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# Tour Notes

Highlights of Costa Rica

Tour Duration – 13 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●○○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

## Tour Pace

Moderate

## Tour Highlights

- Explore the delightful capital of San Jose
- Experience local cooking and learn about chocolate and coffee making process
- Explore the rich biodiversity of Monteverde Cloud Forest
- Discover the stunning natural beauty of Arenal Volcano Area
- Relax in beautiful Guanacaste with its stunning beaches



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## Tour Map



## Tour Essentials

<b>Accommodation:</b>	Mix of comfortable hotels and lodges
<b>Included Meals:</b>	Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.
<b>Group Size:</b>	Maximum of 12
<b>Start Point:</b>	San Jose – you can arrive any time on day 1
<b>End Point:</b>	San Jose – you can depart any time on day 13
<b>Transport:</b>	4WD or Minivans depending on the size of the group
<b>Country Visited:</b>	Costa Rica



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## Highlights of Costa Rica

Embark on an unforgettable journey to Costa Rica, a land of natural wonders and vibrant culture. This tour promises an immersive experience in the country's diverse landscapes, from misty cloud forests to pristine beaches. Begin your adventure in Naranjo, home to some of Costa Rica's best coffee plantations. Then venture into the lush rainforests of Maquenque National Wildlife Refuge where you'll cruise through winding waterways, spotting exotic wildlife such as monkeys, sloths, and colourful birds. Next, journey to the Arenal Volcano area, where you'll hike through verdant forests, and marvel at the iconic volcano's majestic silhouette. Continue your adventure to the misty heights of Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, home to a staggering array of plant and animal species. Conclude your tour with relaxation on the pristine beaches of Guanacaste before heading back to bustling San Jose.

## Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

## Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour. On this tour local guides are used. Please see notes below.

### Note:

Transfers to each place will be with a driver only, no guide included

Local guides will be included on services.

Excursions are shared with other people and not exclusive to UD.

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Arrive San José – Naranjo (driving time approx. 50mins)

Arrive into San José where you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Naranjo. No meals or activities included today. Overnight Chayote Lodge or similar.

### Naranjo

Naranjo is known for its agricultural activities, particularly coffee cultivation. The region is part of Costa Rica's coffee belt, where the climate and altitude create favourable conditions for growing high-quality coffee beans. The landscape is characterized by lush green hills and mountains.

## Day 2 - Naranjo

Today enjoy the gastronomy delights of Naranjo. Visit a local home to learn about traditional Costa Rican food. Although its inheritance is a legacy of the mixing of many European influences and native customs, Costa Rica owns its distinctive characteristics in both its everyday life and cooking. Authentic Costa Rican



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food is made on wooden stoves and each region has its own style, varying from the spicy Afro Caribbean cuisine to the Guanacaste recipes prepared using a corn base. The central region cooking that employs a diet based on local agricultural products such as vegetables in abundance, tropical fruits, rice, beans, dairy and habitual accompanied by one type of meat. You will be shown how to prepare a traditional Costa Rican meal. Overnight at Chayote Lodge or similar (BL)

### **Day 3 – Naranjo – Maquenque**

After breakfast we head to Los Bajos del Toro (approx. 1 hour), a small village surrounded by rainforest in the slopes of the Poas Volcano and home of the Toro Amarillo Waterfall, one of the most scenic in Costa Rica. We first stop at Palmira where plantations of potatoes, cabbage and pasture fields blend in the natural forest to offer some spectacular views. Continue to Bajos del Toro and visit the Toro Amarillo Waterfall. We then continue north to Maquenque Lodge at Boca Tapada, San Carlos (approx. 1hr 30). Overnight at Maquenque Ecolodge or similar (BD)

### **Day 4 – Maquenque**

This morning we take a boat ride at Tres Amigos River and enjoy the tranquillity of the rainforest. Here we can see the wealth of flora and fauna and you can spot exotic animals like crocodiles, turtles, iguanas, monkeys, water birds and more. This afternoon, enjoy a nature walk with your guide at the hotel trails. Overnight at Maquenque Ecolodge or similar (BLD)

### **Day 5 – Maquenque – Arenal Volcano Area**

Today continue our journey to Arenal Volcano Area (approx. 1hr 45min). Upon our arrival to the area we will be exploring Arenal 1968 park. Enjoy the most extraordinary view of the Arenal Volcano on a hike along the base and flanks of this giant on the Arenal 1968 park. The trail is one of the park's most extraordinary, to the 1968 lava flows: the remaining memory of the 20th century first eruption and some other areas now in the process of regeneration. We are going to be on this trail for about 2 ½ hours. You will then be transferred to your hotel. Overnight at Lomas del Volcán, Arenal Area or similar (B)

### **Day 6 – Arenal Volcano Area**

Today we will discover one of the most authentic products of Costa Rica - chocolate. Start today with a 30-45min walk on the cocoa trails, and learn about the process of planting, maintaining and harvesting organic cocoa. Continue to a ranch to see the chocolate-making process in action, and have the opportunity to taste different flavours, as well as making a chocolate bonbon. To finish, try your hand at making "Gods Drink", which the ancient civilizations of Mexico used to make. After lunch we will explore the rainy forest from the top of the trees. Overnight at Lomas del Volcán, Arenal Area or similar (BD)

### **Day 7 – Arenal – Monteverde Cloud Forest**

Today travel to Monteverde (approx. 3 hours) and visit El Trapiche, a family-run business. Walk through the farm with beautiful views of sugar cane, coffee and banana plantations. See the entire coffee making process from drying, grinding and peeling the coffee beans to produce high-quality coffee. We then take an ox cart ride to the sugar mill to see how sugar cane is grinded, and enjoy a cup of high-quality, Costa Rican coffee. Overnight at El Establo, Monteverde Area or similar (BD)

### **Day 8 – Monteverde Cloud Forest Area**

This morning, discover the cloud forest from the sky. Get an amazing view of the forest by taking the Sky Walk where you will see the region's abundant flora and fauna. This is a 2.5km trail which includes 6 hanging bridges of different lengths and heights, giving you a 360 degree view of the cloud forest. We also take a ride on the Sky Tram – a comfortable and spacious gondola where you can spot the local wildlife. Enjoy fantastic views of the Arenal Volcano and lake, as well as the Tilarán mountain range. Overnight at El Establo, Monteverde Area or similar (BD)



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### Monteverde Cloud Forest

Monteverde is worldwide recognized as the perfect destination for those looking to spend some real time surrounded by nature. This region is considered one of the most biologically diverse areas in the country. This is why Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve is continuously visited by nature lovers all around the world, marveling at its beauty.

Chosen as one of Costa Rica's Seven Wonders and one of the most important private reserves in the country, Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve has over 10,500 hectares and is located 6 km from the small town of Santa Elena. Located at an altitude between 1,200 and 1,600 m, this cloud forest gives you the chance of exploring a different type of forest, allowing you to make your very own comparison between the biodiversity found in a rainforest and a cloud forest, proving that Costa Rica is full of natural treasures.

### Day 9 – Monteverde – Guanacaste Beach Area (overall approx. driving time 3 hours)

Leave the cloud forest behind and head to towards the beautiful beaches of Costa Rica. The journey starts with one of the most scenic rides, before descending the Tilaran Mountain range to reach the plains of Guanacaste's countryside and finally head to the sands of North Pacific Coast. On the way we stop at Palo Verde National Park and take a boat through the brackish wetlands and look out for birds and the park's many resident crocodiles. We then continue to your beach hotel. Overnight at Bosque del Mar, Guanacaste Beach or similar (B)

### Days 10 and 11 – Guanacaste Beach Area

Spend the next two days at leisure. There are several optional activities available for these days, or explore the area on your own. Overnight at Bosque del Mar, Guanacaste Beach or similar (B)

*Please contact us for a list of optional excursions.*

### Day 12 – Guanacaste Beach - San Jose

After breakfast we make our way back to San Jose (overall approx. driving time 4hrs 30mins). On the way we visit the Natuwa Sanctuary, which promotes the conservation of Costa Rica's macaws, both scarlet macaw (Ara macao) and green macaw (Ara ambiguus). After the visit transfer to your hotel for your last night in Costa Rica. Overnight at Presidente Hotel or similar (BD)

### Day 13 – San Jose Departure

Explore the San Jose City on your own this morning and get ready for your transfer to San Jose Int Airport. (B)

### END OF SERVICES

## Inclusions/exclusions

#### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
All accommodation  
All ground transportation  
Services of English-speaking local guides whilst on excursions – no throughout guide  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary – these are shared excursions with other people

#### Excluded:



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International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visas if applicable  
Drinks  
Items of a personal nature & tips (discretionary)

## Important Information

### Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to the areas of Costa Rica that we visit. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

### Accommodation and Meals

#### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

#### Accommodation Rating

On this tour you will be staying in mid-range standard tourist class hotels. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary, air-conditioning will be provided. In general, you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

#### Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.



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### **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### **Budgeting for your Tour**

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### **Food**

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £8  
Dinner £10

### **Drink**

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £2.30  
Water £1.30

### **Tipping – Guide and Drivers**

Tipping is common practise in Latin America. If your guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. If you are travelling in a group tour, then around \$10 per person, per day for a guide and around \$5 per person, per day, for a driver is reasonable. If you are travelling privately, then roughly double these amounts are reasonable. In restaurants a service tax of 10% may be included, if not a tip will always be appreciated. It should also be noted that a sales tax of 12% may be added to your bill.

### **Foreign Exchange**

**ATM Availability:** ATM's can be found in most cities  
**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Widely accepted  
**Local Currency:** Costa Rica Colon  
**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US Dollar  
**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you

### **Joining your Tour**

#### **Flight Information**

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we



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have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### **Travel Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday. It is now a condition of entry to for Ecuador that all visitors have a valid health insurance policy, so you should ensure you travel with the appropriate documentation.

### **Visa Information**

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals do not require a visa for a short-term tourist visit to Costa Rica.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance. Contact details can be found by visiting the following websites.

British Nationals - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - [www.smartraveller.gov.au/](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

### **Passports**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### **Vaccinations & Protection**

As with travel to most parts of Latin America, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. A yellow fever vaccination may also be advised. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended, and we recommend that you take professional advice about malaria prophylactics.





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# Preparing for your tour

## Climate

The ideal time to visit Costa Rica is during the dry season, from December to April. This period offers sunny weather and minimal rainfall, perfect for outdoor activities, wildlife viewing, and exploring the country's diverse landscapes. However, Costa Rica can be visited year-round, with each season offering unique experiences.

## Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy.

## Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and to be adequately immunized with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must – please ensure you bring enough as it may not be available locally. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. It is a good idea to bring a torch or head-lamp for poorly lit areas or in case of any electricity outages.

## Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended. Sandals are fine whilst on the road.

## Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

## Driving times

The driving times stated in the itinerary are given in the best of faith. Driving times may on occasion be longer due to unforeseen circumstances such as poor weather, road construction activity, mechanical problems etc. We ask for your patience and understanding if journey times take longer than anticipated.

## Electric Supply & Plugs

The electrical supply in Costa Rica is 120v, and plugs tend to have either two flat parallel pins (type A), or two flat parallel pins with a grounding pin (type B). We recommend that you bring a multi-adapter.

## Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 18 April 2024.