

Ecuador

Cloud Forest Birding Expedition – 3 Days

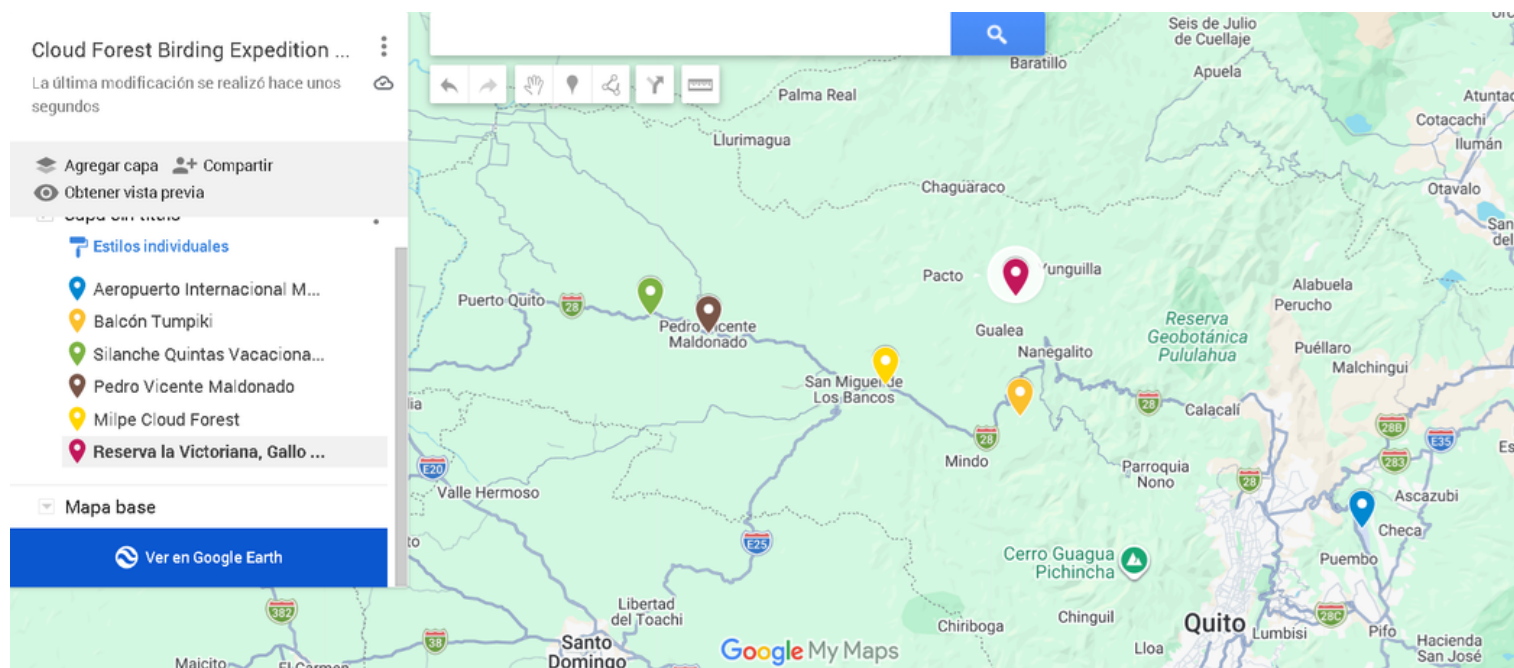


Plate-billed mountain toucan

Experience three unforgettable days of birdwatching through the spectacular cloud forests of the Chocó Andino, exploring some of the most iconic birding locations in this unique region of Ecuador. From misty high-elevation forests to lush mountain valleys, each day will take you to a different habitat, where you can discover an incredible variety of species. The experience includes visits to renowned bird feeders and strategic observation sites, offering exciting opportunities to see some of the region's most representative birds, including the Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Giant Antpitta, and Andean Toucan, along with colorful tanagers, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, toucanets, and many other cloud forest species.

More than just a birdwatching tour, this three-day adventure is an opportunity to immerse yourself in the extraordinary biodiversity of the Chocó Andino. Guided walks through native forests, visits to iconic birding spots, scenic landscapes, local gastronomy, and close encounters at bird feeders will make every day a new discovery. Whether you are an experienced birder, a wildlife photographer, or simply fascinated by nature, the diversity of habitats and species will keep you watching, listening, and searching for the next unforgettable sight.

Map



Itinerary



Day 1	Alambi & Balcón Tumpiki Hummingbirds at Alambi, guided birdwatching at Balcón Tumpiki, San Tadeo feeder and a nocturnal walk.
Day 2	Silanche, Frutitour & Milpe Explore different Chocó Andino habitats, visiting Silanche, Frutitour and Milpe for diverse birdwatching opportunities.
Day 3	Santa Elena & Balcón Tumpiki See the Andean Cock-of-the-rock at Santa Elena, followed by guided birdwatching trails at Balcón Tumpiki before returning to Quito.



Description of the observation sites



Plate-billed mountain toucan

Your first day begins with a morning visit to Alambi, one of the most rewarding places in the Chocó Andino for observing hummingbirds. Here, surrounded by lush vegetation and mountain landscapes, we will look for a remarkable variety of species, including Green Hermit, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Tawny-bellied Hermit, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Sparkling Violetear, Velvet-purple Coronet, Brown Inca, Collared Inca, Violet-tailed Sylph, Booted Racket-tail, Western White-tailed Hillstar, and White-booted Racket-tail. This first encounter with the cloud forest offers excellent opportunities for close observation and photography.



Black Capped Tanager

After breakfast at Balcón Tumpiki, we will explore its native forest trails with a specialized birdwatching guide. As we move through different elevations and habitats, we can encounter colorful species such as Masked Trogon, Toucan Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Dusky Chlorospingus, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager, Palm Tanager, Rufous-crested Tanager, Black-capped Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Flame-faced Tanager, and Golden Tanager. Every trail brings new possibilities, with birds moving through the canopy, forest edges, and surrounding vegetation.



In the afternoon, we will visit the San Tadeo feeder, an excellent location to continue exploring the birdlife of the Chocó Andino before returning to Balcón Tumpiki for dinner. As night falls, the adventure continues with a guided nocturnal walk through the forest, where we will search for the fascinating creatures that become active after dark. It is the perfect way to finish a day filled with hummingbirds, toucans, tanagers, and the sounds of the cloud forest.

Description of the observation sites

We begin the day early in Silanche, exploring the lower-elevation Chocó forest and looking for species such as Chocó Toucan, Yellow-throated Toucan, Blue-tailed Trogon, Rufous Motmot, Orange-fronted Barbet, and other colorful forest birds. We then continue through Frutitour, enjoying the changing landscapes and habitats of the region.



Choco Toucan By Pedro Mansaba

In the afternoon, we will explore the trails of Milpe, making the most of the final hours of daylight to observe birds in the canopy, understory, and forest edges. This change in elevation perfectly complements the experience, allowing us to discover species that we may not encounter on the first day in the higher-elevation forests.



Crimson-rumped toucanet

Afterwards, we will continue to Frutitour, enjoying the landscape and the transition into the lower-elevation areas of the Pedro Vicente Maldonado region. This part of the journey will allow us to continue searching for forest birds and species along the forest edges as we make our way to Milpe Bird Sanctuary, one of the most renowned birdwatching sites in this part of the Chocó Andino. At Milpe, we can look for emblematic species such as Chocó Toucan, Red-headed Barbet, Club-winged Manakin, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, and Blue-whiskered Tanager, along with other birds that form part of the large mixed-species flocks found in the forest.



Pale-mandibled Aracari

Description of the observation sites



Cock-of-the-rock

We will start early with a visit to Santa Elena (La Victoriana) to search for the iconic Andean Cock-of-the-rock in its natural habitat. Afterwards, we will return to Balcón Tumpiki for breakfast and a guided walk along its trails, looking for species such as the Yellow Breasted Antpitta, before lunch and the transfer back to Quito.



Masked trogon

Important notes

The price of the tour is listed on our website. The tour accommodates a maximum of four people. The price decreases as the number of people increases.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from breakfast on day 1 to lunch on day 3;
- Bottled drinking water
- Soft drinks at meals
- All lodgings
- Ground transportation
- Extra activities mentioned in the itinerary;
- All national park and other reserve entrance fees; and
- Local guiding services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees
- Any flights
- Any beverages expect noted
- Optional excursions
- No tips or gratuities
- Other items of a personal nature
- Binoculars or birdwatching equipment.

This tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time. Guests will be notified when longer walks may be undertaken. If you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure. The lunch menu is subject to change; please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions or allergies.

Important Details

The tour begins in Quito on day 1 with a welcome breakfast, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day; you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude after our internal on day 3.

Mariscal Sucre International Airport, Quito (IATA: UIO), Quito is the major port of entry into Ecuador for this tour.

You must provide the name of your hotel in Quito and send your location, as well as the details for each passenger, exclusively to the person designated by Balcon Tumpiki.