



## EJE CAFETERO BIRDING TOUR – 7Days/6nights

### Day 0: Arrival & Welcome to Salento

Your journey begins in the heart of the Coffee Triangle. Upon arriving at the Armenia (AXM) or Pereira (PEI) airport, our private transport will whisk you away to the charming, colorful town of Salento. Nestled into the lower slopes of the Central Andes, Salento serves as our scenic base camp for the first part of the expedition. In the evening, we will gather for a welcome dinner and a briefing to discuss our targets and logistics for the incredible week ahead.

- *Please note: This is an arrival and rest day; no official guiding services or field meals are scheduled.*
- **Overnight:** Hotel Salento Mirador

### Day 1: La Carbonera | The Lost Sanctuary of the Yellow-eared Parrot

We leave the standard tourist trails behind and ascend into the high-Andean cloud forests of La Carbonera via 4x4 vehicles. This hidden gem holds the largest and most pristine stands of Wax Palms (*Ceroxylon quindiuense*) on the planet, vastly superior and quieter than the crowded pastures of Cocora. Our ultimate prize here is the endangered **Yellow-eared Parrot**, a species that relies entirely on these towering palms for nesting. As we bird along the quiet mountain roads, we will also keep our eyes peeled for spectacular mixed flocks.

- **Key Targets:** Yellow-eared Parrot, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Golden-crested Quetzal, Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Orange-rumped Euphonia, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Powerful Woodpecker Collared and Masked Trogons, and Black-billed Mountain-Toucan.
- **Overnight:** Hotel Salento Mirador

### Day 2: Boquía, Santa Rita & Authentic Coffee Culture | Rivers & Forest Relics

Today we dive into the diverse landscapes right on Salento's doorstep, seamlessly blending elite birding with the region's rich cultural heritage. We begin the morning along the rushing waters of the Quindío River in Boquía, scanning the mossy boulders for specialized river species. From there, we venture into the lush, native forest relics of the Santa Rita nature reserve, walking trails that offer fantastic visibility for colorful sub-Andean tanagers, trogons, and toucanets.

In the afternoon, we transition from the canopy to the crops. We will visit an authentic local coffee plantation for a premium, hands-on specialty coffee tour. You will walk among the fields to learn about the traditional cultivation, harvesting, and artisanal processing methods that make Colombian coffee world-famous, concluding, of course, with a private tasting session of the finest local beans.

- **Key Targets:** Torrent Duck, Crested-Ant Tanager(E), Parker's Antbird(E), White-capped Dipper, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Golden Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Fawn-breasted Tanager,



Metallic-green Tanager, Grayish Piculet(E), Bronzed-winged Parrot, Speckle-faced Parrot, Blue-headed Parrot, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet and Andean Motmot.

- **Overnight:** Hotel Salento Mirador

### **Day 3: Finca Cortaderal & Embalse Comeguadua**

We pack up early for a spectacular dual-ecosystem day as we bridge the gap between Quindío and Caldas. Our morning begins high up at Finca Cortaderal, an incredible hotspot of high-Andean temperate forest. Here, we search for one of Colombia's rarest, most localized gems: the critically endangered **Fuertes's Parrot**. After a morning of high-altitude forest birding, we drop down into the warm valleys to explore Embalse Comeguadua. This sprawling reservoir introduces an entirely new world of aquatic birds, herons, and lakeside specialists to heavily diversify our trip list before we head up to Manizales for the night.

**Key Targets:** Indigo-winged Parrot, Greyish Piculet, Black-headed Hemispingus, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Red-crested Cotinga, Andean Pygmy-owl, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Blackish Rail, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Least Grebe, Yellow-hooded Blackbird.

- **Overnight:** Hotel Termales del Ruiz

### **Day 4: Nevado del Ruiz | Birding the Roof of the Andes**

We ascend into a completely different world today as we reach the breathtaking páramo and elfin forests of Los Nevados National Natural Park, climbing to the 4.150m.a.s.l. The stark, dramatic landscape of frailejones and volcanic peaks is home to highly specialized, high-altitude avifauna. We will visit specialized feeder setups where glittering, cold-hardy hummingbirds hover just inches away, and scan the rocky canyons for the majestic ruler of the Andean skies.

The highlight of our afternoon is an exclusive visit to **Termales del Ruiz**. This premium mountain lodge features world-famous, specialized nectar feeders where glittering, cold-hardy hummingbirds hover just inches from your lens, offering unparalleled photography opportunities. To top off an incredible day in the high Andes, you can relax alongside the natural, volcanic thermal pools heated by the volcano itself before we head back to Manizales for the night.

- **Key Targets:** Buffy Helmetcrest (endemic), Great Sapphirewing, Golden-crowned Tanager, Black-backed Bush-Tanager, Tawny Antpitta, Crowned Chat-Tyrant, Many-striped Canastero, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill.
- **Overnight:** Rio Blanco Ecolodge

### **Day 5: Río Blanco Reserve | Nocturnal Owling Session**

Río Blanco is legendary among birders worldwide. This cloud forest reserve protects the watershed of Manizales and acts as a fortress for some of the most elusive deep-forest species. We will participate in the reserve's famous morning feeding session, where wild, secretive Antpittas hop out of the dense bamboo right into the open for earthworms. The rest of the day is spent walking the



forest tracks, targeting rare mountain-toucans, saltators, and an overwhelming variety of hummingbirds at the garden feeders.

As dusk falls, we check into the cozy on-site lodge for a traditional dinner. Afterward, we venture back out into the mist-shrouded trails for an exclusive **night-birding session**, using playback to track down iconic nocturnal specialties right on their breeding grounds.

- **Key Targets:** Brown-banded Antpitta (endemic), Bicolored Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Slate-crowned Antpitta, Masked Saltator, Pink-billed Cnemoscopus, Buff-banded Mountain Tanager, Plushcap, Grass-green Tanager.
- **Owling Targets:** White-throated Screech-Owl, Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, and the rare, localized Rufous-bellied Nighthawk.

**Overnight:** Rio Blanco Ecolodge

### **Day 6: Dawn Chorus at Río Blanco & Departure**

Wake up to the spectacular dawn chorus of the high Andes. We will gather for a final, relaxed breakfast on the lodge balcony, accompanied by a flurry of colorful brushfinches, hummingbirds, and flowerpiercers visiting the morning feeders. It is the perfect, laid-back setting to tally up our final trip checklist and review the incredible species seen throughout the week. Following breakfast, our private transport will pick you up from the lodge and transfer you comfortably to the Pereira (PEI) airport for your departure flights home.

## **TOUR INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS**

### **What is Included:**

- **Accommodations:** Double/Single accommodation throughout the tour.
- **Meals:** Full board (all meals) starting from dinner on Day 0 to breakfast on Day 6 (with vegetarian options fully accommodated upon request).
- **Guiding Services:** One professional, bilingual expert birding guide, supplemented by local specialist guides where required.
- **Transportation:** All private ground transportation for the duration of the itinerary, including specialized 4x4 vehicles for mountain ascents.
- **Entrances:** All entry fees to national parks, private nature reserves, and protected areas.
- **Amenities:** Field snacks, fresh water, and professional Colombian event/travel insurance coverage.

### **What is Not Included:**

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Optional activities or excursions not explicitly scheduled in the itinerary.

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- International and domestic airfare, airport taxes, or visa fees.
- Personal expenses (laundry services, toiletries, room service, international phone calls).
- Medical expenses not covered by standard local event insurance.
- Unforeseen trip extensions caused by circumstances completely beyond our operational control.
- Tips and gratuities for guides and drivers.

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