

DAILY ITINERARY

Costa Rica Private Bird Photography Tour with Costa Rican Birding Guide Esteban Mendez and Photography Instructor Joe Fischer

May 4th – 13th 2025

Day 1

Pick up at our hotel at 8 am. We'll drive 2 hours south to the Talamanca Mountains at an elevation of 8000 feet to find regional species only found in this area. We'll start right out with a photo session at Cabinas El Quetzal gardens along the river with feeders that attract emerald green toucanet, tanagers, woodpeckers, white throated hummingbirds, among others.

For 2 nights we'll stay at **La Gema del Bosque**

Day 2

Before breakfast we will drive to some hot spots for spotting Resplendent Quetzal's. After breakfast we'll have a photo session at Batsu Gardens. These incredible gardens have many bird and hummingbird feeders that allow us to photograph species such lesser violet ear, volcano, and stripe tailed hummers along with many bird species.

Day 3

After breakfast, we drive about 3 hours north for a boat tour on the Tarcoles River for mangrove specialties, including the endemic Mangrove hummingbird, panama flycatcher, Northern scrub flycatcher and other wetland species. After lunch we continue driving for 2 more hours to our next destination, Monteverde.

For 2 nights we'll stay at **Arco Iris Lodge**.

Day 4

Today we'll visit two reserves. First is the San Luis Eco Farm, a family owned reserve with bird feeders making it easy to photograph birds. Montezuma oropendulas, scarlet rumped tanagers, lesson's motmot, gray headed chachalacas are some of the many birds here that keep coming to the feeders throughout the day. After lunch, we'll visit the Curi Cancha Reserve with a unique combination of gardens and primary forest making it a great place to spot many birds including coatis, agoutis, tanagers and many more.

Optional night tour at Curi Cancha Reserve; nocturnals and frog macro photography

Day 5

After breakfast we check out and drive to Bijagua for birding in Tapir Valley. Here we'll spend the morning with a walk through secondary and primary rainforests, a good place for antbirds, tody motmot, flocks of tanagers and good chances of finding a tapir! There is also a fruit feeder filled with yellow throated toucans, red legged honeycreepers and many more colorful birds where we can work on our photo skills. Afterwards we continue our drive to La Fortuna and the Arenal region.

For 2 nights in Arenal we'll stay at **Hotel Lomas del Volcan**

Optional night tour at Arenal Oasis; frog macro photography

Day 6

After breakfast we head to the Arenal Observatory Lodge. This amazing place has a network of trails and gardens as well as a deck at the restaurant where you can enjoy the most stunning views of the Arenal volcano and birds at the fruit feeder. After lunch we'll bird the famous Peninsula Road along Arenal Lake that combines water with forest habitats. This is good for keel billed toucans, motots, rufous tailed jacamars, crested guan and many more.

Optional night tour at Bogarin Trail; frog macro photography

Day 7

After breakfast we'll visit the world famous Bogarin Trail. This little reserve is located at La Fortuna town, surrounded by civilization and pasture land, which is like a forest island for birds and wildlife that found their ideal habitat. Easy walk with flat trails where we can find sloths, agouties, coaties, broad billed motmot, uniform crane, black & white owls. After lunch we drive to Sarapiquí to visit the famous police road, a good place for endangered great green macaws.

For 3 nights in Sarapiquí we'll stay at **Ara Ambigua**

Day 8

Today, we'll have an early breakfast and head to La Selva Biological Station, a tropical research station with many amazing species including rufous motmots, black cowled oriole, red throated ant tanager, rufous tail jacamar among many others. After lunch we will explore the trails at our hotel with lush gardens and jungle.

Day 9

Today we visit Frogs Heaven. This unique, photographer owned sanctuary is combined with secondary forest and trails. The forest is good to see sloths and monkeys and many bird species, or you can photograph their collections of snakes and frogs in a covered area built for photographers. They have a beautiful collection of vipers and specialty frogs they will bring out of their cages for us to photograph or you can choose to walk the jungle for birds and mammals.

Day 10

After breakfast, we'll drive to Guapiles for a photo session at Cope's Place. Here they have created another unique ecosystem full of birds, frogs and insects. This location will provide more chances to polish all of the different photo skills you learned.

Drive back to San Jose to end the tour