

Tico Traveller

9 Days | Starts/Ends: San Jose



Depart San Jose and explore some of Costa Rica's key sites including the famous Arenal volcano, Monteverde's beautiful Cloud Forest and spectacular Manuel Antonio National Park. Meet some of the country's weird and wonderful wildlife in one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world!

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- San Jose - spend two nights in Costa Rica's cosmopolitan capital
- Arenal - marvel at the mighty Arenal Volcano
- Lake Arenal - take a boat ride across this picturesque highland lake
- Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve - go hiking through this picturesque reserve, which is shrouded in a canopy of cloud and home to a wonderful array of flora and fauna
- Manuel Antonio - explore this spectacular national park with its beautiful beaches, lush rainforest and abundance of wildlife

What's Included

- 8 nights standard accommodation (superior and deluxe available on request)
- 8 breakfasts
- Airport transfers
- Shared excursions to Monteverde Reserve and Manuel Antonio Park, including entrance fees
- Transport and transfers in shared vehicles and boats (private transfers available on request)

What's Not Included

- International flights, departure and border taxes and visas.
- Tips on all excursions. Tip for your tour guides - an entirely personal gesture.
- Meals - allow US\$25-30 spending money per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs and any extras.
- Items of a personal nature.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: San Jose

Upon arrival into San Jose airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure for you to relax or to independently explore Costa Rica's capital.

Overnight - San Jose

Days 2-3 : Arenal Volcano



San Jose - La Fortuna. After breakfast on day 2 you take a shuttle to Arenal - one of Costa Rica's most iconic and famous sites. Positioned within Costa Rica's fertile northern lowlands, the Arenal volcano is an unavoidable presence while travelling within this part of the country. Arenal's perfectly symmetrical shape makes it a sightseer's dream, while its abundance of outdoor activities makes it an easy place to check things off your 'must do in Costa Rica' list. There are a number of leisure activities available including a hike along the base of Arenal Volcano, kayaking on beautiful Lake Arenal, horse riding, canyoning or a boat tour of Cano Negro wildlife reserve.

Day 3 is at leisure to further explore the area in Arenal. There are many things to see and do here including an eco-park, zip-lining, caves and hot springs. The area of La Fortuna is also full of many nice restaurants where you can

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sample some of the local cuisine. **Overnight - La Fortuna (B:2)**

Day 4 : Monteverde

La Fortuna - Monteverde. After breakfast cross picturesque Lake Arenal by boat and continue by jeep to Monteverde, which enjoys a prime location between the two cloud forests of the Santa Elena Reserve and the famed Monteverde Cloudforest Reserve. Once at the hotel the afternoon is free to explore or partake in one of the many optional activities on offer in the area, such as a tree top Canopy Tour, horse riding or a tour of the coffee plantations. **Overnight - Monteverde (B)**

Day 5 : Monteverde Cloud Forest



Today enjoy a scenic hike through the scenic Monteverde Cloudforest Reserve, which is renowned for its incredible biodiversity. Wind-sculpted elfin woodlands give way to rainforests where tall trees - festooned with orchids, ferns and vines rise into the sky. **Overnight - Monteverde (B)**

Days 6-7 : Manuel Antonio Village

Monteverde - Manuel Antonio. A shuttle transfer takes you to Manuel Antonio on day 6 and the following day explore the stunning national park with its gorgeous beaches, lush forests and wonderful flora and fauna. Optional activities within the park include a canopy tour and ocean kayaking. **Overnight - Manuel Antonio Village (B:2)**

Days 8-9 : San Jose



Manuel Antonio - San Jose. Return to San Jose today, where the remains of the day are free to explore the capital. Your tour ends on day 9 with a private transfer to the airport for your onward flight. **Overnight - San Jose (B:2)**

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Costa Rica Country Guide

Costa Rica - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Costa Rica
- Capital: San Jose
- Population: 4.9 million
- Total Area: 51,100 square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 76%, Evangelical 13%, others 10%
- Voltage: 110 volts, US-style two pronged plugs
- Dialling Code: +506
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -6
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$29 - can be paid on arrival to avoid queues when departing.

Costa Rica - Visas

It is important to check with your nearest embassy or consulate regarding the rules depending on your nationality however most nationals do not need a visa to enter Costa Rica. Entry will be granted as long as your passport is valid for more than six months and you have proof of funds to support yourself during your stay as well as a return ticket (this is not usually requested). On arrival to Costa Rica you will be presented and requested to fill out an immigration/tourist card which you will need to keep a copy of until you leave the country. As a tourist you are usually granted with 30 days however this will depend on the immigration official you speak to.

Costa Rica - Climate

Costa Rica has a tropical and subtropical climate depending on the time of year. The dry season usually runs from December – April, whilst rainy season runs from May – November with the highlands offering cooler temperatures.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Costa Rica - Money

The currency used in Costa Rica is the Costa Rican colon. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

Generally, the easiest way to obtain local currency is to use ATM's. CIRRUS ATMs are available at most major tourist locations and as long as you have a four-digit pin you can withdraw cash with ease, however you should not rely on this as there are times the machines won't work even if your bank tells you they will. Always have a few back-ups just in case.

Visa is the most accepted credit card however due to poor connections there can be issues with the machines accepting the purchase even if you have funds in your account. There may also be a commission added to your bill (usually 8%), so it is advisable to pay with cash where you can.

Travellers cheques can often be a hassle to cash in Costa Rica so if you do decide to take them, make sure they are in US dollars and 'American Express' cheques as they are more widely accepted.

San Jose is the easiest place (and sometimes the only place) for you to stock up on money. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Costa Rica, however very large sums should be declared on arrival.

Remember that once out of Costa Rica you will generally not be able to use or exchange colones (except at the border towns). Therefore, you must make sure you spend/exchange/donate any left-over money before leaving the country.

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Costa Rica - Local Transport

Taxis are recommended for most journeys in San José. All taxis should have a meter but it's a good idea to be aware of what the approximate price should be before getting in the taxi. In other Costa Rican towns and cities, walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Costa Rica - Food & Drink

Food

There's a lot of different food options to choose from in Costa Rica and travellers are usually surprised by the variety on offer. The Caribbean coast tends to offer dishes influenced by the island nations and curry spices are heavily used whereas on the Pacific Coast in the Guanacaste Province there are still a lot of ancient indigenous influence where maize is heavily used.

Local cuisine is simple yet tasty and not very spicy. The national dish of "Gallo Pinto", consists of red and white beans with rice, sometimes served with egg, is the most common breakfast dish. The Gallo pinto from the Caribbean side is made with coconut milk and is very tasty.

Lunch is a similar affair however the rice and beans are usually supplemented with meat, fried plantain, salad and cabbage. Other specialities include "Sopa negra" (Black bean soup) and "Olla de carne" (beef, plantain, corn, yucca and chayote soup).

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

Costa Rica has no national drink, however "horchata", a cinnamon flavoured drink made of ground rice, "batidos", fresh fruit shakes made with milk or water and ice, and "fresco de frutas", a fruit salad floating on a base of cola and water are very popular.

Beer is also heavily on offer in Costa Rica with countless larger, and dark beers on offer. The most popular are Bavaria and Imperial. Wine, once a rare commodity, has become more common in higher end restaurants, where there are good Chilean and Argentinean varieties on offer. Also, very popular is "guaro", a clear spirit distilled from fermented sugarcane.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense throughout the tour. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US\$1
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$2

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink.

Cost Rica - Bugs

Should your tour include any visit to the jungle/rainforest region you should be prepared to come into contact with an array of wildlife including insects and spiders etc. This is all part of the jungle experience and most insects and bugs are harmless. As you will be in the jungle finding any bugs in your room doesn't mean the room is unclean – it's all part of the experience. If you are uncomfortable with bugs we recommend you bring insect repellent spray and coils to put in your room.

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