although English is widely spoken.

TIME: Central Standard Time

INTERNET ACCESS: Available at all locations (and generally, but not always, reliable).

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. 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.

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.

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 regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

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.

An 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 is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself

pre-treatment has to 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 Permanone 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.

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 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html (click on Travel Health).

INSECT PROTECTION: Chiggers are occasionally a problem in some areas. For prevention of bites, we recommend regular use of a repellant lotion (small plastic squeeze bottle) and a pump-style container of insect repellent that has close to 100% DEET. Topsyn gel is useful in reducing irritation from stings or bites, and some cortisone creams are available without prescription. Also, "Flowers of Sulphur" powder has proven effective for deterring chiggers (ask your pharmacist).

A Note About Chiggers: This tour visits areas where chiggers are known to occur. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world's tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who make contact with the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood and the majority of the world's species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids, however, through a process in which a digestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defense against the chigger's digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body's natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to

attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking, or standing in particular, in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique commonly employed.
- Apply a cream-style insect repellent, such as “Cutters” to your body from the waist down BEFORE putting on your clothing.
- Spray your pants and socks with a spray repellent such as “Cutters” or “Off.” Repellants with high concentrations of DEET (70-100%) are most effective. You do not need to apply these to your skin, only to clothing. (Be careful as DEET will damage plastics and lens coatings). Repel Permanone is an odorless aerosol insecticide that offers perhaps the best defense against chiggers. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online. It should only be applied to clothes and allowed to dry before you dress. Never apply Permanone directly to the skin. Permethrin is known to be a highly toxic chemical to insects. It is the active ingredient in Permanone, but is present in a small amount (0.5%).
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

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. We also recommend Andrew Isles books for the Asia-Pacific region at http://www.andrewisles.com for difficult to find and out of print books for Australia.

This list includes some basic field guides and reference volumes of use to the visitor. A great deal has been written about all aspects of Australia's natural history. You will find a variety of selections in any library. Browse around a little and you will discover many resources not listed here.

Field Guides (Birds):

Dyer, Dale and Steve N.G. Howell. *Birds of Costa Rica.* Princeton University Press. 2023. The most recent field guide for Costa Rica showing updated taxonomy and great illustrations. Compact and complete, this is the recommended field guide.

Garrigues, Richard and Robert Dean, *The Birds of Costa Rica: A Field Guide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Stiles, Gary and Alexander Skutch. *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990. The first field guide specifically for Costa Rica and still very useful, especially the text.

Ridgely, Robert S. *A Guide to the Birds of Panama*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992 (2nd ed.). Edition expanded to include Costa Rica and excellent for use here.

Field Guides (Other):

DeVries, Philip. *The Butterflies of Costa Rica & Their Natural History.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Lovely guide to butterflies; but no longer easy to obtain.

Garwood, Kim & Richard Lehman. *Butterflies of Central America, Volumes I & II.* Edition RiCale Publishing, 2011, 2012. Beautiful new photo guide to the butterflies of the region. Volume I covers most of those seen, while Volume II is only the complex hairstreak and metalmark groups.

Glassberg, Jeffrey. *A Swift Guide to the Butterflies of Mexico and Central America.* Second edition. Sunstreak Books, 2018. The most practical guide to the butterflies of Costa Rica if this is one of your special interests.

Leenders, Twan. *A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica.* A Zona Tropical Publication; 2001.

Wainwright, Mark. *The Mammals of Costa Rica.* Comstock Published (a division of Cornell University Press), 2007. Excellent guide to the mammals.

General Introduction to the Tropics:

Forsyth, Adrian, & Ken Miyata. 1984. *Tropical Nature.* Life & Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America. Scribners Sons, New York. Does not deal much with birds but is a fantastic introduction to all kinds of topics relating to tropical wildlife including bugs, frogs, plant strategies, bot flies, and much more. Extraordinarily well written, a classic, and a book that ought to be read by anyone contemplating a visit to the American tropics.

* Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity*. University of Texas Press, 2005. Highly recommended for background information on how things work in bird communities in tropical latitudes; topics include diversity of birds, hummingbird communities; mixed species flocks; antbirds and army ants; colorfulness, song structure in relation to environments, and much more.

* Kricher, John C. *The New Neotropical Companion.* 2017. Princeton University Press. An introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World Tropics. Recommended as a general, broad-based introduction to plants and animals of Amazonia.

Further Reading:

Janzen, Daniel H. (ed.). *Costa Rican Natural History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. An encyclopedia that contains a wealth of information on the plants and animals of Costa Rica, especially those that have been studied in the field; also has chapters on geology and soils, agriculture, etc. Recommended as a technical reference book.

Perry, Donald. *Life Above the Jungle Floor*. Simon & Schuster, 1986. Out of Print, but still available. A popular book that talks much about life in the tropical rainforest, especially in the little-known canopy.

Reid, Fiona A. *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeast Mexico*. Oxford University Press, 1997. Also a good mammal guide.

Skutch, Alexander F. *A Bird Watcher's Adventures in Tropical America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977. Fun reading from an eminent ornithologist who resided in Costa Rica.

Skutch, Alexander F. *A Naturalist in Costa Rica*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971. Good general background in the tropics from a prolific and very readable author. Reprinted in 1992. Try www.abebooks.com.

App´s:

**** Merlin Bird ID.*** **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** The best app to use in the field. Nowadays considered the "future of birding". Once you download the app, you must download the pack for Costa Rica. Includes bird description, photos and voices. Also, there is a section for Bird Photo ID which can be useful in the field. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

**** Ebird.*** **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** This is nowadays your best way to keep your life list, all in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, your list will be automatically updated. Furthermore, your guide will be able to share the daily list. You can just accept the list, and have it uploaded in your files! **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

Bird Call Xeno**.** This app gives you access to one of the largest online bird libraries in the world. Provided that your phone has an active data service, you´ll be able to listen to the bird recordings uploaded in the site.

Costa Rica Birds - Field Guide. Birding Field Guides. A good source of information with bird voices and range maps. It provides multiple filter choices and easy search function. Downloadable in the App Store, Amazon appstore and Google Play.

Mammals of North, Central and South America - A mammal app.

* ***Sky Guide.*** If you're interested in stargazing, you might want to consider using this app. Just hold your device overhead and it will show you the stars, constellations and planets. Downloadable in the App Store and Google Play.

* ***Maps.me.*** If you like checking routes, roads and locations, this app allows you to track the tour route even with your phone offline! Just download the app and the Costa Rica map and you will be all set. Downloadable in the App Store and Google Play.

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.

CRR:20261114

12/1/25 – DA

6/9/26 – PS/DE

Publish Date: 6/9/26