

FEBRUARY 19 – 28, 2011

10 DAYS from only **\$2,489**

Includes roundtrip airfare from Boston. Other gateways available, please call for pricing. Departure fees & taxes: \$122. Pricing valid until June 30, 2010.



Costa Rica: San José, Arenal & Guanacaste



Admire magnificent Costa Rican landscapes on your visit to the rainforests.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN COSTA RICA

If you did not take our pre-tour extension on the Caribbean Coast, your journey begins with a regularly scheduled flight to Costa Rica on an internationally recognized airline. Touch down in San José, the country's capital. A Go Ahead representative will greet you at the airport after you clear customs and then escorts you to your hotel. Dinner is included upon your arrival.

Included meals: dinner

DAY 2: DOKA ESTATE, POÁS VOLCANO AND BUTTERFLY GARDEN

This morning, ascend to Poás Volcano National Park (weather permitting), home of one of the largest active volcanoes in Costa Rica. The Doka Estate, a coffee plantation more than a century old. Here, the owners give you a tour of the farming, milling and delicate roasting process required to make some of the country's best coffee. Then, visit the Butterfly Garden, which holds hundreds of butterfly species. Your Tour Director teaches you about the butterfly's complex life cycle. Transfer to Sarapiquí this afternoon where you'll enjoy an included dinner with your group.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Included entrances: Butterfly Garden

DAY 3: SARAPIQUÍ RIVER ADVENTURE

Today you'll board a river cruise boat for our Sarapiquí River Adventure (see "Tour Highlight," to the right for more details). Dinner is included tonight. Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 4: ARENAL NATIONAL PARK

This morning, transfer to Ciudad Queada for a tour of the Orchids Garden. Later, on today's hike in Arenal National Park, you'll have more views of its mile-high volcano, which emerges in a perfect conical shape from the green hills of Alajuela. Arenal has been Costa Rica's most active volcano peak for the past 1,000 years. Dinner is also included tonight.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 5: ECO TERMALES HOT SPRINGS

This morning, you can continue your explorations of the cherished Arenal region with an optional Treetops Walk in the rainforest on the Arenal Hanging Bridges, a collection of connected byways that connect tree to tree. This evening, relax with a visit to the local hot springs, which are fed by the natural healing waters of the Arenal Mountains. Dinner and a nighttime volcano viewing are included this evening.

10-DAY TOUR INCLUDES

- Round-trip air transportation with a major airline, airport transfers
- The services of a bilingual Go Ahead Tour Director
- 9 nights accommodations in comfortable, well-located hotels with twin beds and private bath or shower
- All hotel service charges and tips, baggage handling and local taxes
- Buffet breakfast daily; 9 three-course dinners
- Private motorcoach
- Guided sightseeing and entrance fees to select sights as described
- Go Ahead travel gift and membership in our World Traveler Club, which includes credit toward your next tour

SIGHTSEEING TOURS

DAY 2: Doka Estate & Poás Volcano National Park

DAY 4: Arenal National Park

DAY 6: Lake Arenal & Corobici River

DAY 7: Rincón de la Vieja National Park

Tour Highlight

The only way to truly get inside a Costa Rican rainforest is by water. Take a cruise down the Rio Sarapiquí on our Sarapiquí River Adventure. Float past miles and miles of pristine rainforest as you look out for howler monkeys, crocodiles and river turtles.

Insider's Tip

Stop by a Costa Rican "soda"—a cross between a coffee shop and small restaurant—for excellent snacks, pastries and appetizers. In particular, try Soda Tapia, a soda located near La Sabana Park in San José. The shop is famous for its fruit salads with ice cream and special pastries.



See another side of Costa Rica as you travel through its rural villages.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Included entrances: Eco Termales Hot Springs

DAY 6: LAKE ARENAL AND COROBICÍ RIVER

This morning, depart for Guanacaste. Along the way, you'll tour Lake Arenal—one of the largest lakes in Costa Rica—and then take a relaxing rafting trip down the Corobicí River. You might catch glimpses of toucans, falcons, iguana and monkeys. The floating tour finishes in the renowned Palo Verde Wildlife National Park, home of 300 bird species. Reach Guanacaste in time for tonight's included dinner.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 7: RINCÓN DE LA VIEJA NATIONAL PARK

On a special excursion today, enjoy a visit to Rincón de la Vieja National Park, a rain/cloud forest located high in the mountains. Visit geothermal hot springs that recall those at Yellowstone National Park and view a wide variety of plant, bird and animal species. At the foot of the Southern flank of the volcano, you'll find an area of intense volcanic activity known as Las Pailas which consists of hot springs, sulfuric lakes, steam geysers and reservoirs of boiling water. Return later to Guanacaste, where dinner is included.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner



Take in all the natural splendor of the Caribbean!

DAY 8: GUANACASTE BEACHES

Guanacaste is known for its spectacular beaches, from resort paradises to secluded coves. Spend a free day exploring the area on your own. Or opt for a sailing and snorkeling excursion off the Guanacaste coast. Dinner is included tonight.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 9: GUANACASTE

Enjoy another free day in Guanacaste. Relax on the beach or choose from any number of outdoor activities along the beach or inland. Tonight, enjoy a final dinner with your fellow travelers.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

DAY 10: DEPARTURE

A Go Ahead representative will escort you to the airport.

Included meals: breakfast

(In the case of early morning departures, breakfast may not be provided.)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast
3 nights

DAY 1: Your journey begins with a regularly-scheduled flight to Costa Rica. Arrive in time for an included dinner in San Jose tonight.

Included meals: dinner

DAY 2: Transfer to Tortuguero, a "Venice of Central America" built on jungle-lined canals and coves. A local guide leads a tour of the town, named after the giant sea turtles that nest on the area beaches. Visit the Caribbean Conservation Center. Lunch and dinner are included today.

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 3: Your Tour Director leads a walk along Tortuguero Hill, offering stunning views of the beaches. You'll then take a boat ride through the canals of Tortuguero National Park.

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 4: Return to San José to join the rest of your group for the main tour. Lunch is included en route.

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Extension is available on select departure dates, and space is limited. Please call early to hold your spot. Extension also requires a minimum of 15 travelers.

Pre-departure information for “Costa Rica: San José, Arenal & Guanacaste”

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

In order to enter Costa Rica, U.S. and Canadian citizens need a valid passport. The expiration date must extend at least six months beyond the date of your return home. No visa is required for U.S. or Canadian citizens. If you are not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, contact the Costa Rican consulate for your particular entry requirements.

AIRPORT AND DEPARTURE TAXES

All airport and departure taxes for this tour are included in the total trip cost printed on your invoice.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Airlines have varying weight restrictions on luggage. Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies. Bear in mind that your luggage will probably weigh more on your return trip due to souvenir shopping. We allow only one suitcase per person. One carry-on bag is also permitted, provided that it does not exceed 45 inches (length + width + height). There may be times when you will have to handle your own bags, and you'll find that lightweight luggage provides a distinct advantage. Make sure you label your baggage and carry valuables, medication and documents in your carry-on luggage.

CLOTHING AND PACKING TIPS

Your Costa Rican itinerary focuses on the outdoors, so your clothing should be casual and appropriate for outdoor use. Loose-fitting, layered clothing that can accommodate varying temperatures will probably be most comfortable. A sun hat, sunglasses, and a bathing suit are recommended. Sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots are crucial. Occasional rain showers are common in the areas you will be visiting, so pack light rainwear. Binoculars are very useful for bird- and animal-watching, along with a field guide if you are particularly interested in specifics about the different species you'll spot. Insect repellent is highly recommended for visits to the rain forests.

HEALTH

Travelers should be reasonably fit (see “Walking on Tour” for more information). Take proper care for sun exposure. There is also some risk of mosquito-borne diseases, especially in the rainforests and national parks. Consult your doctor at least eight weeks prior to departure about possible preventive measures and personal travel requirements.

CUISINE

One of the pleasures of traveling is experiencing the delightful variety of local cuisine. Most Costa Rican cuisine originates in the country's Indian roots and is similar to what you'd find in many Central American countries. Entrées are often based on rice, black beans, corn, and beef, chicken or fish. Fresh, locally grown fruit such as bananas, mangoes, pineapples and avocados is usually delicious. Traditional desserts include custards, puddings and simple cakes. Locally grown coffee is served very strong and black, though it may be served with hot milk upon request.

TRANSPORTATION

Round-trip flights arrive in and depart from Guanacaste (Liberia). Included transportation on this tour is by private motorcoach. Destinations on tour are all easily walkable, although some local buses may be available.

ELECTRICITY

Costa Rica uses 110 volts, the U.S. standard.

TIME ZONES

Costa Rica is always six hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), and it does not observe daylight-saving time. Therefore, it is two hours behind New York from April to October, and one hour behind New York from October to April.

CURRENCY

The Costa Rican colón is the currency you will be using on your tour, but U.S. dollars are accepted everywhere. Better rates of exchange are usually available at your destination, although it is worth ordering some currency from your local bank to use when you first arrive. We strongly advise that you take a combination of debit/bank cards and credit cards, which may be exchanged at local banks for cash as needed. You can use most debit/credit cards at ATMs on the international networks Cirrus and Plus, but make sure to check with your home bank about withdrawal fees. We suggest that you inform your bank and credit card company of your travel plans, so that they won't confuse your international purchases for fraudulent charges. Please note: It has been increasingly difficult to exchange traveler's checks outside of Costa Rica's major cities—both at banks and shops—and they often attract higher fees.

TIPPING

At the conclusion of your tour, it is customary to offer your Go Ahead Tour Director and driver a gratuity. We recommend tipping in your tour country's currency, the equivalent of \$3USD/CAD per person per day for your driver and \$6USD/CAD to \$9USD/CAD per person per day for your Tour Director. If applicable, we also recommend the equivalent of \$2USD/CAD per local guide. Tips can only be paid in cash. Please keep current local currency exchange rates in mind when tipping.

PURCHASING OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS ON TOUR

If you have not yet purchased your optional excursions, you may be able to do so while on your tour. Your tour director will only accept cash (in U.S. dollars only), Visa, MasterCard or American Express as payment for optional excursions. Please be advised that if you pay for an excursion by credit card while on tour, it may take up to three months for your card to be charged. Some optional excursions may only be purchased in advance. See the separate “Optional Excursions” sheet for more information.

International travel is, by its very nature, unpredictable. We must therefore reserve the right to change this itinerary without advanced notice to meet with local conditions at the time of travel. We appreciate your understanding. Please refer to the current catalog for terms & conditions, dates and prices.



Travel Pace: 4

Travel pace levels are based on criteria such as length of tour, number of cities visited, number of included activities, as well as length of flights and land transfers.

- 1 - leisurely
- 2 - comfortable
- 3 - active
- 4 - challenging

Walking on Tour

This tour is focused on outdoor sightseeing in natural, rain/cloud forest locations, so expect moderate-to-high walking in some areas. Sturdy, comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots are recommended. While walks and hikes are not strenuous for the healthy traveler, expect some uneven, possibly slippery terrain.

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Climate

Costa Rica is a tropical country comprising several distinct climate zones. Temperatures vary by altitude: the Central Valley boasts balmy temperatures in the 70s, while coastal regions on both the Pacific and the Caribbean are hot and humid. Although there is little variation in temperature from one month to the next, most regions have a rainy season (May–November) and a dry season (December–April). The following guide provides the average temperatures for a sampling of the regions on your itinerary.

SAN JOSÉ & HIGHLANDS

65°–75°F / 18°–23°C

CARIBBEAN COAST

80°–90°F / 26°–32°C

GUANACASTE/ PACIFIC COAST

85°–95°F / 29°–35°C