



COSTA RICA FAMILY ADVENTURES

Looking for the best family trip Costa Rica has to offer? Do you have children 5 years old and up? Do you have a minimum of 4 people in your group? Look no further! This is your own private trip for your own family to Costa Rica.

Travel to the world's ultimate eco-adventure destination - the lush playground of Costa Rica! Zip-line above the rainforest canopy, swim in crystal waters and visit a garden fluttering with butterflies. When you spot your first family of monkeys, see the lightshow of an active volcano and go rafting in the heart of pristine rainforests, you'll know that you're living the adventure of a lifetime!

The conservation-minded nation of Costa Rica long ago saw fit to protect its extraordinary tropical ecosystem in a series of national parks and reserves that are now world-famous. We explore Costa Rica's riches on hikes at the renowned Monteverde Cloud Forest, with its complex forest canopy and distinct ecological communities, and at picture-perfect Arenal, a towering volcano with glowing red lava flows and inviting thermal springs. Delightful nature lodges keep us comfortable and well fed as we explore and appreciate the biological wonderland of the tropics.

ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in San Jose, Costa Rica, on Day 1.

DAY 1 ~ Arrive in San Jose´

Your trip leader (or a representative) will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. He or she will answer questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to your hotel.

Hotel Alta (or similar)

DAY 2 ~ Tirimbina Rainforest Center

After breakfast, we will drive to the beautiful Waterfall Gardens Park, with over 3.5 kilometers of walking trails, where you will have the opportunity to see the butterfly observatory, hummingbird garden, serpentarium, frog exhibit and the magnificent waterfalls. There, you will enjoy lunch while dining with an incredible view of the La Paz River Valley.

In the afternoon, discover the wonders behind one of the world's most tantalizing foods — chocolate! The Chocolate Tour begins by taking you across Tirimbina Rainforest Center's popular suspension bridge to a former cacao-tree (*Theobroma cacao*) plantation. During the walk, you will be exposed to the natural and cultural history of the cacao tree and, upon reaching the plantation, your guide will reveal the secrets of transforming cacao fruit into chocolate. You'll see the chocolate-making process first-hand and even have the opportunity to treat your taste buds to organic rainforest chocolate! After the tour, you can visit the Tirimbina's gift shop to purchase some organic cacao chocolate bars made by the Amazilia del Caribe Women Association.

At night, we invite you to enhance your education by learning about bats, dispel myths you may have heard about these wonderful mammals, and enjoy this adventure into the world of the bats. You will see a multi-media

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presentation on the history of bats, their classification system, diversity, adaptations, reproduction methods, threats, and more. And for the most popular part of the Bat Tour, a trained guide will provide visitors a safe opportunity to touch, feed and release safely captured bats. You can also take a short guided walk (15–30 min.) to see the mist nets used to gently catch these creatures. The bats are kept for less than 2 hours and the professional methods used assure the well-being of the animals.

B,L,D (breakfast, lunch and dinner included)..La Quinta de Sarapiquí

DAY 3 ~ Arenal Volcano: Reforestation Project, Sarapiquí River, Hot Springs

In the morning, you will participate in a reforestation project in which La Quinta have been participating since 1994. After the tree planting, you will take a trip boat on the Sarapiquí River, where you can enjoy more than 200 species of beautiful birds, howler monkeys, 3 toed sloths, crocodiles and river turtles in an unforgettable two hours ride in a comfortable and safe motorized boat. In the afternoon, you will drive to La Fortuna, where you will have time to relax at the Baldi Hot Springs. These ten natural hot springs pools are surrounded by lush tropical gardens and have various temperatures ranging from 98-110F.

B,L,D...Lomas del Volcán

DAY 4 ~ Arenal Volcano: Zip Line, Penas Blancas River, local Family Visit

Get ready for a morning of exhilaration by being “Tarzan and Jane” while doing a zip line, a series of cables which go from platform to platform high up in the rainforest canopy. Any kids 10 and under will do it tandem with one of the expert guides. On each platform you also have a chance to observe the forest from different angles and to photograph the beautiful landscapes and monkeys. You may give a white faced or howler monkey a run for it’s money as you swing from tree to tree more quickly than it does! In the evening, you will take a twilight raft float on the Peñas Blancas River (no rapids), where you will discover the behavior of animals and plants during transition from day to night and your naturalist guide will handle your boat while you relax and pay attention to the different sounds of nature. Dinner tonight is hosted by the Hidalgo family, where you will have the opportunity to enjoy a typical Costa Rica (Tico) meal, which they are famous for.

B,L,D... Lomas del Volcán

DAY 5 ~ Arenal Lake & Monteverde Cloud Forest

After breakfast, you will cross the beautiful Arenal Lake by private motorboat (which cuts down on driving time). A second bus is going to be waiting for you in the other side of the lake to drive you to Monteverde. In the afternoon, you are going to visit the Butterfly Farm where you will learn about butterfly ecology in the Monteverde Cloud Forest. The focus of the farm is environmental education and they have a nature center, 4 gardens; a 500 square meter netted flyway, 3 greenhouses, and botanic gardens.

One of the most outstanding wildlife sanctuaries in the New World tropics, Monteverde Cloud Forest is home to more than 400 species of birds, 100 species of mammals, and more than 1,500 plant species. From our lodge, just outside the reserve at 4,600 feet in the Tilaran Mountains, we walk on Monteverde's trails through forests draped in orchids and bromeliads. With luck, we may see the resplendent quetzal, sacred bird of the Mayas and Aztecs, with its long, trailing plumes of iridescent green. We also visit Monteverde's butterfly garden (the Jardín de las Mariposas), with its greenhouses and netted flyway, and neighboring Santa Elena Forest Reserve, a community-owned conservation project. Our lodge's gardens emphasize ferns and bromeliads, with a stream, pond, and small waterfall providing habitat for riverine birds.

B,L,D...Monteverde Lodge

DAY 6 ~ Monteverde Cloud Forest

In the morning, you will walk around 2.5 kilometers of trails and 6 suspension bridges at different heights in the cloud forest of Monteverde, where you will have the chance to appreciate the reach diversity of flora and fauna. After lunch, you will visit the Monteverde Cheese Factory, where you will observe cheese making in Monteverde.

Gouda of Monteverde was the first pasteurized cheese made in Costa Rica. Starting with a production of 10 kg per day, but now the modern factory produces 1550 kg of cheese daily, which is sold throughout Costa Rica. In the evening, you will have time to relax at the hotel before the Farewell dinner.

B,L,D...Monteverde Lodge

DAY 7 ~ Fly home or Four Seasons Resort

After breakfast leave for the Airport in Liberia to fly back to US (Continental has a 1:55pm flight) or transfer to the Nicoya Peninsula (Papagayo Gulf) for a few days of beach time at the Four Seasons Resort or the Fiesta Premier Resort & Spa! We recommend booking these extra nights on your own as the internet often has specials and therefore better pricing. We will be happy to drop you off at either resort today. You can arrange airport transfers directly with the resorts for your homeward bound flight.

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LAND COST

\$2190 per person (4-16 members)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$400 for “requested” singles; \$200 for “forced” singles.

If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If that’s not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ field arrangements and equipment
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ airport transfers
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ entrance fees and permits

What’s Not

International airfare to San José and return; meals as noted; insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase trip insurance offered by Eco Family Adventures, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; cost of medical immunizations; items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. Use the internet to find a flight. But please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expert Leaders

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Eco Family Adventures attracts gifted leaders for whom leading trips is their passion. They show you many natural wonders that you'd never find on your own and make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. Eco Family Adventures guides positively elevate your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends. Although guide assignments can change, the following leaders regularly guide this trip.

Alonso Lezama has been an adventure guide for more than seven years. A certified naturalist, he is currently studying biology in college in Costa Rica after finishing his high school studies in the US at Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. Alonso comes from a long tradition of tourism in the Turrialba area of Costa Rica; his family owns a hotel and a very well-known restaurant in the area called the Turrialba Lodge.

Jorge Calderón is a whitewater rafting guide in his mid thirties who has led trips in Costa Rica for the past seven years. He was part of the Costa Rica whitewater rafting team that won the fourth place in the World Championships in Brazil in 1997, and also competes in long distance sea kayaking competitions. Jorge loves the outdoors and is eager to share with you the natural beauty of his country.

Activity Level

This trip is easy to moderate in nature, and anyone can do it. The trip is not recommended for children under the age of 5 unless arrangements are made for napping schedules on your own departure.

Lodging

All lodging for this departure are in hotels or local lodges. All accommodations are similar to a Holiday Inn in the US in terms of quality of rooms, but all have a lot more charm and personality! All rooms come with private baths. Please "google" the hotels to have a good idea of the quality of the hotels chosen for this adventure.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control.

Note on Services

We often use local suppliers who provide services that may include transportation, equipment, logistic support, and other services (hotels, restaurants, etc.). We do not own or operate these independent suppliers. We work with service providers who share our commitment to safety and quality, and work closely with them to develop itineraries unique to Eco Family Adventures.