



# OAXACA

## VALLEY TO THE COAST

### JANUARY 7-18, 2025

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**Guide: Adam Sell &  
Eric Antonio Martinez**  
Maximum group size is 10 participants

**Price: \$5395**  
Based on double occupancy  
\$965 Single room supplement

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Check out the trip website here: [redhillbirding.com/oaxaca](https://redhillbirding.com/oaxaca)

To register, fill out the booking form here: [redhillbirding.com/bookingform](https://redhillbirding.com/bookingform)

Located in the endemic-laden Southwest of the country, Oaxaca is Mexico's birdiest state and culinary capital. With a large diversity of habitats, and highlands that straddle the divide between the Pacific and Atlantic slopes, Oaxaca boasts a list of nearly 700 species! Our trip focuses on visiting three areas--the highlands and arid valleys surrounding Oaxaca City, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and the coastal and foothill habitats around the town of Huatulco. These are historic places with a unique culture and delicious cuisine, making for a wonderful all-around travel experience.

Our trip begins in the intermontane Oaxaca Valley in the state capital of Oaxaca City. Serving as our base we will bird desert scrub, foothills and humid pine-oak highlands and enjoy many of Mexico's most famed birds and culinary dishes. We will then begin to make our way south to the Pacific coast via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec for one night before arriving in the coastal town of Huatulco, where we will enjoy seafood, West Mexican endemics, and a pelagic! For Huatulco we will work our way back to Oaxaca City via the foothills and highlands of the Sierra Madre del Sur, where cooler temperatures and even more new birds await.

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1, Tue, Jan 7. Arrival in Oaxaca City. Night: Oaxaca City**

Today is an arrival day. You will be picked up from the airport and we will have an evening orientation at the hotel. If there is any time, we will bird around the hotel grounds.

### **Day 2, Wed, Jan 8. Arid scrublands & Teotitlan del Valle. Night: Oaxaca City**

On our first full day, we will bird the arid scrub at 5200 ft east of Oaxaca City that will introduce us to many species typical of the valley, including Dusky Hummingbird, Gray-breasted Woodpecker, Boucard's Wren, White-throated Towhee, Bridled Sparrow, and Black-vented Oriole. As the day warms up, we will visit a few more locations and stop for a nice traditional lunch. Afterwards, during the heat of the day, we will visit the small village of Teotitlan del Valle, our guide's home village, for a traditional rug weaving demonstration, which is famous in this region of Oaxaca. We will finish off the day with some afternoon birding in the valley before returning to Oaxaca City for dinner.

Just 45 minutes north of Oaxaca City, we will head into the pine-oak highlands at 9,000 ft in search of many regional specialties. In the cool upper regions of Benito Juarez National Forest, we will be searching for Mountain Trogon, Dwarf Jay, Gray-barred Wren, Brown-backed Solitaire, Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and the stunning Red Warbler among many others.

Another day will be spent searching northwest of Oaxaca City at lower elevations (~6000 ft) in scrub vegetation and mixed oak forest. Here we will have plenty of birds to sort through, including targets such as Blue Mockingbird, Ocellated Thrasher, Slaty Vireo, Oaxaca Sparrow and Elegant Euphonia.

### **Day 3, Thu, Jan 9. Sierra Norte & Benito Juarez National Forest. Night: Oaxaca City**

After our usual early breakfast, will head into the pine-oak highlands at 9,000 ft in search of many regional specialties. Just 45 minutes for Oaxaca City, the cool upper regions of the Sierra Norte in Benito Juarez National Forest can start with temperatures in the 40's, so a warmer jacket is advised. We will be searching for many enigmatic highland specialties like Mountain Trogon, Dwarf Jay, Gray-barred Wren, Brown-backed Solitaire, Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and the stunning Red Warbler among many others. In the quiet of the day, we will head to a beautiful restaurant with hummingbird feeders where we will be treated to another great Oaxacan meal. In the late afternoon, we will continue birding the region before making our way back to our home base in Oaxaca City.

**Day 4, Fri, Jan 10. Oak foothill forest north of Oaxaca City. Night: Oaxaca City**

After another great Oaxacan breakfast in the early morning, we will make our way north into the oak foothills and scrub to seek out some of the more elusive endemics of the region, including Ocellated Thrasher, Slaty Vireo, Oaxaca Sparrow, and Blue Mockingbird. We will check out some more regions to continue to look for great birds before a nice lunch before retiring ending our last evening in Oaxaca City with a nice meal downtown.

**Day 5, Sat, Jan 11. Monte Alban & Transfer to Tehuantepec. Night: Tehuantepec**

A trip to Oaxaca City would not be complete without a visit to Monte Albán. Dating back to 500 BC, Monte Alban is the largest and most important pre-Columbian archeological site in the region. Oh, and the birds are good! We will have another shot at seeing the endemic Ocellated Thrasher and Slaty Vireo while we enjoy the Vermilion Flycatchers, Cassin's Kingbirds and other species that breed at the site. In the afternoon after lunch with more birds, we will begin our 5 hour drive to the Pacific coast and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

**Day 6, Sun, Jan 12. Thorn forest of the isthmus & Transfer to Huatulco. Night: Huatulco**

After breakfast, we will start birding the thorn forest around Tehuantepec for some of the most iconic birds of Mexico, including Cinnamon-tailed Sparrow and the incomparable Rose-bellied Bunting. With some luck, we could also find Lesser Ground Cuckoo and Lesser Roadrunner, as well as Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Turquoise-crowned Hummingbird, Green Parakeet, White-throated Magpie-Jay, and much more! After lunch, we will enjoy a bit of seaside driving towards the coastal city of Huatulco.

**Day 7, Mon, Jan 13. Birding the forests and lowlands of Huatulco. Night: Huatulco**

Located along the humid Pacific Coast, the town of Huatulco and the surrounding forest hosts some extraordinary flora and fauna. After an early breakfast, we will enjoy the lowland deciduous forest where some possible species include Red-breasted Chat, Citreoline Trogon, Russet-crowned Motmot, Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, Happy Wren, and Orange-bellied Bunting. After lunch and a siesta to escape the midday heat (temps can be in the 90s at midday here!), we will venture back out in the evening for some more birding before dinner.

**Day 8, Tue, Jan 14. Pelagic of the Huatulco Coast. Night: Huatulco**

Today, we will spend a day at sea! After breakfast, we will arrive at the port to get on our boat and head offshore. The continental shelf is a mere 5 miles from the coast, which means some incredible seabirding is possible close to shore. Some species of interest on this pelagic include Black and Least Storm-Petrels, Wedge-tailed, Galapagos and Pink-footed Shearwaters and Nazca Booby, Pomarine Jaeger, and more. As always, the open ocean can hold secrets and we will be on the lookout for many rarities that could be roaming around. After our pelagic, we will return for a nice seafood lunch on the beach before heading to the hotel for a siesta. In the evening, we can continue birding until dinner and have the opportunity for some nocturnal

birding in search of some species like Mottled Owl, Pacific Screech-Owl, and Buff-collared Nightjar.

**Day 9, Wed, Jan 15. Sierra Madre del Sur foothills. Night: Huatulco.**

After our early breakfast we will drive into the mountains north of Huatulco, we will explore this area of coffee plantations and tropical semi-deciduous forest that hosts some highly localized endemics, some of the birds of interest include the very restricted Blue-capped Hummingbird, Red-headed Tanager, Wagler's (Northern Emerald) Toucanet, Gray-crowned Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Emerald, with chances for Mexican Hermit and many others. We will then enjoy a nice meal at a coffee finca (where coffee can be sampled and bought!) and continue our birding as we make our way back to the hotel.

**Day 10, Thu, Jan 16. Lowland birding & Transfer to Sierra Madre del Sure highlands. Night: San Jose del Pacifico**

After some early morning cleanup birding in the lowlands, we will begin our ascent to 9,000 ft (about four hours) and the beautifully cool pine-oak forests around San Jose del Pacifico. After settling into our cabins, we can hopefully bird the grounds in search of Rivoli's and Garnet-throated Hummingbirds, Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Crescent-chested Warbler and some neotropical migrants like Townsend's and Hermit Warbler. We will enjoy a nice meal at the hotel and the beautifully crisp air at this elevation.

**Day 11, Fri, Jan 17. Birding around San Jose del Pacifico & Transfer to Oaxaca City. Night: Oaxaca City**

This morning will be devoted to fantastic montane birding around our lodging. We will seek out species like Bumblebee Hummingbird, Hooded Yellowthroat, Brown-backed Solitaire, Elegant Euphonia, and if we are lucky, the elusive White-throated Jay! After lunch in the mountains, we will begin our drive back to Oaxaca City to prepare for departures tomorrow.

**Day 12, Sat, Jan 18. Departure from Oaxaca City**

Today is a dedicated departure day with no scheduled birding. You can plan your departure for any time.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

### Contact and registration information

Your Red Hill Birding tour manager for this trip is Adam Sell. To sign up, each participant should complete the [booking form](#). Once we receive the form, we will send you information about paying the trip deposit. If you have any questions before registering, please contact the office at [info@redhillbirding.com](mailto:info@redhillbirding.com).

### Safety & Security

Some areas of Mexico are, unfortunately, better known these days for the drug trade and its related crimes than its welcoming people and natural beauty (not to mention world class birding). Oaxaca has luckily always been a safe area to visit. Safety, of course, is always a priority on all of our trips, and our local guides and contacts, with a lot of experience in this area, will be sure that we only visit regions and locations that are known to be safe.

### Timing & Logistics

The trip will begin in the city of Oaxaca on the **evening of Tuesday, January 7**. The international airport is the Oaxaca (Xoxocotlán) International Airport (IATA: OAX). January 7 is a dedicated arrival day, but if you are hoping to arrive earlier, please reach out to us and we can look at arranging accommodations.

The trip will end at the same location on the **morning of Saturday, January 18**. This is a dedicated departure day and you may schedule your flights for any time of the day

Currently, there are no entry requirements for Mexico outside of a valid passport and there are no COVID-19 entry or exit requirements for travel to and from the United States. Please check the state department for the most updated visa and passport information before traveling.

Please do not book your flights until we confirm that the minimum number of participants (6) have registered for this tour.

### Physical difficulty

This trip is **physically moderate**. Although a lot of birding will be done from roadsides or wider trails, there can be some steeper trails in the mountains and some uneven trails throughout. Participants should be in reasonably good health and able to walk 2-3 miles at a slow, birder's pace. There might be times when going off-trail is beneficial for improved looks at some difficult species.

### Pace

The **pace** of the trip is **moderate**. A typical day will have us up early to take advantage of early-morning bird activity and to beat the midday heat in this subtropical region. This trip travels between a few different locations, with a mix of two four-night stays and two one-night stays.

Afternoons will generally be at a slower pace depending on bird activity, and if we are travelling between locations, we will do most of our driving during the heat of the day. When possible, we will take siestas to beat the afternoon heat (especially in Huatulco) before heading out for more birding in the evening hours. On some nights, we will have the option for additional nighttime birding.

## Price

The price of the trip is **\$5395**. The trip price is based upon double-occupancy. The single room supplement for this trip is **\$965**. The price **includes** all meals (excluding alcoholic beverages) from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12; all transportation and accommodation during that period; a Red Hill Birding guide and fantastic local guide; any park entrance fees; our pelagic trip; and a bound checklist to keep track of sightings during the trip. It **does not include** alcoholic beverages, travel insurance, optional activities, snacks, laundry, tips (apart from local guide, driver, boat captain and meals), or other items of a personal nature.

A deposit of **\$1200 per person** and the submission of the [booking form](#) will secure your place on the trip. Upon receiving your booking form, we will send you deposit details. Final payment is due by October 7, 2024. We accept payment by Zelle, check, and bank transfer/electronic check. We also accept payment by credit card with an additional 3.1% processing fee.

## Hotels & Food

Accommodations will all be in quality hotels or lodges. Generally, there will be free wireless internet. We favor hotels that are convenient to our birding sites whenever possible. Our hotel on the final night in Puerto Vallarta will be located close to the airport. With food, most breakfast will either be early in the hotel before going birding, or taken from a local convenience store (Oxxo, etc.) to be enjoyed in the field. Lunches will usually be at sit-down restaurants, but we will have the occasional picnic lunch when it is beneficial for us to stay in the field longer. Dinners will be sit-down either at the hotel or at a nearby restaurant.

Food will be good to excellent throughout, with an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful flavors of Mexican cuisine. We will have bottled water available on the trip for both drinking and brushing teeth, etc. If you bring a refillable water bottle, you will have ample opportunities to refill with filtered water. It is not recommended to drink the tap water on this tour.

## Photography

The **photographic opportunities** are **good**. Although the primary focus of this tour is birding and we will not be making special accommodations for photographers, there will be plenty of opportunities to photograph birds, including some iconic and endemic species. Those interested in photography on this tour should come away with some excellent images.

## Weather

There are a wide range of temperatures on this tour. Mornings in the highlands can start at 40 F, but quickly rise. In the Oaxaca Valley itself, temperatures are pleasantly from 55 F to 78 F and generally dry. In the humid coastal region of Huatulco, temperatures can reach 95 F on a hot day, but overall, the temperatures will be from 55 - 79 F. There is a chance of rain on this tour in any region.

## Packing considerations

You will generally want to wear comfortable, light-weight clothing. Long sleeves and long pants are recommended for sun and insect protection. Sturdy hiking boots will be beneficial on some trails and a warm sweater or mid-weight jacket is useful for cool mornings in the mountains. If you are prone to be cold, gloves and a hat for the mountain mornings could prove useful. Although we are visiting during the dry season, rain can happen. It would be wise to pack a rain jacket or an umbrella for the trip.

In terms of gear, you will want to bring the usual binoculars, field guide, hat, camera, and other gear you are accustomed to going birding with. A reusable water bottle and, for coffee drinkers, a travel coffee mug, are useful to have along in the car during the day. You will want to bring sunscreen and insect repellent as well.

## eBird

Your Red Hill Birding guide and/or local guides will be eBirding the entire tour. If you have an eBird account, they will collect your username/email address in order to share those lists, and will share them when it is convenient. You are welcome to edit your lists to add/remove species, edit text, or change numbers as much as you would like, since any edits you make to your lists do not change others' lists. And we love it when participants add photos and sound recordings to the checklists!

The leader will also provide an eBird Trip Report after the tour and will add participants who have an eBird account to the report; this way, you can see your own personal trip details and those of the whole group. These trip reports are accessible to anyone who has the link, so participants who do not have eBird accounts can still view the report to see the trip list, photos, and any added text.

## Tipping

We aim to provide **exceptional service**, using guides that are knowledgeable, interesting, personable, and experienced. While tipping is never expected, if you feel that your guides went above and beyond, you are welcome to leave them a gratuity. Tips at restaurants are included in the cost of the tour.

### Travel insurance

We do not require travel insurance for international travel. However, we recommend purchasing it to help protect you against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, go to [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 13-0441.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 55Y

Note that to be eligible for some benefits, travel insurance must be purchased within 1-2 weeks of paying the trip deposit.



*Garnet-throated Hummingbird will be a target of ours in the highlands above Huatulco. Photo by Adam Sell*