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EXPERIENCE COSTA RICA

**NATURAL WONDERS
FEB 1-15, 2024 | 15 DAYS | 30 MEALS
JOURNEY LEADER: MARY TAYLOR**

No other country in the world has done more to preserve its natural heritage than Costa Rica. With over 25 percent of its land mass protected as national parks and reserves, we have ample opportunity to experience the natural beauty of this diverse land - from tropical rainforests to windswept beaches, from tranquil lagoons to mountain-top cloud forests that surround active volcanoes. In each area, we shall see flora and fauna that are either unique to this region or nearly extinct in other parts of the world.

Carefully planned to offer an overview of all the different ecosystems that exist in this unique land, this program also ensures comfortable accommodations and ample time in which to experience its biodiversity. A balance of included sightseeing and leisure time will ensure that you travel at a comfortable pace. During your free time, you may choose to relax in the pleasant surroundings of our comfortable resorts or participate in an exciting optional excursion.

This tour will have limited membership - if this is your year to experience the wonders of Costa Rica, we urge you to enroll early.



Tour Highlights

- Visit Tortuguero National Park and marvel at its unique flora and fauna
- Discover the flavours of Costa Rica with a special cooking class in Sarapiquí
- Enjoy the relaxing pools of Ecotermas Hot Springs
- Visit a local school in Arenal (subject to confirmation)
- Explore Arenal Volcano National Park
- Walk through the Monteverde Cloud Forest with fascinating views of the forest, a birders paradise
- Cruise through the waterways of Palo Verde NP
- Relax by the beach at Tamarindo

Inclusive Features

- Return economy class airfare to San Jose and from Liberia, Costa Rica
- First class hotels and lodges, as indicated or similar
- 30 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 14 breakfasts, L - 6 lunches, D - 10 dinners)
- Services of your journey leader plus our professional guide in Costa Rica
- All transfers including portorage (where available)
- All gratuities, surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare

Book With Confidence

For peace of mind, your deposit for this journey is fully refundable until:

October 23, 2023

Journey Leader

Mary Taylor has dedicated nearly four decades to the field of education. She has coordinated university travel exchange programs and volunteered at schools abroad. Her travel experiences have brought her to places such as Australia, Africa, the Solomon Islands, the Maldives, India, and Peru, with many in-depth visits to Europe and the Caribbean. Mary loves to explore different cultures and is keen to use technology to share her travel experiences with others. She looks forward to sharing new adventures with you!



FEB 1, Thursday

Depart Canada / Arrive San Jose

Tour members from across Canada fly via Toronto to San Jose, Costa Rica's capital. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to our hotel, ideally located near the city centre and next to La Sabana Park. This evening we gather for dinner at our hotel. **Hilton La Sabana** (2 nights) D

FEB 2, Friday

San Jose

Drive to the heights overlooking the still active Poás Volcano to experience this harsh but beautiful landscape as well as Lake Botos (weather permitting). On our way back we will spend a couple of hours exploring La Paz Waterfall Gardens. After lunch, we continue to Doka Coffee Estate to experience a fascinating presentation on the production of coffee. Learn about the process of growing the plant to roasting the beans. BL

FEB 3, Saturday

Tortuguero National Park

Departing the capital this morning, we travel by coach, passing volcanic mountains en route to the lush Caribbean coast, and by small boat along the inland waterways, sheltered by the dense vegetation of the rainforest, to Tortuguero National Park. There will also be ample free time in the afternoon to visit a quaint little village or enjoy the unique flora and fauna (watch for herons, toucans, monkeys and more). Our rustic accommodation is set adjacent to the inland waterways.

Pachira Lodge (2 nights)

BLD

FEB 4, Sunday**Tortuguero National Park**

Our day is devoted to the natural beauty of this area, including a cruise through the remote unspoiled sections of the park's waterways. This afternoon we can relax by the pool or visit the Tortuguero Turtle Conservation Museum (entrance by donation). BLD

FEB 5, Monday**Sarapiquí**

Enjoy a leisurely morning cruise on the inland waterway to Caño Blanco or La Pavona (depending on river flow) where we re-join our tour coach. After lunch at El Ceibo restaurant, we continue to Sarapiquí and our resort, which is set in the eastern lowlands on the edge of the rainforest. Our afternoon begins with a visit to a working pineapple plantation. Enjoy the balance of the day at this special eco-lodge, with its gardens designed to introduce us to the area's flora and fauna. **Sarapiquí Rainforest Lodge** (2 nights) BLD

FEB 6, Tuesday**Sarapiquí**

Our day will be highlighted by a special cooking class to discover the local flavours of Costa Rica and to try all of our culinary creations! This evening we will enjoy a special barbecue dinner. BLD

FEB 7, Wednesday**La Fortuna / Arenal**

Start your day with some leisure time, or choose to join your guide for a birdwatching excursion at our resort. Afterwards, we will set off towards the Arenal Volcano region, making a stop en route at a local chocolate plantation. Here, you can enjoy a tour to learn about the process of cultivating and harvesting organic cocoa. At the end of the tour, we will prepare and sample the beverage that ancient Mexican civilizations referred to as "the drink of the Gods." Later in the afternoon, we will visit the beautiful gardens and hot springs at Ecotermales. Take in the stunning views of the Arenal Volcano as you relax in the hot pools and natural cascading stream, allowing the restorative waters to rejuvenate your mind and body. Finally, we will indulge in a delectable buffet dinner overlooking the gardens before returning to our hotel.

Arenal Manoa Hotel (2 nights) BD

FEB 8, Thursday**San Carlos / Arenal Volcano**

This morning we have planned a visit to El Hogarcito San Juan Bosco, an orphanage built to improve the opportunities for mistreated children in transition (subject to confirmation). In the afternoon we have included a walk into Arenal Volcano National Park, which will allow both strong and limited walkers a chance to explore the area. BD

FEB 9, Friday**Monteverde**

Our journey today takes us to the mountainous region of central Costa Rica, where we will be staying at the eco-friendly El Establo Hotel. Nestled on a hillside near the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, this hotel spans over 150 acres of lush surroundings, providing serene and stunning views of the mountains and the Gulf of Nicoya from its well-appointed rooms. During your stay, you can explore the charming town of Santa Elena and immerse yourself in the local culture. Later, you will have the opportunity to visit the Bat Jungle exhibit, where you can discover the fascinating world of bats and learn about the many different species found in this area.

El Establo Hotel (2 nights)

BD



Traditional costume and dance of Costa Rica. Credit - Robert Craig



The magnificent Arenal Volcano



Walk on the hanging bridges of Monteverde Cloud Forest. Credit - Joan Rix



Costa Rica's Red-eye tree frog

FEB 10, Saturday**Monteverde Cloud Forest**

Our morning will be devoted to a walking exploration of the lush greenery of this world-renowned private reserve with our naturalist/guide. Founded by a group of Quakers and native Costa Ricans over 40 years ago and located 1,500 - 1,800 metres above sea level, the reserve is known for its indigenous flora and fauna as well as its birdlife, with over 450 species having been seen (be sure to watch for the long tails of the quetzals and to listen for the "bong" of the bellbirds). Local wildlife and birdlife include howler monkeys, capuchins, white hawks, toucans, woodpeckers, snakes and iguanas. Enjoy the sky walk, followed by dinner at a local restaurant this evening. **BD**

FEB 11, Sunday**Tamarindo**

From the lush cloud forest, we descend through various layers of vegetation to the seaside village of Tamarindo, overlooking Las Baulas National Marine Park. Our final stay will be at one of Costa Rica's most famous beaches, known for its golden sands, clear waters and amazing sunsets. **Tamarindo Diria Beach Resort (4 nights)** **B**

FEB 12, Monday**Tamarindo**

Today is yours to enjoy as you wish. Relax by the pool or in the tranquil hotel gardens, take a stroll on the golden sands of the mile-long beach, or join an optional excursion (additional fees may apply) such as zip lining, sailing, snorkelling, fishing, white-water rafting, or ATV riding. **B**

FEB 13, Tuesday**Tamarindo / Palo Verde**

Early this morning, we gather for a full-day exploration of Palo Verde National Park, known for its wetlands and wildlife. Cruise along the waterways of the Tempisque River to witness the variety of birds and wildlife that populate the park. At the historic Sabanero Hacienda learn about the sugar cane plantations and the lifestyle in the savannas, followed by a typical lunch including local fruits and delicious homemade snacks. **BL**

FEB 14, Wednesday**Tamarindo**

Explore the town of Tamarindo on your own, perhaps take a stroll through the town's colourful streets and visit local artisan shops. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner. **BD**

FEB 15, Thursday**Tamarindo / Canada**

All too soon our unforgettable Costa Rican adventure comes to a close as we transfer to the airport for our journey back to Canada. **B**



A stunning sunset in Tamarindo Beach

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CT Rating 3.5/5 - Challenging: This tour is best suited for people who are physically fit and for those who enjoy walking, hiking and being active. The itinerary includes free time allowing members to select the level of activity best suited to them. Hotels will range from first class resorts to rustic atmospheric lodges – several hotels may require considerable walking reflecting the reality of mountainous Costa Rica.



**Book and deposit by September 28, 2023
and save \$200 per person**

**Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person**

Land Only (Join / Leave at Hotel)	\$6,095
Toronto.....	\$7,195
Montreal / Ottawa	\$7,395
Halifax / St. John's	\$7,465
Winnipeg	\$7,465
Regina / Saskatoon	\$7,595
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver.....	\$7,545
Victoria.....	\$7,595
Single Supplement.....	\$2,095

Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Air inclusive prices are estimated (subject to confirmation). Final pricing will be advised once flights are confirmed. Refer to inclusive features for details.

Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room at hotels. Prices are based on a minimum 20 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective March 2023 and are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted with a minimum of 20 group members.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your confirmation of coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment will be due October 24, 2023

Deposit is \$600 per person

To reserve your spot on this tour, complete the enclosed enrollment form, indicating the tour you wish to join and your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:



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