
El Camino Costa Rica





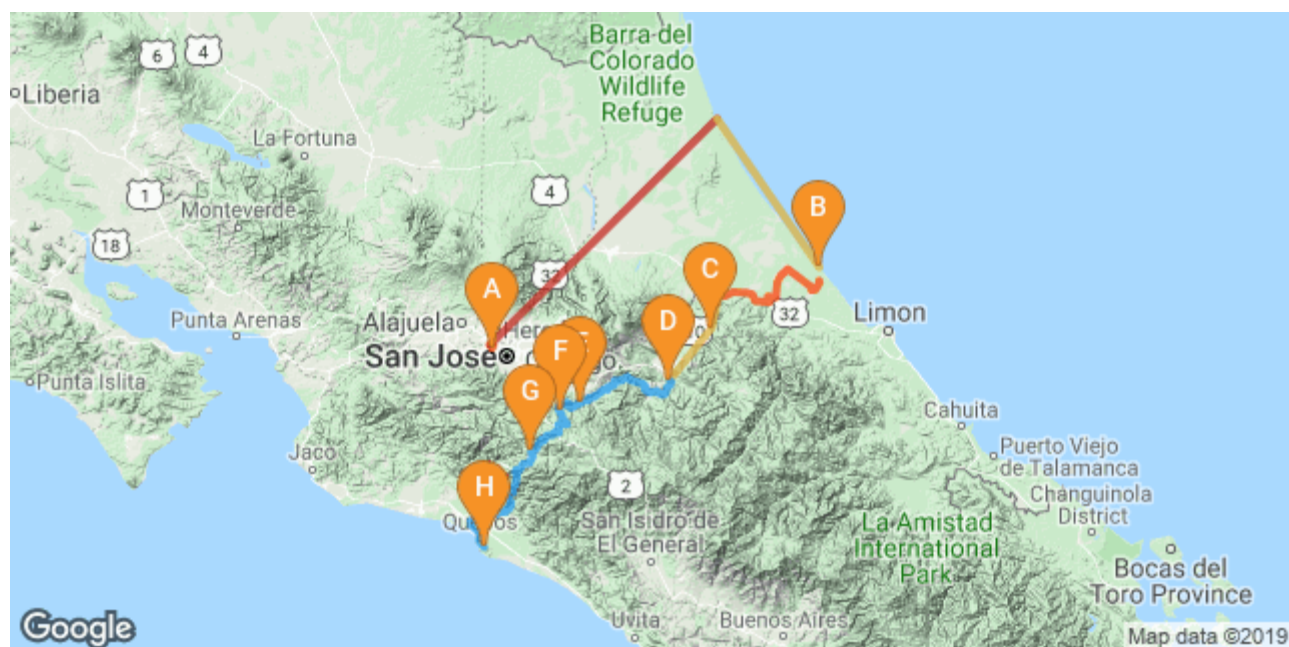
El Camino Costa Rica

San Jose - Pacuare Nature Reserve - Pacuare River - Turrialba - Orosi - Costa Rica - Manuel Antonio

10 Days / 9 Nights

*4 Persons *pricing based on 4 people traveling*

Best travel time for this tour: January through end of March



Introduction

Overview:

El Camino de Costa Rica is a remote and unique experience that connects the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean with world-class trekking through the beautiful mountains of Costa Rica. Designed to attract adventurers looking to immerse themselves in this tropical destination, off the beaten path. Rural community involvement is integral to the experience and cultural exchanges are a daily occurrence through food, conversation, and the warm welcome at the comfortable lodgings.

On this 10-day tour, professional local guides will lead guests along routes through breathtaking locations from sea to sea! The hikes (many of which are moderate to challenging) crisscross the mountains through rain and cloud forest reserves, coffee, sugarcane, and banana plantations and past private fincas and ranchlands, deep valleys, rushing rivers and waterfalls. Add this the all the unexpected bonus experiences and we assure you there is not another trip like this that celebrates the diversity of Costa Rica!

Accommodation	Destination	Basis	Room Type	Duration
Hotel Park Inn San Jose	San Jose	B&B	1x Standard Room	1 Night
Pacuare Nature Reserve	Pacuare Nature Reserve	FB	1x Camp Site	1 Night
Rios Tropicales Lodge	Pacuare River	FB	1x Deluxe Room	1 Night
Casa Turire Hotel	Turrialba	FB	1x Deluxe Room	1 Night
Hotel Rio Perlas Spa and Resort	Orosi	FB	1x River Sound Room	1 Night
Verdesana Forest Lodge	Costa Rica	FB	1x Standard Room	1 Night
Hotel Palenque Tarrazu	Costa Rica	FB	1x Standard Room	1 Night
Villas Lirio	Manuel Antonio	B,B&L	1x Deluxe Room	2 Nights

Key

B&B: Bed and Breakfast

B,B&L: Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

FB: Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Pricing: Please ask for pricing based on exact number of trip participants.

Included

Accommodations, bilingual guide services, local transportation, meals and drinks as specified in the itinerary, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all permits, entrance fees and taxes.

Excluded

Travel to and from start and end point of trip, alcoholic beverages, any meals and drinks not specified in the itinerary, gratuities passport and visa fees, optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, national and international airport and departure taxes (if any), optional travel insurance.

Day 1: Hotel Park Inn San Jose, San Jose (Sun, 1 March)

San Jose

San Jose, affectionately known to its residents as 'Chepe', lies in the heart of Costa Rica and is home to almost two-thirds of the country's population. With few buildings over 100 years old, the mountainous capital is relatively modern compared to its Latin American counterparts, but still has a significant amount of culture, art and history for visitors to discover. With a number of theatres full of Costa Rican culture, museums that include the largest collection of American jade in the world, and streets full of bright murals and painted buses, San Jose is an eclectic city waiting to be experienced.

Day Itinerary

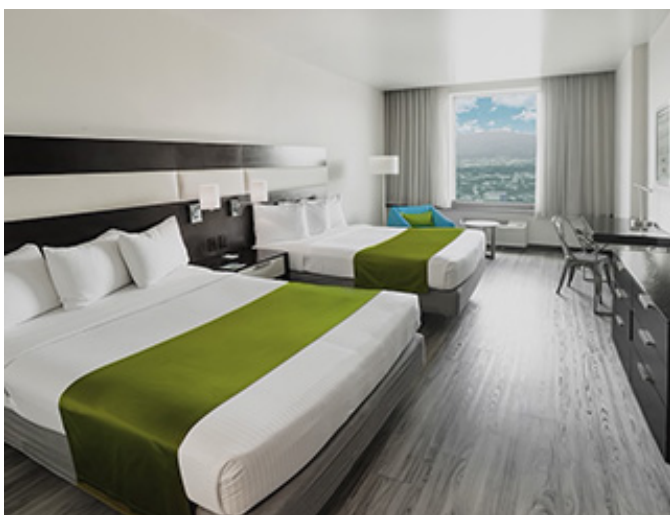
After passing through Immigration in the San Jose Airport, you will be met by a member of the National Chamber of Tourism (CANATUR) and given a sticker with your name on it. When you exit the airport, look for a Costa Rica Sun Tours sign with your name on it. A Costa Rica Sun Tours representative will be waiting to greet you and transfer you to your hotel in San Jose.

Consultant Notes

Before leaving home be sure you packed your passports, medicines, medical prescriptions and anything you will need during your trip.

Overnight: Hotel Park Inn San Jose

Within walking distance of the bustling downtown area, the Park Inn by Radisson San Jose, Costa Rica is an ideal choice for leisure travelers who enjoy easy access to the best attractions. Spend the day at the Jade Museum to learn about the area's rich culture or immerse yourself in the displays at the Costa Rican Art Museum. Visit La Sabana Park, 10 minutes from our hotel, to walk along exotic plants and lakes.



Meet and Greet

SJO Airport Pick Up

Your guide will meet you at the arrivals terminal with your name board. If he should not be there please proceed to the information desk.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Included

Private arrival transfer San Jose Intl. Airport.

Orientation briefing 06:00pm.

One night lodging at Hotel Park Inn San Jose, breakfast and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 2: Pacuare Nature Reserve, Pacuare Nature Reserve (Mon, 2 March)

Pacuare Nature Reserve

Pacuare Nature Reserve is located between Tortuguero and Limon, on the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica. Surrounded by canals and the sea, the reserve is only accessible by boat. The reserve and the surrounding canals are rich in wildlife with over 300 recorded species of animals, including 3 species of monkeys, over 200 species of birds, and rarer species such as jaguar and ocelot. The rare and beautiful agami heron nests in a small lagoon within the reserve.

The main trail runs the length of the reserve, through the forest behind the beach. Other shorter trails lead to areas of special interest, making the observation of an incredible array of flora and fauna species easy and enjoyable. Visitors can look forward to activities such as day/night guided walks along the forest paths and boat trips on the canal to see wading birds, crocodiles and caimans.

Day Itinerary

Following a hearty breakfast and fresh Costa Rican coffee, you set off to board the morning flight to Tortuguero. Upon arrival at the local airstrip you will cruise the canals of Tortuguero National Park by boat – with an eye out for animals in the lush rainforest – this is a great introduction to Costa Rican wildlife! Your immersion into Costa Rica continues with a delicious not-to-be-missed local lunch at Miss Junies. Miss Junie inherited her “soda” - basically a thatched roof structure with tables and chairs – from her grandmother, Miss Bell, in the 1970’s. The tables have stories to tell after feeding hungry visitors for over 70 years – some of the more notable include the scientist Dr. Archie Carr and even the likes of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro! Today, Miss Junies’ is considered one of the best Caribbean restaurants in Tortuguero serving up fresh flavour and sharing local customs with visitors. No lunch is complete without dessert and Cloyd, a local personality in his own right and Miss Junies’ son, steps in to provide his “coconut tour” highlighting nearly lost dessert recipes made from coconuts and other local ingredients.

After lunch, embark on a last boat transfer south the Reserva Pacuare. Reserva Pacuare is a rustic lodge with unique Caribbean charm built for biologists. The food is ample and simple, the rooms are comfortable and clean (*note some rooms share a bathroom). The Reserve buildings are located in front of the Caribbean Sea, where sea turtles can be seen with luck many months of the year (March – September) at night. The Reserve, famous for its turtle nesting activity, specializes in sea turtle research programs and encourages guests to be part of it. If time permits, you’ll be invited for a walk around the trails of the reserve.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sun block, hat and camera.

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Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at Hotel Casa Roland.

Nine days of bilingual naturalist guide.

Private land transfer to the local airport.

Internal flight San Jose to Tortuguero,

Tortuguero Canal Boat Tour.

Local lunch.

Intro walk and turtle nesting (in season).

One night lodging Pacuare Reserve, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 3: Rios Tropicales Lodge, Pacuare River (Tue, 3 March)

Pacuare River

The Pacuare River meanders down the Atlantic slope of the Talamanca mountain range, through the dense rainforest of the Pacuare Protected Zone, until it finally reaches the Caribbean Sea on Costa Rica's central coast. Although the river is primarily known for its challenging rapids and its excellent white water rafting opportunities, it also features some remarkable scenery characterised by lush primordial rainforest, lowland tropical forest and dramatic towering waterfalls. This pristine natural terrain along the banks of the river provides a haven for wide variety wildlife including, among others: river otters, jaguars and ocelots, howler monkeys, capuchin monkeys, sloths, iguanas, coatis and raccoon. Birders will delight in the colourful avian life, with chesnut mandibled toucans, macaws, motmots, egrets, kingfishers, and herons making daily appearances. A number of experienced tour operators offer day trips combining rafting adventures with the exploration of waterfalls, hiking trails and natural springs along the way.

Day Itinerary

Trek: Las Brisas to Tsiobata Indian Reservation (16km, mostly rainforest trails, several river crossings, with several difficult sections, steep, slippery and muddy!)

Wake up to the sound of howler monkeys in the canopy and waves breaking on the beach in front of your room. After breakfast, you'll board an early boat transfer and then bus transfer to Las Brisas de Pacuarito for the beginning of the most adventurous and challenging trek of this tour. Though all along, there will be ample opportunity to meet native Costa Ricans and learn more about their way of life in this part of the country – your local guide will even teach you a few words in the “lengua Cabecar”!

Today will lead you through parts of Costa Rica little known to visitors and locals alike! You will walk through a native Indian village to Tsiobata and parts of the Barbilla National Park-Cabecar Reservation complex. Glimpse locals in traditional huts and magnificent rainforest trees – more than 1,000 years old! Take in the amazing plant diversity of this ancient forest – with large morpheo butterflies flitting along your path.

Toward the end of the hike, your surroundings open up as you walk through various farms growing bananas, cassava, corn, and raising pigs and chickens – a wonderful opportunity to learn about native farming practices on this side of the country. The hike wraps up as you arrive on foot to your river lodge on the beautiful and mighty Pacuare River.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sunblock, hat and camera.

Overnight: Rios Tropicales Lodge

The Rios Tropicales Lodge is located on a private reserve in the jungles of Costa Rica's Limon Province. The lodge is surrounded by tropical rainforest and overlooks the Rio Pacuare River. Accommodation is available in deluxe king rooms,

single rooms, and a dorm room with bunk beds. The lodge features a dining area where a variety of meals are served daily. Various activities are available at the resort including horseback riding, hiking, tree planting, and ziplining.



Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Boat transfer to Bataan.

Private land transfer to Las Brisas de Pacuarito.

Box lunch.

One night lodging Rios Tropicales Lodge, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 4: Casa Turire Hotel, Turrialba (Wed, 4 March)

Turrialba

Situated in the Costa Rican Cartago Province, the small city of Turrialba is home to flourishing agriculture, textile, and tourism industries. Renowned for its amazing white water rafting, visitors can enjoy thrilling excursions down the Pacuare and Reventazon Rivers. This city serves as the gateway to the Costa Rican Caribbean and has been declared as a city of National Archaeological Interest. Visitors can explore the largely undiscovered Turrialba Volcano National Park, home of the active Turrialba Volcano; discover Costa Rica's only pre-Columbian ruins at Guayabo; and sample some delicious locally-made Turrialba cheese. Don't miss the opportunity to climb the majestic Turrialba Volcano located just 15 kilometres northwest of town.

Day Itinerary

Rafting Pacuare River, Class III-IV (2.5h)

Today allows you to rest your legs a bit after yesterday's trek – yet you'll cover ground in a different manner. Following breakfast, head out for a day on the water surrounded by some of Costa Rica's most pristine rainforest. After a full safety briefing, set off in state-of-the-art rafting equipment to raft nineteen miles of the famous Pacuare River through world class III-IV rapids. A delicious picnic is served by the river. Near the town of Siquirres at the take-out you will take a land transfer to the verdant town of Turrialba.

The Turrialba Valley is lush and exceptionally productive for local agriculture - guarded by the impressive Turrialba Volcano. Your hotel tonight is Casa Turire, a beautiful hacienda located in farmland in on the shores of La Angostura Lake. There are canoes and kayaks to take out on the lake, or you may opt to walk the beautiful gardens teeming with colorful tropical birds.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring:

- Rubber-soled shoes that can get wet (Tevaz, tennis shoes, booties or similar).
- Swimsuit / swim trunks.
- T-shirt and shorts of a quick-drying material. Long sleeve t-shirts are very useful if you get cold easily on the water or want more sun protection.
- Water-resistant sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or higher).
- Sun hat or bandana.
- Bug Repellent.
- Croakies or straps to secure glasses.
- Change of clothes, including shoes, for after your tour.
- Towel for changing/showers after the trip.

Overnight: Casa Turire Hotel

Casa Turire Hotel is located in the agricultural region of Turrialba and features stunning views of the Turrialba volcano. Accommodation is available in standard guest rooms, suites, and master suites which include modern amenities. These include satellite TV, ceiling fans, safety box, and a telephone. All guest rooms feature a private bathroom and balcony with beautiful views of Angostura Lake. The hotel features a gourmet restaurant which serves traditional Costa Rican and international dishes. Guests may enjoy a relaxing massage at the in-house spa which offers a variety of treatments including a volcanic rock body wrap.



Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Rafting equipment and professional guides.

Lunch en route.

One night lodging at Hotel Casa Turire, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 5: Hotel Rio Perlas Spa and Resort, Orosi (Thu, 5 March)

Orosi

Located in the Cartago Province of Costa Rica, the small town of Orosi lies just 35 kilometres south of the capital, San Jose. Resting on the banks of the Reventazon River in the picturesque Orosi Valley, this hidden gem is surrounded by hills blanketed in lush vegetation. Known for its coffee cultivation, visitors can sample some of the best coffee in Costa Rica. Soak up the tranquil landscapes of the secluded Orosi Valley, learn about the local history, view a variety of historic landmarks, including the Iglesia de San Jose de Orosi, the oldest church in the country, featuring classic Spanish-colonial architecture and whitewashed walls. Other highlights include: visiting Cachi Dam, or the Presa de Cachi, exploring the Tapanti National Park just south of town, viewing the Ruins of Ujarras, and sampling delicious locally-made elotes and chorreadas.

Day Itinerary

Trek: El Humo to Tapanti (16km, secondary road, streams crossings, up and down sections)

This morning you begin with a transfer to the small village of el Humo and start your trek through coffee and cane fields! The path then leads to secondary gravel roads with soft ups and downs and small stream crossing. The first half of the trek is through rural ranch lands before you reach the Tapanti National Park. During this part of the day you will begin the climb from the lowlands and the rainforest to the highlands and the mystic Costa Rica Cloud forest – at the higher points, the vistas along the cordilleras is superb. This will be your first opportunity to see the emblematic birds of the cloud forest as well as chat with local “campesinos” of the high mountain – the first growers of coffee!

After a lovely local lunch you will begin a steep descent, with views of the beautiful Orosi valley ahead of you, before you ultimately reach Kiri Lodge at the entrance of Tapanti National Park. Here you will be picked up and taken to your lodging at the beautiful Río Perlas Spa and Resort – submersed in nature and tranquility.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sunblock, hat and camera.

Overnight: Hotel Rio Perlas Spa and Resort

Hotel Rio Perlas Spa & Resort is a resort located outside of the city of Cartago. It's situated in Orosi Valley and is surrounded by lush rain-and-cloud forests, adding to its rural charm. Attractions such as Tapanti National Park, Orosi Church, and Ujarras Ruins are within driving distance.

All 65 suites include Wi-Fi, TV, telephone, hairdryer, and private bathroom in addition to terraces and balconies. Guests can enjoy a delicious complimentary breakfast. The resort offers daily housekeeping and 24-hour front desk to make guests' stay comfortable.

Guests who wish to relax can make use of the thermal and swimming pools, and Spa and saunas. Las Loras is the pool-side bar which offers drinks and snacks. The two on-site restaurants offer guests flavoursome Costa Rican cuisine.



Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Private land transfer to El Humo.

Box lunch.

One night lodge Hotel Rio Perlas, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 6: Verdesana Forest Lodge, Costa Rica (Fri, 6 March)

Costa Rica

Visitors to the Republic of Costa Rica will find that despite its small size, the country has an incredible number of attractions and activities to offer. Five per cent of the world's biodiversity can be found within Costa Rica's borders and great efforts have been made to preserve this rich resource; protected national parks make up almost 25% of the land – more than any other country in the world. From fishing and surfing to white water rafting and exploring volcanic regions, Costa Rica is the perfect playground for nature lovers and adventures seekers alike.

Day Itinerary

Trek: Muñeco to Verdesana (14km, secondary roads, mountain trails, steep, some very very muddy sections)

Following a hearty breakfast, you will walk right out of the hotel for your day's hike. Cross over a small stream and across the soccer field of Muñeco de Navarro. Then away from the farming roads, you will experience a cloudforest trail at its most glorious stage: mushrooms, birds, flowers and primary forest with old big trees dominating the canopy. Though this is rated as the second-most difficult day on the trail due to the terrain, the scenery is so beautiful that you almost forget! The day begins at an elevation of 5,000 feet and you'll spend the day climbing to 6,500 feet. Along the way, you'll see indicator plants of cooler temperatures compared to a few days ago in the Cabecar Reservation. For example, you'll find crops like coffee, large epiphytes such as "Barba de Viejo" and orchids covering the canopy branches, and breathtaking mountain views. Today also provides an excellent opportunity for cloud forest birdwatching – keep an eye, and ear, out for bellbirds and quetzals!

At the end of the trail, you will reach Palo Verde del Guarco, a beautiful region located in the cooler cloudforest belt of the Talamancas. To celebrate your efforts on the trail, your local guide will treat you to a mountainside lunch featuring fresh, local dishes, served up with amazing views. Once at the lodge, we suggest a stroll around the grounds - you'll be delighted by the display of the many hummingbird varieties that visit the "opossum tail hedges" grown there!

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sunblock, hat and camera.

Overnight: Verdesana Forest Lodge

Located in Palo Verde, at Verdesana Forest Lodge visitors can reconnect with themselves and with nature, through the practice of Yoga, meditating and indulging in delicious and healthy food. The lodge offers private or shared rooms that are comfortable and warm. Next to the river is the yoga room where enthusiasts can enjoy practising while listening to the relaxing sounds of nature.



Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Box lunch.

One night lodging Verdesana Lodge, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 7: Hotel Palenque Tarrazu, Costa Rica (Sat, 7 March)

Costa Rica

As previously described

Day Itinerary

Hike: Jardín de Dota to San Pablo (12km, secondary roads, up & downs, steep sections)

This morning will be an early departure from your lodge as we make our way to the Pacific side of the country. You will notice the weather change and the day heats up much faster with the heavy sun so hiking in the early part of the day is ideal. You will be driven to Jardín de Dota where you will start your hike along local secondary roads with amazing vistas. Along the route you'll find the first typical crops of the Pacific side of the mountains of Costa Rica, such as coffee, tomato trees and avocados.

You will have ample opportunity to meet local people and experience the local culture of the area firsthand. A very big highlight of the day is meeting the owner of El Casquillo Farm where you'll enjoy a lunch featuring healthy cooking with veggies straight from the garden. The farm is owned by Ms Felicia and everyone loves her! Not only is she an incredible cook but she spends time sharing about her organic and sustainable farm, invites diners to tour her kitchen and shares how she has turned her home into a self-described "smart house" by saving water and energy.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sun block, hat and camera.

Overnight: Hotel Palenque Tarrazu

A family accommodation located in San Marcos de Tarrazú, Hotel Palenque Tarrazú is a rustic retreat surrounded by mountains and lush gardens. Each cabin features cable TV, internet and hot water. Amenities include a swimming pool and an event room. The accommodation also provides tours for guests to view the coffee making process.



Basis

Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Box lunch.

One night lodging Palenque Tarrazu, breakfast, dinner and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Day 8: Villas Lirio, Manuel Antonio (Sun, 8 March)

Manuel Antonio

Neighbouring the spectacularly scenic 680-hectare Manuel Antonio National Park and situated along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, the bustling beachside village of Manuel Antonio offers a variety of comfortable accommodation options for eco-explorers and adventurers who flock here to explore this beautiful area. The undeniable highlight is the adjacent Manuel Antonio National Park, Costa Rica's smallest national park, featuring lush biodiverse rainforests, mangroves, lagoons, offshore coral reefs, pristine white-sand beaches and abundant wildlife including over 100 mammal species and almost 200 bird species. Visitors can enjoy a variety of exciting activities including fishing, swimming, snorkelling, wildlife viewing, bird watching, hiking and relaxing on tropical beaches.

Day Itinerary

Hike: Napoles to Esquipulas (18 km, secondary roads, mostly downhill, with a couple of steep uphill)

Today is your last hike of this Costa Rica Adventure. After breakfast you will be transferred toward the village of Napoles. Step by step today, you will feel the warm weather of the Pacific Ocean. A special highlight of the day will be a visit with Don Lilo and his wife Maria – learning about their coffee farm and “trapiche” or old school sugar cane mill as well sharing a tasty treat! They're known to offer us a private tortilla making class that you can enjoy with a fresh locally grown coffee in their house. A very lovely couple to spend time with! You will be entering the foothills in Esquipulas and eventually the rainforest lowlands near Quepos!

This last section has spectacular views of the Pacific waters in the middle of large coffee groves and vast mountains. As you look back at the week you've enjoyed, you realize the diverse landscapes and thereby plant life and wildlife that makes up this beautiful little slice of Central America. The intense beauty of the country only topped by the incredible welcome of the locals you've met and have been hosted by along the way! A last transfer near Naranjito will take you to the coast but not before we stop into a small local bar for a “merceda cerveza” – or well-deserved beer! Enjoy the last two nights at and around the beaches of Manuel Antonio.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Bring: comfortable clothing, hiking or closed shoes, mosquito repellent, sunblock, hat and camera.

Overnight: Villas Lirio

Villas Lirio is located in the mountains of the Manuel Antonio National Park, Costa Rica. Guest rooms are equipped with cable TV, air-conditioning, hairdryers, coffee makers and safes. The hotel features an on-site restaurant, bar, outdoor swimming pool and tropical garden. Activities available in the Manuel Antonio area include snorkelling, surfing, rafting, nature hikes, mangrove tours and sport fishing.



Basis

Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Box lunch.

Transportation from Esquipulas to Manuel Antonio

Two nights lodging Hotel Villas Lirio, breakfast and taxes included.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Dinner not included.

Day 9: Villas Lirio, Manuel Antonio (Mon, 9 March)

Day Itinerary

Leisure day to enjoy the hotel facilities, the beach or take an optional hike into the National Park of Manuel Antonio.

Activities

Manuel Antonio National Park

Manuel Antonio National Park

With the establishment of Manuel Antonio National Park in 1972, the people of Costa Rica decided to preserve, for future generations, one of the most beautiful and bio-diverse areas in the world. Although it is the country's smallest national park, the stunning beauty and diversity of wildlife in its 683 hectares is unequaled.

Manuel Antonio contains a charming combination of rain forest, beaches and coral reefs. These beaches are the most beautiful in the country, lined with lush forest, and the snorkeling is excellent too. The forest is home for sloths, iguanas, the rare and adorable squirrel monkeys and millions of colorful little crabs. And the trail that winds around Punta Cathedral affords some spectacular views. The park is easy to reach, south of the town of Quepos, and is near a good selection of hotels and restaurants.

Visiting the park, one is treated to an abundant diversity of wildlife. Cathedral Point, with its forest topped cliffs was once an island, but is now connected to the coast by a thin strip of island. This land bridge now forms the spine separating the park's two most popular beaches, Playa Espadilla Sur and Playa Manuel Antonio. The southern facing beach,

Basis

Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Entrance fee to national park.

Lunch en route.

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Dinner not included.

Day 10: End of Itinerary (Tue, 10 March)

Day Itinerary

Pick up at your hotel for a departure transfer to San Jose International Airport for your international flight back home. Check in 3 hours prior to your scheduled flight time.

Consultant Notes

Don't forget to check your room before leave the hotel to no leave any belongings behind in closets, drawers, etc.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Included

Breakfast at lodge.

Private AC land transfer from your hotel in San Jose to San Jose Intl. Airport (SJO).

Excluded

Incidentals like: laundry, phone calls, alcoholic drinks, spa services, meals and tours not specified on the itinerary.

Transport

Flight Information

Date	Flight	Airline	Departure Airport	Time	Arrival Airport	Time	Class	Ref
2 Mar	Scheduled		Tobias Bolanos International Airport [SYQ]		Tortuguero Airport [TTQ]			

Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
1 Mar		Juan Santamaria International Airport [SJO]	Hotel Casa Roland San José		Private Transfer
2 Mar		Hotel Casa Roland San José	Tobias Bolanos International Airport [SYQ]		Private Transfer
3 Mar		Pacuare Nature Reserve	Siquirres		Private Transfer
10 Mar		Villas Lirio	Juan Santamaria International Airport [SJO]		Private Transfer

Voyage Information

Date	Boat	Agency	Departure Port	Time	Arrival Port	Time	Class	Ref
2 Mar	Cruise		Tortuguero Airport [TTQ]		Pacuare Nature Reserve			
3 Mar	Canoe		Siquirres		Rios Tropicales Lodge			
4 Mar	Cruise		Rios Tropicales Lodge		Casa Turire Hotel			

Travel Information



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Banking and Currency

Currency

Costa Rican Colón (CRC; symbol ₡) = 100 céntimos. Notes are in denominations of ₡50,000, 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 2,000 and 1,000. Coins are in denominations of ₡500, 100, 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5. US dollars are also widely accepted.

The import and export of local and foreign currency is limited to US\$10,000. Amounts above this must be declared upon arrival.

Currency exchange facilities are available at banks and bureaux de change. Some hotels may also change money. Additionally, small stores will allow visitors to pay for goods in US dollars (small notes US\$20.00, US\$10.00) and receive change in colones. We highly advice not to exchange currency at the airports bureaux de change, they always give you a very low exchange rate; try to use always banks or hotel cashiers.

Banking

Banking hours: State banks Mon-Fri 09h00-15h00. Private banks Mon-Fri 08h00-16h00.

Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa credit cards are all accepted; American Express slightly less so. Many banks will only process MasterCard for cash credits. Cash may be the only form of payment in smaller towns and rural areas but many places will take US dollars, giving change in colones.

ATMs are common throughout the cities and small towns. They will usually accept foreign cards but in some regions only Visa cards are accepted. Occasionally, paying with credit cards may not be possible for technical reasons. Bringing a good supply of US dollars in cash is advised, as many things such as entrance fees to national parks or meals at restaurants, can be paid for with US dollars.

Although travellers can avoid additional exchange rate charges by taking traveller's cheques in US dollars, fewer and fewer businesses in Costa Rica are willing to accept them, and it is better to use the ATM.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

SANSA (www.flysansa.com) operates services between San José and provincial towns and tourist resorts, including Tortuguero, Tamarindo, Quepos and Golfito. A number of companies also provide internal charter flights using different plane sizes. Much of Costa Rica is riddled with challenging roads, so if you can afford to fly then it will make your life a lot more comfortable.

Costa Ricans drive on the right side of the road. The quality of the roads in Costa Rica is, for the most part, not great. Stretches of the Pan-American Highway leading to and from the major cities tend to be okay, but the rest is a mix of dust, gravel, potholes and perilously mountainous roads. Be very careful driving – especially if you're in a hired car and want to get your deposit back – and if you're a nervous driver then consider public transport instead. You must be over 21 to hire a car, and though an international driver's license is safest, you are likely to be able to use a full license from your own country. You will need a credit card for the deposit, which will cost at least as much as the car hire but which you will hopefully get back.

There are many different car hire companies in Costa Rica, predominantly in San José and at the main airport, but it is advisable to either book a car through a local travel agency or to be exceptionally careful to note and confirm any damage or scratches to the vehicle before you drive off. Also ensure that the vehicle comes with a spare tyre – a decent one! – and a jack, because Costa Rica's roads are such that you may well need one.

A speed limit of 80kph (55mph) is enforced on most highways. However, Costa Ricans are notoriously dangerous drivers who pay little heed to speed limits and traffic regulations. Be careful going through towns, as the speed limit drops. If you speed or drink drive the Costa Rican police can fine you heavily, so it is suggested that you don't do anything to antagonise them and, if you are pulled over, be extremely nice. Never try and bribe them. Use of seat belts is mandatory.

Taxis are numerous and inexpensive in San José. The taxis are coloured red (except those serving the Juan Santamaría International Airport, which are orange). Taxis are usually metered, but few drivers use the meters as they figure they can extract more money from tourists by not doing so. Make sure they put it on and that it hasn't already been running, or ask your hotel concierge how much a fare should be, and negotiate with the driver to an agreed amount before setting off.

Public transport via road in Costa Rica ranges from the large coach companies such as the Tica Bus (www.ticabus.com) and Transnica (506 2223 4242; <http://transnica.com>), which are comfortable and air-conditioned, to tiny little shuttle buses in the Nicoya Peninsula, where they pack you in and jolt you around for hours. Bus travel, however long and potentially frustrating, is inexpensive and often quite fun.

Train lines are now limited to two commuter routes: from Heredia to San José, travelling only at peak times and taking half an hour; and from Pavas via San José and San Pedro to Curridabat, running only hourly in the morning and evening.

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice

Costa Rica is not a major foodie destination, but what it lacks in sophistication it makes up for in choice.

The Caribbean coast tends to be more influenced by the island nations. Jamaican-style jerk chicken is a staple; rice and beans (gallo pinto) are ubiquitous, but more likely to be prepared with coconut milk; and curry spices feature heavily as ingredients, creating dishes with a very distinct flavour from their counterparts on the Pacific coast.

The Costa Rican diet is fairly healthy with low use of dairy or high-fat dishes. Fresh fruits and vegetables make up a high proportion of meals, while pork, chicken and beef are the most popular meats. Seafood is available throughout the country, particularly in coastal regions, with sea bass being the most common fish on menus.

Mains water is normally heavily chlorinated and, whilst relatively safe to drink, may cause mild abdominal upsets. Drinking water outside main cities and towns may be contaminated and sterilisation is advisable. Bottled water is available and is advised for the duration of the stay, especially for those who are liable to sensitive stomachs. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

Climate and Weather

In the Central Valley, where the main centres of population are located, the average temperature is 22°C (72°F) and the region enjoys a spring-like climate year round. In the coastal areas, the temperature is much hotter and humid, while the Pacific Northwest can be extremely hot and dry. The rainy season starts in May and finishes in November, although there are distinct regional variations. June and July are the wettest months, particularly on the Caribbean side, but the season can run from May until December. The 'warm' dry season is December to May, though temperature differences between summer and winter are slight. March is the height of the dry season, and the humidity is lower at this time, making this a popular time for visitors.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

Lightweight cotton and linen clothing is recommended for most of the year with warmer clothes for cooler evenings. Waterproofing is necessary during the rainy season. Loose-fitting clothing is best. Wear neutral browns and greens for birding and wildlife viewing. Always bring mosquito repellent for both day and night.

Electricity and Plug Standards

Electric sockets in the Republic of Costa Rica are Type B (NEMA 5-15) and/or Type A (NEMA 1-15). If your appliance's plug doesn't match the shape of these sockets, you will need a travel plug adapter in order to plug in. Travel plug adapters simply change the shape of your appliance's plug to match whatever type of socket you need to plug into. If it's crucial to be able to plug in no matter what, bring an adapter for all three types.

Electrical sockets supply electricity at 120 volts AC / 60 Hz frequency. If you're plugging in an appliance that was built for 220-240 volt electrical input, or an appliance that is compatible with multiple voltages, then an adapter is all you need. If your appliance isn't compatible with 120 volts, a voltage converter will be necessary.
