

COSTA RICA: A TOUCH OF THE TROPICS



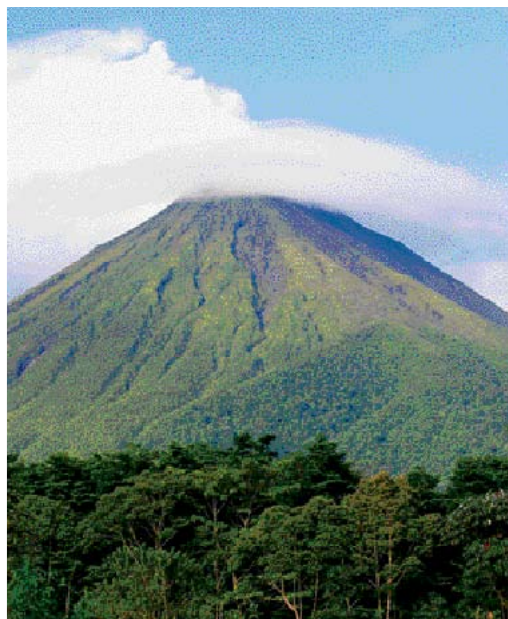
*Educational
Tours*

→ *Discover the Global Classroom*

9 or 10 DAYS

Costa Rica: A Touch of the Tropics

Costa Rica



Number of overnight stays in parentheses. This tour may also be reversed.

In the shadow of the Arenal Volcano, you can explore the flora and fauna of the Lake Arenal region.

Program Fee includes:

- Round-trip airfare
- 8 overnight stays in hotels with private bathrooms (9 with extension)
- 3 meals daily, dinner on arrival day and breakfast on departure day
- Full-time bilingual EF Tour Director
- 9 visits to special attractions:
 - INBioparque • Poás Volcano • Hot springs
 - Kayaking tour • La Fortuna waterfall • Santa Elena Reserve • Canopy tour • Carara Biological Reserve • Manuel Antonio National Park
- Experiential learning: Visit a local school • Tree planting in Monteverde

WITH EXTENSION: All of the above PLUS:

- Whitewater rafting

OPTIONAL:

- Horseback riding in Monteverde
- Folklore Evening

Day 1 San José

Flight to Costa Rica • Your adventure begins as you board your flight to Costa Rica.

Arrival in San José • Touch down in San José, the country's bustling capital and cultural center. Founded in 1737 as "Villa Nueva de la Boca del Monte del Valle de Abra," the city's name was later changed to honor its patron saint, Saint Joseph. After clearing customs and immigration, meet your EF Tour Director, who will remain with you throughout your stay.

Day 2 San José • Arenal Region

Visit to INBioparque • Learn about biological diversity as we visit this theme park and research station created by the National Institute of Biodiversity. Get up-close and personal with tarantulas, frogs, bees and butterflies in the permanent exhibits, or walk through the three different ecosystem trails. Explore the plant life in the lagoon before admiring the butterfly garden. Stop by the Ecological Tourism Office on your way out for further information on Costa Rica's protected land areas.

Poás Volcano • Continue along a scenic 22-mile drive overlooking the Central Valley as you make your way to the Poás Volcano. This still-active volcano is part of Costa Rica's most developed national park. Here, you can see one of the largest craters in the world (about a mile wide and 300 meters deep), whose hot sulfurous lake changes color with volcanic activity. From a lookout point, see geysers and active fumaroles; in addition, a 20-minute hike uphill rewards you with a view of the jewel-like Botos Lake, which occupies an extinct crater.

Transfer to Arenal • Journey west across the Central Valley to Arenal. This area is one of the world's major coffee producers.

Visit to the hot springs • Experience the relaxation properties of natural hot springs, filled with water heated by nearby volcanoes and channeled into pools. It's an ideal way to soothe muscles after the day's activities!

Day 3 Arenal Region

Kayaking on Lake Arenal • Get ready for an adventure to remember—kayaking along Lake Arenal. Picture-perfect scenery surrounds you, including mountains and the Arenal Volcano, as you navigate the lake.

Visit to La Fortuna Waterfall • One of Costa Rica's most spectacular waterfalls, La Fortuna is located within the thick jungle of the Arenal Rainforest. You'll pass some impressive scenery (keep your camera ready for wildlife photos) as you walk to the bottom of the waterfall.

Day 4 Arenal Region • Monteverde

Transfer to Monteverde • Continue through the mountainous scenery to the Monteverde (Green Mountain) Reserve. The reserve was settled in 1951 by a group of Alabama Quakers; attracted by the country's pacifist history, they began dairy farming here. In 1972, the area became the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, a private nonprofit reserve with six distinct ecological zones containing a wide range of spectacular flora and fauna.

Visit to a local school • In Monteverde, you will stop at a local school, where you'll meet Costa Rican students.

Optional horseback riding in Monteverde •

Join an optional horseback riding excursion to explore the ecological wealth and natural beauty of Monteverde.

Day 5 Monteverde

Half-day at Santa Elena Cloud Forest •

Explore the spectacular Santa Elena Cloud Forest, a paradise rich in diverse plant and animal life and situated near the Continental Divide. Warm northeasterly trade winds, filled with moisture, blow in over the Atlantic. As the winds sweep up to the Continental Divide, they cool and condense to form clouds, bathing the forest in a constant soft mist. The cloud forest averages 12 feet of rain annually! Look for bromeliads and orchids as well as brightly colored quetzals among the lush flora. Until recently, the reserve was one of only two places in the world that was home to the now-extinct golden toad. Leave your mark by planting a tree in the EF reserve—future generations will appreciate the oxygen!

Canopy tour • On our canopy tour, you will make like the birds and monkeys who call the cloud forest home. Zip lines unveil one of the planet's most fascinating ecological systems from a unique perspective—the tops of the trees. With local expert guides at your side, you can decide which view you prefer—from below or from above!

Day 6 Monteverde • Central Pacific Coast

Visit to Carara Reserve • Follow the coastline south to the Carara Reserve, a national park that boasts a dazzling population of rare wildlife. Be on the lookout for scarlet macaws, boat-billed herons, motmots and roseate spoonbills among the lush vines and ancient trees that make up the park's dense jungle.

Transfer to the Central Pacific Coast •

Transfer to the breathtaking Central Pacific Coast, where sandy beaches, a rocky coastline and lush rainforests act as a magnet for travelers.

Day 7 Central Pacific Coast

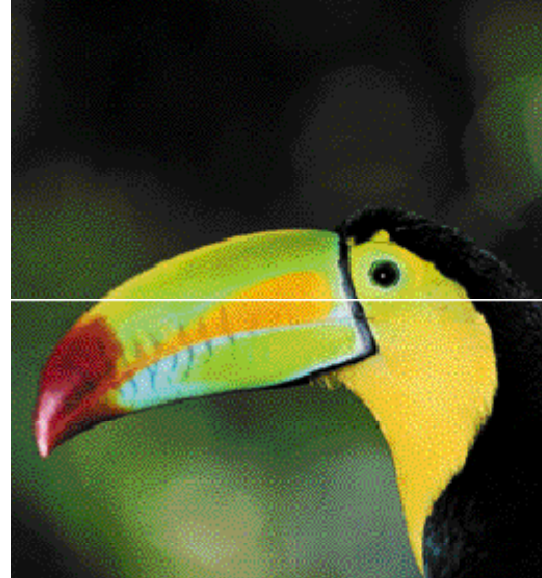
Excursion to Manuel Antonio National Park •

Embark on an excursion along the shoreline to Manuel Antonio National Park, known for its lush jungle vegetation and white, sandy beaches. This beautiful 716-acre park is home to both the squirrel monkey and the two-toed sloth.

Day 8 Central Pacific Coast • San José

Transfer via Sarchí • Your full-day transfer to San José begins via picturesque Sarchí, a town known for the brightly painted designs and colorful wheels that adorn local oxcarts. The complex patterns are passed down from one generation to the next.

Optional Folklore Evening • During our Costa Rican Folklore Evening, learn about the rich cultural traditions of the region as you enjoy a traditional meal, marimba music and entertainment by a local dance troupe.



Tropical birds are just some of the wildlife you'll observe in the Costa Rican rainforest.

Day 9 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

EXTENSION

Day 9 San José

Whitewater rafting excursion • Alternatively, your group can extend its trip. Experience a thrilling whitewater rafting expedition down the Sarapiquí!

Day 10 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

The red-eyed tree frog uses its bright green color for camouflage and its red eyes to startle predators.



For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions.



ITN0309COS/B
Itinerary subject to change.

Discover the Global Classroom



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2010/Fall