



## FEMALE BIRDERS FLOCKING TO COLOMBIA

### A BIRDING & CULTURAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH NORTHERN COLOMBIA

Discover the beauty of Colombia with our specially crafted tour, designed for adventurous women seeking an unforgettable experience! Immerse yourself in the vibrant culture and breathtaking landscapes of this diverse country, which boasts the highest bird biodiversity in the world.

As we embark on this journey, we will explore the wonders of northern Colombia, a haven for nature enthusiasts. From high elevation mountains to lush wetlands, mangroves, deserts, and coastal habitats, each stop on our tour offers a unique glimpse into Colombia's ecological richness.

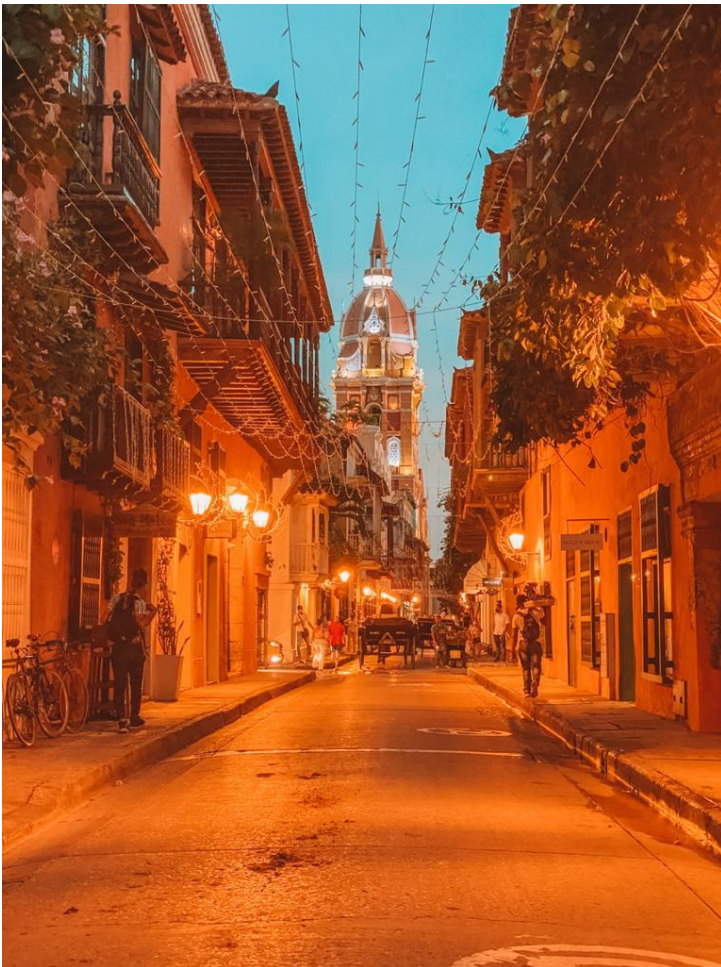
But this tour is more than just a nature expedition; it is an opportunity to connect with inspiring Colombian women who have triumphed over adversity, embracing sustainable alternatives after living through war. Additionally, we will engage with indigenous communities that have found a passion for bird watching as a means of local environmental conservation and a source of extra income.

As we delve into the cultural tapestry of the Colombian Caribbean, you will witness a rich blend of traditions stemming from the ancient indigenous peoples, Spanish settlers in 1499, and the introduction of African tribes. The result is a unique fusion of music, traditions, and lifestyles that continue to thrive today.

Join us on this incredible journey of discovery, where every moment is an opportunity to connect, learn, and be inspired by the wonders of Colombia!

Day	Activity	Overnight Stay	Altitude	
			Meters	Feet
1	Arrival to Cartagena	Cartagena	Sea Level	
2	Birding at Ciénaga de la Virgen, visit to Damartes Project & Traditional drums workshop			
3	City tour in Cartagena Walled city and transfer to Barranquilla	Barranquilla	20	65
4	Birding Isla Salamanca National Park & Barranquilla Area			
5	Visit to the Stilt villages of Ciénaga Grande - Transfer to Minca	Los Colores de la Sierra lodge	650	2132
6	Birding around Minca & visit to a traditional Coffee Farm			
7	Birding the road towards Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta	Mountain House lodge	1600	5249
8	Birding at Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta higher elevation		2600	8530
9	Morning birding at the Sierra Nevada and Transfer to Tayrona Area	La Jorara lodge	Sea Level	
10	Full day at Los Flamencos Flora and Fauna Sanctuary			
11	International flights	End of services		

## DETAILED ITINERARY



### DAY 1. ARRIVAL TO CARTAGENA

Arriving in Cartagena is like stepping into a vibrant tapestry of colors and coastal charm. As your plane descends, you catch glimpses of the turquoise Caribbean waters, hinting at the paradise that awaits. The hotel, a splendid blend of modern luxury and Caribbean elegance, stands tall against the azure sky.

The first night we will have a welcoming dinner with the tour leader.

Accommodation at Radisson Hotel.

### DAY 2. BIRDING AT CIENAGA DE LA VIRGEN. VISIT TO DAMARTES PROJECT & TRADITIONAL DRUMS WORKSHOP

Our first birding destination will be La Boquilla, a charming fishing village of African descent, where a heroic cultural resistance has preserved ancestral traditions for over 200 years. The heartbeat of this community is the Ciénaga de la Virgen, a vibrant swamp where drums take center stage in the rhythmic celebration of heritage.



In the early morning, our journey begins with an enchanting birding experience in the mangroves. Our primary focus will be on the diverse array of shorebirds that call this coastal haven home. Keep your eyes peeled for the graceful Black-necked Stilt, as well as an impressive variety of plovers and sandpipers that gracefully navigate the intertidal zones. The tranquil setting of the mangroves offers a unique opportunity to witness these feathered wonders in their natural habitat, creating a magical and memorable start to our day.

Following our morning birding adventure in the mangroves, we will dive into the inspiring world of conservation initiatives led by the resilient women of La Boquilla. Our first stop is DAMARTES (Damas y Madres del arte), an association comprising seven remarkable women. Using coconut as their raw material, they artfully craft an array of jewelry, vases, containers, belts, and accessories. These women represent the vanguard in La Boquilla, being the first to generate their own income through their craft. Joining them, we will not only witness their creative process but also actively participate, learning the artistry that infuses enthusiasm and patience into every coconut creation.

In the afternoon, our journey of cultural exploration takes us to BATAMBORA, a project spearheaded by young entrepreneurs from the Afro-descendant community of La Boquilla. Their dedication lies in human and economic development, with a primary focus on rescuing and preserving the rich cultural traditions of African heritage. Here, we will immerse ourselves in the soulful rhythms of "los tambores," their traditional drums, which are the heartbeat of their unique musical heritage. This hands-on experience will not only deepen our understanding of their cultural legacy but also foster a connection with the vibrant spirit of La Boquilla's Afro-descendant community. Get ready for a day filled with creativity, resilience, and the rhythmic beats that define the cultural tapestry of this remarkable coastal village.

Accommodation at Radisson Hotel.



### DAY 3. CITY TOUR IN CARTAGENA WALLED CITY AND TRANSFER TO BARRANQUILLA

Nestled on the northern coast of Colombia in the Caribbean Coast Region, Cartagena is a city with a rich history that dates to its founding as a major port in 1533. Its strategic location between the Magdalena and Sinú rivers made it the primary hub for trade between Spain and its overseas empire, solidifying its importance by the early 1540s.



During the colonial era, Cartagena played a pivotal role in the global trade network. It served as a crucial port for the export of Peruvian silver to Spain and was a focal point for the importation of African slaves. To safeguard against pirate attacks in the Caribbean, the city was fortified with impressive castles and walls, creating a formidable defense system that stands as a testament to its historical significance.

Cartagena's colonial walled city and fortress, a marvel of architectural and strategic planning, have been rightfully honored as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As we explore this living testament to the past, we will spend a full morning immersing ourselves in the stories held within the walls, visiting iconic buildings, and delving into the fascinating history that shaped Cartagena.

Before embarking on our journey towards Barranquilla, we will absorb the charm of Cartagena's historic landmarks, allowing the echoes of the past to resonate as we appreciate the cultural and architectural heritage that has made this city an enduring symbol of resilience and grandeur.

Accommodation at Barranquilla Plaza Hotel.

## DAY 4. BIRDING ISLA SALAMANCA NATIONAL PARK & BARRANQUILLA AREA

As we make our way towards Isla Salamanca National Park, our journey takes a fascinating detour on the outskirts of Barranquilla. Here, we will explore dry scrub forests where our main objective is to encounter the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca. Amidst this unique habitat, we may also spot other intriguing species, including the Northern Screamer and Trinidad Euphonia.

The morning unfolds in the expansive wetlands and mangroves of the Salamanca National Park, situated east of Barranquilla. This park, adjacent to the Ciénaga Grande, is a vital conservation area along the Barranquilla-Santa Marta highway, safeguarding the most significant mangrove expanse in the Colombian Caribbean.

Our birdwatching adventure presents exciting opportunities to spot the endemic and critically endangered Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird. The avian wonders continue with sightings of the Bicolored Conebill, Black-crested Antshrike, Golden-green and Red-rumped Woodpeckers, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Bronzed Cowbird, and Striped-backed Wren.



Throughout our exploration, the wetlands and mangroves offer a diverse avian tapestry, with common species such as the Great-tailed Grackles, Thick-billed Euphonias, and Magnificent Frigatebirds. As we gaze skyward, Brown Pelicans gracefully soar, providing a picturesque backdrop to our birding adventure.

Prepare to be immersed in the vibrant birdlife of Isla Salamanca National Park, where every moment offers a chance to witness the beauty and diversity of Colombia's coastal ecosystems.

Accommodation at Barranquilla Plaza Hotel.



## DAY 5. VISIT TO THE STILT VILLAGES OF CIENAGA GRANDE - TRANSFER TO MINCA

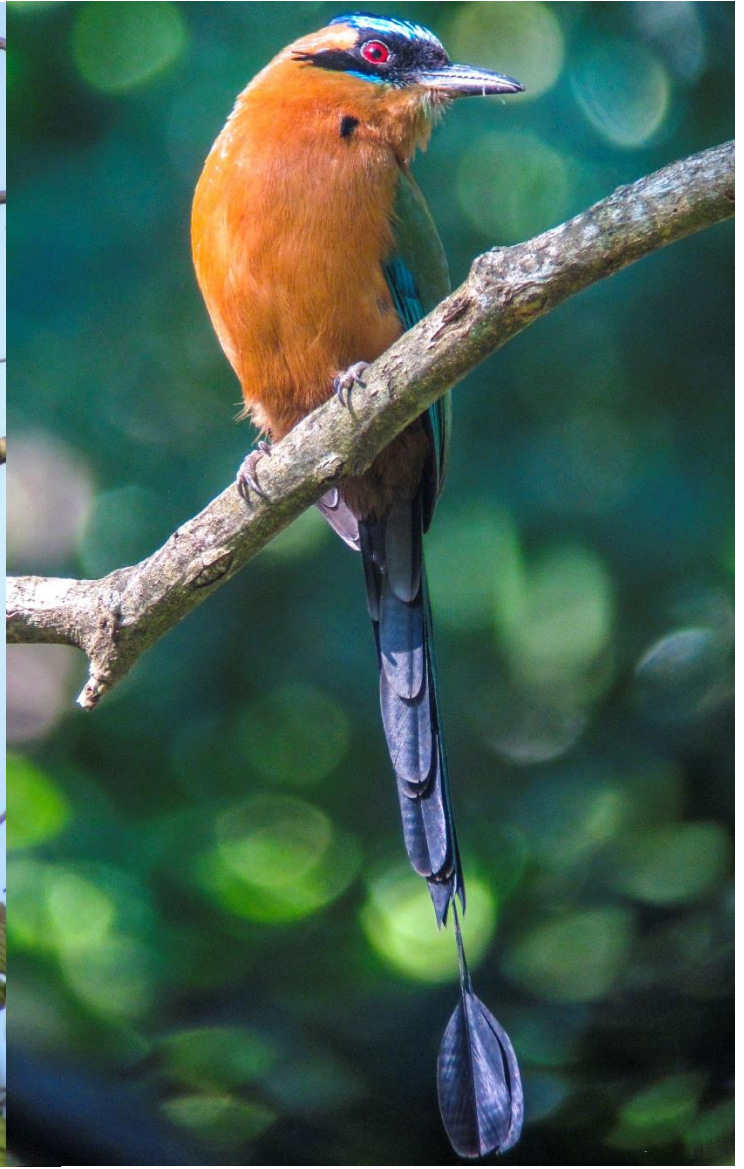
Near the majestic Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountain Range, lies the Ciénaga Grande Fauna and Flora Sanctuary. Positioned between the vibrant cities of Santa Marta and Barranquilla, this sanctuary boasts the distinction of being the largest lagoon area in Colombia and ranks among the major ones in South America. Recognized for its global significance, the Ciénaga Grande was declared a Ramsar site in 1998, emphasizing its crucial role as one of the planet's vital water mirrors. Furthermore, UNESCO honored its ecological importance by designating it as a Biosphere Reserve in 2000.

Encompassing a sprawling 45,000 hectares, the Ciénaga Grande is not just a haven for biodiversity; it is also a thriving community with around 2,500 inhabitants primarily engaged in local fisheries. These fishing communities showcase a remarkable level of adaptation and integration with their environment. They have ingeniously constructed houses immersed in the aquatic surroundings, utilizing wood as the primary building material. The innovative use of stilt construction techniques ensures the stability and longevity of these houses, with platforms and docks supporting them against the ebb and flow of the marsh waters.

As visitors explore this wildlife sanctuary, they embark on a captivating journey through lagoons, swamps, and interconnected canals and channels that wind through natural landscapes and picturesque mangrove mazes of unparalleled beauty. Beyond the breathtaking natural surroundings, the experience is enriched by an intimate encounter with the traditional way of life embraced by the locals. Observing how they have harmoniously adapted to their environment; visitors gain insight into the resilience and resourcefulness of these communities.

In the heart of the Ciénaga Grande, the sanctuary unfolds as a sanctuary not only for flora and fauna but also for the vibrant human spirit that thrives amid the intricate tapestry of water, land, and culture. Visitors are invited to immerse themselves in this extraordinary blend of ecological wonders and the unique, traditional lifestyle of the inhabitants, creating memories that resonate with the harmonious coexistence of nature and humanity.

In the afternoon, we will be transferred to Minca, located in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta foothills. Accommodation at Colores de la Sierra Lodge.



## DAY 6. BIRDING AROUND MINCA & VISIT TO A TRADITIONAL COFFEE FARM

Located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the charming village of Minca offers a birding experience that traverses diverse habitats, from the dry scrub below to the shade-coffee plantations above. This varied landscape provides a haven for numerous bird species, including near-endemics like the Golden-winged Sparrow, Scaled Piculet, and Red-billed Emerald. As you explore, keep an eye out for striking birds such as the Keel-billed Toucan, Military Macaw, Pale-eyed Pygmy-tyrant, Rufous-and-white Wren, and Black-headed Tanager.

For bird enthusiasts, the restaurant bird feeders in Minca become a hub of activity, attracting the elegant White-vented Plumeleteer, the near-endemic Steely-vented Hummingbird, the majestic White-necked Jacobin, the charismatic Black-throated Mango, and the iconic Whooping Motmot. The proximity of these birds to the feeders offers an excellent opportunity for birdwatchers to capture stunning photographs.

During the ascent, our journey includes a stop at Hacienda La Victoria, one of the oldest coffee farms in Colombia, established in 1892. Here, you will gain insight into the meticulous process of planting, harvesting, processing, and selling what is considered some of the finest coffee in the world. Immerse



yourself in the rich history of Colombian coffee cultivation while enjoying the breathtaking views that accompany this educational and aromatic experience.

Accommodation at Colores de la Sierra Lodge.



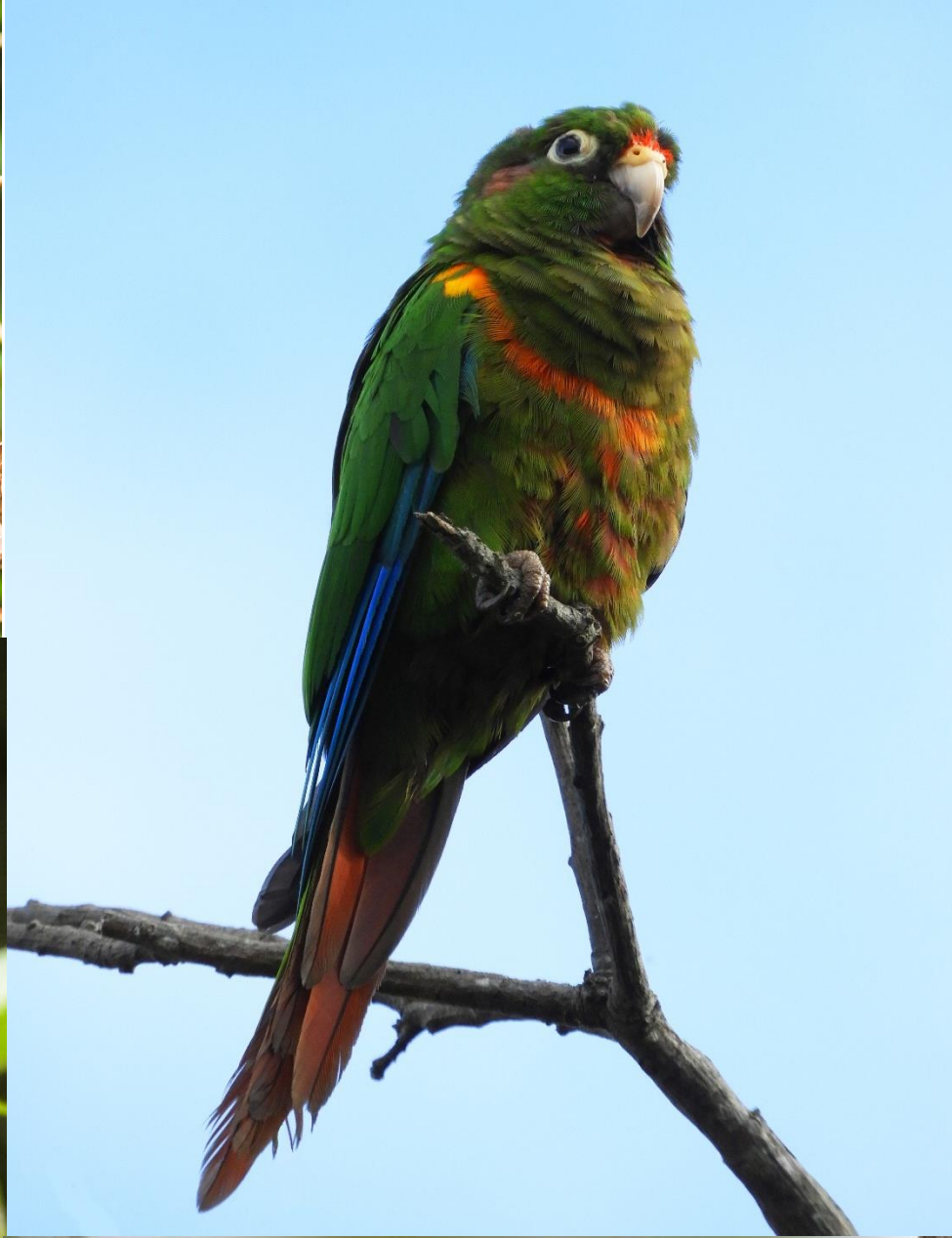
## **DAY 7. BIRDING THE ROAD TOWARDS SIERRA NEVADA OF SANTA MARTA**

As we ascend towards the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, a captivating array of low elevation endemic birds unveils itself. Keep your eyes peeled for the elusive and charming Santa Marta Tapaculo, the dainty Santa Marta Woodstar, the distinctive White-lored Warbler, the vibrant Santa Marta Blossomcrown, and the agile Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner. The unique Santa Marta Antbird is another feathered gem you may encounter during this journey.

The avian spectacle continues with sightings of the elegant White-tipped Quetzal, the vibrant Groove-billed Toucanet, the striking Golden-breasted Fruiteater, and the secretive Rusty-breasted Antpitta. Each of these species contributes to the remarkable biodiversity that thrives in the higher reaches of the Sierra Nevada.

As we traverse through this pristine mountainous environment, the air is filled with the melodies and colors of these endemic and special birds, creating a birdwatching experience that is both immersive and awe-inspiring. Get ready to be enchanted by the unique avian treasures that call the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta home.

Accommodation at Mountain House Lodge.





## **DAY 8. BIRDING AT SIERRA NEVADA OF SANTA MARTA HIGHER ELEVATION**

Starting at the early morning, we will dedicate much of our day to exploring the highest elevations of the Sierra Nevada, where an incredible array of endemic bird species awaits. Among the notable species we will be looking for are the critically endangered Santa Marta Parakeet, the Yellow-crowned Whitestart, the striking Santa Marta Warbler, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, the distinctive Santa Marta (Black-cheeked) Mountain-tanager, the elusive Brown-rumped Tapaculo, Rusty-headed Spinetail, and the captivating Santa Marta Antpitta and many more.

As we traverse the San Lorenzo Ridge, the landscape reveals its treasures, including the White-tailed Starfrontlet and the Streak-capped Spinetail. Returning to the lodge, we will be looking for the Colombian Brushfinch and the Santa Marta Brush-Finch, along with numerous endemic subspecies. These include the charming Cinnamon Flycatcher, the melodious Black-hooded Thrush, the vibrant Blue-capped Tanager, and the captivating Black-throated Tody-Tyrant. The lodge surroundings provide an opportunity to witness the unique biodiversity and distinctive beauty of the Sierra Nevada's avian residents, creating an unforgettable birdwatching experience in this pristine mountainous haven.

Accommodation at Mountain House Lodge.

## **DAY 9. MORNING BIRDING AT THE SIERRA NEVADA AND TRANSFER TO TAYRONA AREA**

On day 9 of our birdwatching adventure, our focus remains on exploring the Sierra Nevada, ensuring that we have covered all the specialties this majestic region has to offer. Depending on our previous sightings, we may choose to return to San Lorenzo Ridge for a more in-depth exploration or head to

lower elevations towards Minca, allowing us to catch any bird species that might have eluded us in the preceding days.

In the late afternoon, we will descend to a hotel on the coast, where we may seize the chance for some coastal birding before dusk. The change in environment introduces a different set of species, enriching our birdwatching experience with a diverse range of coastal avifauna.

Our accommodation for the night will be at La Jorará, situated in the Tayrona National Park area. This coastal location offers a serene backdrop for relaxation, completing another day filled with avian discoveries and the natural wonders of Colombia's diverse landscapes.

Accommodation at La Jorara Lodge.



## **DAY 10. FULL DAY AT LOS FLAMENCOS FLORA AND FAUNA SANCTUARY**

Between the Camarones village and the Tapias River lies the captivating Los Flamencos Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, situated at the western edge of the Guajira desert. Inside the sanctuary, a network of inland lagoons along the coast, filled by rainwater and little streams, becomes a haven for numerous spectacular shorebirds. Among the avian residents are the iconic American Flamingo, the even more vivid Scarlet Ibis, White Ibis, various gulls, terns, and a plethora of migratory shorebirds that grace the waterbodies of Los Flamencos.

This enchanting area is home to the Wayuu people, a matriarchal community where the cultural essence is passed down through the maternal line. The women, since ancient times, have been the bearers of



the community's traditions. Among their activities, the art of weaving backpacks, bags, and colorful blankets reflects their cultural vision. In recent years, a group of five women from the community has developed an interest in birdwatching, and, when their time permits, they serve as local guides. We'll have the privilege of birding with these knowledgeable guides in the morning, gaining insights into both the avian diversity and the rich cultural heritage of the Wayuu people.

The surrounding xerophytic scrub habitat, characteristic of the region, is home to an array of attractive regional specialties. Look out for the striking Vermilion Cardinal, Orinoco Saltator, Buffy Hummingbird, Russet-throated Puffbird, Bare-eyed Pigeon, Chestnut Piculet, Slender-billed Inezia, White-whiskered Spinetail, Pileated Finch, Tocuyo Sparrow, and the Rufous-vented Chachalaca. Additionally, sightings of Black-crested Antshrike, Crested Bobwhite, White-fringed Antwren, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, Blue-crowned Parakeet, Brown-throated Parakeet, and Green-rumped Parrotlet are likely.

In the afternoon, we will have the pleasure of experiencing the traditional dances of the indigenous Wayuu or Guajiro community. Originating from the peninsula of La Guajira on the Caribbean Sea, the Wayuu people have maintained their cultural identity despite contact with European conquerors dating back to the 16th century. Their daily activities, festivities, and rituals are intertwined with traditional music, including the use of flutes and canutillas during livestock activities. The indigenous Yocna or Yonna dance, performed during celebrations related to the development of women, involves intricate steps that symbolize the defiance of women advancing while men attempt to avoid falling—a captivating reflection of their cultural richness and resilience.

Accommodation at La Jorara Lodge.

## DAY 11. INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

As our unforgettable birdwatching adventure ends, we will savor a delightful final breakfast at the lodge, soaking in the beauty of the natural surroundings one last time. With hearts full of memories and cameras filled with the vibrant colors of Colombia's avian wonders, we will head back to Barranquilla, where our international flights await. This last morning will be a perfect opportunity to reflect on the incredible journey, share stories, and bid farewell to the diverse landscapes and captivating birdlife that have made this experience truly special.