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## Ficha viaje



### COSTA RICA FAMILY ADVENTURE - 12 DAYS, SAN JOSE TO SAN JOSE

Imagine a country bursting with rainforests and teeming with unique wildlife; now imagine sharing this with your family, and you have a truly special journey. Avoid the crowds and go off the beaten track, all while keeping the theme of family fun. Discover Costa Rica as you and your family float through the canals of thick jungle and hike through lush cloud forest in the mountains of Monteverde. Your experienced CEO will take the hassle out of planning and organizing, so your family is free to play on the beach, relax in natural hot springs and soak in the spirit of the rainforest.

## Resumen del viaje

**Day 1 San José :** Arrive at any time. Arrival transfer included.

**Day 2-3 Tortuguero:** Guided boat trip through the Tortuguero National Park canals and hike through thick jungle. Option to visit the seasonal nesting grounds of the green and leatherback turtles.

**Day 4-6 La Fortuna/Arenal:** Relax in your hotel's hot springs and enjoy tortilla making along with a typical lunch with a local family. Options to go rafting, waterfall rappelling or floating through the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge.

**Day 7-8 Monteverde:** Guided nature hike in the Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve. Options to visit a butterfly garden, zipline through the canopy or go horseback riding.

**Day 9-10 Playa Esterillos Este/Manuel Antonio National Park:** Day trip to Manuel Antonio National Park including guided tour. Options to go horseback riding, kayaking or relax on the beach.

**Day 11 San José:** Return to the capital.

**Day 12 San José:** Depart at any time.



## Itinerario ampliado

### DAY 1 ARRIVE SAN JOSÉ

Arrive in San José at any time. A G Adventures representative will meet you at the airport and transfer you to our joining point hotel. There are no planned activities so check into our hotel and enjoy the city.

Located in the central highlands, San José enjoys a moderate climate. The heat and humidity of the coast and lowland areas may affect you, with a general sense of lethargy and/or loss of appetite. This is no cause for alarm, it is simply your body's reaction to the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water (bottled water is available everywhere) and do not attempt too much in any given day. We prefer fan-cooled rather than air conditioned rooms to avoid having to acclimatize to the heat and humidity every time you go outside. This is also a more eco-friendly approach.

Like most cities, San José has its good and bad sides. It is the centre of government, theatre, and art, as well as of air pollution and congestion. It has beautiful parks and museums, and a few beggars on the streets. It is big and often noisy, but even from its crowded downtown streets, you'll often enjoy a view of the surrounding lush mountains.

Start your exploration of the city in the main plaza, a great place to people-watch. A mime, juggler, marimba band, magician, or storyteller may be performing for whatever is collected when the hat is passed. Artisan booths are common, creating a regular arts and crafts fair atmosphere. A source of pride for the ticos (as Costa Ricans are known) is the National Theatre. Inaugurated in 1897, the building was paid for by coffee growers through a voluntary tax on every bag of coffee exported. The National Museum, housed in the Bellavista Fortress, offers exhibits on pre-Columbian art, colonial art and furniture and religious art within a 19th century building that was converted from a military fortress after the army was abolished.

The Museum of Costa Rican Art, located in La Sabana Park, was once the international airport; the museum is now housed in the old terminal building. The Jade Museum is on the 11th floor of the Instituto Nacional de Seguros building. In addition to the marvellous collection of jade objects, there are pre-Columbian ceramic and stone works as well as displays with archaeological and ethnographic information. The Gold Museum is located underneath the Plaza de la Cultura. Its spectacular collection of indigenous gold art belongs to the Central Bank of Costa Rica.

The best and least expensive places to buy souvenirs in San José are the markets. The two main ones are the ones in Plaza de la Cultura, which is an outdoor open market, and the Central Market, where handicrafts are sold along with boots, fish, flour, herbal remedies, shirts and everything else you can imagine. Always watch your belongings and be ready for crowds. If you plan on spending a few days in San José after your tour, there are a number of activities within the city and area that you can participate in, many of them outdoors.

Probably the hardest thing you will do in San José, other than get safely across busy streets, is keep the street numbering systems straight. Street and avenue numbers are posted on buildings at the corners of some intersections. Keep looking as you walk, and you will eventually find one.

NOTE: Like any city where tourism is on the increase, crime also tends to increase and while San José is not a noticeably dangerous city, there are certain precautions you should take. Make sure that you are aware of your things at all times and don't go out carrying expensive gear or jewellery.

## **DAY 2-3 TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK**

Early morning journey to Guapiles where we have breakfast and continue to the port of Caño Blanco. Embark on a boat trip along the Parismina river and the Tortuguero river until we reach the Village of Tortuguero. We stop for a walking tour at the village and continue by boat to Peñas blancas and lunch at the lodge.

The following day enjoy an early morning wildlife viewing boat tour along the Peñas Blancas. Return to the lodge for breakfast and take an optional walk to explore the trails.

Tortuguero National Park was created in 1975 to protect the four species of sea turtles which nest along the beaches. The three-hour boat ride along rivers and canals starts just outside the town of Limón and ends in the village of Tortuguero, just outside the park perimeter. We may see herons, egrets, spoonbills, as well as amphibians and reptiles like the “Jesus Lizard” (it walks on water) and caimans. The tropical rainforest gives way to prime beaches, ideal nesting grounds for Green, Loggerhead, Hawksbill and Leatherback Turtles. The latter nests from mid-March to May, the rest from July to September. The Caribbean Conservation Centre, just outside of town, is an excellent source of information about the turtles and their tropical habitat.

During both evenings there is an option to book a turtle night walk with a guide - for a change of viewing one of these beautiful animals in the wild.

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours

Approximate Distance: 270 km

## **DAY 4-6 LA FORTUNA / ARENAL**

Early morning departure by river boat to the port of Caño Blanco. We make our way to La Fortuna by bus stopping in Guapiles for a lunch break. Afternoon arrival in the town of La Fortuna, near the base of the spectacular Arenal Volcano. Our hotel is located near the main road leading from town up around the volcano and has several hot springs along it, fed by sources coming directly from the recently active volcano. While at your hotel, enjoy an evening relaxing in these warm waters surrounded by lush vegetation.

La Fortuna, the town near the foot of Arenal Volcano is an excellent base for adventure. Your options from La Fortuna are endless; fill your days with as much or as little as you want! Hike the area's nature trails, swim in chilly La Fortuna waterfall or join a canopy tour and catch a bird's eye view of the forest greenery. Other optional activities include full-day white water rafting on the Toro or Arenal Rivers, canoeing, mountain biking, caving, horseback riding, or a tour of the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. Like much of Costa Rica, the area is a birders' paradise, with over 600 species as permanent residents.

One day for lunch, experience an authentic cultural exchange with a local family at Doña Mara's home. Doña Mara will welcome the group with a tropical drink at her rancho (gazebo) where she will prepare a delicious lunch on her rustic wood-fired stove. We have the opportunity to try making tortillas out of fresh ground corn masa, Dona Mara will show us how to flatten the dough into perfect circles ready for cooking. The tortillas will then be served with lunch.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your rafting and canyoneering adventures will be on either Day 5 or 6.

Set on the northern plains of Costa Rica, Arenal Volcano sits on the southeast shore of artificial Lake Arenal (77 square kilometres, or 48 square miles). Separating the mountain ranges of Guanacaste and Tilarán, the lake was created by a hydroelectric dam. Winds sweeping off the Caribbean Sea reach speeds of 48 to 72 km/hr (30 to 45 mph), across Lake Arenal you can find one of the best locations in the world to go windsurfing. The volcano, once quite active, has been in a dormant state since the beginning of 2011 but still is a dramatic backdrop to the town of La Fortuna.

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hours

Approximate Distance: 200 km

## **DAY 7-8 MONTEVERDE**

From La Fortuna ascend into the cool, misty mountain air of the Monteverde cloud forest. Spend two days exploring Monteverde and the Forest Reserve, truly a nature lover's paradise. Local guides are extremely knowledgeable about the area and passionate about conservation of this precious ecosystem. The unique community has several local co-operatives worth visiting including artist collectives and a cheese factory. If you're there at the right time of year, you may be lucky enough to see the Resplendent Quetzal, one of the most beautiful and elusive birds in the world. Optional activities include a series of suspension bridges through the jungle canopy, a butterfly garden and a thrilling canopy zip line.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your ziplining experience will be on either Day 7 or 8.

Monteverde or Green Mountain, is exactly what you find at the end of the long, rutted dirt road through the mountains. The surrounding pastures were once covered with dense forest, but today only a small piece of it remains. That piece of forest has been preserved as the Reserva Biológica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Cloud forest is much like a rainforest, but much of the moisture comes not from falling rain but from the condensation left by the nearly constant cloud cover that blankets the tops of mountains in many parts of the tropics. Monteverde Reserve covers 1600 hectares of forest and is home to a great variety of wildlife. More than 2,000 species of plants, 320 bird species and 100 different species of mammals inhabit this small area. The Santa Elena Reserve, another park contiguous with Monteverde, is less well known and visited but also worth seeing. All proceeds from this park profit the local community.

Quakers from the United States founded the village of Monteverde in the 1950s. Looking to leave behind the constant fear of war and objecting to being forced to support continued militarism through their taxes, the Quakers chose Costa Rica because of its commitment to a non-militaristic economic path—Costa Rica's army was dissolved in the 1940s. Since its founding, Monteverde has grown slowly as others who shared the original Quaker founders' ideals moved to the area. Although the Quakers came here to farm the land, they recognized the need to preserve the rare cloud forest that covers the mountain slopes above their fields. The community is very different from those on the coast, and offers several souvenir shops and the Quaker cheese factory, which is definitely worth a visit. Make sure to try their ice cream!

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

Approximate Distance: 60 km

## **DAY 9-10 PLAYA ESTERILLOS ESTE / MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK**

This small town on the Pacific coast is a great place to relax and enjoy the sun and nearby sea. A

short distance from Quepos, Manuel Antonio National Park offers excellent hiking, spectacular views, and abundant wildlife viewing. There are beautiful white sand beaches and the warm turquoise water is ideal for swimming, fishing, kayaking, boogie boarding, sailing or surfing - the perfect finale to an exciting family adventure!

Quepos sits on the outskirts of the Manuel Antonio National Park (about 20 minutes drive) and is a great introduction to the laid-back "Tico" lifestyle. This town is very popular with the younger set of international travellers, and the nightlife in the area is also some of the best in the country. If you have the jungle in mind, then we recommend that you head into the National Park. Although this is Costa Rica's smallest National Park, it is also one of the most popular and it won't take you long to see why. This park has fabulous beaches, abundant wildlife, and a great trail system for those who want to spend the day hiking. Look for monkeys, armadillos, coatimundis, sloths and some of the over 350 species of birds that are present in the park!

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 220 km

### **DAY 11 SAN JOSÉ**

Return to San José for some last minute shopping and a final chance to explore Costa Rica's capital city!

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 190 km

### **DAY 12 DEPART SAN JOSÉ**

## Incluido

- Boat tour in Tortuguero National Park, guided hike through jungle, Hot Springs in La Fortuna, Tortilla making and a typical lunch with a local family, Guided visit of a Cloud Forest Reserve near Monteverde, Day trip to and guided tour of Manuel Antonio National Park, Arrival transfer and daily continental breakfast.
- 11 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners. (Allow USD320-420 for meals not included.)
- Comfort hotels (11 nts).
- Private van, boat, walking
- Chief Experience Officer (CEO) throughout, local guides.
- Small group experience; Max 15, avg 10

## No Incluido

Flights not included.

## Condiciones

### TRAVEL VISAS

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.

## **Hoteles**