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10-day Sample Itinerary - Birdwatching Expedition

\$1,911 per person

The cost is based on a group of 6 pax.

All meals included.

Trip Summary

Day 1

Arrival in Sierra Leone, transfer to hotel in Lungi - Tariq's Resort and Restaurant

Day 2

Makeni, Mena Hills - Makeni

Day 3

Day trip to Bumbuna

Day 4

Makeni to Gola Rainforest National Park

Day 5

Full Day at Gola Forest National Park

Day 6

Gola to Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary - Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

Day 7

Full Day on Tiwai Island - Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

Day 8

Depart Tiwai Island for Freetown

Day 9

Guma Dam Trail - River No 2 Beach, Guma Dam

Day 10

Birding Golf Club

Departure - Freetown-Lungi International Airport (FNA)

Day 1



Arrival in Sierra Leone, transfer to hotel in Lungi

Arrive to Freetown's Lungi International Airport, which is one of the world's most uniquely-situated airports, located on the northern coast of the Freetown Estuary. On arrival, disembark and enter the arrivals hall for baggage reclaim. You will be met by your Guide and the VSL TRAVEL airport representative who will have a signboard with your name on it at the airport terminal exit gate. They will transfer you to your hotel.



Tariq's Resort and Restaurant

Lungi-Town, North West Province, Sierra Leone

Day 2



Makeni, Mena Hills

This morning we head North to the city of Makeni (we could stop to bird few areas on our way), a medium sized town in the Bombali district in central Sierra Leone that is mainly inhabited by the Temne tribe. Many students live in the city as they attend the University of Makeni. The annual international Sierra Leone Marathon (by Street Child) also kicks off in Makeni.

In the late afternoon, we'll drive to Mena hills to explore this area. Birds may include Cabanis Bunting, Yellow-fronted Canary and more!

Overnight in Wusum Hotel



Makeni

Day 3



Day trip to Bumbuna

Take an early breakfast and head for Bumbuna. Bumbuna is a town in the central of Tonkolili District in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. Bumbuna hosts the country's largest hydroelectric power station, and it is also a great site for people interested in birding. You will spend the whole day birding this area. Birds may include Emerald Starling, Paradise whydah, Pin-tailed whydah, yellow-mantled whydah, and more.

In the late afternoon, you're transferred to your hotel.

Day 4



Makeni to Gola Rainforest National Park

In the morning we drive from Makeni to Kenema, departing 8AM. We could make stops on our way to explore few areas.

We then drive from Kenema to Lalehun, arriving Lalehun at 3.30pm. Rest at Lalehun Lodge, soaking up the tranquility of the surrounding forest. Take a late afternoon stroll into the forest, should you desire. Birds may include Lagaden's Bush-shrike, Capuchin Babbler, Narina Trogon, Yellow-casqued hornbill, dwarf hornbill, Black-headed Oriole, Picathartes Gymnocephalus, White-tailed aethya, African Pitta, West African Nicator and more!

In the evening we will be welcomed to Lalehun with the traditional mask dance of the Gola people, with dinner.



Day 5



Full Day at Gola Forest National Park

Arise early and enter the forest to observe the many endemic bird species in Gola at dawn. Rest at the lodge for the remainder of the morning, departing after lunch at 2pm to arrive at the large White-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) colony (10 nests) in time to observe the birds returning to nest (16km round-trip, c. 5 hrs inc observation time). Dinner at lodge.

Day 6



Gola to Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

A visit to this tropical rain-forest is undoubtedly one of Sierra Leone's wildlife highlights. Enriched by the lazily flowing waters of the Moya River you are immersed in the sights and sounds of this safe haven. There is some of the most diverse chimpanzee and monkey populations and more than 700 species of plants life, not to mention the elusive pygmy hippo, a squat little nocturnal beast found only in Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Depart Freetown for Tiwai Island, departing 8AM, taking an early lunch in Bo. Arrive at Tiwai Island at 1 pm, with time to rest at camp following transfer to Tiwai Island by boat from Kambama.

After arrival and a bit of a rest, take a late afternoon/early evening boat trip up the Mao River in an engine-powered boat. Take in spectacular views of Tiwai Island and the neighbouring mainland, looking out for monkeys jumping between the trees, some 135 species of birds and, of course, the occasional crocodile and the very elusive Pygmy Hippo. For more details on Tiwai Island check on the link below:

<https://www.visitsierraleone.org/tiwai-island-wildlife-sanctuary/>

In the evening eat dinner cooked by camp staff and rest at camp. Night walks can be arranged at additional cost.





Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

Sierra Leone

Day 7



Full Day on Tiwai Island

In the morning, walk the forests of Tiwai Island accompanied by a local guide, experiencing the thrill of tracking the 11 different species of primates, 135 species of birds and some 800 species of butterfly, as well as the footprints of mammals such as mongoose, wild pigs and that Pygmy Hippo. Not to mention the incredible plant life.

Departing after an early lunch, take a boat back to the mainland and explore the fascinating culture and heritage of the rural villages of Kambama and nearby Nianiahun (20 min drive), including sites of traditional sacrifice, meeting points for the rituals of village elders, birth ceremonial sites and the 'blood stream' hiding place for the knives and weapons of ancient warriors.

In the evening take a stroll into the forest to watch for monkeys, birds and gaze at the treetops. Eat dinner cooked by camp staff and rest at camp. Night walks can be arranged at additional cost.



Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

Sierra Leone

Day 8



Depart Tiwai Island for Freetown

In the morning, relax at camp or rise early to take a stroll into the forest to watch for birds, with binoculars at hand.

Depart Tiwai Island at 9AM and head to Freetown. If you wish, you can have lunch in Bo, before continuing your journey to Freetown.

You will drive through Freetown Peninsula and also explore John Obey and Black Johnson before being transferred to your hotel in Freetown

Overnight at Radisson Blu Hotel.

Day 9



Guma Dam Trail

Today, after an early breakfast, you will embark on a journey to the Picathartes breeding colony, departing at 6:30 AM.

You'll spend the majority of the day birdwatching in the Guma Valley Dam area, where you'll have the opportunity to observe a diverse range of species, including the endangered Yellow-headed Picathartes, Yellowbill, Narina Trogon, bronze-naped pigeon, and the Sierra Leone red-footed squirrel, among others.

In the afternoon, you will be transferred to River Number 2 Beach, where you can enjoy a relaxing lunch and continuing birding before being transferred to your hotel.



River No 2 Beach

Western Area, Sierra Leone



Guma Dam

Day 10



Birding Golf Club

Arise early and head for golf club to bird this area.

Birds may include Blue-breasted kingfisher, Pygmy Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Black and white flycatcher, Northern puffback, Senegal Thicknee, Yellow-billed kite, Hooded vulture, Oriole Warbler, African thrush, Black sparrow-hawk, Shikra, Pied Crow and more.



Departure

After birding golf, you'll go back to your hotel to have lunch before being transferred to the airport for your trip home!



Freetown-Lungi International Airport (FNA)

Lungi, Freetown, WESTERN AREA, SIERRA LEONE