

Tour: Costa Rica Eco-Adventure
Specialization: Science, History, Geography, Language & Culture
Itinerary: 8-days / 7-nights
Preferred Dates: January through November; excluding Easter Week

Costa Rica Eco-Adventure - Sample Itinerary					
Day	Morning	Afternoon		Evening	
1	Travel to Costa Rica; transfer to hotel; Welcome & Safety Meeting			Welcome Dinner	
2	Poás Volcano National Park	Doka Estate Coffee Plantation Tour		Dinner	Free Time
3	Transfer to Sarapiquí	Lowland Rainforest Exploration - Ziplining Expedition & Whitewater Rafting on the Sarapiquí River		Dinner	Bat Master Class
4	Chocolate Workshop	Transfer to Fortuna / Arenal	Costa Rica Cooking Class	Arenal Volcano Hike	Dinner
5	Eco-Centre Danaus Biology & Wildlife Walk	Don Juan's Farm & Costa Rica Culture Experience		Baldi Hot Springs Exploration & Dinner	
6	Transfer to the Pacific Coast	Jungle Crocodile & Tropical Mangrove Safari	Hotel Check-in	Dinner	Free Time
7	Manuel Antonio National Park Excursion + free time at the beach				Dinner
8	Transfer to San Jose International Airport; depart Costa Rica				



“Mention Costa Rica and people think paradise. The country's Disney-like cast of creatures — ranging from howler monkeys to toucans — are prolific and relatively easy to spot. The waves are prime, the beauty is staggering and the sluggish pace seductive. The incredibly varied topography means you can cruise a cloud forest one day, climb a volcano the next, and finish passed out on a hot sandy beach.” - Lonely Planet

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

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.

Day 1

Dinner (dependent upon arrival time)

Travel to Costa Rica via air, arriving at Juan Santamaría International Airport. After boarding your transportation, your group will be swiftly transferred to your hotel. After getting checked in, we will have our Welcome, Safety & Orientation meeting and then dependent upon your arrival time, your group will reconvene for dinner later in the evening. If you experience a late arrival, head for bed and we will start in the morning!

Sample Hotel: Best Western Irazú Hotel - This full-service San Jose hotel provides comfortable lodging and superb customer service. The hotel is centrally located in the capital city, near major attractions, commercial and banking districts and only 15 minutes away from San José International Airport. Hotel amenities include 3 hotel restaurants and room service options, buffet breakfast, free wireless Internet, outdoor swimming pool, fitness facilities, gift shop, business center, laundromat, 24-hour front desk with currency exchange, plus a casino (adults only). Room amenities include wireless internet telephone service, hairdryers, safe deposit boxes, 32-inch LCD TV, coffee makers with Costa Rican coffee, and air conditioning.



Day 2

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Rise and shine Costa Rica! After a great breakfast, we'll start off our tour with a fantastic day. We'll board our transportation and head to Poás Volcano and then the Doka Estate!

Poás Volcano - Poás volcano is a powerful symbol of the geothermal forces that formed Costa Rica. When the mist and clouds part you'll see the sulfuric, bubbling, green rain-fed lake at the bottom, surrounded by smoke and steam rising from fumaroles. Water from the lake is constantly seeping through cracks in the hot rock, evaporating and building pockets of steam. When the pressure in these pockets exceeds the weight of the water above, the steam breaks through in geysers that rocket up to 820 feet (250 meters) high. Don't worry about getting a shower though, the crater is 1,050 feet (320 meters) deep. At almost a mile across it's also the largest active crater in the world.



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A modern visitors' center and small museum explains and interprets the geothermal and ecological attractions in the park. The volcano provides an excellent, if extreme, example of the effects of acid rain. Around the caldera, and for several miles downwind, the vegetation is stunted brown and black by the tainted moisture that precipitates from the omnipresent clouds near the peak.

After our morning at Poás, we're off to one of our favorite locations – The Doka Estate.

The Doka Estate Coffee Tour - Located in the coffee capital of Costa Rica, Sabanilla, Alajuela, this coffee plantation belongs to the Costa Rican Vargas Ruiz family; pioneers and award winners of coffee production for more than 70 years.

The main objective of the Coffee Tour is to educate students on the agriculture and production process of coffee. The tour takes place on the Doka Estate, where students learn about production, harvesting, the processing plant and the roasting of the coffee grain. Costa Rica has a large variety of microclimates and altitudes within short distances. The route taken explains how the different climatic factors flavor the taste of the coffee. Guided by an expert, students will receive extensive information making this activity an incomparable experience.



- The tour begins in the seedbed. Students will observe and learn the development process of the plant up to the point of collection. Students also learn about the history of the estate, its owners, the production and varieties of plants, the geography of the area and the traditional ways of cultivating the grain.



- The second station is the oldest humid coffee processing plant that works by hydraulic power, declared to be an Architectural Heritage for Humanity in 2003. In the receiver, students will see and learn about the classification of the grains, and afterwards, the process of de-pulping of first and second quality coffees that takes place in the grinders.

- Next, the natural honey of the grain is cut in the fermentation tanks and a process is carried out that is significant for taste. Once the coffee that has been dried in the Guardiola or on the patios under the sun is ready to be peeled, it will then be exported or roasted in-country.

- Finally, the roasting plant 'Café Tres Generaciones' is visited, where students will observe the different types of roasts that are offered.

And best yet, we'll 'taste' the process along the way!



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After a tremendous day, we'll head back to our hotel for dinner and a well-deserved night of rest.

Day 3

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Good morning San Jose! After breakfast at the hotel, we'll transfer to the Sarapiquí area, approximately 2- hours, for a day full of adrenaline and outdoor exploration at Hacienda Pozo Azul!



Hacienda Pozo Azul is a 2,000-acre ranch in Sarapiquí, located approximately a 2-hour transfer from San Jose. The Hacienda's many trails have plenty of natural fauna, beautiful rivers and waterfalls, giving our guests the opportunity to explore on horseback, mountain bikes, in a guided nature walk, or just enjoy bird watching as they drift down the Sarapiquí River. Adventurous travelers will feel their adrenaline rise as they discover the wonders of Hacienda Pozo Azul with a thrilling (and safe) Treetop Canopy Ride ending with a spectacular 900-foot zip line across the Sarapiquí River. Or sample the exhilaration of whitewater rafting with the Sarapiquí's year-round, class II and III rapids, all with top quality equipment and experienced certified guides. For even more 'hands-on' excitement, rappel down the Sarapiquí River canyon with special safety ropes. Hacienda Pozo Azul guides are not only certified in Health & Safety procedures, but also specialize in each of the activities they perform at the hacienda.

NOTE: Groups may choose one of the following activities for this morning's activity and then a second activity for the afternoon. Options include horseback riding, canopy/ziplining, rafting (Class II – III) or rappelling. Each person will have the opportunity to pick two independent activities. **Those electing to participate in whitewater rafting should be capable of swimming. A waiver/release is required for all activities and for all participants.** If you require a copy prior to travel, please notify us.

After our thrilling day, we'll "camp" for an outstanding forested evening!

Sample Accommodation - Hacienda Pozo Azul Tent Suites - Imagine sleeping to the harmonious lullaby of the jungle's night sounds, waking up to the Congo's greeting and the bird's song in an ambiance of comfort, privacy and immersed in nature. This is what you will live at Hacienda Pozo Azul Tent Suites! It's a magical experience that combines nature with comfort, the rugged with the modern, relaxation with excitement.



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Here you will be able to let nature and its forest absorb you while sleeping a canvas away from 4% of the world biodiversity. Your main door will be a zipper and your windows will be screens; your enjoyment will be complete. The Hacienda Pozo Azul has 30 Tent Suites equipped with 2 queen size beds or 1 king size bed, comfortable bathrooms with hot water and a furnished private deck, telephone and Wi-fi in all suites, and fans both in the rooms and on the decks. Additional amenities include full reception, dining area, in-room satellite television, reading room, computer access available, convenience store and a social area for meetings.

After dinner, it's time for a little flying exploration!

Night Bat Workshop - Bats represent 50% (110 species) of Costa Rican mammals. Students will enhance their education, dispel myths they may have heard about these wonderful mammals, and enjoy an adventure into the wonderful world of the bats. The activity consists of a presentation regarding the natural history of bats, classification, diversity, adaptations, reproduction, threats and more. At the end of the presentation, a qualified guide will provide you with a safe opportunity to see the bats that were captured during the night up close. Finally, you will visit the site where one of the nets, used to capture bats, is set up and the guide will explain the methods used for capturing, why the bats don't detect the nets and the process to ensure the wellbeing of the animals.



Day 4

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Good morning Sarapiquí! Following breakfast at Pozo Azul, we'll transfer to Arenal and the Northern San Carlos Plains to start our day with a very sweet agriculture tour!

The Sweetest Rainforest Experience - In this activity you will discover the marvels of one of the favorite foods of humankind – chocolate! The tour includes a guided hike across the Tirimbina suspension bridge to a cacao plantation, as well as to a forested section where you will observe species of cacao and how the product originally developed there. Onsite, you will learn about the process by which cacao is processed into chocolate (harvesting, fermentation, drying, milling). There also you may taste different types of chocolate, made from organic chocolate grown by the Association of Amazilla Women of the Caribbean, a group of rural women from Pueblo Nuevo de Guacimo dedicated to the production of organic chocolate.



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After our chocolate experience, we'll transfer back to Pozo Azul for lunch, and then on to the Arenal Volcano area! En route, we'll learn how to prepare Costa Rican cuisine!



Pura Vida Cooking Class in La Fortuna – Learn how to make some of Costa Rica's classic dishes such as gallo pinto (rice and beans), tamales, empanadas or another favorite. Top off your experience by enjoying the meal with your hosts while hearing insightful commentary. Come, learn, cook and have fun!

After, we'll check into our hotel.

Sample Hotel: Magic Mountain Hotel – The Magic Mountain Hotel is located at the base of the Arenal Volcano and consists of 36 standard-sized rooms, all with a balcony or terrace view of Arenal Volcano. The rooms are tastefully decorated, close to the swimming pool area, and include two queen-sized beds, private baths, air conditioning, ceramic tile floors, telephone, refrigerator, cable television, safety box, coffee maker, hair dryer and wireless internet service. Resort amenities include a spa, swimming pool, restaurant and sports bar.

www.hotelmagicmountain.com



During the late afternoon, the journey continues to the Arenal Volcano National Park!



Arenal Volcano Hike - An explosive volcano tour! Guides will take us through Secondary Forrest trails up to the viewpoint just for sunset.... Here, guests will gain an understanding about the volcano and the ecosystems created since its last eruption, viewing the fauna and flora along the trails.

Tonight, after dinner at the hotel, guests can either enjoy free time at the pool, spa or perhaps an evening quiz night or scavenger hunt.



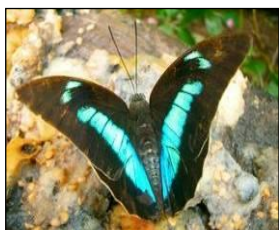
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Day 5

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Good morning Arenal! After breakfast at the hotel, today we will delve into a morning of exploring and learning about “natural” Costa Rica.



Eco-Centro Danaus – Today we’ll travel to the Eco-Centro Danaus, where we will learn about the natural history of the flora and fauna of Costa Rica. Guests will see and study a great variety of tropical plants and traditional crops, organically farmed in the gardens. The Eco-Centro is home to various animals and a tree nursery. The nursery project propagates local species who provide shelter for birds or mammals or whose fruit provides food, as well as useful timber species.

www.ecocentrodanaus.com/en

Later, we’ll travel to Don Juan’s Farm for an afternoon of local farming and culture.

Don Juan's Farm & Costa Rica Culture Experience – Are you ready to get organic? A few minutes away from La Fortuna, in a small town called Jaurí, there is Don Juan’s Farm. A place raising the bar in organic products and sustainable development. We’ll explore how more than 30 different crops are grown with strict organic techniques, livestock, methane gas production, tilapia, manufacture of organic compounds including worm farming, bio-fermentation, fertilizers, fruit, herbs and more. You’ll have a chance to investigate rural Costa Rica life and culture while learning about the food journey from farm to table.



While here, you’ll learn about cassava harvesting, vegetable picking, fresh fruits for homemade refreshment, fresh spinach and other necessary ingredients which you will later have for lunch. The dishes prepared with “farm fresh” organically grown products will awake your senses! The tour also includes a look at the stables and cow milking production. The cows provide the main ingredient for daily cheese and sour cream in addition to production of methane gas and fertilizer. Next, learn how sugar cane is processed in a hand mill as you enjoy a tasty treat of cane juice and cane pieces. For adults, don’t miss the trial of sugar cane liquor called “güaro”. This trip will be full of surprises while you taste crops, homemade cheese, tortillas, natilla custard, medicinal plants used to cure illness and diseases, and more.

Next, we’re off to Baldi Hot Springs for dinner and then some serious relaxation!

Baldi Hot Springs Resort – Get ready for a great evening! Baldi Hot Springs provides 25 of the most thermal mineral water pools in the world flowing naturally from the volcano. Their medicinal waters have delightful settings for each individual taste of heat with temperatures ranging from 32 – 67oC. The unique pools are surrounded by lush vegetation where delicious waterfalls massage your back. Changing rooms, water slides, swim-up bars and Roman bath pools are sure to whet your appetite.



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Afterwards, we'll have dinner and enjoy the sights and sounds of Costa Rica!

Day 6

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Rise and shine Arenal! After a leisurely breakfast in the hotel, we'll board our transportation and travel to the Pacific Central Coast area. After stopping for lunch, we'll land on the river in search of crocs!

Jungle Crocodile Safari & Tropical Mangrove Adventure - Jungle Crocodile Safari offers a tour specially designed for adventurers and bird watchers that takes place on the Tárcoles River, one of four rivers flowing out into the Nicoya Peninsula, and home to one of the world's largest crocodile populations in the wild with crocs up to fifteen feet long. In addition to the crocodiles, over fifty different kinds of birds can be seen on site, including scarlet macaw and a great variety of resident and migrant waterfowl. Iguanas and Jesus Cristo lizards are very common as well.



Jungle Crocodile Safari's tour time is 2-hours and our bilingual guide offers expert orientation about the crocodiles and other associated wildlife. On the way downstream, the boat heads along the Estero Guacalillo, a most awesome mangrove ecosystem that features four different species of mangrove trees. Guests receive a bottle of cold drinking water along with a brochure that shows all 56-bird species commonly sighted along the river.

After our safari, we'll check into our new hotel. After settling into our hotel, we are free to go beachcombing, swim at the pool, or take a dip in the magnificent Pacific Ocean. Dinner will be served at the hotel restaurant.

Day 7

Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Good morning Pacific Coast! After breakfast, we'll travel to the beautiful Manuel Antonio State Park for a morning of exploration!



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Manuel Antonio National Park - With the establishment of Manuel Antonio National Park in 1972, the people of Costa Rica decided to preserve one of the most beautiful and bio-diverse areas in the world. Although it is the country's smallest national park, the stunning beauty and diversity of wildlife in its 683 hectares is unequalled. Manuel Antonio contains a charming combination of rainforest, beach and coral reefs. These beaches are the most beautiful in the country, lined with lush forest, and the snorkeling is excellent too. The forest is home for sloths, iguanas, monkeys and millions of colorful crabs.



After our guided park visit, we'll have the afternoon free to soak up the sun and beach, monkey-spotting and spending our last full day at leisure.

Day 8

Breakfast

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



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COSTA RICA ECO-ADVENTURE

Minimum Booking Numbers:

20 students

What's Included:

Roundtrip flights with a scheduled carrier
7-nights' accommodation in Costa Rica
Breakfasts, lunches & dinners daily (except travel days)
Transportation for programmed activities & airport transfers
Poás Volcano Excursion
The Doka Estate & Coffee Plantation Tour
Whitewater Rafting on the Sarapiquí River
Rainforest Ziplining at Hacienda Pozo Azul
Bat Master Class
The Sweetest Rainforest Experience – Chocolate Master Class
Eco-Centre Danaus Master Class
Don Juan Farming & Culture Master Class
Guided Hike at Arenal Volcano
Baldi Hot Springs Excursion
Pura Vida Cooking Class
Manuel Antonio National Park Excursion
Jungle Crocodile & Tropical Mangrove Safari Master Class
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:

Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
Coach transfers to/from home airport
Lunches on travel days and meals not shown in itinerary
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
Passport or Visa costs
Additional Sightseeing / Entertainment Options
Any gratuities – Drivers, Housekeepers, Ambassador, National Guide

Currency Notes:

If you plan to travel to Costa Rica, you will most likely want to carry the local Costa Rica colon (currency) to purchase goods and services. 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. www.xe.com

Most every business / vendor 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.**

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
 - Hiking Boots, Athletic Shoes; Water Shoes; Beach Sandals
 - Camera & Binoculars if desired
 - Bathing Suit
 - Water Bottle
 - 4 – 6 pairs of Shorts
 - Short-sleeve or non-sleeved T-shirts
 - 1 Fleece or Sweatshirt
 - Females may desire to bring dresses for dinner although not required
 - Cash for Departure Tax (payable to Costa Rican officials prior to departing the country)
 - Cash for Lunches on Days 1 & 8
 - 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)
 - Cash for any Gratuities / Tips
- Please know that gratuities (tips) are totally discretionary however they are customary and assist in making up the general basic wages for service personnel. Gratuities are generally paid in local currency or USD, paid per person and suggested minimums are:*
- ❖ Bus Driver = \$5 - \$10 per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
 - ❖ Costa Rica National Guide = \$25+ per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
 - ❖ Ambassador = \$25+ per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
 - ❖ Housekeepers = \$1 per person, per day, dependent upon service levels
 - ❖ Waitstaff for services other than normal mealtimes = 15-18% of total bill

PASSPORT COPY - Please bring at least one photocopy 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.



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