



Colombia

Birding Colombia – Eastern & Central Andes

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

Itinerary

Colombia • Briding

15 Days • 14 Nights

Bogota – Paramo, Cali, El Queremal, Manizales, Tinamu, Rio Blanco, El Bosque, Termales Del Ruiz, Jardin, Alto De Ventanas, Medellin

HIGHLIGHTS

- Puerto Asis - Amazon of Colombia, in the region of Putumayo, one of the departments that connect the Andes with the Amazon and one of the most important biodiversity corridors of Colombia
- Visit Arbolito Reserve where you spot birds such as the White-necked Jacobin, Black-throated Mango, Blue-tailed Emerald, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail and more
- La Mohana Trail

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Exploration Tour
Tour Start	Bogota
Tour End	Medellin
Accommodation	Hotels & Lodges
Included Meals	12 Breakfast, 12 Lunch, 13 Dinner
Difficulty Level	Medium

Ultimate Colombia



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COL08



Colombia, an overview

Colombia – a country associated with beauty, mystery, tropical warmth and endless bounty. The natural riches found within its borders aren't found here by chance, however. It's Colombia's rugged, broken and unique geography that makes it one of the world's most diverse countries, a treasure trove of biological evolution, where this same geography has created many restricted range species, found across Colombia's 5 main geographical regions – Andean, Pacific, Caribbean, Llanos (plains) and Amazon. This vast array of landscapes and ecosystems makes a wildlife watching tour to Colombia an essential trip for any discerning wildlife enthusiast. Additionally there are also those special ecosystems that Colombia has almost to itself, such as the tropical savannahs of the Llanos (or Eastern Plains) that only exist in Colombia and Venezuela, covering an area larger than Nepal, or the Paramo – a high altitude tundra recently proven to be the fastest-evolving ecosystem on Earth, with its other-worldly plants and extreme climate.

The word 'Colombia' sparks imagination and wonder when mentioned in birding circles. It is the mecca for neo-tropical birding, being home to 1,932 recorded species (over 1,950 unofficially recorded) with more being found each week as the country's vast territory is explored during this time of transition and peace. This startling amount represents close to 20% of the world's total number of birds. Among this mouth-watering list there are at least 84 'country endemics' found in Colombia's various isolated geo-regions and ecosystems, the evolutionary results of the complex and extreme Andean topography, its role as the bio-bridge between North, Central and South America and its 1,000-mile Caribbean and Pacific coastlines.

During this tour you'll explore the biodiversity hotspot of the highlands of many regions of Colombia, starting in the Eastern Andes The Amazonian piedmont in Putumayo, one of the most biodiverse areas of our country and also one of the last biological corridors between the Andes and the Amazon. Back to the Andes, to the Central mountain range where volcanic soils have shaped and given life to this lush environment; and finally, the incredible north coast in the lowlands of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where you will visit the unique and endangered ecosystem of tropical dry forest in Tayrona National Park.. Colombia is here, slowly but surely making a claim to being one of the world's most exciting emerging wildlife watching destinations.

Why Pioneer Expeditions?

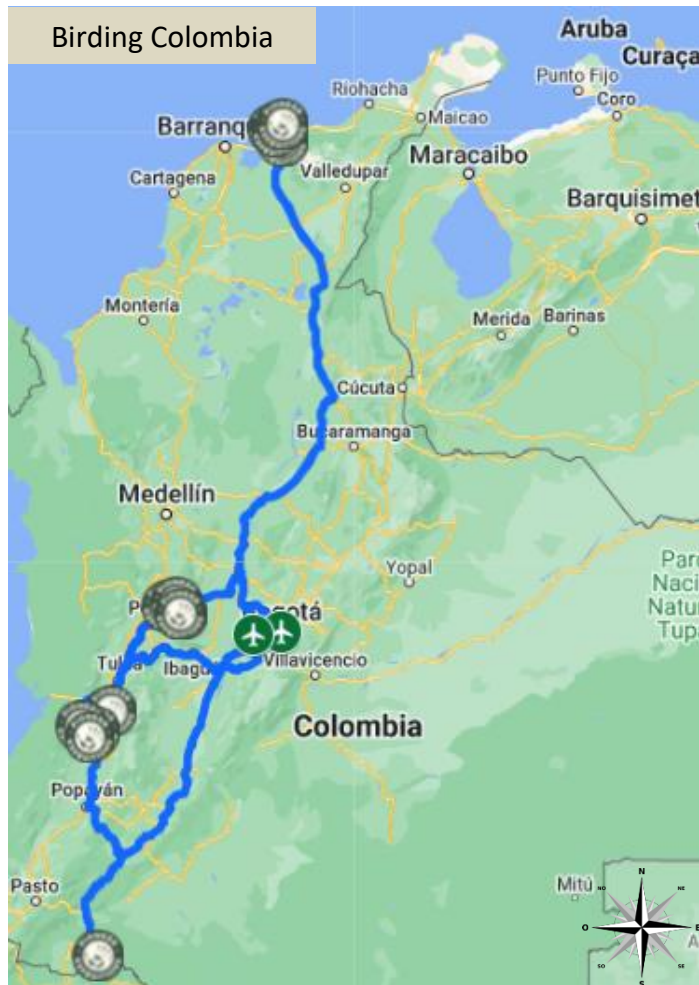
Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.



Itinerary



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DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN BOGOTA

BOGOTA

Located at 8,530 ft above sea level and surrounded to the east with its imposing Cerros Orientales (eastern hills) we find the capital and largest city of Colombia, Bogotá. With average temperatures of 62°F throughout the year, Bogotá leans towards being a cool weather city for its 8 million or so inhabitants; a population that brings together people from all over the country, making Bogotá a multicultural city with a good representation of each region of Colombia. Bogotá offers visitors a vast variety of options for all kinds of activities related with culture, nature, history and nightlife. It boasts Colombia's best museums, among them the world-renowned Gold Museum and an excellent gastronomic scene that is developing into an unmissable attraction. Having been the most important city since the Spanish colonial times, Bogotá is full of history and tales, where many of the most important moments of Colombia's recent history have occurred. Also, the night life of Bogotá is amazing, its wide variety of bars and restaurants makes Bogotá a place to live and enjoy, and staying more than 3 nights, you'll start to 'get' Bogota's local vibe.



Overnight – B.O.G Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
D



Distance:
Approx. (Varies)



Activity:
Travel

DAY 2: LA FLORIDA WETLAND AND BOGOTA CITY TOUR

LA FLORIDA WETLAND

After an early breakfast you will be transferred for about 1 hour to La Florida Wetland the first birdwatch morning in Colombia. Main targets here will be Eastern Andes endemics such as the shy Bogota Rail, Silvery-throated Spinetail and Apolinar's Wren if we're fortunate. After the wetland we will be transferred to Bogotá again for an afternoon city tour to get to know Bogotá.

BOGOTA CITY TOUR

After a birding morning you will have a tour through Bogota's colonial neighbourhood, La Candelaria, the capital's heart and soul. With its colourful houses, pretty balconies and village-y vibe, it's the city's cultural heart, too, with plenty of museums, the city's main library and a picturesque church on every second street corner. Home to artisans and musicians, it has plenty of bohemian cafes and restaurants, making it ideal for strolling and exploring its streets. Visit the capital's main square, the imposing Plaza Bolívar, with its magnificent Colonial and Republican style buildings, including the stately Palace of Justice, Colombia's Congress and Bogota's Primary cathedral. Enjoy the architectural mix of old adobe houses, churches, and buildings of the Spanish Colonial period, alongside Baroque and art deco styles. Visit the Botero Museum, showcasing the 'oversized' artwork of Fernando Botero, one of Colombia's best-known artists.

GOLD MUSEUM

The Gold Museum boasts the largest collection of pre-Columbian gold in the world, with tens of thousands of gold pieces displayed from all of Colombia's major pre-Hispanic cultures. Colombia is the birthplace of El Dorado, a mythical city the Spanish conquistadores believed was home to untold riches of gold and jewels. Colombia's pre-Hispanic cultures and their incredible mastery of gold is displayed here in spectacular fashion - you'll gasp at the advanced techniques that were used and the incredible craftsmanship required to produce these intricate and elaborate pieces that were typically made for tribal chieftains..



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Overnight – B.O.G Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture and Discovery

DAY 3: PARAMO & HUMMINGBIRDS

EASTERN ANDES HIGHLANDS

Today we will visit the predominant ecosystems of Chingaza National Park and its buffer zones, the high-Andean forest, sub-páramo and páramo, certainly one of the most beautiful neotropical landscapes and home of the Andean Bear, the only bear in South America. We'll be moving between different altitudes between 2,700 – 3,100 masl / 8,800 – 10,200 ft. At this colder, high altitude climate we will have the chance to spot the stunning Blue-throated Starfrontlet (near-endemic) and the Amethyst-throated Sunangel hummingbirds, the raucous Brown-breasted Parakeet (endemic), diminutive Rufous-browed Conebill (near-endemic), the Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, shy Rufous Antpitta, Green-and-black Fruiteater and many more birds that are typical of the high-Andean ecosystems of Colombia.

HUMMINGBIRD OBSERVATORY

After lunch, we will visit a beautiful hummingbird observatory. This 'Hummingbird Observatory', high up in the mountains of La Calera, is a flower-filled sanctuary for these winged messengers, as they are known by indigenous cultures. Colombia is home to over 160 hummingbird species and here you can observe as many as 18 species, including the Coppery-bellied Puffleg (near-endemic), the Blue-throated Starfrontlet (near-endemic), the Glowing Puffleg, the Great Sapphirewing, the unbelievable Sword-billed Hummingbird, delicate Black-tailed and Green-tailed Trainbearer among many others. If you're lucky, you may spot the Silvery-throated Spinetail (endemic) and Red-crested Cotinga.

Overnight – B.O.G Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAYS 4: FLIGHT TO CALI

Today you will catch an early flight to Cali. Once there you will be transferred to Araucana Lodge, one of the best birding lodges in Valle del Cauca. 186 Species of birds have been registered in Araucana, including 4 endemics: Parkers Antbird, Colombian Chachalaca, Grayish Piculet and Apical Flycatcher. Including Bar-crested Antshrike, Spectacled Parrotlet, Purple-throated Woodstar, and Blue-headed Sapphire. Our forests host 17 species of hummingbirds that also visit our two areas with feeders with drinkers and bananas for fruit species.

Overnight – Araucana Lodge



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAYS 5: KM 18



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Today we will have a very early start from your hotel to KM 18 IBA Reserve, which forms part of the renowned San Antonio cloud forest. Arrive at Finca Alejandria. Enjoy hummingbird feeders, looking for targets such as Bronzy Inca, Blue-headed Sapphire, Purple-throated Hummingbird and the endemic (and very special) Multi Colored Tanager amongst many others.

Overnight – Araucana Lodge



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 6: EL QUEREMAL

5:30 am transfer to Queremal area in the famed Alto-Anchicaya basin, teeming with Choco endemics and rarities, such as Toucan Barbet, Green Thorntail, Empress Brilliant, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, Glistening-green Tanager, Yellow-throated Tanager, endemic Crested Ant-Tanager and many many more. Spend all morning birding along the road where the birds abound.

Overnight – Araucana Lodge



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 7: ARAUCANA LODGE & TRANSFER TO MANIZALES



Today all morning to find more species at the lodge such as Grayish Piculet, Colombian Chachalaca, Parker's Antbird, Apical Flycatcher, Blue-headed Sapphire, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Long-billed Starthroat, Purple-throated Woodstar, Flame-rumped Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Scrub Tanager, White-lined Tanager, Yellow-backed Oriole, Spectacled Parrotlet, Scaled Antpitta, Black-winged Saltator and many of the 186 species of birds registered, including 4 endemics: Parkers Antbird, Colombian Chachalaca, Grayish Piculet and Apical Flycatcher. Also Bar-crested Antshrike, Spectacled Parrotlet, Purple-throated Woodstar, and Blue-headed Sapphire; 17

species of hummingbirds that also visit the feeders with drinkers and bananas for fruit species. You will have an early lunch and then transferred to Manizales.

Overnight – Araucana Lodge



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 8: TINAMU BIRDING RESERVE

Spend a day exploring Tinamu reserve where over 230 species of bird have been reported. Species at the feeders offering excellent photographic opportunities are: Steely-vented Hummingbird, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Brown Violetear, Long-billed Starthroat, Grey-headed Tanager, White-shouldered Tanager, Scrub Tanager (near-endemic), Guira and Bay-headed



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Tanagers, Green Honeycreeper, Red-crowned Woodpecker, stunning Andean or Blue-crowned Motmot, Thick-billed Euphonia among many others. On trial there is chance to see Golden-Crowned Warbler, Cocoa Woodcreeper and Grey-headed Ground-Dove, Little Tinamous (after which the reserve is named), Spectacled Owl, Scaled Antpitta (difficult), Speckle-breasted Wren, Moustached Puffbird and many, many flycatchers.

Overnight - Tinamu



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Relax

DAY 9: RIO BLANCO RESERVE



An hour and 20 min drive from the hotel will take us to one of the world's best birding sites – not only because of its 4,343ha size or wonderfully conserved Andean forests, or 380 or so recorded species, but because for the past number of years, the local guides of this reserve been feeding and coaxing out some of the world's most difficult bird genus to see – Antpittas. These skulking birds that look like balls on two sticks are terrestrial forest birds, normally making good sightings a rarity as opposed to a commonality. As you approach with your guide, you'll see these beautiful little creatures silently hop out of the undergrowth as soon as they hear his footsteps.

During this morning we'll be visiting the various Antpitta feeders and with a little patience we may be able to see the vulnerable and endemic Brown-banded Antpitta, elusive and difficult Bi-coloured Antpitta, small and quick Slate-crowned Antpitta, the more common and bold Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and less common Chestnut-naped Antpitta. In total there are 7 species of Antpitta found in the reserve, an astounding number and testament to what a special place this is.

Either before or after the Antpitta-fest you'll dedicate time to the very rare and very local Masked Saltator which fortunately, makes a frequent habit of perching above the house, making Rio Blanco arguably the best place in the world to see this stunning bird. Above our heads we'll be listening for the characteristic calls and chatter of groups of Golden-Plumed Parakeet, the uncommon and unpredictable White-capped Tanager and uncommon Barred Fruiteater. Some of the most colorful mixed flocks will be dominated by the larger and red-eyed Hooded, Lachrymose and Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers along with the more uncommon and solitary Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager.

You'll spend the morning birding the various gravel roads, with occasional stops to look for more skulking species such as the various 'Tapaculos' that inhabit these forests, among them the very shy but astoundingly beautiful Ocellated Tapaculo – a bird definitely worth spending some time on just to catch a glimpse. We'll also be looking for the large Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Crimson-mantled and Powerful Woodpeckers and common but very pretty Cinnamon Flycatcher, sallying for insects above the road. Various species of the Tangara genus will be passing by in mixed flocks but special attention will be paid to the uncommon and local Red-Hooded Tanager, the lush Grass-green Tanager and emblematic Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher. Flying above we'll be watching out for the local and uncommon Scaly-naped Parrot and strikingly coloured Rusty-faced Parrot – a wonderful bird to add to the list if seen.



At the reserve feeders you'll be able to sight many hummers and flowerpiercers such the stunning Long-tailed Sylph, beautifully marked Collared Inca, territorial Buff-tailed Coronet, along with Andean Emerald and Speckled Hummingbird. A massive list is possible at Rio Blanco and few birders leave disappointed. You will have lunch at the reserve and then be transferred to Hacienda El Bosque to spend the night.



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Overnight – Hacienda El Bosque



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D

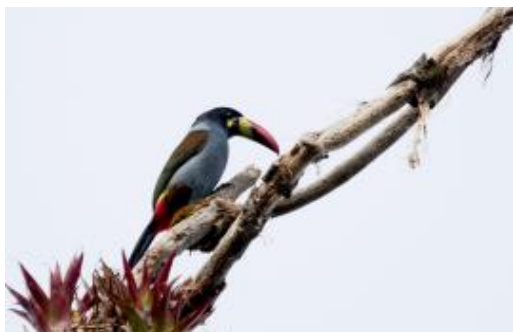


Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 10: EL BOSQUE RESERVE



A morning visit to Hacienda El Bosque near the CHEC forest reserve is a perfect spot to see the local and scarce Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Banded Fruiteater and one of the most photogenic antpitta around – Crescent-faced Antpitta which has been visiting feeders with some regularity. You will be transferred to Termales del Ruiz in the afternoon to spend the night.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 11: TERMALES DEL RUIZ

Today will be gem of a day birding, spotting all the high-Andean specialities and endemics which can be found in the hotel's gardens and feeders located strategically along the old Manizales road, as well as at the entrance to the magical National Park of snow-capped peaks, Los Nevados. Targets include: Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Rufous-fronted Parakeet, Buffy Helmetcrest, Tawny Antpitta, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Black-thighed Puffleg, Rainbow-bearded Helmetcrest, Crested Cotinga, Sapphire-winged Hummingbird, Shining Sunbeam, Buff-winged Starfontlet and various mountain tanagers. Breakfast will be taken either before leaving or on the trail, depending on the group's preferences. Time will also be spent visiting local areas of páramo, an otherworldly, high-altitude tundra ecosystem only found in five countries in the world. Colombia holds the lion's share of this precious ecosystem, with 60% of the world's total. The páramo is an ecosystem like no other; an essential producer and regulator of fresh water, home to specially adapted plant species and recently described as the fastest-evolving ecosystem on Earth.



Overnight – Color de Mis Reves



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 12: TRANSFER TO JARDIN

Today after a pleasant stay in Termales del Ruiz, we will be transferred for about 6 hours - depending on traffic and the conditions of the road - to the town of Jardín, in the south-west of the department of Antioquia. Jardín is a typical Antioquia population or as they say in Colombia, "paisa" name that is used for the people of this region. Once again we will be amazed by the color of its architecture, balconies full of flowers and a festive and cheerful atmosphere will



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accompany us this afternoon in the cozy town of Jardín, where in the afternoon we will go to the Jardín de Rocas Natural Park to observe the spectacular Gallito de Roca.

Overnight – Casa Passiflora



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 13: ALTO DE VENTANAS

This incredible place is a top birding site covering an elevation range from 1,600 – 2,800 masl / 5,200 -9,200 ft. Breakfast and lunch today will be taken in the field to maximise our birdwatching hours. Without doubt the main highlight of any visit to Alto Ventanas is the chance to see the once thought-to-be extinct Yellow-eared Parrot (endemic), an endangered bird that was rediscovered here in 2001 and strictly associated with tall wax palms where it makes its home. Other exciting targets are the skulking and difficult Tanager Finch (near-endemic), Rufous Antpitta, Chestnut-naped Antpitta, Lachrymose Mountain Tanager, Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Sharpe's Wren, the hard to see Plushcap, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Buff-tailed Coronet, Grass-green Tanager, Golden-faced Whitestar (near-endemic), Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Golden-headed Quetzal, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Torrent Duck, Crested Oropendola, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher (near-endemic) and many many more.

Overnight – Casa Passiflora



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Explore

DAY 14: TRANSFERS TO MEDELLIN

Today we will have a 4-5 hour transfer to Medellín, stopping in a few nice birding spots before we arrive to our hotel close to the airport to get ready to say goodbye to Colombia.

Overnight – Movich Las Palmas



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Travel

DAY 15: TRANSFERS TO AIRPORT



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Approx. Varies



Activity:
Travel



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Accommodation, at a glance

Subject to availability

NIGHTS	DESTINATION	ACCOMODATION
Nights 1, 2, 3	Bogota	B.O.G Hotel
Nights 4, 5, 6	Cali	Araucana Lodge
Nights 7, 8	Manizales	Tinamu
Nights 9	Manizales	Hacienda El Bosque
Nights 10	Manizales	Termales Del Ruiz
Nights 11	Manizales	Recino Del Pensamiento
Nights 12, 13	Jardin	Casa Passiflora
Nights 14	Medellin	Movich Las Lomas

Important Information

INCLUDED

- Hosting services in Bogota, Coffee Region, Cartagena and extension (if applicable)
- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- All transfers
- Internal flight ticket
- All entrance fees

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned
- Alcoholic and soft drinks (water included)
- Tips
- Personal expenses
- Optional tours/activities and extensions



When to go

- Due to Colombia being on the equator, temperatures are fairly stable at 24°C throughout the year, getting cooler if you move higher inland.
 - Colombia wet seasons vary depending on where you are in the country. In the North, there are 2 rainy seasons, between April and June, and between September and November. However in the South the rain is more constant but the showers never last that long.
 - As for when to avoid the tourists! The busy tourism season tend to be between December to February and Easter Week (the week before Easter weekend).
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Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	2 – 5 hours per day. This is a tailor-made trip so can be as active as you wish it to be
SEASON	This part of Colombia is best explored from December to April, but can be visited at any time
BEST TIME TO GO	December – April, July - August
GROUP SIZE	Tailor-made
RESPONSIBILITY	As part of our commitment to responsible travel, we propose activities that are respectful of the environment and communities working at the same time exclusively with local partners.
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.



The Pioneer Booking Process

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

