



THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-Departure Itinerary

Costa Rica

Sunday, February 14 - Sunday, February 21, 2010

Costa Rica is Central America's jewel, an eco-tourism haven that ensures its lush jungles are home to playful monkeys, languid sloths, crocodiles, countless lizards and a mind boggling assortment of exotic birds, insects and butterflies. Considered one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world, Costa Rica is divided into natural parks, biological reserves and a series of protected areas that captivate nature lovers. The excursions on this eco-holiday highlight many of these areas. Visit Poas Volcano, where you'll walk the crater's edge. At La Paz Waterfall Gardens, with over 70 acres of lush landscape, towering waterfalls, hummingbird gardens and the largest butterfly observatory in the world. Relax at Ecotermales Fortuna Hot Springs where dinner is included. On a boat tour through the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge you'll witness five distinct habitats that shelter literally thousands of birds and plants, fish mammals, reptiles and amphibians in and along the river. Travel to the very active Arenal Volcano and National Park and journey around Arenal Lake before stopping at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Private reserve, considered to be one of the most outstanding wildlife sanctuaries in the New World tropics. You'll end this amazing journey on the Pacific coast at Manuel Antonio National Park, where expansive white sand beaches are bordered by an evergreen forest growing right up to the high tide line.

Includes

- Round-trip air transportation on regularly scheduled American Airline from Boston to San Jose, Costa Rica, via Miami
- Seven nights' three-star accommodations
- Fifteen meals: 7 breakfast, 1 lunch, 7 dinners
- Round-trip, private airport/hotel transfers with assistance
- Sightseeing and touring via modern motorcoach
- Services of professional local tour manager

Features

Poas National Park & Volcano, Ecotermales Fortuna Hot Springs, Cano Negro boat tour, Arenal National Park & Volcano, Monteverde Butterfly Garden, Monteverde Cloud Forest & Sky walk tour. Manuel Antonio National Park

Rates

\$1,869 per person double occupancy
\$2,349 for single reservations
Triple accommodations may be available on request.
Add \$295 for current air taxes, fees charges and surcharges. Passport required.

TRIP PLANNER

DAY 1 Flight from Boston, Hotel Clarion Amon Plaza, San Jose

DAYS 2-3 Tilajari Resort Hotel, Arenal Volcano

DAYS 4-5 Hotel Heliconia, Monteverde

DAYS 6-7 Hotel & Casitas Eclipse, Manuel Antonio

DAY 8 Return flight to Boston

DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Sunday, February 14th

USA – COSTA RICA

Arrival at the International Airport Juan Santamaría in San José and transfer to your accommodations.

Dinner at the hotel

Lodging: Hotel Clarion Amónn Plaza

DAY 2: Monday, February 15th

POÁS VOLCANO – LA PAZ WATERFALL – ECOTERMALES – HOT SPRINGS – MUELLE DE LA FORTUNA

Following breakfast at the hotel you'll drive to the Poas Volcano.

Poás is an andesitic-basaltic stratovolcano 2,708 m high. It is impressively beautiful and is one of the three volcanoes on the continent that are accessible along a paved road that almost reaches the crater edge.

Subconical in shape, the upper part has three caldera depressions. The main crater is an enormous hollow almost 2 km in diameter and 300 m deep. At the bottom of this crater there is a thermomineral lagoon some 350 m across. When it occasionally dries out, the sulphur emissions become more intense and produce acid rain that damages the vegetation and the fields on its sides. To the north of the active crater is the von Frantzius cone, the oldest eruption point, which is today inactive, on the peak of the massif. To the southwest, there is another cone called Botos, which is currently occupied by a very beautiful cold-water lagoon 400 m across. The volcano experiences plumiforme cyclical eruptions similar to those of a geyser, which consist of columns of muddy water together with steam that rise from a few meters to several kilometers. These eruptions have made Poás famous as the biggest geyser in the world.

Your next stop is the La Paz Waterfall Gardens. With over seventy acres of lush landscaping, towering waterfalls, hummingbird gardens and the largest butterfly observatory in the world, this is sure to be a highlight of your tour, if not of your stay in Costa Rica. Your guide will walk you through the trails of the butterfly gardens, hummingbird feeders and the trails along the cascading La Paz River. Here you will experience the majesty of five incredible waterfalls as you walk above, below and right next to the magnificent falls. Lunch included.

Drive to the hotel for the check-in. In the evening visit Ecotermas Fortuna with its hot springs, waterfalls and four mineral pools. Each pool varies in temperature and depth, and some vary in mineral count. Dinner is included.

Lodging: Hotel Resort Tilajari

DAY 3: Tuesday, February 16th

BOAT TOUR THROUGH THE CAÑO NEGRO WILDLIFE REFUGE – ARENAL VOLCANO AND NATIONAL PARK – MUELLE DE LA FORTUNA

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before you start your tour today.

The Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge is an area of lakes and swampy land formed from alluvial sedimentation, which has been included on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. In this refuge there are five main habitats. The vegetation on the edges of the lake and along the channels is mainly herbaceous, such as gamalote grass and dormilona. The birdlife is rich and varied. Some of the most abundant or note-worthy aquatic birds are the anhinga, roseate spoonbill, white ibis, jacana, woodstork, black-bellied tree duck and the jabiru. The colony of olivaceous cormorants that nest here is the biggest in the country. This refuge holds the only permanent population of Nicaraguan grackle, an endemic bird of the basin of Nicaragua Lake. The mammals and reptiles living in this area include the puma, jaguar, ocelot, tapir and cayman, which is very common in the channels. Caño Negro is situated on the Los Guatusos plain near the border with Nicaragua.

Later you'll visit Arenal Volcano and National Park. The Arenal Volcano is an active and almost perfect cone 1,633 high, whose explosive eruptions of very viscous lava at night provide an extraordinary spectacle. It is a conical stratovolcano of very recent origin, which started erupting again in 1968 with a big explosion that formed a crater half way up the cone and gave off glowing clouds of gasfluidized material that caused a great deal of destruction. In 1975, it shook again with four explosions that threw up great clouds of ashes.

Since becoming active again, it has emitted over 60 lava flows and the interesting phenomenon of forest succession can be seen on some of them.

Dinner at the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Resort Tilajari

DAY 4: Wednesday, February 17th

MUELLE DE LA FORTUNA – MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST – PRIVATE RESERVE – MONTEVERDE

Breakfast at the hotel.

After breakfast depart for a drive around the Arenal Lake and through the small town of Tilarán on the way to Monteverde.

Afternoon visit to the Monteverde Cloud Forest Private Reserve

The Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve has earned its fame as one of the most outstanding wildlife sanctuaries in the New World tropics. Positioned atop the Continental Divide in western Costa Rica, the Preserve extends down both the Caribbean and Pacific slopes. The resultant combination of climatic and geographic factors creates temperature and humidity gradients which change dramatically over relatively short distances. The altitude varies from about 600 meters in the lower reaches of the Peñas Blancas River, to 1842 meters at the top of Cerro Tres Amigos. The Preserve supports six different vegetational communities (Life Zones). There are over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, 120 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 2,500 species of plants (among them 420 different kinds of orchids), as well as tens of thousands of insect species. Spectacular wildlife includes the Jaguar, Ocelot, Baird's Tapir, Three-wattled Bellbird, Barenecked Umbrellabird and Resplendent Quetzal. Visitors should bring a sweater, rain gear and footwear. The temperature ranges between 16 and 18 degrees Celsius, and average annual rainfall is 3,000 millimeters. The weather changes quickly, often making the air feel colder.

Dinner at the hotel

Lodging: Hotel Heliconia

DAY 5: Thursday, February 18th
MONTEVERDE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Breakfast at the hotel.

The focus of the project here is environmental education and thousands of butterfly enthusiasts each year visit this Nature Center and four enclosed butterfly gardens. This day will allow you to explore the beauty of Monteverde and see many of the things it is famous for.

Dinner at the hotel

Lodging: Hotel Heliconia

DAY 6: Friday, February 19th
MONTEVERDE – MANUEL ANTONIO

Breakfast at the hotel.

Drive along the Panamerican Highway and along the Pacific Coast to reach Manuel Antonio, Quepos. There will be a short stop at the bridge of Tárcoles River to see the crocodiles.

Dinner at Hotel & Restaurant Espadilla

Lodging: Hotel & Casitas Eclipse

DAY 7: Saturday, February 20th
MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the Manuel Antonio National Park, four very interesting geomorphological units can be distinguished. The first is the tombolo of Punta Cathedral; in other words, the sand between the point and the continent formed by sedimentation which refracts the waves as they break against the point. The white sand beaches called Espadilla Sur and Manuel Antonio beach have white sands, gentle slopes with clear waters and little wave action. The second unit is the Puerto Escondido blow hole, which can be made out when the tide is rising. The third is Serrucho Point an awesome cliff with a very irregular shape reminiscent of a saw. The fourth is the underwater turtle trap of Pre-Columbian origin located at the western end of Manuel Antonio Beach.

The main habitats in the park are: primary forest containing trees like the black locust a commercial species endemic to Costa Rica and threatened with extinction, and the Santa María; secondary forest with species like the balsa and the bastard cedar; mangrove swamp and herbaceous lagoons and free water lagoons that cover small areas in the interior. In total, 350 species of vascular plants have been identified. The wildlife is varied; 109

mammals and 184 bird species have been observed. One mammal that is very interesting for its small distribution range and the fact that it is threatened with extinction is the beautiful and amusing squirrel monkey. Some of the birds found there are: brown pelican, black-collared hawk and the fiery-billed aracari. On the beach it is easy to see ctenosaurs and basilisks.

Dinner at the hotel ***Lodging: Hotel & Casitas Eclipse***

DAY 8: Sunday, February 21st

MANUEL ANTONIO - USA

Breakfast at the hotel.

Transfer back to the International Airport Juan Santamaría for the return flight.

Included entrances:

- **Poás National Park and Volcano**
- **La Paz Waterfall**
- **Ecotermes Fortuna Hot Springs**
- **Caño Negro boat tour**
- **Arenal National Park and Volcano**
- **Monteverde Cloud Forest**
- **Monteverde Butterfly Garden**
- **Manuel Antonio National Park**

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Proof of Citizenship is required for all trips outside the United States. U.S. citizens require valid Passport. Passports are the responsibility of each client.

PLEASE NOTE: This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.

PLEASE NOTE: This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.