

Costa Rica Family Adventure



Day 1: Arrive San José

You will be met on arrival at Juan Santamaría International Airport and transferred to the Hotel Real InterContinental for 2 nights in a standard room.

Hotel Real InterContinental

The Hotel Real InterContinental is a luxury resort hotel situated midway between Juan Santamaría International Airport and downtown San Jose, and within easy reach of shops, restaurants, and bars.

The hotel offers 372 elegantly-appointed rooms, equipped with the expected modern amenities – air conditioning, LCD TV screen, telephone, wireless internet, mini bar, electronic safe, CD radio/clock with MP3 and iPod connection, hair dryer, and both shower and tub in the bathroom.

There are several restaurants and bars on site. The lively Zimbora Bar offers cocktails and delicious hors d'oeuvres accompanied by live music. Other hotel facilities include a swimming pool, 24-hour gym, sauna and steam room.

Day 2: Poás Volcano National Park and the La Paz Waterfall Gardens (B, L)

An early start this morning (approx. 7:30am), as you depart San José for Poás Volcano National Park. The crater of this volcano is over 1.5km in width, making it one of the largest geysers in the world. Though active, Poás is safe for viewing. As you climb the volcano you will detect a gradual

change in the climate and, with it, the fauna and flora, as the coffee plantations and strawberry farms that cover the lower foothills give way to wilder vegetation.

At the summit, you will have the opportunity to view the main crater from a distance. Spend some time here admiring the view, before descending back down.



In the afternoon, visit the La Paz Waterfall Gardens, a private reserve of 70 acres. Here you can explore a network of trails that stop at some of the reserve's many beautiful waterfalls, the highlight being La Paz itself. You can also pay a visit to a number of animal exhibits, including a hummingbird garden, which attracts over 25 different species of hummingbird, a butterfly garden, where you can learn about the spectacular variety of butterflies found in Costa Rica, and snake and frog enclosures.

Finally, visit the La Casita de la Paz, a reconstructed farmhouse that provides an insight into the lives of rural Costa Ricans. Return to your hotel in San José late afternoon.

Day 3: San José - Tortuguero (B, L, D)

Depart San José early morning and drive through the magnificent Braulio Carrillo National Park towards Tortuguero, stopping for breakfast along the way. On arrival at Caño Blanco pier, set off on a 2 hour boat journey through the canals, ending at Pachira Lodge, your home for the next two nights.

After lunch at Pachira Lodge, embark on a guided tour of Tortuguero, including a stop at the Sea Turtle Centre, which has supported the conservation of endangered sea turtles in Costa Rica since 1959.



The beach at Tortuguero is a vital nesting site for the endangered green turtle. In the 1960s, when green turtles came close to extinction from poaching, the Sea Turtle Centre was established. Its work culminated in the establishment of Tortuguero National Park in 1970. Today, Tortuguero provides a haven not just for nesting green turtles, but also hawksbill and leatherback turtles.

NB. July to September is the peak nesting season for green turtles at Tortuguero.

Pachira Lodge

Pachira Lodge is located right on the edge of Tortuguero National Park, in a remote area accessible only by water.

The lodge offers 80 guest rooms, all attractively furnished with bamboo furniture and equipped with ceiling fans (no air-con). Facilities include a cosy bar and restaurant area, swimming pool, and a beautiful garden with hammocks overlooking the canal. All meals, boat and ground transfers are included during your stay at Pachira Lodge.



Day 4: Tortuguero (B, L, D)

After an early breakfast, begin your exploration of Tortuguero National Park. You will explore Tortuguero by foot and by boat, starting with a cruise along the canals in a small, open boat that will allow you to get as close as possible to the unique fauna and flora. A guided walking tour of the park (with picnic lunch) will follow in the afternoon.

Tortuguero constitutes a huge network of natural rivers, lakes and man-made canals traditionally used for the transport of goods, but today predominantly used to view wildlife. Much of Tortuguero has been designated a National Park.

A huge variety of wildlife inhabits Tortuguero, including over 50 recorded species of amphibian (poison dart frogs, salamanders), 100 species of reptile (iguana, caiman, basilisk), and more than 60 mammals. As many as 300 species of bird are found in the National Park, among them the endangered great green macaw. Toucans, trogons and myriad parrots are seen in the jungle, while on the waterways are found heron, egret, kingfishers and jacana.



Mammals commonly seen include white-faced, spider and howler monkeys. Peccary and tapir are occasionally seen, as are river otters. Jaguars, kinkajous and ocelots are seldom seen. Rare water species include manatee, gar and bullshark.

NB: There are two tours included today, a river boat trip on the canals and a jungle hike. Occasionally, however, due to weather or other concerns, the Park administration closes the walking trail, in which case you will have the option of a full-day boating tour.

Day 5: Tortuguero – Arenal (B, L)

After breakfast at the lodge, return to Caño Blanco by boat. On arrival in Caño Blanco, meet with your driver for the driven transfer to Guapiles, where you stop for lunch. From Guapiles, continue to La Fortuna de San Carlos, at the base of Arenal Volcano, where you check-in at Arenal Springs for three nights.

Until recently the most active volcano in Costa Rica (it has been dormant since 2010), Arenal occupies a region of spectacular natural beauty, a fertile land of forests, plains, lakes and springs. Tours of the base of the volcano also allow you to explore the lava emissions left from recent eruptions.



Arenal Springs

Arenal Springs Resort & Spa is a quiet hotel located on the outskirts of La Fortuna de San Carlos. Its 90 rooms are all comfortably furnished and air-conditioned, and each has a private terrace with a direct view of Arenal.

There's a charming restaurant serving a buffet breakfast and a la carte lunch and dinner menus. There are also two hot spring swimming pools and a wet bar. Wireless internet is available across the hotel, including in the rooms.

Keen astronomers should keep their eyes peeled tonight. Costa Rica is one of very few places in the northern hemisphere where you can reliably view the Magellanic Clouds, and the clear skies of La Fortuna make for perfect viewing. With Arenal Volcano in the backdrop, the view is often stunning.

Day 6: Arenal Rainforest (B)

Explore the Arenal Hanging Bridges this morning, with the rest of the afternoon free to participate in any of the varied activities available in the area.

The Arenal Hanging Bridges are a network of trails and canopy bridges within the primary rainforest that surrounds Arenal Volcano. As well as offering stunning views of the volcano and lakes, the trails also provide a superb means of getting close to the fauna and flora of the forest.

The birdlife is especially stunning, as the reserve occurs within a corridor used by birds as they migrate between Southern and Northern America. It's one of the most rewarding birding routes in the region.

After exploring the 3km trails, return to Arenal Springs.



Day 7: Arenal Volcano bike tour (B, L)

After breakfast at the hotel, set off on a guided bike tour around Arenal Lake. This is a leisurely ride through forest and along the lakeshore, via an old, mostly paved road that connects the Arenal Dam with the entrance to the National Park. You will visit a local village (El Castillo) during the course of the day. Though this is not a wildlife-viewing area, you may see monkey and a variety of birds, including toucan and king fisher.

The road sees little traffic and provides superb views of the volcano backdropped against the lake.



Day 8: Arenal – Monteverde (B)

Leave Arenal this morning for Monteverde. It's a 30 minute drive to the Arenal Dam, where you board a pontoon boat and cross the lake to Río Chiquito. If the skies are clear, expect marvellous views of Arenal. On arrival at Río Chiquito, a bus will transfer you to El Establo Hotel for the following two nights in a suite.



El Establo Mountain Hotel

El Establo Hotel is situated in the heart of Monteverde, between the Santa Elena Rainforest and the Monteverde Cloud Forest. The view, as you might expect, is stunning, and the rooms at El Establo are positioned so as to make the most of this. Each has a balcony/terrace overlooking the forest. All are spacious and attractively, if simply, furnished.

Guest facilities include spa, gym, swimming pool, bar, restaurant and internet access. Please note

that there is no air-con in the rooms, though the nights are generally cool in Monteverde.

There are a number of activities available in and around the property, including horseback riding, canopy and nature walks.

The small town of Monteverde had its beginnings in the early 1950s, when a group of Quakers from the United States established themselves in the region as dairy farmers. Today the town – which hasn't grown that much since it was founded – is better known for its proximity to the Monteverde Cloud Forest, one of the best wildlife reserves in the country. The climate is temperate and humid, with an average temperature of 17°C, and the nights are cool when the trade winds blow.

Day 9: Selvatura Park (B)

A full day of guided activities in Selvatura Park.

Selvatura Park is a conservation project within the Monteverde Forest Reserve, where visitors can take part in a range of activities: glide through the cloud forest on zip lines or take a walking tour of the canopy via a network of treetop walkways that weaves its way through the forest. There is a butterfly garden, similar to that at La Paz, and a hummingbird garden – keen

photographers will be able to keep themselves busy! The entomologist Dr Richard Whitten maintains an insect collection within the reserve, which is open to visitors much of the year.

The canopy tour is suitable for children, but please do note that it does involve heights. You will be supplied with safe climbing gear and carefully secured to the cables. The zip wires cover a total length of two miles.



Days 10-12: Monteverde – Manuel Antonio (B)

After breakfast, depart by private vehicle transfer to Manuel Antonio (approx. 4½ hrs). Check in at Si Como no Resort for 3 nights in a superior room.

Si Como no Resort

Located in coastal Manuel Antonio, Si Como no Resort is a small, intimate hotel situated between tropical rainforest and soft sand beaches. The property offers 58 rooms across several different categories, scattered within a ten-acre plot within easy reach of the beach; there is no TV in the rooms.

Facilities at Si Como no Resort include a fabulous jungle canopy terrace with restaurant & bar, two swimming pools - one for families and another for adults - Jacuzzi & spa. A complimentary shuttle service to the beach and to Manuel Antonio National Park is offered throughout the day.



Your remaining days in Costa Rica are at leisure to enjoy the beach and to relax in your villa with private pool. Optional tours, including forest walks and various water activities, are available.

Day 13: Manuel Antonio – San José – Departure (B)

After breakfast at the hotel, depart by private vehicle for San José and Juan Santamaría International Airport, where you check in for your international flight home.

Price Guide:

*The cost of this itinerary is from **£2,800 per person**, based on twin/double rooms. Please contact us for child rates.*

For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Local representative to meet you at the airport
- Accommodation as per itinerary
- All hotel taxes
- All private transfers
- Local flight Islita – San José
- Entrance fees to national parks and museums
- Tours and meals as indicated in day-by-day description

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Tips
- Optional tours
- Drinks with meals
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Travel insurance