



COLOMBIA'S COFFEE BELT

The Central Andes

&

TATAMÁ NATIONAL PARK AND MONTEZUMA ROAD PRE-TRIP

June 4 -12, 2026
May 31 - June 5, 2026



Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan © David Ascanio

This brand-new tour visits Colombia's Coffee Belt, in the heart of the Central Andes, a region celebrated for its picturesque landscapes, pleasing climate, and marvelous biodiversity. Hosting a spectacular avifauna, the Central Andes features delightful accommodations, wonderful food, and friendly people. Led by VENT tour leader Doris Valencia and local expert Laura Rubio, this inaugural tour promises a parade of birds ranging from the mesmerizingly beautiful to the nearly mythical, with touches of culture and style.

Our base is the lively mountain city of Manizales, at 7,200 feet and surrounded by cloud

forest-covered slopes and lofty peaks and ridges. This location is prime for its easy access to an array of important parks and nature reserves. Each of these protected areas is a haven for birders, photographers, and naturalists alike, with forest trails, flowering gardens, and feeding stations providing opportunities to observe prized birds such as Barred Fruiteater, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, and rarely seen antpittas such as Brown-banded, Equatorial, and the beautiful Crescent-faced.



Sword-billed Hummingbird © David Ascanio

As the days unfold, we'll venture through lush cloud forests and surreal páramo landscapes in search of highland specialties that include Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Buffy Helmetcrest, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and a dazzling mix of tanagers, mountain-tanagers, finches, wrens, flycatchers and more. Whether you're on the trail or relaxing in a hummingbird-filled garden, every moment brings the potential for excitement.

Throughout the tour, we'll enjoy stays at carefully selected, bird-friendly lodges and a charming traditional coffee hacienda, each offering comfort, local charm, and direct access to excellent birding. The itinerary covers a range of elevations, culminating in a visit to breathtaking Los Nevados National Park above treeline.

Beyond birds, this tour offers endearing cultural connection. A highlight of the trip is a visit to a bird-friendly coffee farm, where we'll meet local growers and gain insight into Colombia's rich coffee traditions, which underpin the growth of community-based conservation in this vibrant part of the country.

Those seeking an enhanced Central Andes experience are encouraged to join the Tatamá National Park and Montezuma Road Pre-trip. Set in the amazingly diverse Chocó bioregion, the park preserves more than 128,000 acres of primary forest and hosts an alluring range of rare and highly desirable birds we will not see on the main tour, a representation of which includes Gold-ringed Tanager, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Black-and-gold Tanager, and countless other species.

June 4, Day 1: Arrival in Pereira

On arrival at Pereira Metecañá International Airport (airport code PEI), you will be met by a representative of our local ground team and transferred to the **Hotel Boutique Sazagua**, where a room has been reserved in your name. We will convene at 6:00 p.m. this evening with our fellow travelers and tour leaders for a trip welcome and introduction, followed by a lovely dinner.

Some participants may wish to arrive early in Pereira. On request, VENT will be happy to help in making hotel reservations for early arrivals.

NIGHT: Hotel Boutique Sazagua, Pereira

June 5, Day 2: Pereira to Manizales

The fun starts this morning with some easy birding in the hotel gardens followed by a hearty Colombian breakfast featuring corn arepas, delicious coffee and hot chocolate, fresh fruit, and more. We will then drive twenty minutes to Bonita Farm, where we will meet Juan Carlos Noreña, a passionate marine biologist and the creator of this special place. Here we will spend the morning enjoying hummingbird feeders and fruit feeding stations that attract an amazing array of easy-to-see birds. Several species of hummingbirds buzz around the feeders, and we will be on the lookout for Black-throated Mango, Steely-vented and Rufous-tailed hummingbirds and the very territorial White-necked Jacobin. Other beauties include the eye-popping Golden Tanager, while Red-crowned and Golden-olive woodpeckers are often attracted by the ripe bananas; Streaked and Black-winged saltators and Andean Motmots often get in on the action, too.



White-necked Jacobin © Barry Zimmer

It can be hard to leave this magical garden and so many birds, but for those who wish, there is also the opportunity for a moderately challenging hike into the forest, where we have excellent chances at Parker's Antbird, Grayish Piculet, White-breasted Wood-Wren, and even perhaps the unique Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper.

We will enjoy a delicious lunch hosted by Juan Carlos and his team, followed by a very special presentation in which Juan Carlos will share his passion for butterflies. The carefully tended garden here attracts many notable species to their host plants, and Juan Carlos takes the opportunity to teach visitors, including schoolchildren, about the importance of protecting butterfly habitats and preserving their role in the cloud forest ecosystem. In keeping with the theme "You don't love what you don't know," Juan Carlos titles his presentation "Seducción ambiental," environmental seduction, hoping to inspire the same passion in visitors from Colombia and around the world.

From there we will drive to Manizales, with a stop at the wetlands of Cameduadua. Access here is restricted for casual visitors, but we have arranged to be met by a local guide with access privileges who will lead us on the search for Bare-faced Ibis, Southern Lapwing, Pied-billed Grebe, Short-tailed Hawk, Torrent Tyrannulet, and other birds. We will arrive at the very comfortable Quo Hotel in the afternoon. We will gather to review the day's bird list, then enjoy dinner together.

NIGHT: Hotel Quo, Manizales

June 6, Day 3: Demostrativa Don Miguel

Today we will visit a special place called Demostrativa Don Miguel, a little more than an hour from our hotel. Here, Mr. Miguel, one of the people behind the preservation of the local biodiversity, has shown his neighbors that, with time and passion, one can make a living from the forest and the birds. The name of his finca (farm) comes from “demostrar,” which means to show someone that they might be wrong, and now the neighbors are following in his footsteps. His older son, John, assists him, and in their garden one can see more than 60 species of birds in a sitting, a true demonstration of the great things that can be achieved with hard work and dedication.

Fruit feeders attract a fabulous array of colorful tanagers, euphonias, toucans, and the inquisitive Andean Motmot. The nearby hummingbird garden showcases an alluring selection of birds such as Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, White-vented Plumeteer, Andean Emerald, and others. Just down the hill, we’ll visit an elevated observation tower from which we’ll search the mid-canopy for the endemic Turquoise Dacnis. Other possibilities include Crimson-backed, Palm, Blue-gray, and Blue-necked tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonia, Tropical Parula, and Cocoa Woodcreeper. A short walk along the road will take us to the bank of the Chinchina River, where we will look for Torrent Tyrannulet and the handsome Torrent Duck.



Turquoise Dacnis © Doris Valencia

A delicious homestyle lunch will be provided at the main house, along with a *tinto* (small cup of coffee). We will return to Manizales in the mid to late afternoon, capping what will have been a very special day.

NIGHT: Hotel Quo, Manizales

June 7, Day 4: Owl's Watch

Over the past two decades, Colombia has prioritized clean drinking water for its expanding population. Legal protections have been enacted to safeguard vital watersheds, enhancing both water quality and wildlife habitat. Among these protected areas is Reserva Ecológica Río Blanco, operated by Aguas de Manizales. This morning, we will leave the hotel around 6:30 for a leisurely drive to the reserve, famous as one of Colombia's premier birding destinations. Upon arrival, we will be met by a man named Juan Carlos, one of the region's two antpitta "whisperers."

The reserve teems with birds! As we get started, we will keep an eye out for the striking Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Streaked Tuftedcheek, and Blue-and-black, Blue-capped, and Beryl-spangled tanagers among many other species.



Blue-necked Tanager © David Ascanio

For as wonderful as these birds are, however, much of our focus we'll be on observing two or more species of antpittas.

Antpittas are elusive birds of the forest floor, shaped like eggs balanced on spindly legs. Though widespread in the American tropics, they are notoriously difficult to spot. A highlight of our visit will be the chance to encounter at least two of these hard-to-see antpitta species, thanks to a remarkable technique invented by an Ecuadorean farmer twenty-five years ago: by patiently offering mealworms, he established a bond of trust with these enormously wary birds. This “whispering” involves calling to the birds and offering food, a practice now in use across South America. As a result, the chances of actually seeing otherwise impossibly timid antpittas have dramatically increased.

At one particular “station,” Juan Carlos has been feeding more than one generation of Chestnut-crowned and endemic Brown-banded Antpittas. It is amazing to witness the close connection between Juan Carlos and these birds.

Meanwhile, another fruit feeding station nearby often hosts the fabulous Black-billed Mountain-Toucan as well as inquisitive Red-tailed Squirrels. Mixed flocks in the area may include Cinnamon Flycatcher, Mountain Cacique, Golden-fronted Redstart, Flammulated Treehunter, Mountain Wren, Black-capped Hemispingus, and the very localized Masked Saltator.



Brown-banded Antpitta © Doris Valencia

At noon, we'll enjoy a delicious lunch and a unique view of the city of Manizales. The main reserve building is nice and cozy, and the hummingbird feeders here are often visited by Bronzy and Collared incas, Speckled Hummingbird, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Buff-tailed Coronet, Long-tailed Sylph, and Purple-throated Woodstar. We will return to Manizales for dinner in the hotel restaurant, followed by a review of the bird list and an early bedtime to prepare for tomorrow's adventure.

NIGHT: Hotel Quo, Manizales



Buffy Helmetcrest © David Ascanino

June 8, Day 5: Los Nevados National Park

For a contrast of habitats, we will spend the day in Los Nevados National Park. We'll strike out from the hotel after breakfast, driving to the stunted wet forest at the lofty elevation of 13,350 feet.

Given the altitude, our pace today will be a leisurely one. Right at the main entrance of the park, with views of the volcano of Nevado del Ruiz, we have our best chances at seeing the remarkable Buffy Helmetcrest, a highly sought hummingbird restricted to the humid páramo grasslands of central Colombia. Officially classified as "vulnerable," the helmetcrest is often seen feeding at the flowers of *Espeletia schultzi*, where the birds tend to perch rather than hover, as is typical of high-elevation hummingbirds. We will also be looking for Brown-backed and Crowned Chat-Tyrants.

Along the way, we'll make stops in the páramo to seek out the unique White-browed Spinetail, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Pale-naped Brushfinch, and the elusive Páramo Tapaculo. The characteristic vegetation of this treeless high-elevation habitat includes tall grasses and giant rosette plants with an enormous number of leaves. Plants grow slowly here, and many of these páramo plants are of great age.

Perhaps the most striking of páramo plants are the members of the genus *Espeletia*, including the famous frailejones. Frailejones and its relatives store water from the clouds and fog and slowly release it into the environment, counteracting soil erosion. These plants account for most of the biomass of the páramo and are essential to the survival of several species. It is here in the páramo that we may find the Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Grass Wren, and possibly Viridian Metaltail.



Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager © David Ascanio

We'll also visit the colorful gardens of the Termales del Ruiz Hotel, where we'll hope to see stunning Scarlet-bellied and Lacrimose mountain-tanagers, Tawny Antpitta, and the wonderful Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. After a delicious lunch, we will return to our hotel, where the rest of the afternoon is free for rest and relaxation.

NIGHT: Hotel Quo, Manizales

June 9, Day 6: Hacienda El Bosque and Tinamu Reserve

Hacienda El Bosque is a traditional ranch in the mountains about 40 minutes from Manizales. Spanning 9,500—12,800 feet elevation, the area's diversity of habitats ranges

from cow pastures to extensive tracts of high Andean cloud forest and páramo, which have been protected for over 40 years. Today, the hacienda has been converted into a nature-focused destination, where fruit feeding stations and hummingbird feeders offer opportunities to observe some of the most elusive neotropical birds. We will arrive in time to enjoy some initial birding at the lodge feeders before making the short walk to the hummingbird feeding station, where we will see a mesmerizing collection of beautiful hummingbirds, with Sparkling Violetear, Tourmaline Sunangel, Shining Sunbeam, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Mountain Velvetbreast, and White-bellied Woodstar all likely.

In an echo of the Colombian Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia-Marquez's magical realism, today we will also experience one of the country's most enchanting birding phenomena: the antpitta whisperer of Hacienda El Bosque.

Here at the hacienda, the star of the show is the Crescent-faced Antpitta known as Lunita. She recognizes the voice of her whisperer, Christian, who has been faithfully feeding her for years. This antpitta is among the most seldom seen members of this elusive group, but here at Hacienda El Bosque, visitors have opportunities to observe and photograph this beautiful bird at close range.



Crescent-faced Antpitta © David Ascanio

Those of us who are feeling adventurous can also walk a moderately steep trail, with steps and a handrail, down to a nearby creek frequented by an Equatorial Antpitta. Other species found along this walk include Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant and Gray-browed Brushfinch.

The excitement continues with a visit to still another set of feeders, where Sickle-winged Guan, White-throated Quail-Dove, Barred Fruiteater, and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan have been spotted, a great place for both birders and photographers.

These feeding stations are located in wild areas, and because all the birds are wild, we cannot guarantee sightings of any of them. Our visit is timed to coincide with the best chances of seeing the most sought-after species.

We will return to Manizales with time to freshen up and check out of our hotel before lunch. A 45-minute drive in the mid-afternoon will take us to our next accommodation, the very comfortable Tinamu Reserve, where we should arrive in time to explore the gardens and trails in search of lower-elevation species such as Andean Motmot, Spectacled Parrotlet Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, and Scrub, Guira and Crimson-backed tanagers. The bird-feeding stations, blooming flowers, and hummingbird feeders attract an array of easily visible and photogenic species, making it an excellent setting for a relaxing afternoon. This evening, we will enjoy a delightful dinner at the lodge, featuring the local flavors of the coffee region.

NIGHT: Tinamu Reserve, Manizales

June 10, Day 7: Finca Romelia: birds and orchids

There's nothing like waking up to a chorus of bird calls. We will begin our day with a steaming cup of coffee and a hearty breakfast before setting out on a 30-minute drive to visit a very special host, Mr. José Fernando Londoño. A charming character, a keen birder, and above all a renowned orchid expert, Mr. Londoño will welcome us to his beautiful finca, Romelia. The bird diversity is outstanding here, and we can expect to see colorful tanagers, euphonias, orioles, and more. A moderate walk will be available for those who wish to explore further; for those who prefer not to walk, transportation to the lower part of the trail will be available. Along the way, we will search for specialties such as Spectacled Parrotlet, Striped Cuckoo, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Ultramarine Grosbeak, and many others.

The main house is a treasure unto itself, preserved by the family for generations. The antique furniture, historic photographs, and unique heirlooms transport you back in time. We will be particularly amazed at Mr. Londoño's spectacular orchid collection, comprising over 800 species in every imaginable color, shape, and even fragrance. Some smell as sweet as jasmine, while others mimic more unusual scents, like rotting fruit. Many of his orchids have won prestigious awards at international shows.

We will sit down to a delicious home-cooked lunch with Mr. Londoño and his family, enjoying warm hospitality, stories, and plenty of laughter. After this memorable morning and meal, we will return to our lodge. The afternoon will be a time to relax or explore the lodge's gardens and trails on your own. In the early evening, we'll gather for the daily bird checklist, followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Tinamu Reserve, Manizales

June 11, Day 8: Tinamu Reserve to Pereira

This will be a relaxing morning as we enjoy a hot cup of coffee and bird the lodge garden. Mixed flocks of tanagers, euphonias, honeycreepers, and more are common here. Noisy Colombian Chachalacas will be at the feeders, and other stations could have Black-chested Jay, Yellow-backed Oriole, Green Honeycreeper, Bronzewinged Parrot, and Black-capped, Guira, Scrub, Palm, and Hepatic tanagers. Along one of the lodge trails, we'll hope to encounter Golden-collared Manakins on their lek, Slaty Spinetail, Cinereous Becard, and others.



Golden-collared Manakin © Doris Valencia

After a last delicious lunch at the finca, we will visit a farm to learn more about the history of Colombia's famous coffee. At charming Finca Venezia, rich in history and natural beauty, we'll sample different varieties and gain a new appreciation for the coffee bean. Then we will start back to Pereira, where we will bid farewell to our new friends and to this stunning country. A farewell dinner will be followed by a final checklist session to review the day's sightings.

NIGHT: Hotel Sonesta Pereira, Pereira

June 12, Day 9: Departure for home

Participants may depart Pereira at any time today.

TATAMÁ NATIONAL PARK AND MONTEZUMA ROAD PRE-TRIP

MAY 31–JUNE 5, 2026



Gold-ringed Tanager © Doris Valencia

This optional pre-trip to our tour to Colombia's Coffee Belt explores the middle to upper elevations of Colombia's Western and Central Andes, from the city of Pereira to the remote reaches of Tatamá National Park.

Nestled within the wonderfully diverse Chocó bioregion, Tatamá National Park spans more than 128,000 acres of well-preserved west-Andean rainforest, cloud forest, and páramo ecosystems. Its geographic isolation and altitudinal variation make it a haven for endemic and near-endemic species. More than 600 species of birds have been recorded, including rare, range-restricted, and iconic species such as Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Collared Inca, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Gold-ringed and Black-and-gold tanagers, Olive Finch, and countless other species that reflect the area's incredible avian diversity.

The birding experience centers on the renowned Montezuma Road, a 6.85-mile stretch of lightly traveled road ascending from subtropical foothills at 4,255 feet to cloud forest and high páramo, reaching 8,530 feet at its highest point. The birding is done on foot along the road, which is open and walkable with gradual inclines. Feeders placed at key points offer excellent chances to observe birds as they emerge from the dense forest.

Our base for exploring the park is Montezuma Lodge—a fairly simple yet charming eco-lodge run by a family of entrepreneurial women—offering cozy accommodations, delicious home-cooked meals, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Located at the edge of the forest, the lodge is ideally positioned for easy access to birding sites. Situated at the convergence of Colombia’s famed Coffee Triangle, or Coffee Belt, the lodge also serves fresh, locally sourced coffee daily, the perfect start to misty mornings in the cloud forest.

With its exceptional species diversity, unspoiled habitats, and scenic highland landscapes, this tour offers an immersive experience in one of Colombia’s most significant conservation areas, a true highlight for birders and nature lovers alike.

May 31, Day 1: Arrival in Pereira

On arrival at Pereira Metecaña International Airport (airport code PEI), you will be met by a representative of our local ground team and transferred to the **Hotel Boutique Sazagua**, where a room has been reserved in your name. We will convene at 6:00 p.m. this evening with our fellow travelers and tour leaders for a trip welcome and introduction, followed by a lovely dinner.

Some participants may wish to arrive early in Pereira. On request, VENT will be happy to help in making hotel reservations for early arrivals.

NIGHT: Hotel Boutique Sazagua, Pereira

June 1, Day 2: Pereira to Cerro Montezuma

After a restful night and a delightful breakfast, we will spend the first part of the morning enjoying easy birding on the hotel grounds before embarking on our journey to Montezuma Road, one of Colombia's premier birding destinations. Located in the department of Risaralda at the edge of Tatamá National Park, in the Chocó bioregion, this area is only 60 miles northwest of Pereira. We will settle in to the conveniently located Montezuma Ecolodge and enjoy a lunch of local specialties. We will spend the next three nights in this lodge, which is run by three generations of women, under the leadership of Mrs. Michelle Tapasco.



Purple-bibbed Whitetip ©
Doris Valencia

The lodge's gardens are alive with hummingbirds feeding on flowers and at strategically located feeders. You'll be captivated by the sight of stunning hummers such as Violet-tailed Sylph, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Western and Andean emeralds, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, and Empress Brilliant, among many others. Fruit feeders attract an equally colorful array of barbets, oropendolas, and tanagers. The lodge's dining area adjoins a covered porch, the perfect vantage point to observe these beautiful creatures while enjoying your meal.

The range of elevations found in Tatamá National Park creates the conditions for a remarkable variety of bird species. Montezuma Road, the only route up Montezuma Hill, offers an unparalleled birding experience. After a mid-afternoon break, we will explore the grounds of our inn and bird the lower part of the dirt road, at an elevation of 4,430 feet. As we make our way through the gardens, we should encounter an array of vocal and colorful species such as Red-faced Spinetail, Red-bellied Grackle, and Andean and Western emeralds. White-necked Jacobin, a highly territorial gem of the cloud forest understory, is also commonly sighted here, as is Red-headed Barbet. In the evening, we will savor a tasty dinner, sampling local flavors.

NIGHT: Montezuma Rainforest Ecolodge, Pueblo Rico, Risaralda

June 2–3, Days 3–4: Cerro Montezuma

After a delicious morning cup of coffee or hot chocolate, we will ascend to the summit of Cerro Montezuma, renowned for its pristine cloud forests. We will enjoy a typical Colombian breakfast in the field.

The elevation in this part of Tatamá National Park ranges from 4,430 feet at our lodge to 8,350 feet at the peak of Cerro Montezuma. We will spend two days driving to roadside stops at various elevations and birding from there, with our vehicles always nearby. The number of stops and the time we spend at each will depend on our energy levels, bird activity, and weather.



Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer © Doris Valencia

One of our prime targets will be Dusky Starfrontlet, a rare and endangered hummingbird found only here and in one other tiny area. In all, over 400 species have been recorded along this road, including such notable birds as Bicolored Antwreio, Munchique Wood-Wren, and Greater Scythebill. The area is also home to a remarkable variety of tanagers, including endemic species such as Black-and-gold Tanager, the fabulous Gold-ringed Tanager, Crested Ant-Tanager, and the charming Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer. In addition to birdlife, the region boasts an astounding diversity of orchids, butterflies, and other organisms, adding to the richness of the experience.

NIGHTS: Montezuma Rainforest Ecolodge, Pueblo Rico, Risaralda

June 4, Day 5: Montezuma Rainforest Ecolodge; return to Pereira

After a delicious local coffee, we will spend the first hours of the morning searching the lodge clearing for any birds we may have missed and getting second looks at some of the species we will have come to be more familiar with. Over breakfast, we will also enjoy the hummingbird feeders and other feeding stations. The lodge's fishpond can be a good place for rails. On a sunny morning, it is not uncommon to see a Barred Hawk or a Black-and-chestnut Eagle, master of the cloud forest skies, soaring overhead.

We will check out of our rooms in the mid-morning, then set out on the scenic drive back to Pereira. Along the way, we will enjoy a traditional lunch in one of the charming local communities along the highway. We will arrive at **Hotel Boutique Sazagua** in the late afternoon, where a room has been reserved in your name.

Those continuing on to the main tour will have time to relax before gathering this evening with newly arrived participants to start the main tour.

Airport transfers will be provided for those leaving on international flights tonight.

June 5, Day 6: Departure for home

Participants not joining the main tour may depart for home any time today.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: The main tour and the optional pre-trip are each limited to 10 tour participants.

TOUR LEADER(s): This tour is led by **Doris Valencia** and **Laura Rubio**.



Doris Valencia is a keen Peruvian birder and naturalist. She was born in Cusco, the capital of the Incas. Her passion for the outdoors and birding has its roots in her childhood. She spent her early years in the Madre de Dios region (southern Amazon) where her parents managed an eco-lodge. Doris leads birding trips throughout Perú and Colombia and is expanding to Ecuador. She unites great birding skills with a wide-ranging knowledge in all aspects of natural history. She is also an avid student of Peruvian history. Her lectures on the history of Machu Picchu are superb. Doris is the director of the Pacha Conservancy Project, which works with reforestation, outdoor education, research, and community outreach in the fragile cloud forest north of Cusco-Perú. She is also an entrepreneur and has been working to promote women in the tourism industry as guides and naturalists, especially from the communities that surround important bird areas.



Laura Rubio is a biologist with 15 years of experience working with wildlife across Colombia. As an ornithologist, she has participated in projects focused on migratory birds in the cloud forests of the Western Andes and on urban ecology around Medellín. For the past five years, she has been working as a birding guide in the central and western Andes of Colombia. Laura is also the founder of her own NGO, where she oversees environmental education projects around Medellín, including a notable initiative on snake bite prevention. She has a deep passion for outdoor activities, plants, and nature in general.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: The fee for the main tour is **\$4,665** per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes alcoholic beverages, 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.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: If you request single accommodations, a single supplement of **\$550** will be added to your tour fee.

The fee for the pre-trip is **\$2,555** per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on Day 4, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes alcoholic beverages, 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.

If you request single accommodation, a single supplement of **\$500** will be added to your tour fee.

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. A second deposit of **30% of the main tour fee** is due 180 days prior to departure (December 6, 2025). A second deposit of **30% of the pre-tour fee** is due 180 days prior to departure (December 2, 2025). 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 main tour fee is due 120 days (February 4, 2026) prior to the tour departure date. Full payment of the pre-trip tour fee is due 120 days (January 31, 2026) prior to the 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 on 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 luggage to one medium-size bag 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 valid passport is required. Please check the expiration date on your passport. **If it is not valid beyond your trip return date, you will need to get it renewed.** You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps.

If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States, this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk's office. You may also visit <https://state.gov/travelers/> for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport and keep the photocopies in a safe place, so that if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage.**

VISAS: Citizens of the United States and Canada are not required to obtain a visa for entry into Colombia. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: The physical environment of this trip ranges from humid lowland forest to upper montane forest (cloud forest and elfin forest) and páramo (vegetation well above treeline). The days will vary from cold to hot, with little rain expected. Light field clothing (for the lowlands), a good jacket and wind breaker (for the highlands, where the temperature can drop to 45° Fahrenheit in the early morning), and casual attire are suitable for this trip. The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** A couple of pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is also acceptable.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and long-sleeved shirts made of lightweight, durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular. These provide useful protection from the sun and occasional biting insects.
- **Shirts:** Two or three long-sleeved shirts, in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm and cold weather. We do not recommend short-sleeved shirts, as they offer no protection from biting insects or the sun.
- **Hat:** A hat, particularly of a wide-brimmed style, for protection from the sun is essential. Please bring a baseball-style cap at the very least. A warm wool or fleece hat will also be necessary.
- **Outerwear:** Warm and cold weather is anticipated on this trip. A sweater or light down jacket and wind breaker will come in handy for the morning approach to the highlands and for the evenings. In the event of unexpected rain, you'll want to have a water-repellent jacket and an umbrella.
- **Swimsuit:** The Boutique Hotel Sazagua and the Hotel Sonesta Pereira have swimming pools.

FOOTWEAR: We recommend a good trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot for the field. Athletic shoes aren't recommended for our birding locations, but a lighter shoe, like an athletic shoe, will come in handy when relaxing around the lodges and hotels.

EQUIPMENT: The following items will come in handy during your trip to Colombia:

- **Backpack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, optical equipment, etc.

- **Notebooks and pens or tablet**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick** – Highly recommended for those who have trouble walking
- **Umbrella** – A small collapsible umbrella can be indispensable should we be caught on the trail in the rain.
- **Refillable wide-mouth water bottle**
- **Tissue packs**
- **Small flashlight or headlamp** (important, given the lack of reading lamps in some hotels and lodges)
- **Small folding stool** – Many people find this extremely useful when patiently waiting for shy forest birds.

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 & WEATHER: Weather conditions can be variable on this trip due to the range of elevations visited. In Manizales, the temperature varies from 75° (daytime) to 65° F (nighttime). In the field, we will experience a variety of temperatures and humidity, ranging from about 35° F (at dawn in the high Andes) to 59° Fahrenheit (in most Andean locations). Although we will be visiting the Andes during the dry season, please be aware

that because Colombia sits so close to the equator, rainier and drier periods are not well defined, and rain and wet or muddy conditions and muddy and slippery trails can be encountered at any time of the year; we advise you to bring an umbrella and/or rain jacket. Rubber boots are not necessary, but you should have sturdy trail shoes or hiking boots.

The morning at treeline on Nevado del Ruiz may be quite damp and cold (perhaps also with fog), and you should bring a warm jacket with a fleece layer (or vest) underneath, a warm hat and gloves, and a rain jacket large enough to slip on over your jacket. Temperatures on Nevado del Ruiz may be in the mid- to high 30s or low 40s F, although some mornings are considerably warmer. All other areas will be warmer, but nights can be cool, and mornings at most sites will probably be cool enough to require a light jacket. You may want to bring a lightweight jacket with you during some day hikes as well.

CONDITIONS: This tour ranges in elevation from 4,270 feet at Tinamu Birding Nature Reserve to 12,000 feet at Los Nevados National Park. Elevations of specific sites: Pereira: 4,630; Manizales: 7,100 feet; Reserva Ecológica Río Blanco at Owl's Watch: 7,000–8,630 feet; Hacienda El Bosque: 9,000–9,600 feet; Hacienda Venecia and La Romelia Orchid Garden: 4,320 feet; Demostrativa Don Miguel: 4,870 feet; Finca Romelia: 4,430 feet.

Daily schedule

To take advantage of the best time for avian activity, we will make early departures most days, but not at the crack of dawn. On some days, breakfast and lunch will be taken at the hotel, and on other days at our birding locations. We are planning on a break in early to mid-afternoon on most days. Following the afternoon break, we will reconvene for a short birding walk around the hotel or nearby.

At some locations, we will walk to bird feeders; there is one steep but optional walk, equivalent to five flights of stairs, down to the antpitta feeder at Hacienda El Bosque. At other locations, most of our birding will be on slightly inclined but still walkable terrain. In some places, such as Nevado del Ruiz, some of our birding will be along the road or on short trails through páramo habitat. At such high elevation, walks will be optional, and we will focus mostly on standing in places where the chances of seeing the target species are good. Lengthy or steep walks will be avoided. During the visit to Tinamu Lodge and the full day in Parque Natural Los Nevados, expect steps, roots, rocks, and other uneven terrain; participants must be able to negotiate these without assistance and at a normal birding pace. Overall, physical demands range from light to moderate.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: Your tour to Colombia includes all necessary expenses. The official currency of Colombia is the Colombian Peso (COP). Credit cards are widely used, but you are likely to find cash more convenient for drinks, stamps, laundry, and other

small personal expenses. Some shops accept major credit cards, while cash is the rule of many smaller vendors. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. US Dollars are widely accepted, but please be advised that bills showing faded numbers or even a small tear won't be accepted. VENT recommends acquiring local currency before leaving home, or at the airport upon arrival in Colombia.

You can check the latest conversion rate at <http://www.xe.com/>.

ELECTRICITY: Electrical plugs in Colombia are usually of the two-flat-pin type (same as in USA), and electrical current is 110 volts in virtually all areas (always check first, as 220 to 240 volts may be found in a few areas). Adapters are not needed in most cases, but we recommend bringing one anyway in the unlikely event that a particular plug or appliance does not fit the socket.

INTERNET ACCESS: Colombia is one of the most “wired” countries in South America, and most hotels and lodges have internet access and Wi-Fi (at least in the lobby, if not in the rooms).

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the primary language spoken in Colombia. The staff at some hotels and lodges speak English.

TIME: Colombia is on Colombia Time (COT). At the date of this tour, COT is one hour behind Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available on a charge-per-item basis at Quo Hotel. Items dropped off in the morning at the front desk are usually returned late the same afternoon.

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 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.

FOOD AND WATER: Drink only the water provided in dining rooms or the bottled water in your hotel room. Do not drink water out of the faucets. Food is safe to eat, except for fresh lettuce and other fresh raw vegetables. Your leaders will provide guidance before each meal.

BITING INSECTS: Mosquitoes and other small biting insects can sometimes be a nuisance in Colombia, especially in forested areas. Chiggers are restricted to grassy areas, and we will avoid walking in such areas. We suggest a stick-type repellent for your face and hands, plus a pump-style container of repellent for your clothing. Before using the pump-style container, please be sure that you are away from fellow birders and other equipment, as DEET can cause severe damage to the coating and finish of binoculars, scopes, and camera lenses.

Tropical diseases – A variety of mosquito-borne diseases occur in Colombia, including malaria, yellow fever, and dengue. None of these diseases is common, especially in the areas our trip will visit; the chance of contracting any of these diseases is low to extremely low. Proper prevention against mosquito bites includes always wearing pants and long-sleeved shirts and applying insect repellent as needed. Please consult your physician for more information and advice.

Malaria – Malaria, including the chloroquine-resistant strain, has been confirmed in rural areas of Colombia. However, this disease is not considered a threat in locations above 5,600 feet, where our tour will largely operate. We will be below that elevation around Pereira, but only for a limited amount of time. As the chances for infection are very low, VENT does not feel that an anti-malarial regimen is necessary for this tour. Please consult your physician for advice.

Yellow fever - While not a requirement for entry into Colombia (unless you are arriving from an infected area in another country), VENT generally recommends a yellow fever vaccination as a standard travel precaution. For most people, the single-shot vaccination confers lifetime protection. Please consult with your physician for specific information related to your health (for example, if you are immune compromised).

Typhoid – VENT strongly recommends vaccination against typhoid, a bacterial disease that occurs in Colombia. Caused by *Salmonella typhi*, typhoid, or typhoid fever, is contracted by consuming contaminated food and water, typically when someone who is infected uses the bathroom and does not wash their hands. Symptoms may include high fever, weakness, stomach pain, headache, diarrhea or constipation, cough, and loss of appetite.

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 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 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. 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.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Colombia*. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2021.

The most important field guide for this trip. However, it is in short supply and is pricey!

Forward-looking taxonomy includes all species and subspecies groups (as in eBird/Clements checklist). Illustrations are taken from the 16-volume *Handbook of Birds of the World* (Lynx), with many updates and additions. All species, subspecies, and subspecies groups are illustrated and mapped. Unique for South America, this book contains a QR code for every species, which allows users to quickly link via mobile phone to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *Birds of the World* website and listen to vocalizations, view photos, and read expanded text; it is almost like having an app embedded in the book (Colombia has remarkably good cellular coverage, so this feature is usable almost everywhere). The flex-back edition is recommended for travel, although it has been out of stock for some time. The hardback version, however, is available through the publisher, Lynx Edicions, and at a lower price than on Amazon.

Ayerbe Quiñones, Fernando. *Birds of Colombia*. Wildlife Conservation Society, 2019.

An excellent alternative to the Hilty guide. Small and compact, with fine, well-organized computer-generated illustrations; a detailed map with color-coded subspecies distributions accompanies each species. No text but has comments pertaining to each genus. Lacks a useful index (orders, families, and genera, but no English names). Small size and accurate illustrations make this book very useful in the field, but it is printed on low-quality paper, which is easily damaged by moisture (always carry it inside a plastic bag and do not let the book get wet). Now shown as available on Amazon. There is also a Spanish-language edition (2018).

BIRDING RESOURCES AND GENERAL NATURE:

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 needs to 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 **Colombia: Andes** or **Colombia: All**. Highly recommended.

Birds of the World. "Discover the world of birds" through the Lab's Birds of the World online resource, offering comprehensive life histories for all bird species and families. Visit the [Birds of the World website](#), where for any bird you can learn about its appearance, distribution, diet, behavior, and more. Free samples are available at the home page, and subscriptions are available at monthly, annual, and three-year levels. **Highly recommended.**

Mammals

Emmons, Louise H. **Neotropical Rainforest Mammals**. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Natural History Resources: The following titles are classics of modern popular science. Easy to read, easy to understand, and always entertaining, these books are written for the experienced naturalist and layman alike. Highly recommended.

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding, and Diversity*. University of Texas Press, 2005.

Highly recommended background information on how things work in bird communities at tropical latitudes; topics include the diversity of birds, hummingbird communities, mixed species flocks, antbirds and army ants, colorfulness, song structure in relation to environments, and much more.

Forsyth, Adrian, and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America*. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1984.

Does not deal much with birds, but a fantastic introduction to all kinds of tropical wildlife, including bugs, frogs, plant strategies, botflies, and much more. Extraordinarily well written. Excellent introductory reading.

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 September 25, 2025 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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