



CAE 2452

fly & drive

BIRDWATCHING IN COSTA RICA

15 days / 14 nights

If you are a bird lover, this is the tour for you! Although Costa Rica is a small country, its bird list is huge, with over 900 species between resident and migrant birds on offer. Travel around Costa Rica's birding hotspots and discover as much as bird species you can. Within relatively short distances, get to know very diverse habitats from sea level to high mountains with cloud forest. On the way, you will also be able to enjoy the fantastic landscapes and the nature these destinations have to offer. All this, by driving at your own pace, enjoying the freedom and ease of doing so.

DAY 1 ARRIVAL IN COSTA RICA – HEREDIA

Upon your arrival in Costa Rica, you will be welcomed by our English-speaking airport guide, he/she will hand you over your documents and be available for any questions you may have. Afterwards, seat-in transfer to your hotel in Heredia, where you spend the first night. If you arrive before sunset, explore the hotel's beautiful garden and try to recognize as many birds as possible. Enjoy your first night in Costa Rica and get ready for an unforgettable experience. Overnight at the Hotel Bougainvillea***(*), Garden View.

Emblematic birds: Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus lessonii*), Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*), Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevastii*), White-naped Brush-finch (*Atlapetes albinucha*)

Other important species: Guanacaste tree (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*), Cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*), Bromeliads (*Bromeliaceae*), Forrers Leopard frog (*Lithobates forreri*), Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*)

DAY 2 HEREDIA – SAN GERARDO DE DOTA

Breakfast at the hotel. Early in the morning, you can enjoy the hotel's beautiful gardens and observe the birds during one of the most active times of the day. Afterwards pick-up of your rental car, you need a credit card (Visa, Mastercard or American Express) and your valid national driving licence. Then you travel south, through the capital of Costa Rica, San José, towards San Gerardo de Dota. On the way, you can stop at Los Quetzales National Park for an optional hike (not included) or go straight to your hotel and over there take advantage of its hiking trails that are perfect for birding. San Gerardo de Dota is a small community in the Talamanca Mountain Range that offers access to oaks, colourful plants, and an incredible variety of animal life. This is one of the best places in the world to spot the spectacular Resplendent Quetzal. Besides, here you can also encounter many endemic species, which means that you can find birds that don't exist anywhere else on Earth. Please keep in mind that it can be quite chilly at night. It would be wise to bring warm clothes, as well as waterproof wear or a poncho when hiking, in order to cope with the humid weather predominant in the area. On the culinary level, we recommend you to try out trout, which is one of the recommended foods produced in this area. Overnight at the Savegre Lodge*** (B)

Emblematic birds: Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*), King-tailed Silky-flycatcher (*Ptilonotus caudatus*), Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*), Highland Tinamou (*Nothocercus bonapartei*)

Other important species: Tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), Black Oak (*Quercus costarricensis*), White Oak (*Quercus copeyensis*), Montane Alligator Lizard (*Mesaspis monticola*), Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*), White Orchid (*Sobralia leucoxantha*)

PRICE PER PERSON EN DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

Base 2 Pax EUR 1.873.-

Base 3 Pax EUR 1.864.-

Base 4 Pax EUR 1.759.-

SURPLUS April EUR 250.-

SURPLUS SINGLE ROOM EUR 859.-

DISCOUNT TRIPLE ROOM EUR -154.-

2024

DEPARTURES ON REQUEST MARCH THROUGH OCTOBER

Upon request, you can choose any other day of the week to start the program. Please send us an E-mail or call us to check your dates for availability.. And if you have a group, we will be very happy to send you a special offer with bus or rental cars.

INCLUDED SERVICES

- ✓ 14 nights in Heredia, San Gerardo de Dota, Turrialba, Sarapiquí, Boca Tapada, La Fortuna, Rincon de la Vieja, Carara, and San Jose
- ✓ 14 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- ✓ Standard seat-in transfer from the airport to your city hotel
- ✓ - Overnight stay at the mentioned hotels or similar in rooms with private bathroom
- ✓ - Meals as per description
- ✓ - Rental car with basic insurance as follows:
- ✓ * 1-3 pax: MID Size 4WD / IFMR or IFAR (Suzuki Vitara 4WD Manual (IFMR) or Automatic (IFAR) or similar)
- ✓ * 4 pax: Standard 4WD / SFMR or SFAR (Suzuki Grand Vitara 4WD Manual (SFMR) or Automatic (SFAR) or similar)
- ✓ * Pick-up: Day 2, Hotel Bougainvillea
- ✓ * Drop-off: Day 14, Alamo Rent A Car office in San Antonio de Belén, from where you take a shuttle to the airport
- ✓ - Bird list of Costa Rica
- ✓ 24 h. support via Whatsapp

NOT INCLUDED

- ❖ International flight
- ❖ Departure tax in Costa Rica USD 29)
- ❖ Further services for the rental car (insurances except for basic insurance, GPS, Drive Relaxed Package, fuel, highway tolls etc.)
- ❖ Parking fees at the hotels and visits
- ❖ Additional tours
- ❖ Personal expenses
- ❖ Tip for drivers, guides and porters
- ❖ Meals not mentioned in the program





DAY 3 SAN GERARDO DE DOTA

Breakfast at the hotel. Savegre Lodge is surrounded by a spectacular cloud forest, offering fantastic scenery and great bird photography opportunities. You could not be in a better place, especially if you are one of those hoping to catch a glimpse of the iconic bird playing such an indisputable role in the Mesoamerican mythology: the Resplendent Quetzal. The reserve has at least 30 km of walking trails, carefully designed to fulfil the interests and physical capabilities of all visitors; a good half of these trails lead through primary forest. There are tours and activities for nature watching enthusiasts, and all in all, this is a place full of sensory stimuli: On soft soils you walk through the mystic cloud forest, with your eyes closed you listen to the birdsong and with some luck you might spot some of those perfectly camouflaged, amazing mimetic insects hiding on the tree barks. Some optional tours you could also consider for today are the following, all of them can be booked on spot on a seat-in basis from 1-5 participants: Quetzal tour, full-day birdwatching-tour, half-day birdwatching-tour (also on a private basis available), horseback riding tour, visiting the Savegre Waterfall. Overnight at Overnight at the Savegre Lodge*** (B)

DAY 4 SAN GERARDO DE DOTA - TURRIALBA

Breakfast at the hotel. During the day, travel through Cartago towards Turrialba, famous for its white soft cheese. On the way, you will also pass through small towns that can show you the country lifestyle in this part of Costa Rica and its beautiful landscapes. Your hotel today is specialized in birdwatching experiences, it is also known for its culinary dishes, handmade way and with fresh ingredients. Here you will combine a relaxed and familiar ambience with the sounds of the

birds and the beautiful gardens. Overnight at Rancho Naturalista**(*) (B) (D)

Emblematic birds: *Snowcap (Microchera albocoronata)*, *Tawny-chested Flycatcher (Aphanotriccus capitalis)*, *Purplish-backed Quail-Dove (Zentrygon lawrencii)*, *White-crowned Manakin (Dixiphia pipra)*

Other important species: *White-nosed Coati (Nasua narica)*, *Northern racoon (Procyon lotor)*, *Brazilian Free-tailed Bat (Tadarida brasiliensis)*

DAY 5 TURRIALBA

Breakfast at the hotel. The hotel has a private reserve with trails at your disposal waiting to be discovered. Additionally, you can organize a private early morning bird watching tour with a local English-speaking guide and, along with him/her, explore various trails looking for the over 450 species of birds that have been recorded in the area (not included). The gardens at Rancho Naturalista are renowned for attracting many species of Hummingbirds, such as: *Violet-crowned Woodnymph (Thalurania colombica)*, *White-necked Jacobin (Florisuga mellivora)*, *Green Hermit (Phaethornis guy)*, *Green Thorntail (Discosura conversii)*, *Violet Sabrewing (Campylopterus hemileucurus)*, *Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer (Chalybura urochrysia)* and *Green-crowned Brilliant (Heliodoxa jacula)*. On the Verbena Hedges at Rancho Naturalista, the *Snowcap* is a frequent visitor, along with the *Black-crested Coquette (Lophornis helenae)* and the *Violet-headed Hummingbird (Klais guimeti)*.

Other activities you can consider while staying in this region (at an additional price to be paid on the spot): Morning or afternoon bird tour, cultural tours (Sugar mill tour, Spanish lessons, dancing lessons, painting class, cooking class), adventure tours (Swim in a mountain stream, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, canyoning and zip-lining). Overnight at Rancho Naturalista**(*) (B)

DAY 6 TURRIALBA - SARAPIQUI

Breakfast at the hotel. Enjoy the morning in Turrialba and, after lunch here, continue the trip to the area of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. On the way, you are going to be able to observe different plantations, such as oranges, coconut, yucca, macadamia nuts, papaya and especially pineapple. Sarapiquí is a famous place for bird watchers, 54 % of all native bird species call this region their home. Accommodation here is at a lodge that for decades has attracted birdwatchers from all over the world. Overnight at La Quinta de Sarapiquí*** (B) (L)





Emblematic birds: Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*), Sunbittern (*Eurypyga helias*), Snowy Cotinga (*Carpodectes nitidus*), Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*)

Other important species: Red-eyed Tree Frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*), Brown Two-toed Sloth (*Choloepus hoffmanni*), Black Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliata*), Mountain Almond Tree (*Dipteryx panamensis*), Blue Jeans Poison Frog (*Oophaga pumilio*)

DAY 7 SARAPIQUI

Breakfast at the hotel. Today we recommend a morning hike on the lodge's trails or a visit to the Tirimbina Reserve with its famous hanging bridges (at an additional cost) during the morning. As a non-profit organization, the Tirimbina Reserve protects the rainforest and promotes conservation. In this humid tropical forest, influenced by the Caribbean climate, there are both endemic birds and migrating birds that are found in September and October. Other possible activities to be done in Sarapiquí are the following (at an additional price):

- A guided chocolate tour at the Tirimbina reserve, where you can get to know everything about the process of making chocolate out of the cacao seeds.
- A visit to the Ecofarm Finca Surá will get you closer to the local population, and you can also learn a lot about cultivating different products in total harmony with nature.
- In the region, there are some adventure activities, such as rafting, horseback riding, mountain biking, or hiking, a night hike and more!
- During the afternoon, you can also relax at the lodge, or go on another hike on your own through the paths of the hotels' reserve. Overnight at La Quinta de Sarapiquí*** (B)

DAY 8 SARAPIQUI – BOCA TAPADA

Breakfast at the hotel: Today we continue to Boca Tapada, a place off the beaten track. This remote region on the Río San Carlos is located in the far north of the country, close to the border with Nicaragua. Here, life proceeds in a quiet way and in harmony with nature. Your Eco Lodge offers a private reserve where you can explore the hiking trails and the beautiful wildlife of this tropical forest on your own. Overnight at Laguna del Lagarto Lodge** (B)

Emblematic birds: Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*), Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*), Ocellated Antbird (*Phaenostictus mcleannani*), Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*), Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*)

Other important species: White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*), White-faced Monkey (*Cebus capucinus*), Kapok Tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), Green Basilisk (*Basiliscus plumifrons*)

DAY 9 BOCA TAPADA

Breakfast at the hotel. Explore the banks of the San Carlos River by boat. Your experienced captain will show you the fauna of the zone: crocodiles, green basilisk lizards, turtles and many water birds. The boat travels along the river to the border with Nicaragua. Here you can get off to explore the remote town of Boca San Carlos. Overnight at Laguna del Lagarto Lodge** (B)

DAY 10 BOCA TAPADA – LA FORTUNA/ARENAL

Breakfast at the hotel. Today, your journey continues to La Fortuna, known for its famous Arenal Volcano. Although it has not been active since 2012, it still has a fascinating presence. You can enjoy the hotel's pool and jacuzzi, as well as the 800-metre approach through gardens and rainforest and about 11 km of well-maintained hiking trails. Many interesting and optional activities are offered in and around La Fortuna such as relaxing in one of the numerous hot springs, hiking over cooled lava fields in Arenal National Park, adventurous walks over suspension bridges, mountain bike tours, horseback riding, rafting, hiking or horseback tour to La Fortuna Waterfall, an adrenaline canopy tour or a boat trip through the Caño Negro wildlife reserve to observe crocodiles, monkeys, sloths and birds. Overnight at Arenal Observatory Lodge***(*) (B)

Emblematic birds: Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*), Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*), Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*), Passerini's Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*), Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*)

Other important species: Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliata*), White-faced Monkeys (*Cebus capucinus*), Chestnut-mandibled Toucan (*Ramphastos ambiguus*), Coati (*Nasua narica*)





DAY 11 LA FORTUNA/ARENAL – RINCON DE LA VIEJA

Breakfast at the hotel, In the early morning, enjoy the daily guided hike on the trails of the Arenal Observatory Lodge with a local nature guide, included in the price. It starts every morning at 08:30 at the reception and lasts about 2.5 hours. The hike takes you over suspension bridges, through lush tropical gardens and into primary and secondary rainforest. Your guide will show you the wildlife along the way and explain the plants and trees of the tropical rainforest. Your destination is the beautiful jungle waterfall of the Danta River. The walk ends at the cattle pastures, from where the lodge's open Jungle Bus will take you back to the hotel. Possible wildlife you may see en route includes more than 400 species of birds, howler monkeys, capuchin monkeys, coatis, anteaters, sloths, green iguanas, snakes and insects. Afterwards, you will drive to the area of the Rincón de la Vieja volcano, which is located in the province of Guanacaste, just north of the provincial capital of Liberia. 14'200 hectares of the area are protected by the Rincón de la Vieja National Park, which also includes the volcano of the same name with its manifestations such as fumaroles, lagoons and mudholes as main attractions. Overnight at Hacienda Guachipelin*** (B)

Emblematic birds: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), Great Egret (*Ardea alba*), Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

Other important species: Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*), White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Peccary (*Pecari tajacu*), Palo Verde Tree (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), Real Guayacan Tree (*Guaicum sanctum*), Pochote Tree (*Bombacopsis quinata*)

DAY 12 RINCON DE LA VIEJA

Breakfast at the hotel. Today is at your leisure. Your hotel offers many optional tours, such as ziplining, horseback riding, hot springs or hiking (not included). Otherwise, you can explore the famous Rincón de la Vieja National Park and observe some volcanic phenomena hiding in the tropical dry forest. Overnight at Hacienda Guachipelin*** (B)

DAY 13 RINCON DE LA VIEJA - CARARA

During the day, you will continue your journey to the Central Pacific. On the way, you can stop at the Tárcoles Bridge, famous for the large crocodiles that bask in the riverbed (beware of fast passing vehicles). Your hotel is close to Carara National Park (entrance fee to be paid on the spot), a wonderful, peaceful place of unspoilt nature that protects one of the last transitional forests between tropical dry and tropical wet forest. Carara is one of the best birding spots in all of Costa Rica. Fiery-billed aracaris and Swainson's toucans are common in this region. Scarlet macaw parrots can also be seen in flight, moving daily between the interior wet forest and the coastal mangrove swamps. Overnight at Macaw Lodge**(*) (B) (D)

Emblematic birds: Fiery-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus frantzii*), Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*), Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*)

Other important species: Common Basilisk (*Basiliscus basiliscus*), Boa Constrictor (*Boa constrictor*), Blue Morpho Butterfly (*Morpho peleides*)

DAY 14 CARARA

Enjoy the surroundings, you may want to take a morning walk before breakfast. Afterwards, we recommend a visit to the waterfalls on the hotel grounds, where you can enjoy a refreshing swim and admire the beautiful forest all around. In the afternoon, you can arrange an optional boat tour through the Guacalillo mangroves (not included), which are considered the most biodiverse on the Pacific coast. The Guacalillo Estuary and the Tárcoles River offer the opportunity to observe one of the largest crocodile colonies and the most important nature reserve in the world for the bright red macaw parrot. Its colours of bright red, orange, blue and yellow and its long tail and pointed wings make it easy to spot as it flies over the boat, and it can also be heard from afar from the tops of the mangroves. This ecosystem provides an important area for mating and nesting for many bird species, and shelter for mammals and reptiles. Overnight at Macaw Lodge**(*) (B) (D)

DAY 15 CARARA – SAN JOSE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Breakfast at the hotel. Depending on the departure time of your flight, you will drive to the Central Valley. You will drop off your rental car in San Antonio de Belén and then be taken by shuttle to the check-in at the international airport. If your flight leaves early in the morning, we recommend an extra night in San José. Have a good trip back home! End of our services. (B)

