

Birds of Cloud Forest

An Epic Photo Escape to Ecuador

MARCH 20-28, 2023

Day 1:

Upon your arrival in Quito (Ecuador's capital) you will be met at the airport with your transportation to our lodging for the night. Say hello and meet all the group over our introductory group dinner. We have also planned to have a class this first night, focused entirely on camera settings. The class will help ensure that you know how to set your camera for optimal results when photographing birds in flight.

Day 2:

We'll depart our hotel early in the morning for Antisana National Park! The goal is to see giant hummingbirds and condors! Antisana National Park is home to over 400 species of birds, and of course other wildlife. If we are very lucky, we may even spot an Andean Bear and/or an endangered Mountain Tapir. In the afternoon, we'll check into our hotel in the village of Papallacta, which is considered the doorway to the Ecuadorian Amazon region.

Day 3:

We'll spend a Full Day at our lodge in Papallacta. The lodge has hummingbird feeders that attract many species, including the Sword-Billed Hummingbird. Trails surround the lodge, with one that leads to a waterfall. At times, Toucans can be seen in the distance when on and around the trails. Within a 10-minute walk from the hotel is a river in which Torrent Ducks are often seen diving in and out of the rapids. It's quite the sight!

During our stay in Papallacta, the entire lodge will be occupied by only our group for the overnights. That means we'll have the place to ourselves each evening for sitting by the fire and sharing photos/stories after a three-course delicious meal - giving you a taste of the local food.

We will have a class in the evening on Day 3 teaching how to use off camera flash to get still images of hummingbirds in flight. We will also have time for your one-on-one with Kristi Odom and Jen Waicukauski.

Day 4:

Today we are off to go deeper into the cloud forest to Cosanga (by the way – Cosanga is considered a “Best Place to Visit” by Tripadvisor!). En route, we will stop at La Brisa Hummingbird Garden to see all the beautiful species that visit their feeders. One common visitor that we hope to photograph is the stunning Booted Racket-Tailed Hummingbird.

We'll arrive at our lodge in the evening and enjoy a group dinner while keeping our eyes open for the Black-Banded Owl that visits the lodge at night.

Day 5, 6, 7:

In the mornings our lodge is visited by a huge variety of birds. We start our mornings photographing them over coffee, tea and breakfast. There are lots of options here, from taking a cooking class to hiking into the cloud forest.

An interpretive trail heads out from the lodge teaching all about local biodiversity. Keep an eye out on this trail, as sometimes it is visited by the endangered Mountain Tapir. There will be time for more classes and one-on-one time with your instructors.

On one of the days during our stay here, we'll leave the lodge to visit the Narupa Reserve. “Narupa was established as a reserve in 2006 by the Ecuadorian conservation non-profit group Jocotoco Foundation to protect a large block of eastern Andean foothill forest, one of the largest in this part of Ecuador.” By visiting we are supporting their efforts for local conservation and preservation of the Ecuadorian forests.

The lodge prides itself in preparing amazing food made from local produce, truly showing you Ecuadorian Cuisine at its finest. A few words from their website: “The cuisine is original, vanguard and always evolving; in current cooking terms, we like to best classify it as what has become popularly known as “slow food”. We produce our own organic vegetables, chickens, as well as give priority to local providers, creating an incentive for them to plant and rescue traditional products that might have otherwise gone long forgotten. This all paves the way for more environmentally friendly and agriculturally sustainable practices that promote the diversity and cultural awareness of organic products.”

Day 8:

After lunch in our lodge, we’ll return to Quito. You will be free to explore the city in the afternoon. In the evening, we’ll have a group dinner and share our favorite images with each other from our adventure!

Day 9:

We say goodbye to our new friends and depart ways at the Quito airport.