

Spain's Canary Islands
June 23 – 29, 2021

Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 - June 23 - Arrival

After a mid-morning flight (2.5 hrs) from Madrid, we'll assemble at the Fuerteventura airport and meet up with the local guides. We cross the small island's arid, terracotta-colored landscape and climb up through the barren hills to Betancuría, our first base. After settling in and some lunch at our boutique hotel, a converted farmhouse, we'll head out to nearby Tindaya for the tour's first birding. Flocks of *polatzeki* **Lesser Short-toed Larks** – a separate subspecies to those of mainland Spain – and the charming **Berthelot's Pipit**, and **Houbara Bustard** are our main targets. We'll then settle down for a delicious evening meal, featuring some of the typical tastes and wines of the island.

Day 2 - June 24 - Tindaya

We'll head back to Tindaya this morning, this time looking for **Cream-coloured Coursers**, **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, **Barbary Partridge**, and the endemic **Fuerteventura Stonechat**. Lunch will be at the ruins of Casa de Coroneles - an 18th Century mansion and former home of the island's occupying colonels – among the company of the local Barbary Ground Squirrels. We'll be looking out for the **Trumpeter Finches** and **Berthelot's Pipits** that breed amongst the debris. Later we explore more of the island around Betancuría, focusing on the watering holes and reservoirs for **Ruddy Shelducks** and **Black-winged Stilts** among others Finches and pipits may well be congregating, and in moist scrubby areas we'll look out for the *degener* subspecies of **African Blue Tit**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Laughing Dove**, **Turtle Dove** and **Spanish Sparrow**. We'll also be on the lookout for the endemic *majorensis* subspecies of the Egyptian Vulture, and the local subspecies of **Common Buzzard** and **Common Raven**.

Day 3 - June 25 - Jandía; Ferry to Tenerife

We will spend most of the morning exploring the plains of Jandía, looking for more **Cream-coloured Coursers**, **Houbara Bustards**, as well as **Barbary Partridge**. We'll have a relaxed lunch on the coast before our ferry, and will be on the lookout for resident species such as **Eurasian Hoopoe** and **Plain Swift**, but also interesting introduced species such as **Hadada Ibis**, **Monk Parakeet** and **Red-vented Bulbul**. Our afternoon and evening will be out on the ocean, making the 150-mile sea journey to Santa Cruz de Tenerife aboard a comfortable ferry, hopefully seeing plenty of **Cory's Shearwaters** and **Bulwer's Petrels** from deck on the way.

Day 4 – June 26 – Anagua Rural Park

We'll begin our day with a trip to Anaga Rural Park, a 36,000-acre expanse of pristine Laurel Forest at the north of the island. Here we should start to encounter some of the island's endemics - **Bolle's** and **Laurel Pigeons** in the canopy, and hope for smaller treasures in the form of **Canary Islands Chiffchaff** and **Tenerife Kinglet** as well as the local subspecies of **European Robin** (*superbus*) and **European Chaffinch** (*tintillon*). After our picnic lunch we'll spend a little time exploring the gorges and gulleys that run perpendicular to the north coast of the island. These areas often harbour pockets of unspoiled Laurel Forest, where are havens for the *teneriffae* subspecies of **African Blue Tit**, **Atlantic Canary** and maybe the odd migrant surprise!

Day 5 – June 27 – Monte de Agua

We'll head out early this morning to the laurisilva woodlands of Monte de Agua. These spell-binding sub-tropical cloud forests are a true prehistoric natural treasure. Here dwell more of the endemic targets **Bolle's** and **Laurel Pigeon**, **Tenerife Kinglet** and **Canary Islands Chiffchaff**. We'll take our picnic

here before heading out to the rocky coast at the far western end of the island, where we can enjoy expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean, while surrounded by endemic Tenerife Lizards basking on the strange forms of the solidified lava fields. A small number of **Barolo's Shearwaters** breed on Tenerife and La Gomera and we'll search for them out to sea among the **Cory's Shearwaters**, although we'll need a lot of luck! Here we may also be able to encounter one of the island's breeding **Barbary Falcons** overhead.

Day 6 - June 28 – Mt. Teide

Today we reach for the heights, heading up to explore the extraordinary landscape of El Teide, Tenerife's 12,200 ft volcano, and governor of its climate. We'll be driving right across the remarkable lava flow moonscape and the vast main crater, scattered with the 3m tall spikes of the endemic Red Bugloss, and home of the occasional intrepid *koenigi* **Great Grey Shrike**, foraging for large-bodied insects among the Teide Broom. On its slopes we'll spend time exploring the dense pine forests of *Pinus canariensis*, the native tree that is host to *canariensis* **Greater Spotted Woodpecker**. We will of course be searching for one of Tenerife's star endemics – the gorgeous **Tenerife Blue Chaffinch**! This high-octane, high altitude cobalt-coloured beauty is as plucky as it is characterful, and we can hope for some wonderful prolonged encounters. Hopefully today the trip will end on a high in all possible ways!

Day 7 - June 29 - Departure

Today our trip comes to an end as you catch your afternoon flight back to Madrid. But not before a final leisurely morning's birding, catching up with more great views of the fascinating locals.