



# Costa Rica: A Wildlife Journey Through the Tropics

From the flash of a blue morpho butterfly to the quiet movement of a sloth in the canopy, Costa Rica offers an intimate look at life in the tropics. Journey through rainforests, cloud forests, and coastal landscapes as we explore some of the most biodiverse regions on Earth. Along the way, connect with local communities, learn from knowledgeable guides, and experience the rhythms of daily life in this remarkable country.

As we travel from the Arenal region to the cloud forests of Monteverde, the Pacific coast, and beyond, daily experiences bring these landscapes into focus. Walk across hanging bridges high in the canopy, explore forest trails with expert naturalist guides, and take to the waterways on a wildlife-viewing river excursion. Look for monkeys, sloths, and vibrant birdlife by day, with opportunities to discover the forest's nocturnal side. Relaxing in nature and meaningful visits with local communities add both balance and depth to this immersive journey.

For more information, visit us at  
[www.uaf.edu/summer/travel](http://www.uaf.edu/summer/travel).

**Important note:** Travel insurance is always recommended for any travel out of the United States. There are several ways to purchase coverage. Some credit card companies insure trips that are purchased with their card. Another option is to check with a local travel agency.

**Note about Mobility:** Our tours are designed for people who are able to walk comfortably for up to 3 miles per day, sometimes on uneven terrain, as well as handle stairs easily. If you have any concerns about this tour, please contact Summer Sessions.

## Tour Dates:

January 31 –  
February 12

## Tour Cost:

\$5,250.00

Single supplement: \$600.00

Extra room night, 1/30/27:  
\$130

## Inclusions:

- 24/7 Tour Director/Guide
- 12 nights of accommodations
- In country transportation
- Entry fees
- Gratuities
- Educational programs
- Three meals per day
- Transfer to and from the airport

Transportation costs to and from Costa Rica is NOT included in this tour price. All travelers must arrange their own transportation to and from the starting and ending city (San José).

## Day 1, January 31: San José

Begin today with a Welcome Briefing at the hotel led by your Trip Experience Leader. Spend the day exploring some of the highlights of San José and enjoy our Welcome Dinner in the evening.

## Day 2, February 1: San Carlos

Today, we drive northwest from San José into the northern lowlands of Costa Rica along the Pan-American Highway. As we travel through the countryside outside of San José, we'll have sweeping views of the country's agricultural landscapes. We'll stop en route to visit a family-owned coffee *finca* (plantation). As we tour the farm with the owner, we'll see the various steps in the production of this important national export. We'll also have opportunities to interact with the farmers and get hands-on experience with the production process.

## Day 3, February 2: Muelle

Today we travel to Costa Rica's remote northern border. We'll then board a small touring boat to explore the Río Frío, a complex inland waterway where we'll likely see wading birds, like Northern Jacanas and Wood Storks, as well as many turtles and butterflies. Keep your binoculars and camera ready. We might be lucky enough to spot larger animals, like spider or howler monkeys, sloths, and caimans that live by the river. After enjoying regional cuisine for lunch, enjoy some free time until dinner. After dinner, we will embark on a nature walk in the dark with an expert guide in search of nocturnal animals like sloths, frogs, and snakes.

## Day 4, February 3: Muelle

Today we travel through the Costa Rican countryside. We'll see pineapple plantations, as well as a few sights you might not expect in this famously eco-conscious country: industrial buildings, heavy machinery, and clear-cut forests. They're all by-products of Costa Rica's extremely profitable (and controversial) commercial pineapple industry, which we will learn more about this afternoon. We'll make a quick stop at a market to pick up ingredients for today's home-hosted lunch.

As you dine on homemade specialties, you'll learn more about what life is like in Juanilama Village.

## Day 5, February 4: Monteverde

We will enjoy a nature walk through Arenal Volcano National Park on our way to Monteverde. Then, we will board a boat and cruise the Arenal Reservoir where we will enjoy views of the volcano. Once our boat ride concludes, we will continue the drive to Monteverde Cloud Forest. Monteverde is renowned for its unique environment and diversity of natural life. The mountainsides on which the forest is located trap the warm, humid air rising from the ocean, creating dense clouds that provide near-constant moisture, supporting a large number of plant species.





## Day 6, February 5: Monteverde

In the morning, explore the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Founded in 1972 as a refuge for local wildlife, Monteverde today is a protected region dedicated to scientific research and education. Monteverde is home to 100 mammal species, 400 bird species, more than 120 species of amphibians and reptiles, and more than 300 species of orchids! The afternoon is free for your own discoveries, or you can explore the canopy via a series of thrilling zip-lines.

## Day 7, February 6: Monteverde

Begin the day with a Hanging Bridges tour where we will discover the lush cloud forest from a unique vantage point. We'll follow a system of suspension bridges that spans the canopy of the Monteverde Cloud Forest, examining the flora and fauna of the rain forest from a bird's-eye view alongside our expert naturalist guide. Our guide will explain the unique characteristics of the canopy and point out animals, birds, and plants native to this treetop environment. After enjoying lunch at a local farm, you'll have the remainder of the day to explore Monteverde at your own pace.



## Day 8, February 7: Manuel Antonio National Park

Today we drive south to the abundant environs of the Pacific Coast and Quepos, home to the renowned Manuel Antonio National Park. We will stop for lunch and enjoy some time along Río Tárcoles, Costa Rica's premier wildlife areas along the Central Pacific. Enjoy a guided boat ride on Rio Tarcoles which empties out into the Pacific Ocean and its watershed. Learn about the mangrove trees that have uniquely adapted to the water they grow in. The area is home to four species of mangrove trees, which are an important nesting ground for birds like the Scarlet Macaw and are located along the scenic shores. Be on the lookout for crocodiles, which can grow well over ten feet in length and are often seen swimming through the river or sunbathing along the banks.



## Day 9, February 8: Manuel Antonio National Park

Explore Manuel Antonio National Park. The park includes four beaches, island bird sanctuaries, and a luxuriant rain forest. And perhaps because of its small size, a morning full of wildlife sightings—including howler and Capuchin monkeys and sloths—isn't at all unusual. In particular, we'll keep an eye out for the endangered squirrel monkey, as Manuel Antonio is one of only two of its habitats in the country. Our local guide will stop us as we walk to witness local flora and fauna.



## Day 10, February 9: San Gerardo

Today we will tour a vanilla spice plantation with a local guide and learn why vanilla is the second most expensive spice in the world. In addition to touring the plantation and post-harvest warehouse, we will go on a scenic walk through the plantation's distinctive "Epiphyte Trail," which winds through the plantation. There will even be time for tasting treats made with vanilla, chocolate, and Ceylon cinnamon and visit their Spice Shoppe. From here, we will head to San Gerardo de Dota in the lush, mountain-walled valley of the Savegre River.



## Day 11, February 10: San Gerardo

Our lodge makes it easy for us to get closer to the unique ecosystem of San Gerardo de Dota. Here we can enjoy hiking and birdwatching. Birdwatching enthusiasts will be pleased to know we are in one of the most populous quetzal nesting areas on the planet (owing in large part to its altitude of 7,000 feet), making it the perfect opportunity to spot the Resplendent Quetzal, a bird often found on a birder's "life list." The Resplendent Quetzal is a legendary bird and among the most coveted species to see. Your Trip Experience Leader will escort you into the green valley forest in search of this elusive bird renowned for its brilliant plumage.



## Day 12, February 11: San Jose

This morning, we depart the lodge and drive to the final destination of our journey, Costa Rica's capital, San José. Spend the afternoon making your own discoveries before our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

## Day 13, February 12:

If you are not joining us for the post-trip add-on to Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast, you will have a transfer to the airport and catch your return flight home. Box breakfasts can be provided for travelers who have early morning flights, and accommodations can be made for late departures.

