

Colombia: Santa Marta, Tayrona & Isla Salamanca With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

Feb. 28 – Mar. 9, 2021

Cartagena Ext. Mar. 9 – 12

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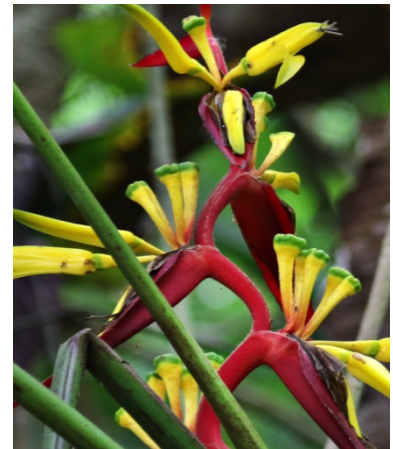
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"Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza stayed at the railing [of the deck], surrounded by noisy passengers who made bets on how well they could identify the lights in the city, until the boat sailed out of the bay, moved along invisible channels and through swamps spattered with the undulating lights of the fishermen, and at last took a deep breath in the open air of the Great Magdalena River."

— Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*

Discover the endemic-rich Caribbean Coast of Colombia with Naturalist Journeys, a spectacularly scenic area where palm-lined beaches fringe the skirts of snow-capped summits, with unmatched avian diversity.

Colombia's 1,900 bird species include exclusively Neotropical families like guans, woodcreepers, ovenbirds, antbirds, puffbirds, toucans, jacamars, manakins, and motmots. Migrant North American songbirds may be seen at any elevation and extensive coastal wetlands offer plentiful waterbirds.

The lush slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta jut up abruptly from the coastline, and isolated from the rest of the Andes by a "sea" of dry forest, these snow-capped mountains have the highest number of endemic birds of any area in Colombia. About 25% (21 species) of Colombia's endemics occur here, as do at least 39 endemic subspecies.

Nearby, the coastal Tayrona National Park splits at its northern face; a ring of Tropical Dry Forest surrounds the massif. Tayrona also offers our first direct immersion in Tropical Moist Forest, directly connected to the Caribbean.

With little drive time (the sites are in close proximity), we are left with plentiful opportunities to immerse ourselves in nature. Additionally, a three-night Cartagena post-tour extension invites you to further explore Colombia's rich natural and cultural history.

Tour Highlights

- Explore in one of the safest and most beautiful areas of Colombia
- Bird the Magdalena River and the Ciénaga Grande marshes, the setting for Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez's book *Love in the Time of Cholera*
- Search for Santa Marta endemic birds near El Dorado Lodge, including the Santa Marta Tapaculo and White-tailed Starfrontlet
- Absorb breathtaking sunset views of the ocean and Magdalena Delta from our lodge
- Venture by 4WD atop San Lorenzo Ridge, high above the windswept cloud forest, stronghold for Santa Marta Parakeet and other endemic birds
- Explore Tropical Dry Forest in Tayrona National Park, one of the last Dry Forest habitats in Colombia
- Watch for mammals like Three-toed Sloth, Nine-banded Armadillo, Cotton-top Tamarin, Night Monkey, White-fronted Capuchin Monkey, and two species of brocket deer in Tayrona

Tour Summary

10-Day / 9-Night Colombia National Park Tour
\$4150 from Barranquilla
Airport is Ernesto Cortissoz International (BAQ)

Itinerary

Sun., Feb. 28 Arrivals in Barranquilla

The group assembles at mid-day today, and from the airport we depart with a packed lunch for some coastal birding looking for the Horned Screamer, followed by dinner as a group with your guide. Welcome to Colombia! Accommodations at Hotel Barranquilla Plaza (L,D)

Mon., Mar. 1 Coastal Minca Birding

Today we bird our way to our comfortable hotel in Minca. Immediately east of Barranquilla, we cross the Río Magdalena — one of Colombia's largest rivers — that carved the huge valley floor separating the Western and Central Andes. The Magdalena River, Karikalí, or Río Grande de la Magdalena, was the main waterway giving access to mainland Colombia, even before its discovery by Spanish explorers in 1500. In the language of the Karibs, Karikalí means River of Caimans.

We drive Coastal Route 90. At the time of construction, the road's foundations between Barranquilla and Ciénaga changed the mix of salty and sweet water in the area, negatively impacting 56,000 hectares of marshes of the Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta. This sad event modified the natural dynamic of the mangroves and the marshes but left a perfect birding drive with views over both the Caribbean and the Ciénaga Grande in search of marine, estuarine, and dry forest birds.

Reminiscent of the Everglades, Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, presenting the most extensive array of estuarine habitats and ecosystems in northern South America. However, in spite of its importance, the reserve only covers 268 sq km — 6% of the total marsh area.

Its biological features have shaped the life and culture of humans for millennia. In fact, one of the two first records of early ceramics in the Americas was discovered here. Additionally, this is one of the few areas in the world where palaphitic towns — villages built completely over water using stilts — still exist.

As time permits, we stop at several small wetlands, either salt flats or patches of mangroves, scanning for wintering shorebirds and waders. Species like Semipalmated, Spotted, and Western Sandpiper and Willet are familiar; others like Collared Plover may be new. Wilson's Plover and Short-billed Dowitcher are generally present in good numbers and we should see a number of terns, including Gull-billed, Royal, Sandwich, and the large and showy Caspian. A real treat: Roseate Spoonbill, storks, and Jabiru feeding in saline pools; Brown Pelican abound, and Magnificent Frigatebird are usually present over the beach. Brown-throated Parakeet often come in flocks, sometimes swooping over roosting Black Skimmer, Little Blue and Tricolored Herons, and American Flamingo.

As we travel through drier habitat with cactus and huge shrubs of the introduced Giant Milkweed or Sodom's Apple, we watch for Crested and Yellow-headed Caracaras, Harris' Hawk, American Kestrel, Russet-throated Puffbird, and the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca (E) perched on cacti at day's end.

In the late afternoon we veer from the coastline toward our comfortable foothill accommodations in Minca, half an hour into the mountains from Santa Marta. Minca is situated among extensive shade coffee farms while the town's mango trees draw numerous parakeets and other fruit-eating birds.

Keel-billed Toucan, Masked Tityra, Whooping Motmot, Black-backed Antshrike, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, woodcreepers, and tanagers are all possibilities in Minca.

Additionally, our hotel has feeders that attract hummingbirds like White-vented Plumleteer, White-necked Jacobin, Black-throated Mango, White-chinned Sapphire, Rufous-breasted Hermit, and with some luck and patience, Santa Marta Woodstar (E) and Long-billed Starthroat. There are also reports of Santa Marta Sabrewing (E) in the area.

Accommodations in Minca (B,L,D)

Tues., Mar. 2 Minca Birding & Transfer to El Dorado Lodge

This morning's first hours are devoted to looking for Tropical Dry Forest species around Minca and those from yesterday that we might have missed at the feeders. Local alternatives include Scaled Piculet, Collared Forest-Falcon, Black-backed Antshrike, Lazuline Sabrewing, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Cinereous Becard, Rufous-breasted

Wren, Rufous-and-white Wren, Dull-colored Grassquit, Thick-billed Seed-finch, Crimson-backed Tanager and the beautiful endemic Golden-winged Sparrow (E).

As we climb towards the clouds, we leave Minca (2175 feet) to explore the upper limit of the Tropical Dry Forest. We drive up the slopes of the San Lorenzo ridge and into the Subtropical Wet Forest (Bosque Muy Humedo Subtropical) of El Dorado Reserve. Here, birds with the first name “Santa Marta” are more likely to appear.

En route, we search for the skulking Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Swallow Tanager (an endemic subspecies), Scaled Pigeon, Coppery Emerald, two endemic hummingbirds — Blossomcrown (E) and Santa Marta Woodstar (E), Santa Marta and Yellow-billed Toucanets, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Streaked Xenops, Cocoa Woodcreeper, the endemic Santa Marta Tapaculo (E), Venezuelan Tyrannulet, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, and the endemic White-lored Warbler (E).

By afternoon, we ascend to approximately 6,000 feet, arriving at El Dorado Reserve, administered by the environmental organization, Fundación ProAves. We should arrive with sufficient daylight remaining so that we can enjoy the fruit and hummingbird feeders outside the restaurant. Here we look for Black-backed Thornbill (E), White-tailed Starfrontlet (photo, E) and Santa Marta Brushfinch (E), plus calling White-tailed Trogon.

The lodge overlooks extensive gardens and active hummingbird feeders. Each cabin has a private bath, hot water, and sufficient outlets for charging your camera or laptop. The setting and its splendid views are quite remarkable!

Birding the lodge grounds is productive; endemic White-tailed Starfrontlet (E) joins the numerous violet-ears, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, and Tyrian Metaltail (a potential Santa Marta split) at the hummingbird feeders. Black-fronted Wood-Quail are attracted to seed and the lodge’s compost pile, Santa Marta Brush-Finch is common, Stripe-headed Brush-Finch may be seen in the bushes surrounding the lodge, and occasionally Santa Marta Antpitta (E) is seen outside the restaurant. Even the exceptional Santa Marta Sabrewing (E) has been seen on the lodge grounds and Lined Quail-Dove is frequently heard (but difficult to see). During a recent visit, two Band-tailed Guans were perched outside one of our cabins and a Santa Marta Screech-Owl (E) called outside of another. We have the opportunity to look for the day roost of this owl during our stay.

Accommodations at El Dorado Lodge (B,L,D)

Wed., Mar. 3 El Dorado Lodge

We have a very early start today to catch the sunrise at the top of the ridge. Our goal is to be there and ready by the time all the specialties wake up, particularly small flocks of Santa Marta Parakeet, one of Colombia’s most endangered parrots. Space is not ample and the road is narrow; birding groups have one shot during their stay at El Dorado to explore the top of the mountain unless there are no others trying for the summit.

The ride uphill in four-wheel drive vehicles (on what some have referred to as a “road”) takes us to the San Lorenzo Ridge, one of the only vehicle-accessible areas in the upper part of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta National Park. Recognizing the area’s unique character, the Colombian government designated much of the Sierra de Santa Marta as Colombia’s second National Park in 1964. If the morning is clear, we are able to see the highest snow-covered peaks of the Sierra de Santa Marta towering far to the south above the windswept Cloud Forest.

A stretch of mostly flat road, lined with ferns, bamboo, sprawling club mosses, and melastome shrubs harbors a number of very local specialties, as well as some more widespread birds including Santa Marta Antpitta (E), the Santa Marta race of Rufous Antpitta, Brown-rumped Tapaculo (E), Rusty-headed Spinetail (E), Flammulated Treehunter, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant (E), Santa Marta Warbler (E), some easier endemics such as Yellow-crowned Redstart (E), Black-cheeked (Santa Marta) Mountain-Tanager (E), and curious Santa Marta Brush-Finch (E) that are more confiding than the ones at the lodge. The low, open woodland is home to Santa Marta Toucanet, Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager, Yellow-crowned Redstart, Santa Marta Warbler, White-

throated Tyrannulet, a local race of Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, and a number of other species. We might be lucky and find Santa Marta Saberwing (E) hummingbird.

Butterflies here include several interesting species of small, dark satyrs and a few skippers that have adapted to these higher, cooler habitats.

Today's altitudinal range is between 7900 and 8900 feet along the last 1.5-mile stretch of road to the Antenas-Cerro Kenedy area. Above 8200 feet the vegetation changes; the rains are diminished here but the presence of clouds and fog increases. These different environmental conditions support a different set of plant species, defined as Montane Wet Forest (Bosque Muy Húmedo Montano). Our guide Gustavo shows us some of the representative plant species, including *Chusquea* thickets and dense shrubbery.

Accommodations at El Dorado Lodge (B,L,D)

Thurs., Mar. 4 Another Day in the Mountains at El Dorado

The dirt road that passes the lodge provides easy walking access through moist Subtropical Wet Forest (Bosque Muy Húmedo Subtropical). This kind of forest is present between 4950 to 8250 feet, and exhibits an annual average rainfall of 79 to 158 inches. Vegetation is increasingly lush and we feel moisture in the air. Morning temperatures can be a cool 62°F.

As we drive uphill from the lodge again this morning, we explore between 5280 and 6270 feet at our leisure. Here tree ferns are seen frequently, as well as epiphytes, lianas, and vines. We look for some of the previous days' birds that we might have missed.

Mixed flocks are likely perched on palms (Arecaceae) like *Dictyocaryum lamarckianum* and *Socratea* at lower altitudes. Strolls may yield a variety of species including Santa Marta Antpitta, Groove-billed Toucanet, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, Santa Marta Tapaculo (E), White-lored Warbler, Masked Trogon, the rather local White-tipped Quetzal, Black-throated Tody-Flycatcher, Cinnamon Flycatcher, the endemic Streak-capped Spinetail (E), Montane and Strong-billed Woodcreepers, Slate-throated Redstart, Blue-capped Tanager, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, and Black-hooded Thrush.

Depending on yesterday's records we could go a bit higher, up to 7600 feet, surrounded by temperate forest vegetation. We might try again for Santa Marta Sabrewing and other endemics. Vegetation includes taller trees (above 70 feet in height) with buttresses and a habitat with denser undergrowth. This is the Subtropical Wet Forest.

After the Tropical Dry Forest, the Subtropical Wet Forest is the next most endangered vegetation formation in Colombia. Within this altitudinal range, there are 19 endemic flowering plants with restricted distribution in these mountains. An additional group of 21 species endemic to this mountain is present in higher and lower elevations as well. This Subtropical Wet Forest also harbors a third of the 126 endemic flowering plant species reported in the Santa Marta Mountains.

As we return to our lodge we have our last chance to catch the breathtaking view of the sunset over the ocean and along the Magdalena Delta. A past client stood silently as the sun set, then said "I don't think the video camera will be able to record this."

From the lodge's restaurant we watch the water mirror of the Ciénaga and imagine the words of *Love in the Time of Cholera* ...

"The ship left the bay with its boilers quiet, made its way along the channels through blankets of taruya, the river lotus with purple blossoms and large heart-shaped leaves, and returned to the marshes. The water was iridescent with the universe of fishes floating on their sides, killed by the dynamite of stealthy fishermen, and all the birds of

the earth and the water circled above them with metallic cries. The wind from the Caribbean blew in the windows along with the racket made by the birds, and Fermina Daza felt in her blood the wild bleating of her free will. To her right, the muddy, frugal estuary of the Great Magdalena River spread out to the other side of the world."
Accommodations at El Dorado Lodge (B,L,D)

Fri., Mar. 5 El Dorado to the Coast | Tayrona National Park

After breakfast and a bit of feeder watching for specialties like Black-fronted Woodquail, we bird our way down to the coast. As we descend, we revisit the vegetations from the prior days, in order to find some of the specialties that we might have missed: Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Woodstar, Venezuelan Flycatcher, and others. We have chances for Venezuelan Red Howlers as we stop to check for hummingbirds.

During the hot hours of the day we have lunch and then drive to "Las Tinajas" side road. Las Tinajas sits on the slopes to the North of the Santa Marta mountains massif. There we look for a sample of a slightly higher altitude (circa 759 feet) Tropical Dry Forest and the area of transition towards the Tropical Moist Forest. Tropical Dry Forest is present in the Magdalena Department from 0 to 1100 meters. Rain in this formation fluctuates from 40 to 83 inches per year.

At this road we try for the range restricted Lilac-tailed Parakeet, along with a set of more common species including Red-crowned Woodpecker, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Whooping Motmot, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Coppery Emerald, White-bearded Manakin, Pale-breasted Thrush, and Bicolored Wren.

As the day cools we birdwatch our way to the Calabazo access to Tayrona Park. At the Park we have our first direct immersion in Tropical Moist Forest as we approach our charming beach-side accommodations.

We may explore the Palangana access to Neguanje Bay in search of the rare and local Black-backed Antshrike and maybe with a bit of luck we also find the very localized Tocuyo Sparrow. Here we find a mixture of Tropical Very-dry and Tropical Dry Forest (Bosque Muy Seco y Bosque Seco) as we drive and walk the road to Palangana. This area of Dry Forest represents one of the most important and last remnants of this kind of habitat in Colombia and in the Colombian Caribbean Region.

Accommodations at Villa Maria (B,L,D)

Sat., Mar. 6 Full Day in Tayrona National Park

The various trails, beaches, and main road of Tayrona National Park offer many opportunities to look for forest species, perfectly complementing our time in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Park. Tayrona protects coral reefs, beaches, bays, and important samples of unique coastal vegetation directly related to the ecosystems and geological formations on the northern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Because of its biogeographical importance, UNESCO declared the Park to be part of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Biosphere Reserve in 1982, an extension of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta National Park. The western section of the reserve, the area we visit on our fourth day in Colombia, is Tropical Moist Forest, an isolated coastal extension of this vegetation formation that wedges itself between sections of the Tropical Dry Forest of the Colombian Caribbean.

This rich diversity of flora shelters unique bird species, including the ultra-rare endemic Blue-billed Curassow (E), Crested Guan, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Keel-billed Toucan, Yellow-billed Cuckoo (only during migration), Rufous-breasted Hermit (photo), Western Long-tailed Hermit, Sooty-capped Hermit, White-chinned Sapphire, White-necked Puffbird, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Red-billed Scythebill, Western-Slaty Antshrike, Jet Antbird, Northern White-fringed Antwren, White-bellied Antbird, Lance-tailed Manakin, Southern Bentbill, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Gray-headed Tanager, Carib Grackle, and Yellow and Orange-crowned Orioles.

The late afternoon is devoted to looking for park specialties, including the localized Pale-tipped Tyrannulet right in the mangroves near the lodge.

The park also has a number of mammals, including Three-toed Sloth, Nine-banded Armadillo, Cotton-top Tamarin (E), Night Monkey, White-fronted Capuchin Monkey, two species of brocket deer, and even Ocelot and Giant Anteater.

Accommodations at Villa Maria (B,L,D)

Sun., Mar. 7 Tayrona to Santa Marta

This morning you can choose to relax and enjoy the pool or beach, or if you are keen on more birding, depart early to venture east into very arid habitats in search of additional endemics, most notably Vermilion Cardinal.

We return by lunch, and then move on to historic Santa Marta. Santa Marta is not only the Capital city of Magdalena Department, but also the oldest city of South America, founded in 1526 by Rodrigo de Bastidas (Jaramillo Uribe, 1984). From our boutique hotel, we have time to walk to the waterfront to see historic parts of the city and enjoy delicious local dining.

Accommodations at Casa de Leda (B,L,D)

Mon., Mar. 8 Simon Bolivar Monument | Isla Salamanca | Barranquilla

This historic city is where Simon Bolivar passed away on his way to exile in Europe on December 17, 1830, and where he wanted to have his heart buried at the Cathedral as an expression of his love for this land. The monument to him is impressive, and also very birdy; large trees create an oasis and gardens are well-watered, making for a super morning mix of nature and culture.

En route back to Barranquilla, we stop at the Cocos visitor center inside Salamanca National Park to walk through mangrove forest in search of one of the rarest birds in Colombia: the enigmatic and endemic Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird (E).

Other birds here include Bare-eyed Pigeon, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Brown-throated Parakeet, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, Black-crested Antshrike, Bicolored Conebill, Bronzed Cowbird (for some this is considered the Bronze-brown Cowbird, a Colombian endemic), and the rare Chestnut Piculet.

As the day warms, we explore the park's wetlands, where bird communities vary by month and water level. We look for Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling-ducks, Cinnamon Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Black-necked Stilt, several sandpipers, gulls, plovers, Black-collared Hawk, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, and two delightful flycatchers: Pied Water-Tyrant and White-headed Marsh-Tyrant.

Accommodations at Barranquilla Plaza. If you find an evening flight that works for you, it is possible to depart tonight. (B,L,D)

Tues., Mar. 9 Departures | Cartagena Extension

Those departing today taxi to the airport accordingly; those opting for the extension continue on to Cartagena. (B)

Cartagena Extension

"At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point ..."

— Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

At Cartagena Bay, a village of a few straw-and-wood houses, with roofs almost reaching the ground, is what Rodrigo de Bastidas and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo saw during their first exploration of the Tierra-Firme coast around 1501. Protected by islands and sandbanks, surrounded by brackish channels and swamps, and overlooked from two neighboring hills, this naturally broad and sheltered port became the gateway to Spanish South America: “The Key to the New Kingdom of Granada, of Chocó, and the Darién” or “The Key to the Kingdom of Peru.” Amidst the thriving process of conquest by the Inca Empire and the other indigenous gold-bearing tribes and confederations in South America, and up to the War of Independence from Ferdinand VII's Spain, Cartagena grew rich and strong as a trading center in an extensive region with scarce natural resources and inhabited by scattered small human populations. Few neighboring mountain forests, swamps, and mangroves survived the city's growth. Today these habitats give us the opportunity to explore the unique wildlife of the Tropical Dry Forest of the Caribbean Colombia as we overnight in the colonial district.

Trading made the city viable. For early Cartagena, the only other important sources of food, water, and shelter lay miles away: Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta and the Santa Marta Mountains. Sheltered by the mountains, its resources, and with the support of the Ciénaga, the cities of Santa Marta and Barranquilla developed as alternative urban centers, while inland Villages like Mompox, Tolu, and Aracataca began to forget their times of glory. García Márquez depicts this phenomenon when describing the mood of Macondo's inhabitants in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

During what is described as the most profound time of struggle for the Colombian Caribbean region, the beauty of nature, its wildlife, its landscapes, and mostly its people and their stories, deeply stroke the spirit of adult García Márquez and flourished in his novels. His early years in languishing Aracataca and his struggle trying to make himself a life between Cartagena, Barranquilla, and Riohacha, fueled his creativity, turning him into the chronicler of true myths of the region, of Colombia, and of Latin America.

Hence, it is proper that through the life of Sierva María, the main character of García Márquez's *Of Love and Other Demons*, we can travel in time as we explore the corridors and the patio of the Palace of Inquisition within historic Cartagena de Indias.

Tues., Mar. 9 Cartagena Sights & Culture

After dropping departing group members off at the Barranquilla airport, we bird our way from Barranquilla to Cartagena, arriving in the afternoon. We then settle into our lodgings before experiencing Cartagena by night. A walking tour of the Plaza Colon and Plaza Bolivar complements our lovely dinner.

Overnight in Cartagena (D)

Wed., Mar. 10 Jardín Botánico de Cartagena | San Felipe's Castle Fortress

Today we bird the Jardín Botánico de Cartagena in Turbaco. Highlights here include Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, and Keel-billed Toucan, among other lowland dry forest birds.

We enjoy a pleasant lunch nearby, then drive back to Cartagena to visit San Felipe's Castle Fortress.

Overnight in Cartagena (D)

Thurs., Mar. 11 La Boquilla | Cartagena Sights

We depart this morning for the activity of your choice—we can either explore La Boquilla via a mangrove tour, looking for Chestnut Piculet and Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird. We then depart the mangrove tour to explore a few local trails to forested areas in search of Northern Screamer. Or, you may choose for a casual cultural morning, enjoying the wonderful city of Cartagena and it's beautiful historical sights.

Gustavo shares his knowledge and love of this great Colombian city. As we walk through the wall of the city's fortress at the Gate of the Clock, the narrow streets of this World Heritage site fill with images of the past: pirate attacks, slave trade, and political and military turmoil during the wars of independence.

Overnight in Cartagena (D)

Fri., Mar. 12 Departures — Cartagena or Barranquilla

We say goodbye to enchanting Cartagena this morning as we depart for home. You can return to the USA on a multi-city ticket from Cartagena, or return with our driver to Barranquilla for flights out after NOON.

Guide Gustavo Canas-Valle



Gustavo is a professional birding guide, working with Naturalist Journeys in both Ecuador and Colombia. He has also led many trips to the Galapagos, the Andes, Amazonia, and more. Gustavo not only has expertise in botany, but also in birding, and is passionate about the history of South America. He has guided in Colombia since 1991 and has developed close relationships with many birders in the country. His knowledge, kindness, and enthusiasm help to create a forever memorable experience.

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Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Photo Credits

Green Violetear, Peg Abbott (PA); Red Howler Monkey, Naturalist Journeys Stock (NJS); Bird of Paradise Plant, PA; Crowned Woodnymph, PA; Green-and-black Fruiteater, Greg Smith; Groove-billed Toucanet, PA; Cotton-top Tamarin, PA

Cost of the Journey

The cost of our Colombia Santa Marta tour is \$4150 per person double-occupancy (DBL) / \$4590 single-occupancy (SGL), from Barranquilla, Colombia. Cost of the extension to Cartagena is \$1295 DBL / \$1475 SGL. Please note that the price is subject to the exchange rate and will need to be adjusted if a change of more than 5% occurs at the time of final billing. We do not anticipate a big change but advise you here of this possibility.

Cost is based on double occupancy and includes all accommodations; all meals as specified in the itinerary, group airport transfers (if independent, additional charge), professional guide services, local park and other area entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

The tour is designed for 8 – 10 persons, with a minimum group size of 6 persons. With 8 or more persons, a host from Naturalist Journeys joins our expert local guide, Gustavo Canas Valle.

Travel Information

Flights should be booked to Ernesto Cortissoz International Airport (BAQ) in Barranquilla, Colombia. If choosing the extension, you may leave from either Rafael Núñez International Airport (CTG) in Cartagena, Colombia, or return to Barranquilla, though it saves driving and time to go multi-city and depart from Cartagena

Please plan to arrive at your leisure on in Barranquilla on February 28. If you need to arrive a night early, we recommend the Barranquilla Plaza Hotel and will pick you up there (or other hotel if near airport or the Plaza Hotel). You may depart Cartagena's Rafael Núñez International Airport (CTG) at a time convenient for you on March 9 for the main tour. For the extension you may depart from Cartagena's Rafael Núñez International Airport (CTG) at a time convenient for you on March 12, or you may return to Barranquilla for flights out March 12, after NOON.