

Orchids in The Wild

The OCA goes to Colombia!



Nov 3-Nov 19, 2018

Tour led by Sebastian Veira (Colombia) and Steve Beckendorf (Orchid Conservation Alliance)



This “Orchids in the Wild” trip to the central and northern Andes of Colombia starts by everyone meeting in the city of Pereira. From there we will start traveling from south to north by bus and 4-wheel drive to experience various mid and high elevation Andean habitats known for their high-biodiversity cloud forests where abundant epiphytes cover the trees.

TRIP SUMMARY

We will visit the vicinity of Tatamá National Park, where the Andes start to dive down into the pacific coast and where it is possible to see a hundred species of orchids in bloom in just a weekend, together with lots of other plants, birds, butterflies and crystal clear rivers. From there we go north towards Medellín, pass by some coffee towns, visit several natural reserves, orchid habitats and orchid

greenhouses, all of them located within the beautiful, green-covered mountains of the northern Andes. One of the reserves we will be visiting is La Selva de Ventanas, the most recently established OCA reserve.



DAILY ITINERARY

Nov 3. Arrive in Pereira during the day on Saturday and check into our hotel. If you have time explore the central square with its statue of Simón Bolívar and the Cathedral.

Nov 4. We begin our travels via chartered bus from Pereira to Pueblo Rico, Risaralda, a small town in the outskirts of Tatamá National park, with a good view of the Tatamá Massif. From Pueblo Rico we get 4-wheel drive transportation to Cerro Montezuma. If we arrive early, we can make a short exploration around the lodge (Middle elevation orchids like *Erycina*, *Rodriguezia*, *Maxillaria*, *Sigmatostalix* and *Scaphosepalum*). Overnight in Montezuma Rainforest Eco-lodge.

Nov 5. We get 4-wheel drive and go to the Cerro Montezuma top for a nice sunrise view of the Tatamá Massif. From there we walk down the road and look for highland orchids on the roadsides all day long. This is the start of the blooming season and there are many interesting orchids: *Otoglossum*, *Phragmipedium*, *Dracula*, *Porroglossum eduardi*, *Brachionidium imperiale* and many *Lepanthes*, just to mention some of them.

Overnight in Montezuma Rainforest Eco-lodge.

Nov 6: The area near the lodge is very biodiverse and is famous for watching birds and butterflies. In the morning we go along a pasture and forest trail near the lodge to see middle elevation orchids and get back to the lodge for lunch (*Pleurothallis*, *Dichaea*, *Epidendrum*, *Sobralia*, *Elleanthus* and *Huntleya*). It is possible to have a swim in the crystal clear river near the lodge and then go for a short exploration up the river (*Polycynis* if blooming, variety of *Pleurothallis*, *Elleanthus*, *Sobralia* among others).

To enhance the experience for each traveler, the total number of participants will be limited to 14. Although there will not be extremely strenuous hikes on this trip, much of it will be at altitudes of 7000 – 10,000 feet. Thus, all participants should be in good health and physical condition. The OCA reserves the right to limit participants due to health or fitness reasons. Because of the limited number of spaces, interested participants should send their deposits to the OCA as soon as possible to reserve a spot on the tour.



PROPOSED ITINERARY CONTINUED

Overnight in Montezuma Rainforest Eco-lodge.

Nov 7: We go by car to Apía and visit La Línea area. We will explore forests along the road with different mid-highland orchids, including some *Dracula*, *Epidendrum*, *Masdevallia*, *Maxillaria*, *Scaphosepalum* and *Lepanthes*, and then go to the lowland town of Viterbo. Overnight in Viterbo.

Nov 8: From Viterbo we take a car to Riosucio, and then we start the fantastic OrchidChiva trip to Jardín. The Chiva is the artisan rustic bus used in rural Colombia. We will travel by Chiva and do orchid exploration along the road to Jardín, where it is possible to see many roadside orchids like Pleurothallids, *Dracula*, *Masdevallia*, *Oncidium*, *Cyrtocbilum*, *Odontoglossum* and a big flowered *Utricularia* (an orchid-like carnivorous plant). Yellow-eared parrot nests can also be seen along this road, along with many other interesting birds. Overnight in the picturesque coffee town of Jardín.

Nov 9: In the morning we visit Reserva Orquídeas, the Colombian Orchid Society's recently established nature preserve. We see some of the orchids they have protected and walk a trail to the nearby waterfall with an optional swimming hole. In the afternoon we do a coffee tour near Jardín. Overnight in Jardín.

Nov 10: We take a short, early morning walk just outside Jardín to see the fantastic Cock of the Rock at its lek, then a car trip to Medellín in a chartered bus.

Optional activities in the afternoon in Medellín:



- Visit the Botero Museum and Plaza
- Visit Explora Park
- Visit the Medellín Museum of Modern Arts
- Graffiti Tour

Overnight in Medellín.

Nov 11: We will take a chartered bus and visit some of the nicest greenhouses in Colombia, in the eastern





mountains near Medellín. We will visit Daniel Piedrahita's renowned greenhouse and then the nursery at Colomborquideas where orchids will be available for purchase.
Overnight in Medellín.

Nov 12: We start the day with a chartered bus ride to Quebrada El Oro (3 hour) near Yarumal, a mid-elevation, ultra-humid habitat

daily covered with fog where trees are abundantly covered with epiphytes and many endemic *Lepanthes* and other Pleurothallid species can be found. Luer & Escobar discovered and described many species at this place.
Overnight in Yarumal town.

Nov 13: On this day we visit Reserva La Selva de Ventanas funded by OCA and the Rainforest Trust. It is located at a mid to high elevation, ultra-humid habitat with many Pleurothallid species. *Dracula*, *Houlletia*, *Miltoniopsis* and *Acineta* may be observed here, together with some endangered species of Magnolia trees and plenty of nice and rare birds. In the afternoon we take a chartered bus back to Medellín.
Overnight in Medellín.

Nov 14: We start the day with a flight from Medellín to Cali and then have a free afternoon for some rest.
Overnight in Cali.

Nov 15: We take a short, chartered bus ride to visit the orchid nursery Orquideas del Valle where plants will be available to purchase. Afterward we explore a nearby cloud forest where plenty of *Dracula chimaera* and many other orchids can be seen.
Overnight in Cali.

Nov 16: We go on a chartered bus to El Quereal. This is a well known mid elevation orchid area with cloud forests where it is possible to see *Phragmipedium*, *Restrepia*, *Masdevallia*, *Epidendrum escobarianum* among many others, together with a lot of nice birds

Key Dates

July 15, 2018

Deposit (\$500 per person) due. However, due to the limited numbers, to ensure a spot, you are advised to get your deposit in as soon as possible!

September 1, 2018

Balance of trip costs due. Refund of deposit can not be made after this date

November 3, 2018

Plan to arrive in Pereira, Colombia. International connections through Bogota, Medellin or Cali are available. Flights from the US using Avianca or Copa airlines are quite reasonable.

November 18, 2018

End of tour. Participants may either fly home or continue on own tour.

Point of contact

All questions about tour details should be addressed to Steve Beckendorf, OCA tour coordinator

steve@orchidconservationalliance.org

Payment information

Checks should be made **payable to the OCA** and mailed to:

Mary Gerritsen, OCA Treasurer

541 Parrott Drive

San Mateo, CA 94402

International travelers, contact Mary Gerritsen

(mary@orchidconservationalliance.org) for bank transfer information.





and a river with waterfalls. Then we head back to Cali. Overnight in Cali.

Nov 17: We take a chartered bus and go to see *Cattleya quadricolor* in-situ near Ginebra, Valle del Cauca. Ginebra is famous for its local typical cuisine, so we will have lunch there and taste its food.

Here we enjoy a free afternoon at a colonial house hotel and you can prepare for your international flight the next day. Overnight in Ginebra.

Nov 18: Departures from Cali airport to go home.



Level of Activity and Accommodation

Walks in the reserves generally take 3-4 hours and can be on a variety of paths, some slippery and narrow, others easy and flat. Some climbing can be expected. The order of walks may change. In general a good fitness level and open mind will be required. Car journeys will be a maximum of 6-7 hours but most of these are then followed by a few days in one locality. We will stay in comfortable though not luxurious hotels throughout the trip. Vegetarians are likely to find limited food options. Colombia has a wide range of tropical diseases although the risk to travelers is generally low. Please check with your physician to determine recommended immunizations or other precautions (e.g. medications to prevent altitude sickness). Mosquitos and other biting insects are common in some places, particularly in lowland forests. There are also occasional venomous snakes.

Tour Costs

Double Occupancy (shared accommodation) \$3300

Single Occupancy \$3700

If you would like to have a room mate to reduce costs please let us know, and we will do our best to match you with another traveler.

To ensure a spot on the tour, submit your \$500 deposit as soon as possible. Due to the transportation and hotel limitations, the number of participants will be strictly limited.

Included:

- Accommodation at all hotels mentioned in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified (basically full board throughout)
- Vehicle, driver / guide and gas throughout the tour
- Internal flight
- Taxes, Tolls and Entrance fee and guided walks at all parks/reserves in the itinerary.

Not included:

- Alcoholic Drinks and beverages
- Tips
- International flights. Participants to make own flight arrangements
- If desired, participants can make their own arrangements for pre- or post tour trips to other parts of Colombia or countries in South America.



