



A Private Exploration Of Costa Rica's ~Jungles and Mountains~

2006



Home to rainforests, cloud forests, sandy beaches, active volcanoes, and a host of unique wildlife, Costa Rica is a tropical jewel. This itinerary takes you into several unique ecosystems from the Central Valley mountains to the deep jungles and tropical wet forests of the Caribbean lowlands where your private Naturalist Guide will explore with you the natural and cultural wonders of this tropical paradise.

FOCUS

Introduction to Costa Rican Birding and Wildlife

This tour is geared towards the casual bird watcher who would like an introduction to bird watching and the birds of Costa Rica. In addition, your Costa Rican Naturalist Guide will include wildlife viewing and a brief introduction to Costa Rican culture and people. No matter what your interest, free time will be provided at each location to give you the opportunity for optional tours.

Your private guide and driver are available as you need throughout the adventure.

Birding Checklist

On your arrival in Costa Rica, each traveler will receive a birding checklist. We will review this list every few days after dinner and track birds seen throughout the day as well as other wildlife seen.

Suggested Reading

- ❖ A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica by Stiles and Skutch
- ❖ A Traveler's Wildlife Guides – Costa Rica by Les Belestsky

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: ❖ SLOW EASY PACE ❖ FLEXIBLE

This trip does not require a high degree of physical fitness or require long walks (unless you request it). Each destination has been chosen to provide a mix of activities with limited walks while also providing moderate activities for other group members. Travelers should be aware that heat and humidity may be very high in some places and roads may be very bumpy. The day trip to La Paz Waterfall Gardens may be wet and cool. In addition, you may experience periodic tropical rains especially at La Selva or Tortuguero.

DETAILED ITINERARY

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Meals Included</u>
1	Arrival	Arrival in Costa Rica's Juan Santamaria Airport San Jose, Costa Rica. You will be met at the airport by your Tour Director and taken to your hotel. We will meet in the evening for your welcome dinner. (Costa Verde Inn or equivalent)	D

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| 2 | La Paz Waterfall Garden Day Trip | Today we will spend the day exploring the La Paz Waterfall Gardens, on the way we will stop and explore the surrounding community and coffee plantations. La Paz Waterfall Gardens, located in the cloud of the Central Valley, is a magical place where nature and people can interact effortlessly. Hummingbirds surround you and eat from your hands. This location offers several options for each member of your family. For those wishing to explore the grounds, excellent trails lead to five spectacular waterfalls. For those wishing more easy-paced activities, they can explore the largest butterfly garden in the world, explore the gardens, and enjoy excellent bird watching near the main building. (Costa Verde Inn or equivalent) | B,LD |
| 3 | To Tortuguero 3 hours drive plus 2 hours by boat | The day begins early as we depart for our drive to the Caribbean Side. We will stop several times for birding/nature and exploring a banana plantation before meeting our boat transportation to the hotel. Tortuguero National Park is an excellent birding location in a Tropical Wet Forest. The area serves as an important refuge for sea turtle nesting. The primary mode of transportation throughout this stay in Tortuguero will be by boat. There will be a few short walks including through the small Tortuguero Community to learn about the culture and people of this Caribbean location and a visit to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation Sea Turtle museum. (Mawamba Jungle Lodge) | B,LD |
| 4 | Full Day Tortuguero | We will arise early and explore the canals of Tortuguero by boat and observe the diverse wildlife as they rise with the morning light. Common birds seen include: toucans, herons, kingfishers, spoonbills, aningas, and cormorants. The area is rich in wildlife including white-faced, howler, and spider monkeys, sloths, and iguanas. We will return to the hotel for breakfast and venture back out to the canals in the afternoon. (Mawamba Jungle Lodge) | B,LD. |
| 5 | To La Selva Biological | We travel by small boat back to the mainland then drive to the area near the La Selva Biological Station. La Selva Station is operated by | B,LD |

<p>Station 2 hrs by boat and 2 hrs drive</p>	<p>the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) and located near the Sarapiquí River in the Caribbean lowlands of northern Costa Rica within the tropical and premontane wet forest. The Station has about 73% of its area under primary tropical rain forest and conducts research in the hopes of preserving the wondrous primary forests; more than 420 bird species have been recorded at this location. This reserve has an excellent trail system on flat paved walkways making birding and nature viewing easy and comfortable. Common birds seen include: tanagers, motmots, parrots, and oropendolas. If time permits, we will explore the nearby community and culture. (Selva Verde Lodge nearby La Selva station)</p>	
<p>6 To Arenal</p>	<p>We will spend the morning birding throughout La Selva Station. After lunch, we will explore a nearby medicinal plant project. Later in the afternoon, we will drive to La Fortuna near the Arenal Volcano, the only volcano in Costa Rica with active lava flow. If we are lucky (depending on weather), we may be able to see the red lava flow in evening. Regardless of the weather, you will be able to hear the constant rumble of the volcano from the regular eruptions. We will stop along the drive for birding and nature viewing. At night, you can choose an optional trip to the Tabacon Hot Springs. Bring a bathing suit if you plan to enjoy the hot springs. (Arenal Paraiso or equivalent)</p>	<p>B,L,D.</p>
<p>7 Arenal</p>	<p>There are many activities in this area. We spend the morning exploring near the old lava flows or (<i>for more easy walking</i>) explore the exquisite hanging canopy bridges or bird watch around the pristine Arenal Lake. The afternoon is free to relax by the pool, spa, or join nearby activities (e.g. canopy bridges, canopy zip line tours, horseback riding) or continue exploring the local wildlife with your guide. (Arenal Paraiso or equivalent)</p>	<p>B,L,D</p>
<p>8 To San Jose</p>	<p>We will depart Arenal for our drive to our return to San Jose. Along the drive, we will stop for birding and make a stop to learn about local culture. (Bougainvillea Hotel)</p>	<p>B,L,D</p>
<p>9 Departure</p>	<p>Your Tour Director and driver will accompany you to the airport for return home.</p>	<p>B</p>

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME

If possible, arrive by 4:00 pm for 7:00pm welcome dinner on Day 1; however, since this is a private tour we can accommodate any arrival time. Departure anytime on the final day.

COSTS

The cost for your private all-inclusive expedition to Costa Rica is \$1,975.00 USD per person double occupancy for groups of 4-8 persons. The cost for a two-person private expedition is \$2,300.00 USD per person. Groups of more than 8 or groups traveling with children; call for reduced costs. Trip price does not include international air.

Single Supplement: \$600

This rate includes:

- 8 nights lodging
- B, L, D as indicated
- Non-alcoholic beverages
- All entrance fees to parks
- All internal transportation with private bus and driver
- Exclusive use of your private Tour Director, local guides, and private driver for birding or exploring as needed

Not included:

- Alcoholic drinks
- Gratuities for your Tour Director, local guides, your driver, bellboys etc.
- Miscellaneous items (e.g., personal expenses, laundry, phone calls)
- Optional Activities (e.g., canopy, horseback riding tours)
- Costa Rican Departure Tax of \$26.00 USD

Upgrades:

Transportation

This is a very good tour as described; however, we can also offer travel via 4-wheel SUV drive vehicle when requested; this allows the touring to be more nimble and facilitates access to the best birding locations. If you would like to upgrade to a private 4-wheel drive vehicle instead of the private touring bus, this can be arranged for an additional charge of \$800 total per each group of 4 persons.

Accommodations

If you would like to upgrade from the Bougainvillea Hotel and Costa Verde Inn (your San Jose hotels) to either the San Jose Marriott or the Vista del Valle Plantation Inn, this could be arranged for an additional \$350 per person.

Payment:

Visa, MasterCard or bank transfer

Deposit: \$500