

COSTA RICA: AN ULTIMATE INVITATION

15 – 28 FEBURARY 2025

FROM
£9,985
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Nick Van Gruisen


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY



It is hard to imagine a more beautiful place than Costa Rica, with its spectacular scenery, extraordinary profusion of wildlife and warm, hospitable people so committed to preserving their natural heritage. This captivating tour journeys to the heart of the country, where the rich wildlife of the Americas meets in a wild landscape.

We start in the capital, San José, and from this point onwards the variety of scenery we will see is staggering. We travel to the waterways and mangroves of the wetland reserves of Tortuguero on the Atlantic coast and on to the Central Highlands and Arenal, the country's most active volcano beside Lake Arenal surrounded by sub-tropical cloud forest, lush rainforest and natural hot springs.

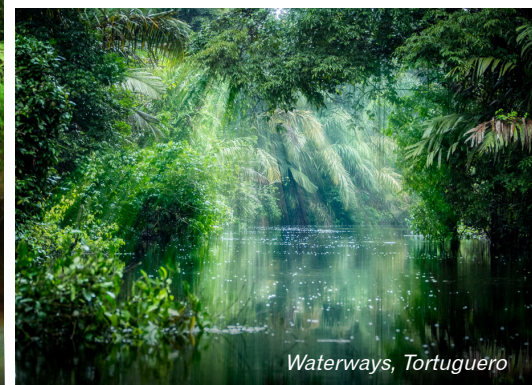
We continue to the Golfo Dulce, where the Piedras Blancas National Park is a pristine tropical wilderness teeming with exquisite flora and fauna. The country has an unimaginable variety of wildlife such as monkeys, armadillo, caiman, sloth, minute vividly coloured frogs and other animals, though it is the profusion of bird life including macaws, parrots and toucans, along with rare butterflies, that will really capture the attention.



Hot Springs, Arenal



Hanging Bridges, Arenal



Waterways, Tortuguero

14-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 15 FEBRUARY 2025

15 February London / San José

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) British Airways flight BA 2237 departing London Gatwick at 11.05 hrs arriving San José at 16.50 hrs. Group transfer to the Hotel Finca Rosa Blanca where two nights are spent. Encircled with coffee plantations, exuberant gardens and inspired by Gaudi's architecture, the lodge has sweeping views of the central valley, Irazú volcano, villages, fruit trees and coffee plantations. There is a swimming pool and the opportunity for walks in the surrounding area. Dinner at the hotel.

16 February San José

Excursion to the Poás Volcano National Park to explore the crater and cloud forest.

Transfer to the Doka Coffee Estate on the slopes of the Poás Volcano for lunch followed by a guided tour to learn about the history and processes of Costa Rican coffee growing and brewing. Dinner under own arrangements.

17 February San José / Tortuguero

Transfer by road to La Pavona Dock and from there by boat to the Tortuguero National Park adjacent to the Caribbean Sea with its prolific wildlife, vast network of canals and dense rainforest. Check in at Manatus Lodge where three nights are spent. Manatus is

a small friendly lodge on the edge of a river adjacent to the national park with just 12 stylishly decorated airconditioned rooms. There is a good restaurant serving regional and international dishes and a small but refreshing swimming pool.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon guided boat tour through the canals of Tortuguero National Park which shelters a fabulous array of wildlife, including more than 309 bird species, among them the great green macaw, 57 species of amphibians, 111 species of reptiles, 3 species of marine turtles, 30 species of fresh water fish and 60 mammal species. Dinner at the lodge.



Red-eyed Tree Frog

18 February Tortuguero

Early morning boat tour through the canals of Tortuguero National Park. A naturalist guide will accompany you and will help you to spot the animals and explain the functions of the rainforest ecosystem.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure with the option to relax by the pool. There are a number of additional activities available from the hotel (some at an additional cost) including fishing and a canopy tour. Visit Tortuguero Village. Dinner at the lodge.

19 February Tortuguero

Morning kayaking tour through the canals of Tortuguero National Park.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure. Optional twilight walk through the forest trails behind the lodge, a great place to look for howler monkeys and colourful poison-arrow frogs. Dinner at the lodge.

20 February Tortuguero / Arenal

Transfer to Tortuguero airport for a charter flight to La Fortuna. Transfer to the Amor Arenal Canyon Casitas where three nights are spent. Set in the foothills of the Arenal Volcano, on the edge of a virgin forest canyon, the hotel offers spacious, air-conditioned cabins made from precious tropical hardwoods overlooking the rainforest with direct views to Arenal Volcano and each with a spa plunge pool. The hotel has its own hot spring pools and spa treatment rooms. The restaurant serves an organic menu using only fresh, local produce.

Lunch under own arrangements.



Keel-billed Toucan



Arenal Volcano



Scarlet Macaw

Afternoon at leisure with optional walks around the surrounding nature trails. The hotel has two of its own jungle trails through lush vegetation, streams, and waterfalls. Horse riding is also available at an additional cost. Dinner under own arrangements.

21 February Arenal

Morning walking tour of the 'Hanging Bridges' through the rainforest canopy which bring you as close as possible to the birds, flowers and lush vegetation.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Afternoon visit to the beautifully landscaped hot springs on the Hidalgo family's private farm Ecotermales. Dinner at Ecotermales.

22 February Arenal

Morning canopy tour of the rainforest by Sky Tram which takes you by gondola up to an Observation Platform to observe the volcano, Lake Arenal and the surrounding rainforest canopy. Take a short hike from the Observation Platform and option to descend either by zip line (at an additional cost) or Sky Tram. Return to the hotel via the Butterfly Conservation Centre.

Lunch under own arrangements.

Afternoon at leisure. Dinner under own arrangements.

23 February Arenal / Golfo Dulce

Transfer to La Fortuna Airport for a charter flight to Puerto Jimenez Airport. Transfer by boat to Playa Cativo where three nights are spent. The lodge is only accessible by boat and is nestled in the tranquil waters of Golfo Dulce, near the Osa Peninsula in southern Costa Rica. Unique in its native beauty and seclusion, Playa Cativo is a beachfront boutique hotel offering an unparalleled experience set on 1,000 acres of private tropical rainforest reserve surrounded by the Piedras Blancas National Park; a former extension of the Corcovado National Park. It is not unusual to see and hear howler and white-faced monkeys and scarlet macaws around the lodge.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure or optional activities at the lodge (some at an additional cost). These include self-guided walks, nature tours, fishing, sea kayaking, snorkelling and stand up paddle boarding. There is a wonderful sandy beach by the lodge or an inviting fresh-water swimming pool. Alternatively, there are gardens, or a yoga platform surrounded by the

sights and sounds of the jungle and the lapping ocean. Dinner at the lodge.



Three Toed sloth

24 February Golfo Dulce

Birdwatching tour in Playa Cativo's Protected Nature Reserve. The variety of eco-systems, including mangroves, is home to a large and diverse selection of birds and animals in a relatively small area with over 390 species of birds recorded.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure or optional activities at the lodge. Dinner at the lodge.

25 February Golfo Dulce

Whale and dolphin watching excursion on the tropical fjord of Golfo Dulce which is home to a variety of marine animals and mammals. With large mangrove areas and many rivers flowing into the gulf from the surrounding



rainforests, the ocean is rich in minerals and provides a healthy food source for dolphins (spinner, bottlenose, and spotted), manta rays, whale sharks, and sea turtles.

Lunch at the lodge. Afternoon at leisure or optional activities at the lodge. Dinner at the lodge. Nocturnal rainforest expedition to see the many animals which become active at night especially amphibians, reptiles, arthropods, night mammals, and birds.

26 February Golfo Dulce / San José

Transfer to Puerto Jimenez airport for a morning flight to San José. Transfer to the Finca Rosa Blanca lodge and coffee farm where a further night is spent.

Lunch under own arrangements. Afternoon at leisure. Optional activities at the lodge (at an additional cost) including river rafting, ziplining and hiking. Or relax by the pool and enjoy a massage. Dinner under own arrangements.

27 February San José / London

Optional early morning bird watching. Day at leisure at the hotel.

Lunch under own arrangements. Group transfer to San José's Juan Santamaria Airport. Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) British Airways flight BA2236 departing at 18.40 hrs.

28 February San José / London
Arrive London Gatwick at 10.55 hrs

Important: The domestic airlines in Costa Rica impose a luggage restriction of 18 kg / 40 lbs per person and 5 kg / 10 lbs hand luggage, for safety reasons. The same situation applies to boat trips. You can store any excess luggage in San Jose with our ground agents.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£9,985
Single Supplement	£3,880

Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 8 lunches; 8 dinners
- Group transfers and transportation as per the itinerary
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portage
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- The services of your tour leaders throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Travel Insurance
- Meals 'under own arrangements'
- Optional activities at the lodges
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 07/03/24.



Rufous-tailed Hummingbird



YOUR TOUR LEADER



NICK VAN GRUISEN

Raised in Northumberland, in the 1970s Nick spent five years as a professional guide in Botswana and southern Africa. He then joined the Tiger Mountain group, pioneering cultural, trekking and wildlife holidays throughout the Indian subcontinent. He founded Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions in 1991, from which The Ultimate Travel Company emerged in 1998.



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