GUATEMALA
HIGHLANDS & HORNED GUAN

The fantastic Pink-headed Warbler is found in the southwest highlands of Guatemala © Fernando Enrique, Limosa Holidays

2018 Sunday 25th February – Wednesday 7th March (11 days)
Small group tour with Fernando Enrique & local guides

NEW! Guatemala has many attractions, but it says something about a country when even its currency is named after its national bird - the exquisite Resplendent Quetzal! Indeed, as a birding destination, this beautiful and incredibly scenic Central American destination is right up there with the best of them. Our tour concentrates on the central highlands to the west of Guatemala City, visiting the best locations and lodges for a wonderful range of speciality birds. Join us as we seek the enigmatic Horned Guan, fabulous Pink-headed Warbler, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Lovely Cotinga and rare Azure-rumped Tanager - not to mention a feast of colourful hummingbirds, warblers and tanagers - plus the quetzal, of course! And you have a trip where birds, landscape and people all come together to make a superb tour.

- Beautiful and immensely scenic Central American country that’s bursting with great birding
- Horned Guan, Pink-headed Warbler, Blue-and-white Mockingbird in the mountains
- Nearctic warblers and “red-hot” rainforest tanagers add brilliant splashes of colour
- A host of hummingbirds, including Rufous and Violet Sabrewings
- Tody Motmot, Bushy-crested Jay, Hooded Grosbeak and the rare Azure-rumped Tanager
- Lake Atitlan - at 5100 feet, ringed by volcanoes and described as the world's most beautiful lake
- Comfortable and characterful lodgings, with friendly people, good food - and great coffee!
- Small group tour expertly led by Limosa’s Fernando Enrique and Guatemalan naturalist guides

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Guatemalan bird guides
- Return flights - London Heathrow to Guatemala City
- 9 nights accommodation in Guatemala, staying at comfortable hotels, lodges and fincas
- All main meals included, featuring much that is locally grown - including the coffee!
- Transfer by boat on Lake Atitlan
- All excursions, local travel, entry fees, tour based tips and taxes

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS, West End Farmhouse, Chapelfield, Stalham, Norfolk NR12 9EJ (UK)
TEL: +44 (0) 1692 580623 | 580624 • EMAIL: info@limosaholidays.co.uk • WEB: limosaholidays.co.uk
Outline Itinerary

Day 1: We fly from London-Madrid-Guatemala City, and travel on to colonial Antigua. Night Antigua

Day 2: We visit nearby Finca el Pilar. Night Antigua

Day 3: Morning at Rincón Suizo forest. Afternoon drive to Quetzaltenango. Night Las Cumbres

Days 4-5: We visit Fuentes Georginas to try for Horned Guan before continuing for lunch and lots of birding at Los Tarrales. Finca Los Tarrales (2 nts)

Days 6-7: We make the short transfer to the shores of Lake Atitlán and next morning search for Horned Guan on the slopes of Volcan San Pedro. Posada de Santiago (2 nts)

Day 8: We leave Lake Atitlán and travel east beyond Guatemala City to the arid Motagua Valley, stopping for lunch and some birding en route. Night Camino Larga

Day 9: Birding in the dry scrublands of Motagua, the Biotop del Quetzal and return to Central Highlands. Night Ram Tzul

Day 10: Morning Biotopo del Quetzal, afternoon return to Guatemala City. Fly overnight to London

Day 11: Afternoon arrival London

Tour Overview

Guatemala is a beautiful and relatively compact Central American country with a great deal to offer the visiting naturalist. Its birds are brilliant, colourful and diverse. From the fabulous, bright green-and-red Resplendent Quetzal - the quetzal is even the unit of currency in Guatemala (not the actual bird, of course – that would be silly!), to the fantastic Pink-headed Warbler and rare Horned Guan – the latter with newly discovered populations allowing easier access for groups to see this amazing beast!

Our exciting new tour commences at Guatemala City and focuses mainly on the species-rich highlands of the Pacific Slope to the west. We'll explore cool high-elevation pine-oak forests, a spectacular volcanic lake ringed by volcanoes, hot, dry thorn-forest and temperate cloudforests - each with their own different set of birds.

Our birding begins around the old Spanish colonial city of Antigua, with a visit to some superb hummingbird feeders. The regionally endemic Green-throated Mountainem, recently split Rivoli’s Hummingbird and localised Rufous Sabrewing (endemic to the mountains of the Pacific Slope) are among many that await.

In the upper reaches of the pine-oak and cloud forests here, the trees can be full of birds: everything from Grey Silky-flycatchers to Rufous-collared Thrushes, while more difficult-to-find specialities include the spectacular Mountain Trogon and striking Hooded Grosbeak - both always high on the list of desired species.

Each hill we visit seems to have its own subtly different avifauna. Sought-after regional highland endemics include the fabulous Pink-headed Warbler - one of the star birds on this tour - Rufous-browed Wren, Blue-throated Motmot and Black-capped Siskin. There's also a plethora of colourful Nearctic migrants to enjoy, with Townsend’s, Hermit and Red-faced Warblers occurring alongside the resident Slate-throated Redstart, and Crescent-chested and Olive Warblers.

Horned Guan is one of the key ‘target species’ and we have a couple of chances to find this endangered and highly localised bird. As big as a turkey, the adult male Horned Guan is notable for the 3cm scarlet ‘horn’ projecting straight up from its crown. This species is legendary for the difficulty in finding it in the cloudforests above 1650 metres (5400ft) - but our guides have recently discovered a more easily accessible site, so we have our fingers crossed!

In Guatemala, the diversity of montane birding is such that every day will bring new species: Crested Guan, White-bellied Chachalaca, cobalt-backed Long-tailed Manakins, the tricky Tody Motmot, Rufous-breasted Spinetail, Prevost’s Ground Sparrow, the rare Azure-rumped Tanager... and many, many more!
To conclude our birding we travel back east, beyond Guatemala City, contrasting the arid Motagua Valley with the moist cloudforests of the Biotopo del Quetzal.

Motagua is the hottest and driest region of Guatemala, and the dry forest here is both very different to anything else we'll see on our tour and complete with its own special birds. The lovely Turquoise-browed Motmot is one of the most conspicuous residents and Rufous Hummingbird, White-throated Magpie-jay and Rufous-naped Wren also occur in the valley.

For our grand finale we visit La Reserva del Quetzal, seeking the smart Azure-hooded Jay, Chestnut-headed Oropendola and, of course, the exquisite Resplendent Quetzal - widely regarded as one of the world's most beautiful birds. We also have a chance of finding the rare Golden-cheeked Warbler, a migrant which breeds sparingly in Texas and passes the winter here.

All in all, Guatemala today makes for a fabulous birding destination, offering much improved accommodation and tourist infrastructure, a rich cultural heritage, fine landscapes and a wealth of special birds - not to mention some of the best coffee in the world to wake up to! Our February tour combines all this to bring you a memorable Central American holiday, one that's jam-packed with exciting and very special birds!

Our tour will be led by popular Limosa guide Fernando Enrique, returning for his 7th visit to Guatemala. He is fluent in both English and Spanish, and received this tour for us in March 2017. Having also carried out bird research in Guatemala (and neighbouring Belize), his love and enthusiasm for the country and its wildlife is sure to inspire you!
Hummingbird, Green Violet-ear and the impressive - and large - Violet Sabrewing.

Having taken our fill of 'hummers', we travel on to the upper reaches at El Pilar. The clearing near the top can be alive with Grey Silky-flycatchers, Rufous-collared Thrushes, Black-headed Siskins and many more - though we may not linger here for too long as the montane oak forests host even more species! The beautiful Mountain Trogon will be high on our list of specialities to look for, as will the equally appealing - and difficult! - Hooded Grosbeak. Other good birds include the always elusive Singing Quail, Black-capped Swallow, Bushy-crested Jay, Bar-winged and Black-vented Orioles and the 'hot' Flame-coloured Tanager.

An exciting and bird-filled day is assured before we must head back down to Antigua for dinner. 

Night Posada de Don Rodrigo

**DAY 3**

**RINCÓN SUIZO & QUETZALTENANGO**

Leaving Antigua first thing, we travel northwest (about an hour) to Tecpan. Just to the north of the city of Tecpán, Rincón Suizo is a restaurant along the Panamerican Highway, at an elevation of 2500m (8200 ft) - and our first port of call today. We will spend the morning birding near here... after first enjoying breakfast at the restaurant.

Nestling behind the restaurant is a small mountain forest reserve of pine, cypress, oak and alder. Less exotic and exuberant than the humid cloud forests on the Guatemalan Atlantic Slope, the forest at Rincón Suizo may remind visitors of North American or European woodlands, but the birds are very different! Trails offer access to a site that's home to a number of sought-after northern Central American highland endemics.

High on the list is the fantastic Pink-headed Warbler, but specialities also include Green-throated Mountain Gem, Blue-throated Motmot and Rufous-browed Wren. Like many tropical forests, at times birding here can seem quiet - but sooner or later we will come across one of the mobile mixed feeding flocks. Joining the resident forest species then can be an assortment of Nearctic migrants, including Townsend's, Wilson's, Black-and-white, Hermit and Red-faced Warblers along with the resident Slate-throated Redstart, crest-like Hutton's Vireo and Crescent-chested and Olive Warblers, too.

As we search eagerly through the restless flocks for the much-wanted Pink-headed Warbler, the likes of Spot-crowned Woodcreeper and Brown Creeper are likely to come our way – the latter a southern form that may yet be split. With careful searching, we might also discover a colourful Chestnut-sided Shrike-vireo within the troupe as well as Bushtits passing through the forest - sometimes in flocks of more than 30 birds.

While walking the trails we may cross a Tufted Flycatcher territory and these can sometimes be joined by Pine, Buff-breasted and Hammond’s Flycatchers, along with Greater Pewee and the local races of Plumbeous Vireo and Mountain Trogon. Lowering our gaze to the understorey, sharp eyes might detect a furtive Ruddy-capped Nightingale-thrush, the bright and rusty cheeked Golden-browed Warbler or a smart Chestnut-capped Brushfinch.

Amongst a plethora of possible hummingbirds zapping about the forest, the White-eared Hummingbird is frequently found, to be joined by Amethyst-throated and Rivoli’s, while the stunning Garnet-throated Hummingbird also occurs. In open areas we will seek Yellow-eyed Junco, Spotted Towhee and the endemic, dapper and strikingly bibbed Rufous-collared Thrush. If we are very lucky and with our eyes to the skies, we may spot the elusive White-breasted Hawk, soaring overhead with the local race of Red-tailed Hawk.

Reluctantly tearing ourselves away from Rincón Suizo and continuing west, our destination this evening is Las Cumbres, an enchanting Posada Rural in the province of Quetzaltenango. We’ll pause along the way to take lunch at a local restaurant, then in the afternoon explore one of the many trails near our hotel.

Situated at an elevation of almost 2000m (6500ft), the fine mix of montane and tropical forest around the hotel is excellent for Nearctic migrants such as warblers, vireos and tanagers. It’s also a picturesque and relaxing spot,
affording great views of the surrounding mountains that are also home to the endangered Horned Guan. Night Las Cumbres

**DAYS 4 - 5 FUENTES GEORGINAS & FINCA LOS TARRALES**

With the Horned Guan firmly in our sights, we set off early this morning, leaving the hotel before sunrise (06:30am) and driving a short distance west to Fuentes Georginas. This hot spring resort is not only popular with the locals, but the pristine cloudforest here is also well preserved and offers our first real chance to find the near-mythical Horned Guan. Although the chances of seeing one here are smaller than in the San Pedro area later in our tour, birds have been present recently so it's well worth a look!

Even if we don’t manage to find the elusive guan, this place hosts an extraordinary array of cloudforest birds - with many of them easily seen around the car park or after a short walk along the road. Highland Guan, Amethyst-throated and Garnet-throated Hummingbirds, Mexican Violetear, Blue-throated Motmot, Ruddy-capped Nightingale-thrush and Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer are among mouth-watering possibilities, along with a fine collection of warblers including Olive, Crescent-chested, Hermit, Townsend’s and Pink-headed.

Having enjoyed at least some of these amazing birds, we’ll return to the hotel for a late breakfast before looping first south and then east to reach our next destination: Finca Los Tarrales.

Los Tarrales is a birder’s paradise - if you had to pick just one place to bird in Guatemala, this would be it! More than 350 bird species have been recorded from this superb private protected area, where primary rainforest and cloudforest is interspersed with coffee and flower plantations on the southern slope of the Atitlán volcano.

The economy of this enlightened finca is based on shade grown coffee and ecotourism. While it’s important to support and encourage that, one of the great things about staying at Los Tarrales is that this place is very ‘authentic’. The guest accommodation is rather modest, although clean and very comfortable, and you’ll see the families working on the finca on their way to the coffee plantations. The homemade cooking is among the best we’ll have anywhere in Guatemala; the scenery is spectacular - you can see the Atitlan Volcano from the lodge... and there are birds everywhere. Indeed, it’s not unusual to see 100 species here before lunchtime!

At Los Tarrales, we will bird from a number of accessible trails that run through the excellent forest, seeking out species that are restricted in Guatemala to the Pacific Slope. Pacific, Orange-chinned and yellow-spectacled Orange-fronted Parakeets, Rufous Sabrewing, Blue-tailed Hummingbird and the cobalt-backed Long-tailed Manakin will all be high on the list - and we have a great chance of seeing the rare and range-restricted Azure-rumped Tanager here, too!

Having arrived at Los Tarrales in time for lunch (Day 4), we’ll then check the feeders for White-bellied Chachalacas before heading out for our first look at birds in the surrounding forests and plantations. The tricky Rufous-breasted Spinetail and Spot-breasted Wren will no doubt occupy some of our time this afternoon, while at a small plantation, a pair of stunning red-billed Blue-throated Sapphires sometimes set up territory – the male often calling and performing from small sticks. As the day draws on, the likes of Lineated Woodpecker, Collared Aracari, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper and White-winged Tanager will come our way and we should see Yellow-naped Amazon, too.

For our second day here, we’ll spend the whole time at Los Tarrales, leaving our lodgings 30 minutes before sunrise so as to be at the right spot in the half-light of pre-dawn to await the Highland Guans displaying. As the light slowly improves we should be treated to better views before they slope off to be replaced by Crested Guans and White-bellied Chachalacas. Nearby, we will search for the tricky Tody Motmot and with patience will hope for ‘scope views of this wonderful little bird! Concealed within the local trees, our guides might also find a day-roosting Mottled Owl before we head back to the finca for a well-deserved breakfast.

Replete, the rest of our morning will be spent looking for the many other avian specialities Los
Tarrales has to offer. It's an immense property, one that encompasses a large portion of the Atitlan Volcano from the lower grounds around the base, all the way up to the top.

There should be a great assortment of hummingbirds about, with Green-breasted Mango, White-bellied Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat and Emerald-chinned Hummingbird among many delights in store. The brilliant orange Spot-breasted Oriole is often about, as we try for the rather less showy White-faced and Ruddy Quail-doves, Rufous-breasted Spinetail and the delectable Prevost's Ground Sparrow. As the day warms, the skies above Los Tarrales are home to large raptors such as Black and Ornate Hawk-eagles and the impressive King Vulture.

After lunch (and a short siesta for those that want it), we'll pick up a new trail, hoping for views of the shy White-throated Thrush and keeping a sharp eye out for the diminutive Northern Bentbill and Worm-eating Warbler. Returning before dusk, we can again try for Highland Guan and, as we wait for them to appear, groups of Yellow-naped Amazons may pass over to roost and neat Prevost's and White-eared Ground Sparrows may be picked out on the ground.

Night birds at Los Tarreles include the stunning Black-and-white and Mottled Owls, and there's often a Common Pauraque about, hawking for moths. The strange Northern Potoo sometimes appears and can give great views, while other nocturnal creatures we can try spotlighting for after dark include Kinkajou, Possum and several interesting amphibians. Two nights Los Tarrales

DAYS 6 & 7
LOS TARRALES TO LAKE ATITLÁN & THE SAN PEDRO VOLCANO
Bidding a reluctant farewell to Los Tarrales, we transfer the short distance north (about an hour) to Santiago Atitlán, where we'll spend the next two nights at the superb Posada de Santiago, on the shore of Lake Atitlán - ringed by volcanoes and often described as the world's most beautiful lake. The cloudforests that cloak the immense Atitlán and San Pedro volcanoes which rise up from the lake are the best place to look for Horned Guan - and we'll make a special effort to find this spectacular bird first thing tomorrow!

Prior to that little adventure however, and after settling into our comfortable lodgings beside Lake Atitlán, we'll spend a leisurely afternoon birding the hotel grounds, enjoying the many ‘garden’ birds. The hummingbird feeders here can be buzzing with Azure-crowned and Berylline Hummingbirds! With a big day in store tomorrow for those wishing to try for Horned Guan, we'll take an early dinner and bed tonight.

The rare and endangered Horned Guan is a relic of the Cracidae family that persists today only in small fragments of its previous range. Its sole habitat is limited to cloudforests above 1650 metres (5400ft). As big as a turkey, adult males have a 3cm scarlet ‘horn’ projecting straight up from the top of the head.

Horned Guans are active first thing in the morning so a very early start (optional for those who wish to take part) will be essential on Day 7 if we are to have any real chance of seeing one. Our adventure begins with a boat trip across the emerald and blue waters of Lake Atitlán (from Santiago Atitlán to San Cristobal La Laguna), it being much quicker to take a boat than to drive around the shore. The boat trip takes only 20 minutes or so, but is both beautiful and scenic for the caldera lake is surrounded by dramatic volcanoes which soar to 3000m (9800ft).

Birders have two bites of the Horned Guan cherry at San Pedro: one at a relatively easy 'new site' discovered nearby; the other at a traditional area high on the slopes on Volcan San Pedro. As luck would have it, the 'new site' has recently proved to be the best place to find the guan - and has the added attraction that the walk to this area is both shorter (about an hour) and much less arduous than the very steep hike to reach the 'old site' on San Pedro.

After (hopefully!) having seen the Horned Guan well at the new site, we have a chance to pick up a few more of the volcano's special birds. Wine-throated Hummingbird, the diminutive and highly localised Belted Flycatcher, Rufous-
browed Wren and perhaps even orange-bellied Elegant Euphonia - all are possible up here.

As we descend again, in drier areas lower down we have a great opportunity to find the tricky Blue-and-white Mockingbird (looking not unlike an outsize Black-throated Blue Warbler) before catching the boat back across Lake Atitlán and relaxing after a well-deserved lunch back at our lovely hotel.

For anyone who doesn't wish to participate in the early morning excursion for the guan, our hotel is located on the shore of Lake Atitlán, with the most amazing views you can imagine. The cabins are very comfortable and food at the hotel's restaurant is excellent. But perhaps the best thing (from a birdwatcher’s point of view) is the amazing diversity of birds to be found on the grounds. On his last visit, Fernando spent one afternoon birding here and saw more than 70 species! Two nights at Posada de Santiago

DAY 8
LAKE ATITLÁN TO MOTAGUA
Departing Santiago and the Lake Atitlán region after breakfast today, we travel east, fringing the outskirts of Guatemala City on our way to the Motagua Valley. We’ll break our journey with a stop for lunch at Guatemala City and also to visit a local reserve there in search of Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge and other highland specialties.

Continuing east, we'll aim to arrive at our next hotel, in the hot, dry Motagua Valley around 5.00pm, with time to enjoy a little late afternoon birding around the hotel. The habitat here will be totally new to us - and so too will be the birds! Night Hotel Camino Largo

DAY 9
MOTAGUA VALLEY – BIOTOPO DEL QUETZAL & CENTRAL HIGHLANDS
The central valley of the Motagua River is the hottest and driest region of Guatemala - and indeed, is the driest area in Central America. Located on the lee side of the Sierra de las Minas Mountains, very little precipitation reaches the Motagua Valley, with just enough rain falling to allow sparse thorn scrub and dry forest with a 3-5m tall canopy. Characteristic plants include spiny shrubs, cactus (including tall columns), acacias and Guayacan trees.

Making the most of the lower temperatures first thing, we’ll set off early this morning to visit the dry forest reserve at Estación Biológica Heloderma. As the sun begins to rise and bird activity increases, we’ll await the arrival our first feeding flock. White-ored Gnateatchers, argumentative Northern Beardless Tyrannulets, Nutting’s Flycatcher, Streak-backed Oriole and the gorgeous Varied Bunting are among likely component species.

Taking tracks down by the river, we may spot a fleet-footed Lesser Roadrunner darting across the road, while the more verdant riverine forests hold Squirrel Cuckoo, Cinnamon Hummingbird and a good selection of northern migrants, such as American Redstart and Northern Parula.

Of the many bird species that make Motagua's thorn scrub and dry forest their home, we shall be watching for Spot-bellied Bobwhite, Russet-crowned Motmot, Lesser Ground-cuckoo, Plain-capped Starthroat and Stripe-headed Sparrow. The handsome Turquoise-browed Motmot is one of the most conspicuous valley residents and we can also hope to find Altamira and Spot-breasted Orioles, Rufous Hummingbird, White-throated Magpie-jay and Rufous-naped Wren. Checking the skies might reward us with a Black Hawk-eagle or a passing White-fronted Amazon.

From here, we travel on to the Reserva Natural Privada Rio Escondido, home to the rare and endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler which overwinters here and migrates north to Texas where it breeds. We will enjoy lunch on the reserve before travelling the short distance (12km) to our next hotel, on the northeast slope of the Biotopo del Quetzal.

We stay at Ram Tzul, a rustic eco-lodge that was set up to help fund and preserve the habitat of Guatemala's National Bird - the Resplendent Quetzal. The lodge enjoys panoramic views to pristine cloud forest. We’ll aim to arrive here in time to spend the late afternoon walking the grounds and check out the commoner bird species in the mountains. Night Ram Tzul
DAY 10
BIOTOPO DEL QUETZAL, RETURN TO GUATEMALA CITY & FLY LONDON

It’s our final day in Guatemala so we’ll set off early to explore La Reserva del Quetzal in the Biotopo del Quetzal, a vast swathe of cloud forest that safeguards the threatened habitat of the quetzal. Only a small section of this reserve is open to visitors, with access via two trails that begin at the Visitor Centre and follow a circuit through the forest.

The reserve offers good opportunities to see birds of mid-elevation cloud forest, but our main focus will be on finding the smart Azure-hooded Jay, Chestnut-headed Oropendola and of course, the exquisite Resplendent Quetzal. Though it is indeed spectacular with its long tail and bright emerald-green colouration, this species can also be elusive! But as we wait a fine supporting cast comes in the form of Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Spotted and Black-headed Nightingale Thrushes, Tawny-throated Leafgleaner, Slate-coloured Solitaire, Common Bush Tanager and Blue-crowned Chlorophonia. We have another chance here of seeing Golden-cheeked Warbler.

Leaving La Reserva del Quetzal mid-morning, sadly we must return to the hotel to collect our bags and depart for Guatemala City. We’ll stop to enjoy a farewell lunch along the way, before continuing on to the airport. Our flight home departs Guatemala City early this evening, travelling overnight to Madrid.

DAY 11
ARRIVE LONDON

Afternoon arrival at Madrid and onward connection to London, where our birdwatching tour to Guatemala concludes late this afternoon.

Trip Information

**Group Limit**  Maximum of 10 participants & 2 guides

**Birds**  240-280 species

**Mammals**  10-20 species. Forest mammals can be tricky but possibilities include White-tailed Deer, Red Brocket Deer, Collared Peccary, Central American Agouti, Kinkajou and the enigmatic Cacomistle, a poorly known relative of the Raccoon. Jaguar and Puma still roam the most remote areas but are unlikely to be seen.

**What To Expect**  In Guatemala during late February and early March, sunrise is around 6.15am and sunset around 6.15pm. We will be making early starts on this tour, which is the norm for birding tours in the tropics where the daylight hours are relatively short and where bird activity is at its peak early and late in the day. For certain key species it is essential to be out in the field at first light so we can hear the birds singing and calling as the day starts up - in some instances, this may be our only chance to find some species, so we will naturally want to make the most of this opportunity.

Much of our birding in Guatemala will be in tropical forest. Very little of the country is flat, so we’ll mostly be walking on hill trails, birding from tracks and trails with occasional steeper sections. Where possible, we aim to drive uphill and bird as we walk back down. It will be warm to hot, humid at times (though often cooler and more refreshing at altitude), and we may be on our feet for up to several hours at a stretch watching for birds - you may find it handy to carry a lightweight collapsible stool.

Overall, the tour is not a strenuous one (see also Walking, below), but you should be prepared for early starts in order to enjoy the best of the day's birding before the heat and humidity builds and activity starts to wane. After a lull during the hot middle part of the day (there will be afternoon rests after lunch some days), the birding tends to pick up again from mid-afternoon and you should be ready for some long field days as we are likely to be out until near dusk on more or less a daily basis. Our guides will be able to advise you locally about the day's events - and if you prefer to opt out of a particular activity or walk, please don’t be afraid to ask them.

**Accommodation**  9 nights accommodation in Guatemala, staying at a varied selection of comfortable, characterful and conveniently located hotels, lodges and fincas (private estates) described above. All rooms have private facilities.
Meals  All main meals (and with drinking water provided during the day) are included in the tour price, commencing with dinner on arrival in Guatemala on Day 1 and concluding with lunch there on Day 10. Food is good to excellent throughout, and very tasty. Most restaurants offer a good selection of traditional Guatemalan dishes - such as Pepian (meat, vegetable and spice stew, the national dish of Guatemala); Jocon (chicken in tomatillo sauce); Guatemalan enchiladas and Kaq’ik (Guatemalan spicy turkey broth)... all served with tortillas!

Walking & Altitude  Our tour concentrates mainly on the central highlands to the west of Guatemala City. Most of our walks here are short and easy (moderate for Horned Guan), but Guatemala is a mountainous country in places so we will often be walking up or down trails. You should expect some trails to be steeper in parts - but we take all our walks slowly, with frequent stops to rest and bird. Walking poles and/or lightweight collapsible stools can be handy.

The walk to look for Horned Guan at San Pedro Volcano (Day 7) is more strenuous. We will depart very early and will be visiting Cerro Paquisis, the 'new site' for this species (the walk up to which is relatively easy compared to the relentless three-hour slog uphill to the 'old site', which we will not be attempting on our tour).

The walk to Cerro Paquisis takes over an hour along a path that is well maintained by local foresters, but with lots of steps. We’ll take this at our own pace, pausing to rest as often as necessary. At the top, there is a plateau where the cloud forest begins. This limit between the montane forest and the cloud forest is very birdy - with Wine-throated Hummingbird among specialities to watch for - and we’ll regroup here before seeking the guan.

Though it is the 'dry season' rainforest trails can nonetheless be uneven, muddy and/or slippery underfoot at times, so sturdy waterproof walking shoes or lightweight boots with good grip are recommended for this tour.

Maximum elevation this tour: 3000m.

Weather  Tropical to temperate climate, according to altitude. Our February-March tours run during Guatemala’s ‘dry season’ but note rainfall can (and does!) of course occur year-round in the mountains and rainforests! It can be cool and misty in the mountains and cloud forest, especially early in the day. It’s generally hotter and sunnier on the Pacific Slope (Los Tarrales) and in the Caribbean Lowlands (Motagua Valley), with temperatures typically in the range of 10-30°C (50-86°F).

Flights  There are no direct flights from the UK to Guatemala, so we fly with British Airways / Iberia from London Heathrow to Guatemala City with a change of planes in Madrid.

Ground Transport  We travel by comfortable bus or minibus with air-conditioning and local drivers that our agents have worked with for many years.

At Los Tarrales, an early start is essential in order to be at the right spot at first light to look for Highland Guan. We’ll leave the lodge 30 minutes before sunrise and use two 4x4 vehicles to cover the nearly 2 miles (15-20 mins) drive into the reserve. After seeing the guans, we’ll drive back down again, this time stopping along the way to enjoy some more birding.

A very early start is essential for the optional Horned Guan trip at San Pedro Volcano, which begins with a 20-minute boat ride across Lake Atitlan (from Santiago Atitlan to San Pedro La Laguna). Here, modified pick-up trucks will be waiting to transfer us from the lake to the start of the volcano trail. It’s a fun ride since the trucks have space to sit or stand up (there is a rail to hold and seats) while enjoying the beautiful landscape. Note that it can feel cold early in the morning, so layer up with warm clothing that can be peeled off as the day begins to warm.

Insects  Mosquitoes are almost absent in the Pacific Slope highlands, where we spend most of our tour. See also Health section (below).

We may encounter some biting insects at Los Tarrales, where at higher elevations a species of black fly can be a local nuisance.
Photos  Good to excellent photographic opportunities in more open habitats, especially at the feeders around the lodges - birds, wildlife and some splendid scenic shots. Tricky in the forest due to low light levels.

Tour Cost

2018 (11 days):
£3395 (inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £2795
Deposit: £500
Single Supp (Feb): £235

Cost includes
• Services of our expert guide & local guides
• Return flights London-Guatemala City
• 9 nights accommodation in Guatemala
• All main meals (with drinking water provided)
• All local travel (with 4x4 where necessary)
• Boat ride on Lake Atitlan
• All entry fees to reserves and parks, tour based tips (lodges, driver and local guides) & taxes
• Map and Limosa checklist of birds.

Cost excludes
Insurance, drinks, airport snacks/meals & other items of a personal nature.

About Your Guides

Fernando Enrique  Fernando is our resident Spanish expert and English-speaking bird tour guide, all-round naturalist and biologist whose home is in Andalucia - overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar. As a child, he was fascinated by the kettles of raptors that formed above his home and being born on Europe’s most important bird migration route, helped shape his love of birds.
At age 18, Fernando became one of the youngest bird ringers in Spain, while his eagerness to learn more led him to travel widely in Europe, Africa, Asia and Central America, including six previous visits to Guatemala. Now aged 31, he has worked with a number of species - including several with serious conservation problem, such as Montagu’s Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Griffon Vulture and White Stork - as well as on projects studying the effects of wind farms on birds and raptor surveys in Belize and Guatemala. While Spanish is of course Fernando’s first language, his command of English is excellent and he is a delight to travel with. In 2018, he will lead our tours to Spain and northern Morocco as well as this new tour for Limosa to Guatemala, which he recce’d for us in March 2017.

Local Guides  Our group will also be accompanied by an experienced, English-speaking Guatemalan bird tour guide/s.

Financial Security
Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays’ insolvency. Our licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as ‘Land Only’, all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection

Limosa Loyalty Discount
We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying ‘thank you’, we offer a Frequent Travel Discount. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip*2. Remember to request your discount at time of booking!

*2  Please note: This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extras such as additional flights, private extensions and cancellations. Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.
How To Book
Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post
You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely Online via our website, using the ‘Book This Tour’ button on the relevant tour page or the Booking tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there’s one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our Booking Conditions and General Information (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

When to Book
Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an Early Bird Discount - see our current brochure or website for details.

Our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Late booking payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at the time of booking for all late bookings (i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure).

Other Things You Need To Know

Passports & Visas
All participants must be in possession of a valid passport. Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Guatemala.

• VISA NOT REQUIRED by British citizens to visit Guatemala for up to 90 days.

Holders of non-UK passports should contact their nearest Guatemalan embassy or consulate to check whether or not they require a visa/s - http://guatemala.embassyhomepage.com/.
If a visa/s is required, you will need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you
to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.

Health & Vaccinations
Visit your health professional at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC), visit: travelhealthpro.org.uk/country-information/ and by NHS (Scotland), visit: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx
Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available at NHS Choices website: http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx

Compulsory vaccinations: None for travellers arriving from the UK.

However, note that all visitors to Guatemala arriving from any of the following countries - Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, French Guyana, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia and Sudan - are required to produce an International Certificate of Vaccination documenting yellow fever vaccination before entry to Guatemala will be granted. NB. Be aware that such certificates only become valid 10 days after the date of vaccination.

Recommended vaccinations: tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your doctor for current advice regarding TB, typhoid and hepatitis B which may also be recommended in some circumstances.

Malaria: Mosquitoes are virtually absent in the Pacific Highlands of Guatemala and there is no malaria risk in Guatemala City, Antigua and Lake Atitlan and areas above 1500m. There is a low risk of malaria in the lowlands of Guatemala below 1500m (4900ft) - which includes Motagua Valley. For low to no risk areas, antimalarial tablets are not usually advised. However, we recommend you check and discuss the possible need for malaria prophylaxis with your doctor prior to travel as areas of risk can change. See: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/central-america/guatemala.aspx

Other: A sun hat is essential, and the use of an effective barrier cream and sunglasses advised.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.

For full and up-to-date health information we urge everyone to consult The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk prior to booking any overseas holiday. NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government’s Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team. You can search for individual country requirements, which are updated regularly.

Your Safety & Travel Advice
An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the threat it may pose to your safety and security. The UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) encourages British nationals to be better prepared for their overseas trips with a view to avoiding common travelling traumas, risks and dangers. In order for you to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination it is strongly recommended that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel.

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).
‘Travel Aware’ - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: www.gov.uk/travelaware

Travel Insurance
Good travel insurance is essential before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, it is a condition of booking that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses.

Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire, particularly in Third World countries, may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important things to note about insurance

• Travel Insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.

• Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. We recommend all travellers check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk
Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests
We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.
Smoking
Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?
If you have any questions at any time, you’ll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way. Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by fax and email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us - and we look forward to hearing from you again!

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