

Costa Rica: Arenal, Monteverde, Guanacaste

7 days

Tour Description

Welcome to one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. Delightful variety awaits those with a curiosity to learn more about conservation, climate, flora and fauna. Active volcanoes, verdant rainforests and pristine beaches punctuate the rich biodiversity that makes up this central American country sandwiched between two oceans.

Those with an adventurous spirit won't be disappointed either. Active pursuits abound in the jungles, mountains and ocean for those in search of excitement. So blast through the trees on a zip-line, climb a volcano, see wild animals from a kayak, surf in the Pacific Ocean, or soak up the sun on a deserted beach while bird watching. There's something for everyone in this land on the forefront of ecotourism.

Highlights

- ❖ **Poás Volcano – largest active crater in the world**
- ❖ **La Paz Waterfall Gardens**
- ❖ **Cruise on Lake Arenal**
- ❖ **Monteverde Sky Trek – suspension bridges and zip-lines**
- ❖ **Cloud Forest of Santa Elena Reserve**
- ❖ **Pacific Beaches and dry climate of the nearby savannah**

Sample Tour Itinerary

San Jose – 1 night

Day 1: Arrive San Jose, Costa Rica

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by our local representative who will escort you to your hotel via private coach. The balance of the day you are free to explore this vibrant city on your own.

Arenal – 1 night

Day 2: Depart for Poás Volcano, La Paz and Arenal

Considered the largest active crater in the world, Poás Volcano is about one mile wide and over 900 feet deep, with frequent geyser-like eruptions. Lake Botos fills an extinct crater at the end of one trail and is home to many forest birds. Continue to La Paz and visit one of the world's largest butterfly and hummingbird gardens, an orchid collection, snake and frog exhibits, Trout Lake and a bird observatory. La Paz Waterfall Gardens, a rain forest park, provides panoramic viewpoints of five magnificent waterfalls that feed La Paz River. In the evening, enjoy a dip in the Baldi Hot Springs before dinner.

Monteverde – 2 nights

Day 3: Cruise and Adventure en route to Monteverde

Travel to the shores of Lake Arenal where you will enjoy a 45 minute cruise. After crossing the lake our adventure takes us to the Monteverde Sky Walk & Sky Trek, a spectacular combination of suspension bridges with easy and well maintained walking trails above the tropical forest canopy. The Sky Walk tour includes 1.5 miles of trails and six suspended bridges across deep canyons at the level of the treetops. The longest bridge is about (800 feet) in length. Anybody that can walk for two hours can live this experience. There isn't any strenuous climb or mud and the trails are very well maintained. The more adventurous will really enjoy the Sky Trek, a system of trails, suspension bridges, and zip lines that offer visitors the opportunity to appreciate tropical vegetation from different vantage points above the canopy. Continue on into the mountains to Monteverde where you'll have the balance of the evening at leisure.

Day 4: Tour of Santa Elena Reserve

Venture into the world-famous cloud forest, a highland forest characterized by nearly 100% humidity year round. Here in the Santa Elena Reserve, Monteverde, the warm trade winds sweep across the Atlantic, up to the Continental divide, cooling and condensing to form clouds. They bathe the forest in a constant soft mist producing an incredible 12 feet of rain per year. One of the most characteristic features is the abundant vegetation. Competition for growing space is so intense that trunks and branches are almost entirely covered with a variety of epiphytes, lichens, liverworts, bryophytes and mosses. The epiphyte mats store moisture, which is especially important in the dry season (February to May).

Guancaste – 2 nights**Day 5: Beaches of Guanacaste Pacific Coast**

We leave the rainforest, traveling west through the hot, dry savannas toward the popular north Pacific beach region. We are heading to a spot that was formerly part of Nicaragua, resulting in a distinctive cultural difference. Due to its comfortable climate, this is a great area for either relaxing on the pristine beaches or going full throttle with the many activities available.

Day 6: Optional Activities

Sunbathing is always popular in this region, or the more adventurous among us might like to take a surf lesson, jump on a horse and gallop across the sand, or take advantage of world-class sport fishing and fabulous snorkeling. An estuary tour by kayak provides the opportunity to test your knowledge of local birds, iguanas and crocodiles along the riverbanks. Sea kayaking takes you along the coastline during calm seas. Coffee tours bring your taste-buds into play. You might need a couple more days to experience everything!

Day 7: Departure

After breakfast, transfer to the Liberia airport via private coach for your departure flight home.

Inclusions

- Accommodations: San Jose 1 night, Arenal 1 night, Monteverde 2 nights, Guancaste 2 nights
- Continental breakfast daily. Lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary.
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary