

Where to Stay, Who To Call

Plan your ecotour to Guatemala to see Amazon parrots with BIRD TALK's exclusive contact list

By Rose Gordon

Posted: January 10, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

As guests of the Guatemalan National Tourist Institute (INGUAT) during the 2nd annual International Bird Watching Encounter, we were fortunate enough to stay in some of the best accommodations. Our first night in Guatemala City we stayed in the posh Real InterContinental Hotel, a luxury hotel by most standards, but with rooms starting at an amazingly low \$100 per night. Its central location makes it easy to explore the city and nearby Antigua, a historic area.

While in the Pacific coast city of Retalhuleu where we took side trips to Finca Patrocinio and the Chicabal volcano, we stayed at Hostales del IRTRA, an amazing resort-like hotel made up of individual villas themed by location. There was an African villa, one modeled after Indonesia, China and another of Mayan origin. Although it was located across from what is reported to be the largest amusement park in Central America, our group had their eyes trained on the trees and sky — and the pool.

After staying in Retalhuleu for a couple of nights, we boarded a plane — a very small plane — for Flores, Peten, in northern Guatemala. Here the brightly-colored houses reminded me of something from a hillside village in Italy. From Flores, we journeyed toward Tikal National Park, stopping by the El Sombrero Eco-Lodge and Restaurant where we had a delicious lunch of chicken and tortillas and then boarded a boat to cross Lago Yaxhá where we viewed the Topoxte archaeological site which is still being excavated.

The Peten area, although somewhat rural, includes numerous accommodations from hostels to camping to bungalows, especially in the immediate vicinity of Tikal and the Yaxha ruins. This is also where a season of "Survivor" was filmed.

Plan Your Trip

During my week-long trip in Guatemala, I met numerous tour operators and stayed in excellent accommodations. Here are just a few.

CAYAYA Birding
Knut Eisermann
www.cayaya-birding.com
knut.eisermann@cayaya-birding.com

El Sombrero Eco-Lodge &
Restaurant
Yaxha, Peten
info@ecosombrero.com
www.ecosombrero.com
(502) 7861-1691

Guatemalan Tourism
Institute
Guatemala City
www.visit-guatemala.com
inguat@guate.net
(502) 331-1333

Hostales del IRTRA
Retalhuleu
www.irtra.org.gt
(502) 7722-9100

Hotel Tikal Inn
Tikal National Park, Peten
(502) 7926-0065
hoteltikalinn@itelgua.com

Jungle Lodge
Tikal National Park, Peten
(502) 2476-8775

La Via Maya – Bitty Ramirez
Guatemala City
(502) 2339-3601
info@viamaya.com
www.viamaya.com

La Casa De Don David
El Remate, Flores, Peten
info@lacasadedondavid.com
www.lacasadedondavid.com
(502) 5306-2190

Los Trrales Reserve
Eco-Lodge
www.tarrales.com

Operador Latino
Irene Rodriguez
ir@operadorlatino.com
www.operadorlatino.com
(502) 6634-1138

Patrocinio Plantation
Mario Arturo Aguilar
aguilar@internetdetelgua.com.gt
(502) 7771 4393

Tessa Tour Operator for
Guatemala, Mayan World &
Central America
Estelle Rosales
tessamanager@yahoo.com.mx

Turix Activo
Victor Juárez
Guatemala City
victorejb@turixactivo.com
(502) 2327-5444

U.S. Embassy Guatemala City
Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zona 10
(502) 2326-4000
AmCitsGuatemala@state.gov

Via Venture
info@viaventure.com

For the full article, "Birding Guatemala," please see the March 2007 print edition of BIRD TALK magazine.