



**CHEESEMAN'S' ECOLOGY SAFARIS**  
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**Santa Marta Extension**  
***Endemic Abundance***  
February 18 to 25, 2024



Santa Marta Mountains  
© JJ Arango

## **EXTENSION OVERVIEW**

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Discover one of the most important endemism centers on the planet as you ascend from the Caribbean shore to the world's highest coastal peak. Travel through Isla Salamanca, Tayrona, and Los Flamencos National Parks where birding through mangroves and coastal wetlands, along the ocean and in dry scrub forest, should yield species such as the near endemic buffy hummingbird, the endemic chestnut-winged chachalaca, russet-throated puffbird, the near endemic chestnut piculet, bicolored conebill, tocuayo sparrow, and Panama flycatcher among many others. Beginning and ending in Barranquilla, search for many of these endemics: Santa Marta screech-owl, antpittas, mountain-tanagers, tapaculos, foliage-gleaners, brush-finches, parakeets, sabrewings, bush-tyrants, seedeaters, warblers, and a plethora more!

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Bird at varied elevations to encounter incredible diversity.
- Traverse new walkways through the mangroves facilitating rare finds.
- Picnic at high altitude taking in an expansive view of the Sierra Nevada.
- Seek 22 endemic species concentrated in the Santa Marta area.

**TRIP OPTION:** This is a post-trip extension to our Colombia February 11 to 18, 2024 trip (<https://cheesemans.com/trips/colombia-feb2024>).

**LEADER:** Jose Luna.

**DAYS:** 8, including estimated travel time. Adds 7 days to the main trip to total 15 days, including estimated travel time.

**GROUP SIZE:** 8.

**COST:** \$4,010 per person (with 7 to 8 people), \$4,720 per person (with 5 to 6 people), \$6,260 per person (with 3 to 4 people), double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Cali to Barranquilla), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Feb 18	Fly to Barranquilla from Cali.	Hotel Movich, Barranquilla	L, D
Feb 19	Explore Isla Salamanca National Park in the morning and bird along the way to El Dorado Lodge.	El Dorado Lodge, Santa Marta	B, L, D
Feb 20	Bird higher elevations towards Cerro Kennedy looking for numerous endemics.		
Feb 21	Enjoy a day of birding around the lodge observing a variety of hummingbirds and finches.		
Feb 22	Drive to Barvento, birding along the road to Minca searching for lower elevation species.	Maloka, Barlovento	
Feb 23	Visit Los Flamencos National Park and view potentially hundreds of flamingos.		
Feb 24	Spend the morning in Tayrona National Park listening to a symphony of birdsongs before returning to Barranquilla.	Hotel Movich, Barranquilla	
Feb 25	Fly home.		B

## LEADER

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### Jose Luna

Jose was born and raised in the western Andes of Colombia, and he has been birding since he was 16 years old. Jose was the first guide to join Colombia Birdwatch and has since traveled throughout most regions of Colombia with hundreds of guests from all corners of the world. Jose shines amongst his colleagues for his calm demeanor, friendliness, and proficiency in English, not to mention his ability to find birds.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

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### Feb 18 ~ Travel to Barranquilla, Colombia from Cali

After a flight to Barranquilla on Colombia's Caribbean Coast, have lunch and spend the late afternoon birding.

### Feb 19 ~ Isla Salamanca to El Dorado

Rise early and spend the morning birding at Isla Salamanca National Park, 45 minutes from Barranquilla, where you will explore the newly rebuilt walkways through the mangroves in search of sapphire-throated hummingbird, bicolor conebill, the common brown-throated parakeet, green-and-rufous kingfisher, and yellow-chinned spintail, among many others. You will also have time to bird some wetlands in the area in search of northern screamer and other specialties. You will have lunch on the road and then begin an ascent up the Santa Marta Mountains.



Santa Marta Warbler  
© JJ Arango

In the afternoon, you will bird through a vast altitudinal gradient, stopping at different elevations along the road to El Dorado Lodge. Birding up the mountain will surely yield numerous species including golden-winged sparrow, rosy thrush-tanager, rusty-headed spintail, ruddy foliage-gleaner, the recently described Santa Marta foliage-gleaner, rusty-breasted antpitta, Santa Marta tapaculo, black-backed antshrike, the magnificently colored blue-naped chlorophonia, and the attractive rufous-capped warbler.

### Feb 20 ~ Cerro Kennedy

Rise early and head up to higher elevations towards Cerro Kennedy in search of these endemics: Santa Marta parakeet, Santa Marta warbler, Santa Marta mountain-tanager, Santa Marta bush-tyrant, and brown-rumped Tapaculo, among many others. You will have a picnic at high elevation with great views of the Sierra Nevada, and bird along the road on our way down, hoping to run into awe-inspiring species such as swallow tanager, grove-billed and Santa Marta toucanet, black-chested jay, the endemic white-lored warbler, golden-breasted fruiteater,



Blue-naped Chlorophonia  
© JJ Arango





White-whiskered Spinetail  
© JJ Arango

and the near endemic white-tipped quetzal. After dinner you will certainly scout for the endemic and recently described Santa Marta screech-owl.

### **Feb 21 ~ El Dorado Lodge**

After breakfast, enjoy the well-maintained feeders at the lodge. Hummingbirds that visit the feeders include the endemic white-tailed starfrontlet, white-vented plumeteer, and long-tailed hermit. The bananas attract the endemic Santa Marta brush-finch as well as the endemic Colombian brush-finch, and the many flowers in the garden attract white-sided and black flowerpiercer. You will spend some time searching for the Santa Marta antpitta, a skulker that will take some work. A day of birding near the lodge will have its rewards, a special treat being the near endemic black-fronted wood-quail that visits the lodge's compost pile in the afternoon.

### **Feb 22 ~ El Dorado Lodge to Barlovento**

After some birding around the lodge in the morning, spend the afternoon birding along the road to Minca. You will enjoy the hummingbird feeders at the hotel while we have breakfast. Some of the species that visit include rufous-breasted hermit, black-throated mango, long-billed starthroat, the near endemic red-billed emerald, and violet-crowned woodnymph. You will also have time to explore the surroundings in search of birds such as black-backed antshrike, scaled piculet, swallow tanager, rufous-tailed jacamar, keel-billed toucan, masked tityra, and whooping motmot. After lunch, you head down the hill towards your hotel near Tayrona National Park. On the way, you will stop to catch any birds you missed on the drive up, making a stop in the town of Minca, a great location to bird for lower elevation species.



Santa Marta Antpitta  
© JJ Arango



American Flamingos  
© JJ Arango

### **Feb 23 ~ Los Flamencos National Park**

Visit Los Flamencos and the village of Camarones. This is the west edge of the Guajira desert where dry forest becomes shorter and more sparse and bare dry earth separates the trees from each other. However, before you have a mistaken idea of a parched world, Los Flamencos is on the coast, and it has shallow waterbodies that fill from the rains that evaporate during the dry season. These evaporating ponds concentrate salt, and then brine shrimp bloom, which brings in the namesake bird of the park – American flamingos! Their numbers vary depending on water levels, but they can be here in the hundreds on a good day. You will also find gulls, terns, and many migratory shorebirds.



Retreating to the forest though, one is quite surprised that a series of very attractive regional specialties are found here. The sole South American offshoot of what is really a North American group, the vermilion cardinal is found here. Nothing prepares you, even if you have backyard northern cardinals, for the striking red of this species, the overdone crest, and the very different look from its close relatives from the north. On the ground, a member of a group that is usually very drab and brown may elicit "Wows!" from the crowd; the white-whiskered spinetail is one heck of a good-looking spinetail.

Pecking in the branches and trilling away is a tiny and colorful woodpecker, the chestnut piculet. You will also find specialties that are more somber in tone, such as the slender-billed inezia (tyrannulet) and white-tipped inezia. A crowd favorite is the russet-throated puffbird (called the bobo bird by locals) that will just sit staring back at you as hard as you stare at it. In a crowd of what tends to be relatively greenish or grayish and nondescript, the saltators, the uncommon orinoco saltator, is quite nice-looking bird. Don't ask why this drab desert habitat hosts so many good-looking birds, just enjoy these wonderful dry forest birds. After lunch, you drive back to Barlovento.

### **Feb 24 ~ Tayrona National Park and back to Barranquilla**

Visit the park in the morning, and if all things align, the blue-billed curassow could show itself. Otherwise, this is a great place to see some species that you are not as likely to see elsewhere on the trip. One abundant bird that is easier to see here than anywhere is the stunning lance-tailed manakin. Sometimes it can be found with its relative, the white-bearded manakin. The birds here are varied, from crane hawk and boat-billed heron to greater ani, white-necked puffbird, and rufous-tailed jacamars. The blue-headed parrot is common, and lineated woodpeckers are impressive to see as they forage on the large trees.

White-bellied antbirds belt out their song from the understory. If we are lucky, they will even show themselves. The complex songs of buff-breasted and bicolor wrens are heard in the forest, along with the repetitive songs of scrub greenlets, nasal sounds of barred antshrikes, or loud calls of boat-billed and streaked flycatchers. It is an active area full of birds! Crimson-backed tanagers and the gorgeous red-legged honeycreepers give a lot of color to the local flocks. While birding here, it is common to see the cottontop tamarin, a gorgeous little monkey dwarfed by the less common white-fronted capuchin. After lunch, you head to the city of Barranquilla to prepare for flights home.



White-bearded Manakin  
© JJ Arango

### **Feb 25 ~ Fly Home**

## **COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)**

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### **Cost**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Cost per Person</b>
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$4,010 (7 to 8 people)
	\$4,720 (5 to 6 people)
	\$6,260 (3 to 4 people)
Single Supplement	\$480

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Cali to Barranquilla), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

### **Payment Schedule**

Payment is due with your main trip's final payment; see its trip itinerary for details at <https://cheesemans.com/trips/colombia-feb2024>.

### **Cancellations**

Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date

### **Included**

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- One-way flight from Cali to Barranquilla.
- Accommodations for the nights of February 18 through February 24.
- Meals from lunch on February 18 through breakfast on February 25.
- Transfers from the Araucana Lodge to the Cali Airport and from the Barranquilla Airport to Hotel Movich on February 18. Transfer from Hotel Movich to the Barranquilla Airport on February 25.
- Water to refill your reusable bottles and snacks.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, gratuities, etc.

### **Not Included**

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Round-trip airfare is approximately \$750 to \$950 from the US to Cali and back to the US from Baranquilla, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- COVID tests.
- Divergent airport transfers and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$210 to \$350 total per participant for our main leader, local leaders, and lodge staff.
- Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance. For more information see [www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance](http://www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance).

- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Reservation Form.

## SIGN UP

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Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Email: [info@cheesemans.com](mailto:info@cheesemans.com)

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## OTHER DETAILS

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### Climate

Weather conditions can be variable; however, many sites are cool (and sometimes damp, foggy, and windy) and require a medium weight jacket and/or sweater. At Cuchilla de San Lorenzo, the mornings will be cold (close to freezing at dawn) rising into the 60s°F for highs. While in the Santa Marta Mountains, rain can occur at any time, and although February is not the rainiest season, expect some rain, as the mountains generally receive high rainfall. Dress with layers for changing conditions. The lowlands will be hot and humid with lows in the 70s°F and highs in the 90s°F.

### Fitness Level

This trip involves a one-day ascent from Barranquilla to Santa Marta, with an elevation gain of roughly 10,000ft. If you have heart or lung disease, or any other reason to suspect that high altitude may pose a problem for you, please speak with your doctor before booking this trip. Throughout the trip, you'll walk at a slow pace, but the effects of altitude may make some of the walks seem more strenuous than the distance suggests, especially at Cerro Kennedy. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

### Flights

Unless listed as included, airfare is not included in trip costs. Detailed logistical information and the contact information for our recommended flight-ticketing agent are included in the Trip Materials we will send you. Please let us know if you are arriving earlier or staying later, as we are happy to assist you with any extra overnights that you might want to arrange.

**Flights you (or a travel agent) book:** Arrive in Cali, Colombia (CLO) by 3:00pm on February 11. Depart from Barranquilla, Colombia (BAQ) between 12:00am and 4:00pm on February 25.

Flights we book for you: The one-way flight from Cali to Barranquilla is included in the trip cost.

### Terms and Conditions

Read our current Terms and Conditions at <https://cheesemans.com/terms-and-conditions>.



## Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for Colombia** (<https://cheesemans.com/ecotourism-and-conservation-in-Colombia>).
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral:** As of June 1, 2022, our trips are carbon neutral (<https://cheesemans.com/carbon-neutral>).
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. Use this tool to calculate your emissions and purchase your carbon offset today through Sustainable Travel International, or through your favorite carbon offsetting organization (<https://cheesemans.com/carbon-calculator>).