



North Carolina, USA - www.STEMstudytours.com

Tour: Costa Rica Rainforest Biology & Research
Specialization: Biology, Ecology, Geography & Culture
Itinerary: 8-days / 7-nights
Location: Limón Province, Costa Rica

Costa Rica Rainforest Biology & Research Camp					
Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening		
1	Travel to Costa Rica; transfer to the Rainforest Biological Research Center in Limón Province			Welcome & Safety Meeting	Dinner
2	Nature Walk & Orientation	Rainforest Science & Research Activities	Rainforests & Tropical Ecology Group Lecture		Dinner
3	Rainforest Science & Research Activities	Whitewater Rafting*	Rainforest Science Activities		Dinner
4	Sustainable Pineapple Plantation Excursion*	Rainforest Science & Research Activities			Dinner
5	Rainforest Science & Research Activities			Free Time	Dinner
6	Zipline Canopy Tour*	Rainforest Science & Research Activities			Dinner
7	Rainforest Science & Research Activities				Dinner
8	Transfer to San Jose International Airport; depart Costa Rica				
* Excursions shown are at extra cost, please let us know your requests when quoting					



Join us in the location dubbed “the Cream of the Cream of the Rainforest” by National Geographic Traveler. With world-class facilities, astonishing natural beauty, and a commitment to conservation and scientific research, the Veragua Rainforest, home to the Foundation for Rainforest Research, offers the most complete, exciting and educational rainforest experience in all of Central America.

As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an “example” of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet!

General Information: www.visitcostarica.com

Day 1

Dinner

Travel to Costa Rica via air, arriving at Juan Santamaría International Airport. After boarding your transportation, your group will be transferred to your camp location, deep in the Costa Rican Rainforest, in the Limón Province.

The **Veragua Rainforest Biology Center** is located in Brisas de Veragua, 2 ½ hours from San José and less than 1-hour from the historic Caribbean town of Puerto Limón with enchanting views of the endless mountains of the Talamanca Range. Surrounded by 100% rainforest, the private reserve borders the spectacular La Amistad International Park (“Friendship International Park”), the largest nature reserve in Central America.

Accommodations: Lodging is **rustic researcher-style** with **bunk beds and ceiling fans**, maximum eight persons per room. Teachers sleep in double occupancy rooms with a private bath. Boys and girls have separate rooms and bathrooms; the bathrooms are common within each gender. Towels and soap are provided, please bring any other toiletries needed.



Student Accommodation / Staff Accommodation

Please know that all electrical power in the researcher accommodation is turned off at 10 PM. Guests are asked to be quiet after this time and to be considerate to other volunteers and scientists staying in the same building.

There is a social area for playing ping pong, cards, or other table games, open until 10:00 PM.

What to Bring? Tips for the Rainforest

Clothes that dry fast and that you won't mind getting dirty

Long pants for research

Flashlight / Headlamp with extra batteries

Light poncho

Mosquito repellent, hopefully natural-based without Deet, and maybe a mosquito net

Sunscreen

Hiking boots

And above all, eagerness for adventure and hands-on research



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About the Meals

The Center provides three meals a day. Menus are based on Costa Rican traditional foods, such as rice and beans, salads, vegetables, meat, chicken or fish.

Breakfast: 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

Lunch: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Dinner: 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM



Some things to try while here

- Glide through the rainforest treetops on an aerial tram (gondola) looking out for monkeys, sloths and colorful rainforest birds.
- Visit the world-class Frog and Reptile Habitats-- and mingle with hundreds of butterflies at the Butterfly Garden, including the famous blue morpho!
- Journey into the forest on diverse walking trails, admiring the sights and sounds of flora and fauna.
- Enjoy a walk to the riverbank or hike to a spectacular cascading waterfall, feeling the thunderous spray almost at your fingertips.
- Experience the most exhilarating canopy zip-line ride in the Caribbean-- the Original Canopy Tour-- as you glide silently through the Costa Rican rainforest on specially built traverses and platforms, marveling at the commanding views from the treetops.
- Spent time at The Foundation for Rainforest Research, where researchers unlock nature's mysteries and learn about exciting new species. To date, eleven new rainforest species have been discovered at Veragua by our scientists!

Days 2 - 7

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Rise and shine Costa Rica! After breakfast we'll start with a nature walk and orientation and then it's full force ahead with our research and discovery!

The Veragua Rainforest educational program's mission is to deliver an unforgettable student learning experience in the Costa Rican Central Caribbean region. Their vision is to provide educators and students with an opportunity to incorporate the concepts of hands-on research, sustainability and cultural sensibility into their learning experiences.



Research Partners

Conservation International

INBio (Costa Rica's National Institute of Biodiversity)

University of Costa Rica

National Museum of Natural History



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The Nature Conservancy

Most project work is the result of research carried out jointly between Veragua Rainforest and the University of Costa Rica. Projects aim to involve naturalists, students and volunteers to become new researchers. Ongoing research at Veragua Rainforest is coordinated by University of Costa Rica biologists, José Andrés Salazar and Rolando Ramírez.



The Neotropic zone where the Veragua Rainforest is located is one of eight terrestrial eco-zones dividing the Earth's surface. This eco-zone includes Central and South America, the Mexican lowlands, the Caribbean Islands, and southern Florida, because these regions share many plant and animal groups. The Neotropic zone's flora and fauna is distinct from most of North America because of the long separation between the two continents. The Neotropic includes more tropical rainforest than any other eco-zone, extending from southern Mexico through Central America and northern South America to southern Brazil, including the vast Amazon Rainforest. These rainforest eco-regions are one of the most important reserves of biodiversity on Earth.

For current foundation research projects, please visit:

www.veraguarainforest.com/research-projects



Some of the educational activities include:

- **Butterfly and Beetle Trap Set-up:** With our on-site biologist as our guide, we go out into the field to set up insect and butterfly traps for future collection and identification.
- **Snakes, Frogs, Toads and Butterflies:** Students will first be led through a collection of world-class exhibits, including the planet's largest nocturnal frog exhibit. With the help of our expert guide and exhibit stations, students will learn relevant and interesting information (regions found, maximum size, eating habits, etc.) about many of the species they will soon discover in the rainforest.



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- **Biological Research Station:** The Research Station is closely aligned with the School of Biology of the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and the National Museum of Natural History. Students can see how the researchers study rainforest life, and how they discover new species.
- **Owl and Insect Night Hike:** See a unique perspective of Veragua Rainforest. Experience the rich sounds and unusual visuals of the rainforest at dark as we venture out onto the trails with our expert biologist. With nearly every step, students will discover nocturnal frogs, colorful insects, snakes, and even nocturnal mammals such as the opossum or the kinkajou. Another fun activity for students is to identify the different characteristics of nocturnal insects and moths with the on-site entomologist.
- **Peje School Community Work:** Located 2 miles from the entrance to Veragua Rainforest, the Peje School is our local elementary school. Volunteers will interact with the school children on such activities as maintenance projects, English tutoring, tree planting and singing local songs with them.
- **Butterfly Garden Work:** Students will be split into small groups to work on activities such as
 - Butterfly garden maintenance: leaves, eggs and wings collection
 - Pupa Box maintenance: includes species selection, cleaning after release
 - Pupa selection and set-up
 - Butterfly garden feeding
 - Seed planting at Butterfly Garden

Day 8

Breakfast

It's time to pack up and head home! Following breakfast and dependent upon our flight departures, we'll have the morning free and then we'll start to say goodbye to Costa Rica as we head off for our flight home; taking memories with us that will last forever!



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Optional add-ons

Let us know if you would like to include these when requesting a quote

In addition to standard projects, there are also three off-site activities which can be added to your trip. Please alert us prior to travel if you wish to participate as additional costs apply.

Whitewater Rafting – Class II & III: approximately \$77 USD per person

This tour departs directly from the Hacienda facilities and runs approximately 13 kilometers. It is considered very safe with several access points throughout the tour. It is available year-round and includes a full safety and training presentation, energizing fresh local fruits by the river at a swimming spot, transportation back to the facility for shower and changing, top of the line equipment and certified, experienced guides. Approximately 2.5-hours. Recommended clothing: shorts, athletic shoes or rubber-sole sandals, t-shirt, bathing suit and camera.



Organic Sustainable Pineapple Plantation Excursion: approximately \$52 USD per person

On the journey, our enthusiastic experts will guide you through a wonderfully charming rural adventure. You'll travel into the fields on a specially designed coach pulled by a tractor, immersing you in the organic farming world. Learn about the different sections, aspects and stages of growth of organic pineapples and plantation, and the production process from seeding through harvesting. You'll also be introduced to the history of the indigenous roots raised in plantations across Costa Rica and learn about other sustainable crops produced here - including yucca, lemon, guanabanas, and peppers. At the end of the tour, ensconced in our tropical paradise, you'll hear more about traditional Costa Rican folklore as you relax and savor delicious smoothies and slices of our fresh, organic pineapples that will definitely impress your palate. Tour duration: 2 hours. Includes: bilingual guide, exhibition of the land preparation, developing plantations, flowering, induction, meristems and harvest, organic pineapple plantation, pineapple tasting. Recommended clothing: closed-toe shoes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, light clothes and rain slicker.



Zipline/Canopy Tour: approximately \$75 USD per person

Enjoy exhilarating Costa Rican zipping through the treetop canopy in a beautiful jungle setting with experienced guides and safety features. Includes full instruction and safety rules presentation, 9 ziplines and 13 platforms with extra safety features like the double cable and double pulley on each zipline, railing on all platforms, refreshments with fruit and water, and ending with a 900-foot cable crossing the beautiful Sarapiquí River canyon. The tour is compliant with both ICT and AOA regulations. Duration: 1.5 – 2-hours, dependent upon the size of the group. Recommended clothing: long pants, secure shoes, camera, binoculars, sun lotion and repellent.



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COSTA RICA RAINFOREST BIOLOGY & RESEARCH

Minimum Booking Numbers:	20 students
What's Included:	Round-trip flights with a scheduled carrier 7-nights' accommodation in Costa Rica Breakfasts, lunches & dinners daily while at camp Airport transfers 8-day Rainforest Biology Camp Personal Tour Ambassador Fund-a-Forest: A tree is planted in the name of each guest Dollar\$ For Scholars: \$2 donation in the name of each guest 24-hour emergency cover
What's Not Included:	Departure airport taxes of approximately \$31.00 USD per person; paid directly at the International Airport prior to departure Extra activity excursions: Whitewater Rafting Pineapple Plantation Zipline / Canopy Tour Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory) Coach transfers to/from home airport Meals not specified Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel Additional Sightseeing / Entertainment Options Any gratuities – Drivers, Ambassador, National Guide
Currency Notes:	<p>If you plan to travel to Costa Rica, you will most likely want to carry the local Costa Rica currency to purchase goods and services. The Costa Rica currency is called the colon. The colon is named after the Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus (Colon is Spanish for Columbus). The colon is primarily carried in bill form as 50, 100, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 (referred to as toucans), and 10,000 denominations. In coin form, the colon is carried as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 100 denominations.</p> <p>Most every business in Costa Rica will accept USD (United States Dollar) for payment. Many items in local stores and hotels are priced in USD and not in Colons. Please make sure to enquire about currency markings prior to purchase.</p>

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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SAMPLE PACKING LIST – COSTA RICA!

- Raincoat / Umbrella
- 1 Long-sleeved Shirt
- Mosquito Repellent & Anti-Itch Cream
- Sunscreen / Sun Cream
- Flashlight / Head Lamp with extra batteries
- Hiking Boots & Athletic Shoes, Water shoes if rafting
- Camera & Binoculars if desired
- Bathing Suit / Costume
- Water Bottle
- 3 - 5 pairs of Shorts
- Short-sleeve or non-sleeved T-shirts
- 1 Fleece or Sweatshirt
- Cash for Departure Tax (payable to Costa Rican officials prior to departing the country)
- Cash for Lunches on Days 1 & 8
- Cash for any **Gratuities / Tips**

PASSPORT COPY - Please bring at least one copy of your passport's information page. In case of the loss of a passport, the passport owner can use this copy to get a new passport reissued relatively quickly. Additionally, participants may be asked to show proof of nationality to authorities, so this should be carried on your person always.

** Staff: Credit card for emergency medical needs (Note: Typical medical facilities will require payment at the time service is rendered and then the group should request reimbursement upon return)



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