

BIRDWATCHING & PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Yanacocha Reserve

High-Andean forest and a legendary hummingbird garden an hour from Quito, home to the critically endangered Black-breasted Puffleg.

Photo © Jess Findlay

DURATION

Half Day / Day (~7 hours)

DEPARTURE

6:00 AM from Quito

ELEVATION

~3,500 m

GROUP SIZE

1-4

FROM

\$175

per person

1 pax \$340 · 2 pax \$210 · 3+ pax \$175

Yanacocha, a Fundación Jocotoco reserve at 3,500 metres on the western slope of Pichincha, is a comfortable trail with world-famous feeders. In a single morning you can rack up a suite of high-Andean hummingbirds and mixed flocks of mountain tanagers — the perfect first day of a trip or an option for travellers short on time.

TARGET SPECIES

Black-breasted Puffleg
Great Sapphirewing
Tawny Antpitta
Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager

Sword-billed Hummingbird
Buff-winged Starfrontlet
Golden-crowned Tanager
Rainbow-bearded Thornbill

DAY BY DAY

6:00 AM — Pickup in Quito

We collect you from your hotel and drive about an hour up the western slope of Volcán Pichincha, climbing through farmland and remnant forest to reach the Fundación Jocotoco reserve at 3,500 metres while the feeders are at their busiest in the cool early light.

Arrival & the hummingbird feeders

We start at the reserve's world-famous feeder station, where a comfortable clearing lets you stand and watch a parade of high-Andean hummingbirds: Sword-billed Hummingbird, Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Shining Sunbeam, Tyrian Metaltail and Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted Pufflegs — with the critically endangered Black-breasted Puffleg, the reserve's flagship, the bird we watch for most closely.

The Inca Trail — mixed flocks

We walk the gentle main trail (the old Inca aqueduct path, wide and nearly level) through temperate forest, timing it to intersect mixed feeding flocks. These can hold Scarlet-bellied, Black-chested and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanagers, Golden-crowned Tanager, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Pearled Treerunner, Cinnamon Flycatcher and Barred Fruiteater.

Polylepis & the antpitta stop

Where the trail passes stands of gnarled Polylepis we listen for Tawny Antpitta, which often shows in the open here, and search the flowers for Rainbow-bearded Thornbill and Golden-breasted Puffleg. Undergrowth skulkers such as Spillmann's Tapaculo and Andean Guan are possible with patience.

Field breakfast

We take a boxed breakfast and hot drinks in the field, using the pause to keep an eye on the feeders and the forest edge — some of the best hummingbird activity comes while you are sitting still with a coffee.

A second pass at the feeders

Before leaving we return to the feeders for anything missed and for photography, since the light and the bird activity both change through the morning and the pufflegs often come in more reliably on the second visit.

Midday — return to Quito

We drive back down to the city and have you back by early afternoon. As a half-day at altitude with almost no strenuous walking, Yanacocha makes an ideal first day of a longer trip or a relaxed option for travellers short on time.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED

- Private transportation from Quito
- Expert local birding guide
- Reserve entrance fees
- Boxed breakfast

NOT INCLUDED

- Lunch
- Accommodation
- Tips

Ready to book, or want it tailored?

wildandestours.com/yanacocha-reserve-birding-tour/ · sales@wildandestours.com

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