



Costa Rica

Quetzal Photography Extravaganza

Tour Leader: Jamie Cunningham

March 10-17, 2027

Itinerary Overview:

March 10: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel

March 11: Quetzal Valley and Transfer to Pacific Coast

March 12: Morning Boat on Río Tarcoles and Afternoon at Carara National Park

March 13: Esquipulas Rainforest and Transfer to Talamanca Mountains

March 14: Photography at Lodge and Afternoon Hummingbird Multi-flash Photography

March 15: Quetzal Photography and Feeders at Batsu Gardens

March 16: Birding at the Lodge and Feeding Stations - Transfer to San José

March 17: Departure from San José, Costa Rica

Detailed Itinerary:

March 10: Arrival in San José, Costa Rica - Transfer to Hotel

After meeting your guide at the airport, we'll make our way to our hotel in San José. Once we've checked in and had a chance to settle into our rooms, we'll head out for a relaxing walk through the hotel's beautiful, bird-friendly gardens. This is a great introduction to many of Costa Rica's widespread species. We should see things like Great Kiskadee, Social Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Blue-gray Tanager, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird right around the property. It's a good opportunity to work on photographing common birds in good light.

The gardens often turn up some nice surprises too, and we'll keep our eyes out for species like Rufous-naped Wren, Crimson-fronted Parakeet, Lesson's Motmot, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, Chestnut-capped Warbler, and Blue-vented Hummingbird. After some time birding, we'll gather for a welcome briefing to go over the itinerary, get to know one another, and kick things off for a great trip ahead.

-Overnight: Hotel Robledal or similar



Shining Honeycreeper

March 11: Quetzal Valley and Transfer to Pacific Coast

We'll get an early start this morning as we head into the beautiful Quetzal Valley for our first shot at seeing the magnificent Resplendent Quetzal. The hummingbird feeders here are outstanding, offering fantastic chances to photograph regional specialties like Violet Sabrewing and Coppery-headed Emerald, species we won't encounter anywhere else on the trip. After some time working the feeders, we'll focus on finding quetzals and other forest gems like Long-tailed Manakin. This site occasionally hosts nesting Ornate Hawk-Eagles, and if a nest is active during our visit, we'll make a point to photograph these striking raptors. We'll have lunch nearby and then search along the river for the elusive Sunbittern before making our way toward the Pacific Coast.

-Overnight: Tarcoles Birding Lodge or similar



Resplendent Quetzal

March 12: Morning Boat on Río Tarcoles and Afternoon at Carara National Park

This morning, we'll explore the Río Tárcoles by boat, an excellent opportunity to photograph waders like Roseate Spoonbill and Bare-throated Tiger-Heron. We'll also keep an eye out for close-range views of Mangrove Cuckoo, American Pygmy-Kingfisher, and Boat-billed Heron. Double-striped Thick-knee and Common Black Hawk are often very cooperative here, and we may even catch a glimpse of the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird. In the afternoon, we'll bird and photograph along the trails and roads around Carara National Park, targeting highlights such as Scarlet Macaws, Orange-collared Manakin, Gartered and Black-throated Trogons, and Pale-billed Woodpecker.

-Overnight: Tarcoles Birding Lodge or similar

March 13: Esquipulas Rainforest and Transfer to Talamanca Mountains

We'll kick off the day with a visit to Esquipulas Rainforest, where fruit feeders attract a colorful mix of birds. Fiery-billed Aracari, Yellow-throated Toucan, and a variety of tanagers, Scarlet-rumped, Golden-hooded, and Blue-gray, are regulars here. Euphonias, Golden-naped Woodpecker, and all three honeycreepers (Red-legged, Shining, and Green) often put on a show. The porterweed hedges may be buzzing with Violet-headed and Charming Hummingbirds, along with the stunning White-

crested Coquette. A short hike into the surrounding forest can yield manakins like Orange-collared, Red-capped, and Velvety, as well as a variety of hermits, White-tipped Sicklebill, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, and both Baird's and Slaty-tailed Trogons. After lunch, we'll transfer up into the highlands to begin the next chapter of our adventure.

-Overnight: Cabanas El Quetzal or similar

March 14: Photography at Lodge and Afternoon Hummingbird Multi-flash Photography

This morning, our main goal is to photograph the iconic Resplendent Quetzal at active nest sites. With access to a trusted network of private properties, we'll have some of the best possible opportunities to capture this incredible species in action. In the afternoon, we'll switch gears for a multi-flash hummingbird photography session and spend time at a private feeder setup. Target species here include Fiery-throated and Talamanca Hummingbirds, Large-footed Finch, and the always eye-catching Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher.

-Overnight: Cabanas El Quetzal or similar



Resplendent Quetzal

March 15: Quetzal Photography and Feeders at Batsu Gardens

We'll be up early again today to return to the quetzal nesting areas, maximizing our chances for great light and dynamic photo opportunities. After a productive morning, we'll visit the well-known Batsu

Gardens in the afternoon, a stunning location for photographing a wide range of highland birds. Hummingbirds, tanagers, and other colorful species are regular visitors to their feeders and natural setups, providing a relaxed and productive photography session.

-Overnight: Cabanas El Quetzal or similar

March 16: Birding at the Lodge and Feeding Stations – Transfer to San José

We'll start our final full day with one more chance to photograph nesting Resplendent Quetzals, aiming to capture feeding or flight behavior if possible. Depending on time, we may make a last stop at local feeders. On the way back to San José, we'll scan the páramo for specialty species like Volcano Junco and Timberline Wren. In the evening, we'll enjoy a farewell dinner together.

-Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea

March 17: Departure from San José, Costa Rica



Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher



Lesser Violetear



Golden-browed Chlorophonia



Volcano Hummingbird

Target Species

Gray-headed Chachalaca
 Red-billed Pigeon
 Ruddy Pigron
 Inca Dove
 Common Ground Dove
 White-tipped Dove
 White-winged Dove
 Squirrel Cuckoo
 Purple-crowned Fairy
 Green-breasted Mango
 Scaly-breasted Hummingbird
 Blue-vented Hummingbird
 Cinnamon Hummingbird
 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird
 Green Hermit
 Lesser Violetear
 Green-crowned Brilliant
 Talamanca Hummingbird
 Fiery-throated Hummingbird
 White-throated Mountain-gem
 Volcano Hummingbird
 Scintillant Hummingbird
 Stripe-tailed Hummingbird
 Resplendent Quetzal
 Collared Trogon

Lesson's Motmot
 Northern Emerald-Toucanet
 Prong-billed Barbet
 Acorn Woodpecker
 Hoffman's Woodpecker
 Lineated Woodpecker
 Bat Falcon
 Orange-chinned Parakeet
 Crimson-fronted Parakeet
 Sulphur-winged Parakeet
 Mountain Elaenia
 Great Kiskadee
 Boat-billed Flycatcher
 Social Flycatcher
 Tropical Kingbird
 Ochraceous Wren
 Rufous-naped Wren
 Tropical Mockingbird
 Black-faced Solitaire
 Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush
 Swainson's Thrush
 Mountain Thrush
 Clay-colored Thrush
 Sooty Thrush
 Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher

Golden-browed Chlorophonia
 Yellow-bellied Siskin
 Sooty-capped Chlorospingus
 Common Chlorospingus
 Chestnut-capped Brushfinch
 Rufous-collared Sparrow
 Large-footed Finch
 White-naped Brushfinch
 Yellow-thighed Brushfinch
 White-eared Ground Sparrow
 Flame-throated Warbler
 Tennessee Warbler
 Tropical Parula
 Black-cheeked Warbler
 Chestnut-capped Warbler
 Collared Redstart
 Summer Tanager
 Flame-colored Tanager
 Black-thighed Grosbeak
 Blue-gray Tanager
 Silver-throated Tanager
 Slaty Flowerpiercer
 Bananaquit
 Yellow-faced Grassquit



Sulphur-winged Parakeet



Flame-colored Tanager



Sooty-capped Chlorospingus

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from San Jose, Costa Rica: \$5,999

Single Supplement: \$700

Minimum Participants: 4

Maximum Participants: 8

Price Includes:

2 Expert Guides

Ground Transportation in Costa Rica

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from San José, Costa Rica

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, December 10, 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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