



BIRDWATCHING & PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Manu National Park

A 7-day Andes-to-Amazon expedition through Peru's most biodiverse park, including the world's best macaw clay lick.

Photo © Alfredo Fernández

DURATION

7 days

SEASON

March–December

DEPARTURE

~6:00 AM Day 1 from
Cusco

ROUTE

Cusco ·
Cock-of-the-Rock ·

PRICE

On request

Manu National Park is the crown jewel of Neotropical birding — a UNESCO World Heritage wilderness that tumbles from the Andes at 3,500 metres down through cloud forest to the lowland Amazon, and holds one of the highest bird and mammal counts of any protected area on Earth. Our 7-day Manu birding and photography expedition traverses that entire gradient, from the treeline of the Acjanaco pass to the oxbow lakes and clay licks of the Madre de Dios lowlands. For anyone dreaming of a single trip that samples the full Andes-to-Amazon transect, no route in Peru — or arguably the world — packs in more birds and mammals.

The journey begins on the legendary Manu Road, which drops off the puna at Acjanaco and switchbacks down through mist-drenched cloud forest alive with mixed tanager flocks, quetzals and hummingbirds. At the famous lek near the Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge we watch male Andean Cock-of-the-rock — Peru's national bird — display at dawn, while the flowering roadsides draw a glittering cast of hummingbirds. This upper stretch shares its endemics with the nearby Abra Málaga road: Marcapata Spinetail, Cuzco Brushfinch, Masked Fruiteater and more.

TARGET SPECIES

Andean Cock-of-the-Rock
 Blue-headed Macaw
 Razor-billed Curassow
 Pale-winged Trumpeter
 King Vulture
 Jaguar
 Lowland Tapir
 Spider Monkey

Red-and-green Macaw
 Hoatzin
 Agami Heron
 Amazonian Umbrellabird
 Giant River Otter
 Ocelot
 Emperor Tamarin
 Capybara

DAY BY DAY

Day 1 — Cusco to the Manu Road cloud forest

An early pickup in Cusco and the climb over the 3,500 m Acjanaco pass into the park, then a slow descent of the legendary Manu Road through elfin and cloud forest for mixed tanager flocks, quetzals and hummingbirds. We overnight at the Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge, timed for the dawn lek of the Andean Cock-of-the-rock.

Day 2 — Down to the Manu River

A morning drive to the river port of Atalaya, then a seven-to-eight-hour motorised-canoe journey down the Alto Madre de Dios and into the Manu River to the Romero refuge, scanning the banks for herons, skimmers, macaws and capybara. Overnight at the Matsigenka House Lodge, deep in the lowland rainforest.

Day 3 — Cocha Salvador

A full day on the Manu River and the trails and oxbow lake at Cocha Salvador — one of the best sites anywhere for Giant River Otters, with a real chance of caiman, monkeys and, for the very lucky, a jaguar hauled out on a sandbank. Hoatzins, Agami Heron and Sungrebe work the lake margins.

Day 4 — To Tambo Blanquillo

We travel to the Tambo Blanquillo area by early afternoon and spend the rest of the day on the forest trails, building the lowland list with antbirds, woodcreepers, trogons and toucans. Overnight at the lodge.

Day 5 — Blanquillo macaw clay lick

A pre-dawn start for the Blanquillo macaw clay lick, where hundreds of Red-and-green Macaws and a swarm of parrots gather on the riverbank at first light — one of the Amazon's greatest spectacles. We also walk the Camungo loop and climb the 50 m canopy tower for a view over the forest.

Day 6 — Oxbow lake & mammal clay lick

A dawn catamaran on the Blanco oxbow lake for more otters, Hoatzins and waterbirds, and a night visit to the mammal clay lick for a chance at Lowland Tapir and other nocturnal wildlife. A final night in the lodge.

Day 7 — Return

We descend the Madre de Dios River and transfer to Puerto Maldonado for the short flight back to Cusco (or continue overland), birding en route. A fitting end to the richest week of wildlife-watching in Peru.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED

- Lodge/hotel accommodation
- Bird guide and specialized local guides
- Entrance fees
- All tour transportation
- All meals in the itinerary

NOT INCLUDED

- Domestic flights
- Alcoholic beverages
- Meals outside the program
- Guide/driver tips
- Personal expenses

Ready to book, or want it tailored?

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