



4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423



Costa Rica from Coast to Cloud Forest

March 21-31, 2016
11 Days – 10 Nights

Visit the 15th most biologically diverse country in the world* and be immersed in its natural and scenic beauty. Costa Rica is home to 4.5% of all of the world's known plant and animal species yet occupies a land mass roughly the size of West Virginia.



Costa Rica boasts numerous endemic species of vertebrates and invertebrates. The country owes its high biodiversity to twelve different ecosystems which range from tropical rainforests to upland cloud forests, canyons to volcanoes and mangrove swamps to over 800 miles of coastline both on the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean. By no means we will see them all, but there have been 194 species of amphibians, 210 species of mammals, 218 species of reptiles, 878 species of birds and more than 35,000 species of insects identified in Costa Rica!

We have reserved the services of Horizontes Nature Tours for the duration of our all-inclusive trip. They are an ecologically-minded tour operator with more than 30 years of experience working in Costa Rica. Through their network, we have assembled a customized experience which includes private tours and being led by some of the best-rated guides in the country. We will hike in various ecosystems, visit breath-taking destinations, stay at highly rated hotels and sample local cuisine for the duration of our 11 day trip. We will have the opportunity to explore the Caribbean coast, cloud forest, rainforest, volcanic regions and culture that make Costa Rica unique.

March 21 – Travel to San Jose, Costa Rica

Our first day includes travel from Michigan and arrives at Juan Santamaria International Airport where we will be greeted by our tour company. We will stay the night in one of the top 20 hotels in Costa Rica, Hotel Bougainvillea. Relax after the day of travel and enjoy the beautiful scenery and accommodations. (D**)

*Source: World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) 2004.

** (B = breakfast included, L = lunch included, D = dinner included)



March 22 – San Jose City and Chocolate Tour

Our first day will have us taking a tour of the nation's capital, San Jose. This city was founded in the 1738 and has become an economic hub though it is still steeped in the culture and traditions of the country. Our day will include lunch at Sibu Chocolatier where they make the "food of the gods", chocolate. They make some of the world's best chocolate using hand-crafted techniques and all-natural ingredients. Yes, there will be chocolate tasting and a tour after lunch! Dinner will be at the hotel. (B,L,D)

March 23 – Tortuguero and the Caribbean Lowlands

After breakfast we will travel to the Caribbean coast. Our first stop will be in a town called La Pavona where we will board a boat for the trip to the community of Tortuguero which is not accessible by land. Our destination is Laguna Lodge in the wettest rainforest in the country where we will spend two nights. Our first day in Tortuguero will include a tour of the small town and a visit to the Sea Turtle Conservancy Visitor Center. (B,L,D)



March 24 – Tortuguero National Park

After breakfast at Laguna Lodge, we will take a boat tour of the canals of Tortuguero National Park. Bring your binoculars and/or camera for this two hour tour led by the naturalists from the national park. You will be amazed by the biodiversity of the region which lists three species of monkeys, over 400 species of birds, and hundreds of reptile and amphibian species. There will be time in the afternoon for individual exploration at the lodge including a walk on the beach, hiking the trails or relaxing on the spacious patio, gardens or at the poolside. (B,L,D)



March 25 – Sueno Azul Lodge

We will begin our day at the Laguna Lodge with breakfast but will travel to the town of Sarapiquí for our next stop. There will be a boat and bus ride to reach our destination. After check-in at the Sueno Azul Lodge you will have a chance to explore some of the 1,500 acre hillside site where the Puerto Viejo and San Rafael Rivers converge. (B,L,D)

March 26 – La Selva Biological Station

Before we leave the Sarapiquí area, we will take a guided tour of the La Selva Biological Station which includes nearly 4,000 acres of wet forests and is home to a great diversity of animal species including jaguars, pumas, collard peccary, two-toed sloth, more than 450 species of birds and 5,000 species of vascular plants in addition to the nearly 300,000 species of invertebrates. After lunch at La Selva, we will continue traveling to La Fortuna for our two night stay at Arenal Lodge. (B,L,D)





March 27 – Arenal Lodge and Hanging Bridges

The Arenal Lodge area sits on 2,000 acres of tropical rainforest near the Arenal Volcano National Park. There are panoramic views of the rainforest and stunning views of Arenal, Costa Rica's most active volcano. Our morning adventure will be at the nearby Mistico Hanging Bridges Park and will take us on a nearly two mile trail through a 600 acre Tropical Rainforest crossing many bridges both fixed and hanging to view birds, monkeys, waterfalls and the Arenal Volcano. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will visit La Fortuna to explore Costa Rican culture. Dinner will be back at Arenal Lodge where we can relax into the night in preparation for our trip to Monteverde. (B,L,D)

March 28 – Lake Arenal and Curi-Cancha

We will check out of Arenal Lodge and board a boat to cross the 33 square mile Arenal Lake en-route to Monteverde. Once we check in to Hotel de Montana Monteverde we will have a little down time before dinner. The 42 room hotel sits at 4,500 feet above sea level and is adjacent to a 15 acre private forest. After dinner at the hotel, we will be take a guided night hike at Curi-Cancha. This reserve consists of both virgin and secondary growth forest that is highly regulated by the refuge to allow only 50 visitors at a time. It is considered to be one of the best places in Monteverde to see a variety of wildlife including birds, bugs, insects, mammals and amphibians. (B,L,D)



March 29 – Monteverde Reserve and Women's Coop

Our morning will include a tour of the Monteverde Reserve which is home to numerous cloud forest species including jaguar, Baird's tapir, black-faced solitaire, bare-necked umbrellabird, black guan, and the famous resplendent quetzal. The cloud forest is draped in mosses, lichens, ferns bromeliads and orchids with many rapids, waterfalls and standing pools of mountain runoff. The forest is sure to be alive with wildlife and our private guide will help us locate and identify species. Before leaving the Monteverde area you will have a chance to explore the CASEM (Cooperativa de Artesanas de Santa Elena y Monteverde) which showcases local handicrafts and provides both employment and business opportunities for local women and their families. After lunch in Monteverde, we will take a guided Bat Jungle Tour. This indoor exhibit will give us up-close encounters with eight species of bats. We will have dinner back at our hotel and be able to relax for the evening. (B,L,D)

March 30 – Butterfly Garden and Return to San Jose

Our last full day of the trip will include a visit to the Monteverde Butterfly Garden. The facility has four different gardens and so much more than butterflies. Don't forget your camera for this exploration of the invertebrate diversity of Costa Rica! After our morning stop, we will be on our way back to San Jose with a stop along the way for lunch. Our last night will include a farewell dinner and one last relaxing evening at Hotel Bougainvillea in San Jose. The 10 acre property will be a great place for our last bit of exploration. (B,L,D)



March 31 – Travel

After breakfast at the hotel, we will be driven to the nearby airport for our return flight home.

Pricing: \$2,850 per person (based on double occupancy) (\$1000 single supplement)

Payment: \$1,000 deposit due at time of booking and required to hold a place on the trip; deposit plus \$1,000 1st payment due by January 1, 2016; Final payment of \$850 due by February 1, 2016. All payments may be made at one time if desired.

Cancellations: Full refunds will be made until January 1, 2016. After January 1, 2016, up to 50% of money received may be forfeited by the participant. No refunds will be given for cancellation after February 1, 2016.

Included: 10 nights lodging; all meals in Costa Rica; all transportation within Costa Rica; bilingual, professional naturalist guide; entrance to museums, parks and attractions as a group; taxes; gratuities for full time guide and driver; and all gratuities for porters, maids and all staff of the locations visited. Many of the hotels have free Wi-Fi for guests.

Not included: Flight to and from Juan Santamaria International Airport; alcoholic beverages; and personal items during the trip. (Flights for the group will be coordinated through Travel Leaders in Jenison.)

Please contact trip leader Jamie Krupka to learn more or to make a payment: 616.393.9453 or jamie@outdoordiscovery.org.

Suggested Pre-trip Readings

Monkeys Are Made of Chocolate: Exotic and Unseen Costa Rica – February 15, 2005; by Jack Ewing (Author), Daniel Quinn (Foreword)

Costa Rica: A Journey Through Nature – February 25, 2014; by Adrian Hepworth

