SABREWING
NATURE TOURS

Colombia

Santa Marta and Perijá Extension

Tour Leader: Eric Ripma

February 10-18, Extension: February 18-23, 2027

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Itinerary Overview:

Main Tour:

February 10: Arrival in Barranquilla
February 11: Salamanca and Colores de la Sierra - Transfer to Minca
February 12: Lower Elevations of Santa Marta Mountains
February 13: Santa Marta Mountains- Transfer to Mountain House
February 14-15: Santa Marta Mountains
February 16: Santa Marta Mountains - Transfer to Palomino
February 17: Tayrona Area - Transfer to Riohacha
February 18: Guajira Area - Transfer to Valledupar or Departing Flights from Riohacha

Extension:

February 19: Los Besotes Lower Zone - Transfer to Chamicero de Perijá Reserve
February 20-21: Chamicero de Perijá Reserve
February 22: Birding Coffee Plantations - Transfer to Valledupar
February 23: Departure from Valledupar

Detailed Itinerary:

February 10: Arrival in Barranquilla

Upon arrival at Ernesto Cortissoz Barranquilla International Airport (BAQ), you will be transferred to your hotel. We'll have a fantastic welcome dinner this evening and plenty of time to rest before our adventures begin.
Overnight: Hotel Movich Buró 51

February 11: Salamanca and Colores de la Sierra - Transfer to Minca

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll have a short drive to Isla Salamanca National Park. We'll spend the morning birding the extensive marshes and mangroves that this park conserves. This area has the most extensive mangroves on the Caribbean Coast of Colombia and thus has some excellent birding!

Some of the birds we'll be targeting here include the Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird (endemic), Pied Puffbird, Bicolored Conebill, American Pygmy Kingfisher, and Golden-green Woodpecker. This area also has a remarkable number of wintering Prothonotary Warblers, and we will likely see many. If time allows, we will bird in some nearby marshes and could add many species including White-headed Marsh Tyrant, Pied Water-Tyrant, Dwarf Cuckoo, Stripe-backed Wren and the endemic Turquoise-winged Parrotlet. After we have finished birding this area, we will continue our drive to Minca. On the way, when we reach Santa Marta, we will transfer into 4X4 vehicles which we will be using for our time in the Santa Marta Mountains. We will then finish our drive to Minca where we will be staying for the following two nights.
Overnight: Colores de la Sierra

February 12: Lower Elevations of Santa Marta Mountains

We will start our day with some coffee while watching the feeders at our lodge. We can expect to see a few species of hummingbirds including White-vented Plumeleteer and White-necked Jacobin, but the fruit feeders are the real highlight. Typically, many beautifully plumaged Blue-naped Chlorophonias and Purple Honeycreepers visit with lesser numbers of Bay-headed, Gray-headed, White-lined, Crimson-backed, and Blue-gray Tanagers also stopping by. Larger birds such as Crested Oropendolas and Black-chested Jays also typically stop by. And we'll be keeping an eye out for Golden-winged Sparrows which are typically feeding in the nearby forest. Throughout the morning we'll be birding around other areas of the lodge as well. The entry road and a trail to a beautiful viewpoint are good places to spend some time. We will be looking for many species in these areas including Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Scaled Piculet, Crimson-crested and Lineated Woodpeckers, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, and Swallow Tanagers among many others.

Golden-winged Sparrow

In the afternoon, we will spend some time birding at slightly higher elevations, but this small elevation gain changes the bird life quite dramatically. We will likely spend most of our time birding along a quiet backroad where we could see some of our first Santa Marta endemics. This is a great area for Santa Marta Antbird and will give us our first chance at others such as Groove-billed Toucanet, Santa Marta Tapaculo, Streak-capped Spinetail, Spectacled Tyrannulet, and other species that will become more common at higher elevations. This will surely be a great first day of birding in the spectacular Santa Marta Mountains!

Overnight: Colores de la Sierra

February 13: Santa Marta Mountains - Transfer to Mountain House

Early this morning we will make a short drive to lower elevations. We will begin our day, scanning

out over the mountain ridges looking for Military Macaws. Many other species can also be seen in this area and we'll be looking for Common Potoo, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Golden-fronted Greenlet, Rufous-and-white Wren, and Orange-crowned Oriole. After breakfast at the hotel, we will start our journey to higher elevations and our next lodging, Mountain House. The birding is sure to be excellent throughout this day, and we will begin to see some of the species that are only found in these mountains. Some of these low-elevation endemics that we might see include Santa Marta Tapaculo, Santa Marta Woodstar, White-lored Warbler, Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, and Santa Marta Antbird. Other species we may see include White-tipped Quetzal, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Groove-billed Toucanet, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, and Rusty-breasted Antpitta.

Santa Marta Blossomcrown

Upon arrival at Mountain House, we will enjoy a delicious lunch before continuing birding around the lodge. The feeders at the lodge can be unbelievably busy with many colorful, stunning species, such as Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Yellow-backed Oriole, and Black-headed Tanager.
Overnight: Mountain House

February 14-15: Santa Marta Mountains

These two days will be spent exploring the excellent habitat in the Santa Marta Mountains. This mountain range has the tallest peaks in all of Colombia and around nineteen endemic bird species (depending on current taxonomy) are currently recognized here, and there are more than 70 subspecies, some of which will likely be raised to species level soon.

On one of our mornings in the mountains, we will visit the San Lorenzo Ridge where we will be birding at about 8,500 feet. Early on this morning, we will be looking for the endemic Santa Marta Screech-Owl. The high elevation forests along the ridge hold flocks of Santa Marta Parakeets, Yel-

low-crowned Redstart, Santa Marta Warbler, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, Brown-rumped Tapaculo, Rusty-headed and Streak-capped Spinetails, Sierra Nevada Antpitta, and Black-cheeked and Carriker's Mountain Tanager. Around the feeders at the ridge, we will be watching for a Santa Marta Antpitta that comes in for worms and the beautiful White-tailed Starfrontlet that visits the feeders.

Around our lodge, Mountain House, we'll be looking for many species visiting their feeders and gardens. Blue-naped Chlorophonias, Black-headed, Black-capped, and Bay-headed Tanagers, and Yellow-backed Orioles are common at the bananas while the hummingbird feeders typically attract Sparking, Lesser, and Brown Violetears, Crowned Woodnymph, and Lazuline Sabrewing. The nearby flowers usually bring in many White-sided Flowerpiercers with lesser numbers of Rusty Flowerpiercers. We will also have to keep an eye on the flowers for Santa Marta Blossomcrown! We will also keep an eye on the grain pile for Sierra Nevada and Santa Marta Brushfinches and Lined Quail-Dove.

We will also spend some time birding forested habitats just above Mountain House. As we walk along the road, we will be looking and listening for Gray-throated Leaftosser, Santa Marta Tapaculo, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Golden Grosbeak, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, White-tipped Quetzal, Southern Emerald-Toucanet among many others.

Santa Marta Antpitta

Santa Marta Parakeet

The forests below Mountain House will give us a chance to see some new species too. A short drive to some drier forest habitat will give us a chance to see the secritive Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Keel-billed Toucan, Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Spectacled Tyrannulet, and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush. A couple of nice viewpoints nearby are great places to watch for soaring raptors. We have a good

chance to see King Vultures, Sharp-shinned Hawk (Plain-breasted), Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, Zone-tailed Hawk, and if we get really lucky, Black-and-chestnut Eagle!

One of the great things about these mountains is that there is almost always something interesting to look at!

Overnight: Mountain House

Lance-tailed Manakin

February 16: Santa Marta Mountains - Transfer to Palomino

This morning, we will track down any species we may have missed over the last few days. After lunch at Mountain House, we will make our way to Palomino, where we will be based for one night.

Overnight: Hotel Hukumeizi, Colombia

February 17: Tayrona Area - Transfer to Riohacha

We will spend the morning birding around the Tayrona area before transferring to Riohacha. Our main destination on this morning will be Gaviotas Road. We will spend our time walking along this quiet road and looking for the many species that call this forest home. Some of our targets will include Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, White-chinned Sapphire, White-necked Puffbird, Gartered Violaceous Trogon, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, White-bellied Antbird, Lance-tailed Manakin, and many more!

On our way to Riohacha, we will stop for lunch and likely arrive in Riohacha by the early evening. We will likely make a couple of brief birding stops along the way and we will start seeing a different suite of birds that live in the dry scrub habitat of this area. A few species we may see include Double-striped Thick-knee, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Rufous-vented Chachalaca, and Bare-eyed Pigeon.

Overnight: Hotel Taroa

Vermilion Cardinal

February 18: Guajira Area - Transfer to Valledupar or Departing Flights from Riohacha

After an early breakfast at the hotel, we will have a short drive to the Guajira Peninsula. Throughout the morning, we will bird at Los Flamencos Fauna and Flora Sanctuary. This sanctuary, located along the western edge of the Guajira Desert, protects several inland lagoons along the coast that provide habitat for a long list of species. Many species of shorebirds, waders, terns, and gulls occur, including the spectacular American Flamingo, the stunningly bright Scarlet Ibis, and American Oystercatcher.

Surrounding the lagoons is an excellent scrub habitat supporting many bird species. In this area, we hope to see Vermilion Cardinal, Orinocan Saltator, Buffy Hummingbird, Russet-throated Puffbird, Bare-eyed Pigeon, Chestnut Piculet, Slender-billed Tyrannulet, White-whiskered Spinetail, Pileated Finch, Tocuyo Sparrow, and Rufous-vented Chachalaca. Other species we are likely to encounter include Black-crested Antshrike, Crested Bobwhite, White-fringed Antwren, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, Blue-crowned and Brown-throated Parakeets, and Green-rumped Parrotlets.

We'll finish up our birding around lunch time and those in the group that won't be continuing onto our extension can either take a late afternoon or evening flight from Riohacha or spend another night at our hotel. The rest of the group will make an afternoon drive to Valledupar.

Overnight: Hotel Sonesta

Extension:

February 19: Los Besotes Lower Zone - Transfer to Chamicero de Perijá Reserve

We'll spend this morning birding in the dry forest habitat along the entrance road to Los Besotes Park. There is a long list of species that occur at this location, but we will focus on any species we have missed up to this point. Some of the species we are likely to see include Double-striped Thick-knees,

Crested Bobwhites, Mouse-colored, Pale-tipped, and Slender-billed Tyrannulets, Red-billed Scythebill, White-whiskered Spinetail, and Lance-tailed Manakin.

After spending the morning birding, we will start making our drive up through the Perijá Mountains to our next lodge at Chamicero de Perijá Reserve. The lodge is more basic than our other accommodations on this tour, but it puts us in the perfect spot to spend the next two days exploring these mountains. Throughout our time in these mountains, we will be using 4X4 vehicles like we did in the Santa Marta Mountains.

Overnight: Chamicero de Perijá Reserve Lodge

February 20-21: Chamicero de Perijá Reserve

We'll have two full days to explore various elevations and habitats near our lodge. Around our lodge and at the feeders, we have a good chance to see Longuemare's Sunangel, Tyrian Metaltail, Mountain Velvetbreast, Chestnut-capped, Northern Slaty, and Black-fronted (Perija endemic) Brushfinches, Blue-capped Tanager, and Bluish Flowerpiercer.

When we move up to higher elevations and into the paramo habitat, we will be looking for other endemics such as Perija Metaltail, Perija Starfrontlet, Perija Antpitta, and Perija Thistletail, the namesake of the reserve. Other highlights could include Andean Condor, Streak-backed Canastero, Rufous Spinetail, Streak-throated and Smoky Bush-Tyrants, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Black-crested Warbler, and Hooded and Lacrimose Mountain Tanagers.

Hooded Mountain Tanager

When we are birding the forests around the lodge, we will be looking for a whole different suite of birds including Andean Guan, Golden-headed Quetzal, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Perija Tapaculo, Barred Fruiteater, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia, Fulvous-headed Tanager, and many others.

Birding in this region is sure to be one of the highlights of the whole trip!
Overnight: Chamicero de Perijá Reserve Lodge

February 22: Birding Coffee Plantations - Transfer to Valledupar

After an early breakfast at the hotel, we will start our drive to lower elevations and eventually back to Valledupar. However, on the way, we will be making several stops for some more special birds including the endemic Perija Brushfinch. We'll spend much of our morning birding around coffee plantations and due to the lower elevations and change in habitat, we will see a new set of birds. Some of the birds we can expect include White-booted Racket-tail, Rufous-shafted Woodstar, Moustached Puffbird, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Green Jay, Chestnut-bellied Thrush, Gray-throated Warbler, and Buff-banded Mountain Tanager. We plan to make it back to Valledupar by the late afternoon or early evening, in time to have a great farewell dinner before departing flights the following day.
Overnight: Chamicero de Perijá Reserve Lodge

February 23: Departure from Valledupar

White-tipped Quetzal

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy) from Barranquilla to Riohacha, Colombia: $4,999
Single Supplement: $400

Minimum Participants: 6
Maximum Participants: 10

Extension:
Price per person (double occupancy) from Riohacha to Valledupar, Colombia: $3,799
Single Supplement: None

Minimum Participants: 4
Maximum Participants: 6

Price Includes:

Expert Guides
Ground Transportation in Colombia
All Lodging
All Meals
Park Entrance Fees

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to Barranquilla and from Riohacha or Valledupar
Airport Taxes
Passport and Visa Fees
Alcoholic Beverages
Personal Items
Travel Insurance
Tips

Deposit:

A deposit of $500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (November 12, 2026).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

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