



Crimson-collared Tanager © Andrew Morffew



## Costa Rica Birding & Nature

Explore the incredible natural wonders of Costa Rica. Our journey will transport us to the must-see birding sites, including Monteverde, La Selva, Arenal and Carara National Park. Our expert local guide will lead us through diverse landscapes in search of three of the mainland endemic bird species, and an array of other Central American avian gems. We'll also learn how local conservation groups are protecting birds and their habitats for the future.

**Dates:** April 21 – May 3, 2025 (13 days)

**Itinerary:** [Map](#)

**Price:** from \$3,960 (max 12 participants)

**In-country Guide:** Jose Pablo Castillo

**Potential Species:** 340

### TRIP HIGHLIGHTS





- 🌿 Bird the world famous Monteverde cloud forest, and La Selva Biological Research Station.
- 🌿 Visit local conservation projects to learn how their work is protecting endemic and threatened species.
- 🌿 Explore Carara National Park located on the Pacific slope, renowned for its ecological diversity.
- 🌿 Search for iconic Macaws, Manakins, Tanagers, and of course, Resplendent Quetzals.



This program will involve early mornings, moderate-to-high intensity birding, with some rough terrain.

## Day 1: Monday, April 21 Arrival in San Jose

Welcome to Costa Rica! After a short drive to our hotel, you'll have the chance to experience the lush grounds. **Lesson's Motmot**, **Hoffmann's Woodpecker**, **Grayish Saltator**, and **Rufous-naped Wren** are common birds around the hotel. You'll attend a trip briefing and then enjoy your welcome dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel Bougainvillea    

## Day 2: Tuesday, April 22 Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow

Early this morning we will head out to some coffee plantations nearby with the team from the Cabanisi Project in search of the Costa Rican endemic **Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow**\* (NT). This species is considered near threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) because of habitat loss due to urban sprawl. After observing the species in the wild, we'll head back to the hotel for breakfast and attend a presentation to learn more about the conservation status of this unique species and the efforts to protect it. After the presentation you'll depart for the Sarapiquí region, located in the northeastern Caribbean lowlands. En route the group will pay a visit to Mirador Cinchona to enjoy the spectacular views and check the bird feeders hoping to see some of the local specialties **Prong-billed**^ and **Red-headed Barbets**, **Crimson-collared Tanager**, and hummingbirds such as the endemic **Coppery-headed Emerald**\*, and others like **White-bellied Mountain-gem**^, **Black-bellied Hummingbird**^, **Violet Sabrewing**, and **Green Thorntail**. After a delicious lunch, you'll continue your journey and arrive at Selva Verde Lodge in the afternoon with time to bird the lush grounds and vicinity where we hope to find **Collared Aracari**, **White-collared Manakin**, **Red-throated Ant-Tanager**, and **Brown-hooded Parrot**, among others. Dinner will be at the lodge, followed by the first checklist review of the trip.



Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow © Jose Pablo Castillo

Overnight: Selva Verde Lodge      



Great Curassow © Andy Morffew

## Day 3: Wednesday, April 23 La Selva

Full day at La Selva Biological Station birding the road, grounds and trails. La Selva is located in the Caribbean lowlands at an elevation of 250ft with tropical rainforest habitat and a climate that is generally warm with average temperatures of mid- high 80's°F and high humidity. We'll be looking for the highly endangered **Great Green Macaw**, as well as **Snowy Cotinga**, **Rufous Motmot**, **Pied Puffbird** **Great Curassow**, **Chestnut-colored Woodpecker**, **Fasciated Antshrike**, and **Plain-colored Tanager** among others. La Selva protects more than 5,000 acres of highly biodiverse habitat and is known as one of the country's premier birding spots, the station is also home to many other species of flora and fauna. As an

active research facility, researchers publish more than 200 scientific papers each year! All meals will be provided by the lodge.


Overnight: Selva Verde Lodge      



Montezuma Oropendola © Andy Morffew


## Day 4: Thursday, April 24 **Arenal**

After breakfast, the group will head for the Arenal region. This morning we'll first visit Lapa Verde Refuge where you'll learn about the conservation work of the EcoVida Foundation. This private initiative was created to protect the critically endangered **Great Green Macaw**(CR), a species that is recovering after many years of hard work. You'll also learn about the MOTUS tower installed at the refuge, and how they are involved with HawkWatch. After our visit with EcoVida the group will head towards Arenal and stop along La Peninsula Road, adjacent to Arenal Volcano National , for some local specialties such as **Keel-billed Motmot**, **White-fronted Nunbird** and with luck, **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**. We'll check into our lodge at the end of the afternoon and time permitting, we'll explore the grounds. The lodge is located in the Caribbean rainforest foothills at an elevation of 200ft. The climate in Arenal is generally rainy but dry conditions can be expected in April. Temperatures average in the high 70's°F – low 80's°F. We'll finish the day with dinner at the lodge and checklist review.

*Overnight:* Arenal Observatory Lodge 

## Day 5: Friday, April 25 **Arenal**

Early this morning we'll gather at the observation deck and feeders where we hope to see **Montezuma Oropendola**, **Emerald Tanager** and **Red-legged Honeycreeper**. After enjoying a hearty breakfast, we'll explore the various trails on the property that wind through the spectacular rainforest of the Caribbean foothills. Here we look for specialties such as **Yellow-eared Toucanet**, **Broad-billed Motmot**, **Spotted** and **Ocellated Antbirds**, **Black-throated Trogon** and **Brown-billed Scythebill** to name a few. In the afternoon you'll continue birding around the grounds and surrounding areas in search of **Thicket Antpitta**, **Great Curassow**, and even the uncommon **Bare-necked Umbrellabird**(EN)^.

*Overnight:* Arenal Observatory Lodge 

## Day 6: Saturday, April 26 **Monteverde**

After breakfast you'll depart for Monteverde with a stop at Bogarin Trails, a locally owned private reserve just outside La Fortuna at the base of Arenal Volcano. Here you'll look for **Keel-billed Motmot**(VU), **Boat-billed Heron**, **White-collared Manakin**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Uniform** and **White-throated Crakes**, and **Olivaceous Piculet**. Following lunch at a local restaurant, we'll continue up the Tilaran Range to Monteverde. The town is located near the continental divide - the line that separates the water-sheds that drain to the Pacific and the Caribbean. The dominant habitat in this area is cloud forest with an elevation of 5,000ft. Cala Lodge is owned by a young Costa Rican couple who are focused on operating in the most sustainable way while ensuring their guests have a comfortable and relaxing stay. The climate is generally cool and misty, with temperatures in the low mid 70's°F, with cool and breezy nights.

*Overnight:* Cala Lodge 






White-collared Manakin © Mario Cordoba



## Day 7: Sunday, April 27 **Monteverde**

We will spend the day visiting a couple of different reserves depending on bird activity in search of the iconic **Three-wattled Bellbird**(VU) as the primary target species, but we can find other representative birds like **Black-breasted Wood-Quail**^, **Highland Tinamou**, **Black Guan**^, **Purple-throated Mountain-Gem**^, **Coppery-headed Emerald**\*, **Prong-billed Barbet**^, **Northern Emerald-Toucanet**, **Azure-hooded Jay**, **Ochraceous Wren**^, **Silvery-fronted Tapaculo**^, **Black-faced Solitaire**^, and **Costa Rican Warbler**^. You'll return to the lodge at the end of the day for dinner and checklist review.

Monteverde was originally founded by Quaker families who moved there from Alabama in the 1950's, seeking a peaceful place to live and carry on with their lives. As part of their vision, they protected the high-elevation cloud forest, forests that later became the reserves found in the area.

Overnight: Cala Lodge    



Hoffman's Three-toed Sloth © ryanacandee



Prong-billed Barbet © Andy Morffew



Coppery-headed Emerald © Becky Matsubara

## Day 8: Monday, April 28 **Pacific Lowlands**

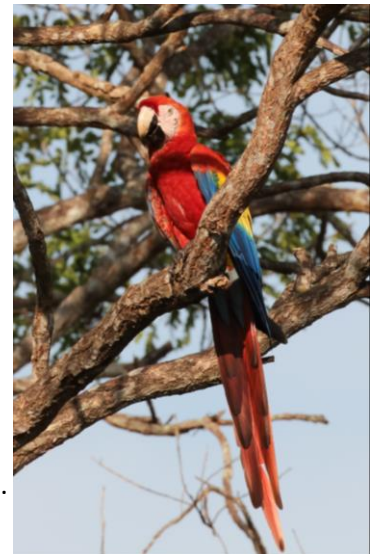
This morning, we will begin our drive to the Central Pacific region with various stops along the way to explore the dry forest areas along Guacimo Road and the Guacalillo area. We expect to find some specialties here like **Orange-fronted Parakeet**, **Long-tailed Manakin**, **Scrub Euphonia**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, among others. You'll arrive at the lodge towards the end of the day. The lodge is located in the Central Pacific lowlands, at an altitude of 200ft with typical hot weather and low humidity. Daytime temperatures average mid-high 90's°F with low humidity. We'll gather in the evening at the lodge's restaurant to eat dinner and log the day's bird sightings.

Overnight: Villa Lapas   

## Day 9: Tuesday, April 29 **Carara NP**

After an early breakfast we'll head out to Carara National Park located in the central Pacific region. Carara is one of Costa Rica's most important national parks due to its geographic location. The park sits right along the convergence zone between the dry north Pacific and the very wet south Pacific region. Here we will look for **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Streak-chested Antpitta**, **Rufous Piha**, and **Rufous-and-White Wren**. The park is also home to the second largest population of **Scarlet Macaw** in the country. In the afternoon we'll explore the areas adjacent to the lodge in search of dry forest species like **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl**, **Lesser Ground-Cuckoo**, **Scrub Euphonia**, and **Double-striped Thick-Knee**. Lunch will be enjoyed at a local restaurant with dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Villa Lapas   



Scarlet Macaw © Toby Ross

## Day 10: Wednesday, April 30

### Tarcoles River and Savegre Highlands

We'll start with an early morning boat tour on the Tarcoles River where we have a chance to find water birds and mangrove specialties. Some possible sightings include **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Southern Lapwing**, **Mangrove Vireo**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, and one more of Costa Rica's four mainland endemic species, the Endangered **Mangrove Hummingbird**\*(EN). After this unforgettable experience you'll continue the journey to the next hotel located in the cool highlands of the Talamanca Mountain range. After settling in you'll explore the grounds in search of highland specialties such as **Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher**, **Black-thighed Grosbeak**, **Ochraceous Wren**, and **White-throated Mountain-Gem**, among others. The Savegre River valley is located at 7,200ft above sea level in a habitat called tropical montane forest, this type of forest is dominated by native oak trees and *Chusquea* bamboo. The climate here is cool with mean temperatures in the mid-high 60's°F during the day, but early mornings can drop to the mid 40's°F. Dinner will be served at the lodge before we review the day's bird sightings.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge



Resplendent Quetzal © Jorge Obando

## Day 11: Thursday, May 1

### Savegre

We'll start the day with an early morning expedition to find the **Resplendent Quetzal**, regularly seen in the valley feeding on wild avocados and nesting in dead trees along the Savegre River. Throughout the day we will have the chance to find many highland species along the various trails and gardens of the hotel. This breath-taking setting is surrounded by highland oak forest and farmland. Some of the highland specialties here are **Slaty flowerpiercer**, **Scintillant Hummingbird**, **Ochraceous** and **Dark Pewees**, **Collared Redstart**, **Black Guan**, and **Yellow-winged Vireo**. All our meals will be provided by the lodge today.

Overnight: Sueños del Bosque Lodge

## Day 12: Friday, May 2

### Los Quetzales National Park

Morning departure back to the Central Valley, with a stop at Los Quetzales National Park located at a higher elevation (11,400ft) to look for **Volcano Junco**, **Timberline Wren**, **Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher**, and **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**. For the group not continuing onto the Extension tour, you'll return to Alajuela and check into the final hotel of the trip and enjoy a farewell dinner. Those participating in the Osa Peninsula Extension, you'll drive south, arriving at the lodge in the afternoon.

Overnight: Buena Vista Chic Hotel

## Day 13: Saturday, May 3

### Alajuela

Transfer to the airport for onward travel.

#### LAND PRICE

\$3,960 per person, group size 11-12  
 \$4,200 per person, group size 9-10  
 \$4,600 per person, group size 7-8

#### REGISTER

To reserve your place on this trip, please contact:  
**Toby Ross** [alighttours@gmail.com](mailto:alighttours@gmail.com) or (206) 552-3834  
 A \$500 deposit is needed to secure your spot.

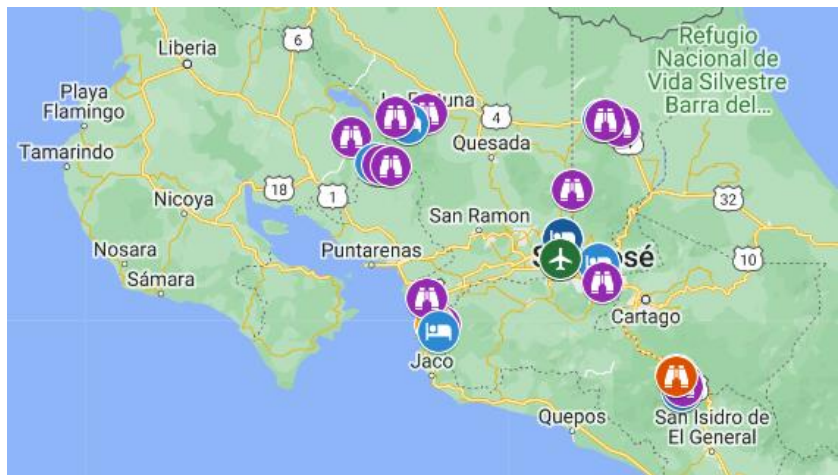
## THE FINE PRINT

Price includes full-time wildlife guide, accommodation in standard rooms, meals and non-alcoholic drinks, park entrance fees and activities as outlined in this itinerary, private transportation (with A/C), arrival and departure transfers, donations to local conservation NGO's, carbon offsets, and a Costa Rica Bird & Wildlife Checklist. The price does not include international flights, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks and gratuities.

Price is based on double occupancy. Single rooms may be available for an additional cost of \$1,050pp. We will make every effort to match people who request to share with others seeking a roommate. The deadline for **final payment is January 1, 2025**. Deposits are refundable less \$100 cancellation fee up until the deadline. Cancellation after the deadline results in the forfeit of the deposit and additional fees.

## MAP

Map shows the locations of birding sites and lodging during this program. Interactive map: [bit.ly/42HsinT](http://bit.ly/42HsinT)









## EXTENSION

For those interested in extending their stay, there is an optional 6-day extension to the Osa Peninsula where there are good chances to find the fourth and final mainland Costa Rican endemic species, the **Black-cheeked Ant-tanager\***.

*See pages 8 - 10 for further details.*

## CONSERVATION CONNECTIONS








Your trip to Costa Rica will support conservation and sustainable development in a number of ways:

-  Employ expertly trained and knowledgeable Costa Rican wildlife guides.
-  Support the local non-profit organization that is helping to conserve the endemic Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow and visit one of their field sites to observe the species in the wild.
-  Learn how the La Selva Biological Research Station became a world-renowned center for tropical biology research, producing 100s of scientific papers every year. You'll support this institution through entrance fees and donations to ensure students and scientists can continue their research.
-  Support local economies by creating a demand for expert wildlife guides, high quality lodging, restaurants, and staff; demonstrating that birds literally do "mean business".
-  Alight Tours will offset the CO<sub>2</sub> from your air travel and in-country ground transportation across a portfolio of forest, biodiversity, clean energy, and blue carbon projects— this fee is included in the cost of this program.
-  Alight Tours will donate 3% of all profits from this trip to an in-country NGO that works to conserve birds, wildlife and the habitats they depend on.

This program is presented in partnership with Crescentia Expeditions, a small Costa Rican owned and operated travel company.



## KEY

-  Locally owned accommodation – so the money we spend on hotels and lodges remains in-country
-  Habitat surrounding hotel/lodge suitable for birding
-  Our stay directly contributes to conservation and/or supports sustainable community initiatives
-  Bird feeders located on the property
-  WiFi internet available
-  Laundry service available
-  Swimming pool on site

\* Endemic – a species only found in Costa Rica and nowhere else

^ Regional Endemic – endemic to Costa Rica plus neighboring Nicaragua and/or Panama

NT – Near Threatened – IUCN classification: nearly threatened with extinction

VU – Vulnerable – IUCN classification: a species that faces a high risk of extinction in the wild

EN – Endangered – IUCN classification: faces a very high risk of extinction

CR – Critically Endangered – IUCN classification: faces an extremely high risk of extinction

## CARBON OFFSET

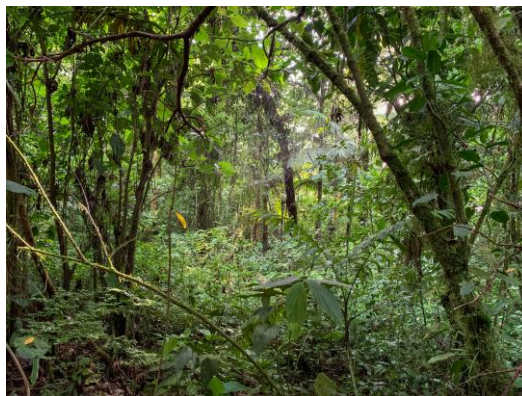
Climate change threatens all life on the planet, as well as the very destinations that ecotourism relies on. Tourism is responsible for roughly [8% of the world's carbon emissions](#), making it a significant contributor to climate change. A single return flight from Seattle to San Jose, Costa Rica produces about 1.5 metric tons of carbon emissions per passenger. That's **over a quarter** of the [amount of carbon](#) that the **average person worldwide produces per year** – just from one round trip flight.

Every time we fly on a plane, stay in a hotel, or ride in a car, carbon emissions are being generated. While there are many ways that you can, and should, minimize your carbon footprint while traveling (e.g. turning off the air conditioner and lights when not in your room), no matter how sustainable our travel habits are, certain CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are unavoidable. That's where carbon offsetting comes in. By calculating your carbon footprint, you can pay a small amount to an organization that supports a portfolio of forest, biodiversity, clean energy, and blue carbon projects that focus on capturing carbon and locking it away in the environment where it belongs.

Alight Tours is committed to reducing the negative impact its tourism activities have on the environment. We are partnering with Sustainable Travel International to offset all the carbon emissions every passenger has on every Alight Tours trip.



White-faced Capuchin © Toby Ross



Costa Rican rainforest © Toby Ross



Fiery-throated Hummingbird © Toby Ross



Crested Guan © Toby Ross



# Costa Rica – Osa Peninsula

## OSA PENINSULA EXTENSION

Explore Corcovado National Park which covers a large portion of the Osa Peninsula with tropical lowland rainforest. This area located on the southern Pacific coast is described by National Geographic as “one of the most biologically intense places on Earth”. Warm and humid conditions prevail for most of the year providing excellent habitat for lowland rainforest specialties.


**Dates:** May 2 – 7, 2025 (6 days)

**Our itinerary:** [MAP](#)

**Price:** \$1,200






**In-country Guide:** Jose Pablo Castillo

**Potential Species:** 100

 This program will involve early mornings, moderate-to-high intensity birding, with some rough terrain.

### Day 1: Friday, May 2      **Los Quetzales National Park and Osa Peninsula**






Morning departure to the Osa Peninsula, with a stop at Los Quetzales National Park located at a higher elevation (11,400 ft) to look for **Volcano Junco**, **Timberline Wren**, **Black-and-Yellow Silky-Flycatcher**, and **Fiery-throated Hummingbird**. We’ll continue driving south, arriving at the lodge in the afternoon. On the Osa Peninsula we find Tropical Lowland Rainforest where warm and humid conditions prevail for most of the year, with the rainy season arriving in May, so here we can expect afternoon and late-night showers for our trip. The lodge sits at an elevation of only 100 ft and is surrounded by lush gardens and rainforest. We can commonly see the regionally endemic **Charming Hummingbird**<sup>^</sup>, **Red-lored Parrot**, **Gray-cowled Wood-Rail**, and much more around the grounds. Lunch will be at a local restaurant en-route, with dinner and checklist review at the lodge.

**Overnight:** Danta Corcovado Lodge     



**Day 2: Saturday, May 3 Corcovado National Park**

Full day of birding around the grounds and vicinity of the lodge. We'll start the day with a short drive to Rincon River Bridge to try for **Yellow-billed Cotinga**, and hopefully **Turquoise Cotinga**, then return to the lodge for breakfast. The lodge protects a private reserve surrounded by Corcovado National Park and is an excellent example of sustainable tourism in Costa Rica. During the rest of the day, we'll explore the lodge's trails and surrounding areas. **Fiery-billed Aracari**, **Golden-naped Woodpecker**, **Little Tinamou**, **Bronzy Hermit**, and **Black-bellied Wren** will be our target species here. We'll enjoy all our meals at the lodge's great, open-air restaurant.

*Overnight:* Danta Corcovado Lodge     




**Day 3: Sunday, May 4 La Gamba**

Today we'll continue to a different area of the Osa Peninsula, this time to the La Gamba Biological Station area. After the 1.5hr drive, you'll have a chance to freshen up and then have lunch. During our time here we'll explore the grounds in search of Costa Rica's endemic and Endangered **Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager\***. Some of the other specialties of this region are **Baird's Trogon**, **Spot-crowned Euphonia**, **Black-striped Woodcreeper**, **Orange-collared Manakin**, and much more.

*Overnight:* Esquinas Rainforest Lodge     

**Day 4: Monday, May 5 Piedras Blancas National Park**

Full day birding around the lodge's grounds and trails. We'll also check the areas adjacent to La Gamba Biological Station and Piedras Blancas National Park. Dense lowland rainforest along the trails as well as more open habitat in the area offers chances for some specialties such as **Black-hooded Antshrike**, **Chiriqui Foliage-gleaner**, **Royal Flycatcher**, and **Riverside Wren**.

*Overnight:* Esquinas Rainforest Lodge     

**Day 5: Tuesday, May 6 Piedras Blancas National Park**

After an early morning walk and breakfast at the lodge, we'll begin our journey back to the Central Valley exploring the area adjacent to Piedras Blancas National Park en route, a famous hotspot where we can find **Brown-throated Parakeet**, **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**, **Blue Ground-Dove**, **Pearl Kite** and others. We'll then continue on to the Central Valley via the coastal road, stopping for birding and lunch along the way. You'll arrive at the hotel toward the end of the afternoon, and we'll gather one final time to review the checklist and have a farewell dinner at the hotel's fine restaurant.

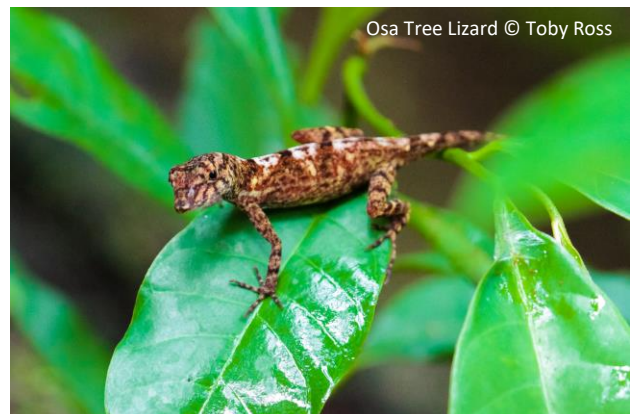
*Overnight:* Buena Vista Chic Hotel  

**Day 6: Wednesday, May 7 San Jose**

Transfer to the airport for onward travel.



Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager  
© Francesco Veronesi



Osa Tree Lizard © Toby Ross

## LAND PRICE

\$1,200 per person, group size 11-12

\$1,350 per person, group size 9-10

\$1,425 per person, group size 7-8

## REGISTER

To reserve your place on this trip extension, please contact:

**Toby Ross** [alighttours@gmail.com](mailto:alighttours@gmail.com) or (206) 552-3834







A \$300 deposit is needed to secure your spot.

## THE FINE PRINT

Price includes full-time wildlife guide, accommodation in standard rooms, meals and non-alcoholic drinks, park entrance fees and activities as outlined in this itinerary, private transportation (with A/C), arrival and departure transfers, donations to local conservation NGO's, carbon offsets, and a Costa Rica Bird & Wildlife Checklist. The price does not include international flights, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks and gratuities.

Cost is based on double occupancy. Single rooms may be available for an additional cost of \$300. A \$300 per person deposit is required to reserve your space on this extension trip. The deadline for **final payment is January 1, 2025**. Deposits are refundable less \$100 cancellation fee up until the deadline. Cancellation after the deadline results in the forfeit of the deposit and additional fees.

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Spot-crowned Euphonia © Charlie Jackson

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