

Complete Costa Rica



Day 1: Arrive San Jose

You will be met on arrival at Juan Santamaría International airport and transferred by private vehicle to Xandari Hotel, where you stay 2 nights in a double prima plus room (inc. breakfast).

Xandari Hotel

This lovely property is situated only 25 mins from the airport, and a few minutes drive from the city of Alajuela. It features 23 individually-designed villas of different categories, centred around an attractive lobby and dining area.

Xandari's unique villas feature private gated gardens and terraces with panoramic views of the Central Valley. Inside they are beautifully-furnished and feature kitchenettes equipped with mini-bar, coffee maker, and a selection of complimentary coffees, teas, snacks and drinks.

There are no television sets in the villas, which are designed for a tranquil experience in a natural setting. Satellite television and movies are available in the television room in the main building, however. The main building also houses a well-stocked bar, indoor and outdoors dining area, and a boutique shop. The indoor/outdoor restaurant features a



healthy Costa Rican menu, prepared with fruits and vegetables from the hotel's own organic gardens and orchard. Other facilities include three swimming pools and a heated outdoor Jacuzzi.

Surrounding Xandari Hotel are over four kilometres of scenic trails which take in the forest and waterfalls.



Day 2: Poás Volcano, Doka Estate and La Paz waterfalls

You will be collected from your hotel at 7:30am by your guide & driver and driven to Poás Volcano National Park for a full-day scenic tour.

Poás Volcano National Park is a 10,000-acre reserve famous for its tropical vegetation, unique wildlife and, of course, its eponymous volcano. Today's route will take you through the lush coffee plantations and flower farms that surround Poás, before climbing to its summit. You travel initially by car, and then on foot as you approach the summit.

Poás' crater is over 1.5km wide, making it one of the largest geysers in the world. Though an active volcano, Poás is considered safe for viewing. As you climb the volcano you will detect a gradual change in the climate and, with it, the fauna and flora, as the coffee plantations and strawberry farms give way to wilder vegetation.

At the summit, you will be able to view the crater from a distance. Spend some time here admiring the view, and then descend back down. Weather and time permitting, you might like to spend the rest of the morning hiking through the forested foothills of Poás, exploring the forest's varied plant and birdlife, before stopping to rest at a peaceful lagoon.





Alternatively, you may prefer to pay a visit to the Doka Coffee Estate, established over 70 years ago on the fertile slopes of the Poás Volcano. On a tour of the farm, you'll have the chance to learn more about production, harvesting and roasting of coffee beans.

In the afternoon, visit the La Paz Waterfall Gardens, a private reserve of 70 acres. Here you can explore a network of trails linking the reserve's many beautiful waterfalls, of which the highlight is La Paz. The gardens are also home to a number of animal parks, including a hummingbird garden, which attracts over 25 different species of

hummingbird, a butterfly garden, where you can learn about the spectacular variety of butterflies found in Costa Rica, and snake and frog enclosures.

Finally, visit the La Casita de la Paz, a reconstructed farmhouse intended to provide an insight into the lives of rural Costa Ricans. Return to Xandari Hotel late afternoon.

Note: *It is recommended that you wear comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots for today's tour, as you will be hiking in forest. You should also carry a light waterproof coat as it can become cool and wet as you climb at altitude.*

Day 3: San José – Tortuguero

Depart San José early morning and drive through the magnificent Braulio Carrillo National Park towards Tortuguero, stopping for breakfast along the way.

On arrival at Caño Blanco pier, trade your car for a boat and set off on a 2 hour journey through the canals to Pachira Lodge, your home for the next three nights (double standard room, inc. three meals a day, lodging and tours).

Pachira Lodge

Pachira Lodge is located right on the edge of Tortuguero National Park, in a remote area accessible only by water.

The lodge offers 80 guest rooms, all attractively furnished with bamboo furniture and ceiling fans (no air-con).

Facilities at Pachira include bar and restaurant, swimming pool, and a beautiful garden with hammocks overlooking the canal. All meals, boat and ground transfers are included during your stay at Pachira.



After lunch at the lodge, take a guided tour of Tortuguero town, including a stop at the Sea Turtle Centre, which has supported the conservation of endangered sea turtles in Costa Rica since 1959.

The beach at Tortuguero is a vital nesting sites for the endangered green turtle. In the 1960s, when green turtles came close to extinction from poaching, the Sea Turtle Centre was established.

Its work culminated in the establishment of Tortuguero National Park in 1970. Today, Tortuguero provides a haven not just for nesting green turtles, but also hawksbill and leatherback turtles.

NB. July to September is the peak nesting season for green turtle at Tortuguero.

Day 4: Tortuguero

After an early breakfast, begin your tour of Tortuguero National Park with a cruise through the park's narrow canals. The cruise is conducted in a small, open boat that will allow you to get as close as possible to the unique fauna and flora.

In the afternoon, if weather conditions permit, you might like to take a guided walking tour of the park.

Tortuguero constitutes a huge network of natural rivers, lakes and man-made canals, which in the past were used to transport goods, but which today are predominantly used to carry visitors to the National Park.

A huge variety of wildlife inhabits Tortuguero, including over 50 recorded species of amphibian (poison dart frogs, salamanders), 100 species of reptile (iguana, caiman, basilisk), and more than 60 mammals. As many as 300 species of bird are found in the National Park, among them the endangered great green macaw. Toucans, trogons and myriad parrots are seen in the jungle, while on the waterways are found heron, egret, kingfishers and jacana.



Mammals commonly seen include white-faced, spider and howler monkeys. Peccary and tapir are occasionally seen, as are river otters. Jaguars, kinkajous and ocelots are seldom seen. Rare water species include manatee, gar and bullshark.

NB. There are two tours included today, a river boat trip on the canals and a jungle hike. Occasionally, however, due to weather or other concerns, the Park administration closes the walking trail, in which case you will have the option of a full-day boating tour.

There is an optional night tour (at additional cost) available from July to September to observe the green turtles nesting.

Day 5: Tortuguero

Today is a free day in Tortuguero. You may like to rest at the hotel. Alternatively, let us know if you would like to arrange an additional boat or walking tour into the park. This can also be arranged and paid for locally.

Day 6: Tortuguero – Turrialba

After breakfast, transfer back to the pier by boat and continue by bus to Guapiles. After a lunch stop at La Ceiba restaurant, meet with your driver and transfer by private vehicle to Rancho Naturalista in Turrialba, where you check in for two nights (double room, full board.)

Rancho Naturalista

Rancho Naturalista is set at an altitude of approx. 1,000m, on the Caribbean slopes of the Talamanca mountains, 2½ hours east of San José. From this enviable perch, the lodge's balcony and rooms provide stunning views of the Turrialba and Irazu volcanoes. And the weather – cooler and less humid than the coast owing to the altitude – tends to be wonderful year-round.



A western-style country homestead, the atmosphere at Rancho Naturalista is warm and relaxed. This comfortable lodge is known for its excellent food, which is prepared with the freshest local ingredients. The guest rooms – of which there are just 15, divided between the main lodge building and a series of wood cabins – are all furnished in their own unique style, some with private balconies.

The beautiful Turrialba Valley is irrigated by the pure and wild waters of the Reventazon River, which converted this land into a rich agricultural area over a hundred years ago. Rains throughout the year create a green collage of primary forest, biological corridors, and extensive plantations of coffee, macadamia and sugar cane, demonstrating a balance between agricultural development and the conservation of nature.

Day 7: Rancho Naturalista

Embark on a full-day guided walking and bird-watching tour in the Cordillera de Talamanca range, accompanied by an experienced wildlife guide.

The Talamanca Mountains are a magnet for a great variety of migratory birds; over 430 species of birds have been recorded in the private forest reserve, including grey-headed chachalaca, collared aracari, keel-billed toucan, blue-crowned motmot and montezuma oropendola.



Rancho Naturalista is a wonderful getaway for bird watchers, hikers, photographers and naturalists. The weather in this region is moderate all year-round – neither too hot nor too cold – making for a wonderfully pleasant hiking environment.

Following the birdwatching tour, return to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

Day 8: Turrialba – San Ramon

You will be collected from the ranch after breakfast and transferred by private vehicle to San Ramon (approx. 4 hours' drive). Check in for 2 nights in a double superior casita at Villa Blanca (inc. breakfast).



Villa Blanca

Villa Blanca is a charming mountain lodge with a marvellous hilltop location. The lodge's centrepiece, la Hacienda, is a beautiful building with an interior garden and a cosy fireplace lounge. The Hacienda also houses the reception, lobby bar and restaurant. Surrounding this central hub are 34 Casitas and honeymoon suites, scattered throughout the property so as to resemble a small village. The rooms have ceiling fans, garden porches or terraces, and fireplaces.

El Sendero Restaurant serves a fresh, varied menu incorporating a fusion of traditional regional dishes, enhanced by unusual sauces and combinations of fresh herbs and vegetables, hand selected from the hotel's own organic gardens. Café El Bosque offers a light snack menu and freshly-brewed Costa Rican Coffee, while the Lobby Bar is the gathering point for before or after dinner drinks, where guests can get together to share stories and pictures of their adventures.

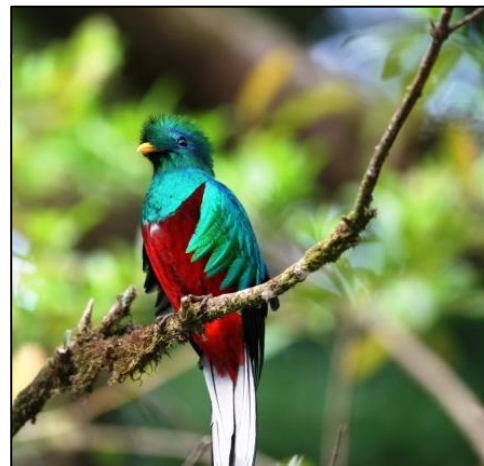
Villa Blanca is situated amid 3,000 acres of pristine cloud forest and dairy pastures. It has 3 km of well-maintained trails, designed with no staircases or steps. During your stay you have the option of self-guided excursions as well as guided tours with the resident guides. Los Angeles Cloud Forest Biological Private Reserve is an excellent spot for bird watching.

Day 9: Cloud Forest bird watching

Depart after breakfast on a guided tour of the cloud forest, setting off in the cool morning air.

Villa Blanca is located in one of the most accessible cloud forest reserves in Central America. At only 1,200 meters above sea level, Los Angeles Private Biological Reserve represents one of the most diverse inventories of flora in Costa Rica. It is equally famous for its bird life, which include endemic birds such as the Orange-bellied Trogon and the Keel-billed Toucan.

Accompanied by a professional guide, you'll be able to make the most of this fantastic chance to explore the cloud forest, its gentle sloping pastures and its unique wildlife.



There is a permanent research centre in the grounds of the lodge where you can talk with the staff about their current programmes. The same staff also guide the walks around the property.

In the early evening, venture into the cloud forest on a nocturnal guided nature walk (approx. 2 hours).

Starting at dusk, this exceptional night walk takes place on the forest trails surrounding Villa Blanca, and is led by a naturalist guide specialising in nocturnal species. You will be provided with a flashlight to discover a world rarely seen during daytime.

You can expect to see a huge array of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals on this slow-paced tour, which is designed to give you the best chance of observing and discovering many of the singular characteristics of the forest's nocturnal species.

It is recommended that you wear hiking shoes, long walking trousers, a light jacket or raincoat.



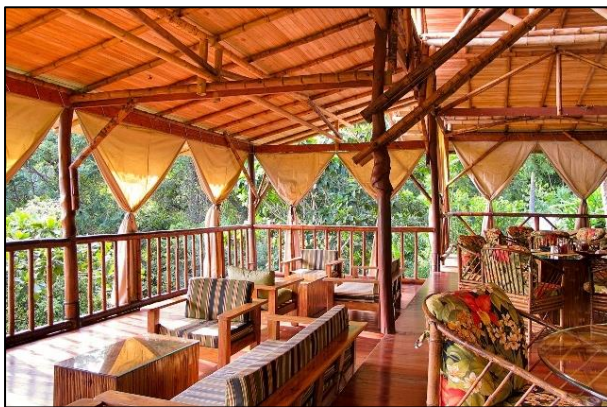
Day 10: San Ramon – San Jose – Osa Peninsula

Depart Villa Blanca this morning and transfer to San Jose and the Nature Air hanger (1½ hrs). Check-in for the flight to Puerto Jimenez. *Please note that your checked-in baggage should not exceed 18kg.*

You will be met on arrival at Puerto Jimenez airstrip and transferred to El Remanso Rainforest Lodge for 4 nights in a casa poniente ocean view room (full board, drinks not included).

El Remanso Lodge

El Remanso Lodge is situated on the Osa Peninsula, close to the famous Corcovado National Park, where it nestles in the rainforest above the secluded and wild Pacific Beach. It is set in a 185 acre private reserve, part of the greater Osa Peninsula Wildlife Refuge.



The owner-operated El Remanso Lodge offers just 13 spacious rooms, from which guests can enjoy views of the forest canopy. The restaurant deck is built on top of a forest canyon, enabling great views of the underlying forest. Local chefs will surprise guests with two different menu options every day, an exciting mix of international cuisine, with a “tico” and tropical touch. The Mirador area of the restaurant offers comfortable lounge sofas in which to relax. Other facilities include a small swimming pool and poolside bar.

El Remanso was designed with strict ecological policies in mind and has been a pioneer in sustainable practices in the Osa Peninsula since its creation. With its lush forest, wildlife diversity and wonderful views, it is the ideal place to unplug from everyday distractions!

A variety of activities can be enjoyed at El Remanso: thrilling waterfall rappelling, early-morning bird watching, guided interpretative hiking, surfing, kayaking, tree climbing, and private meals amid the canopy. Of course you may prefer to simply relax on the wooden deck of the cabin while taking in the surrounds.

We've provided below a schedule of included activities for your three day stay in El Remanso, but you may like to substitute some of the activities for others.

Day 11: Canopy platform breakfast

Enjoy a spectacular view of the forest while enjoying a delicious breakfast on a wooden platform 125 feet above the jungle floor. El Remanso operates a zip line to one of the highest trees of the forest, with both morning and evening rides on offer – the best times of the day to observe wildlife.

Be sure to bring your cameras and binoculars!

After a morning spent in the canopy, return to the lodge. The rest of the day is at leisure.



Day 12: Night hike in the rainforest

Morning and afternoon at leisure.

This evening, explore the Corcovado rainforest by night on a guided nocturnal hike. The coastal rainforest around El Remanso is a very different habitat to the Los Angeles cloud forest, allowing you to discover a whole new array of nocturnal species.

This is a great opportunity to learn about the different feeding and breeding habits that nocturnal species of frog, spider, butterfly or snake have developed in order to survive in the dark. A flashlight in hand, and the resident naturalist guide at your side, you will search for some of the most remarkable – and least understood – creatures on the planet.



Day 13: Nature trail hike

Explore one of several different nature trails in the company of a naturalist guide. This is a chance to discover more of the local fauna and flora, and to gain a real introduction to tropical biology! You may see scarlet macaws, toucans, parrots, hawks, tanagers and many other types of bird (there are as many as 400 species in this region). All four species of monkey found in Costa Rica – the howler, spider, squirrel and white face monkey – are present in Corcovado, as are sloths, anteaters, tayras and anteaters. Puma, jaguar and ocelot are present in the refuge, but very rarely sighted.

Day 14: Osa Peninsula – San Jose

Transfer to Puerto Jimenez airstrip to check in for the flight to San Jose.

On arrival at the Nature Air hanger, you will be met and transferred to the international airport to check in for your international flight home/onward travel arrangements.

See price guide overleaf.

Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is **£3,595 per person** based on twin share and subject to availability at the time of booking. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Domestic flights
- Accommodation and meals as per itinerary
- Transfers between destinations/airports
- Entrance to Tortuguero National Park
- Hotel Taxes

Excludes:

- International flights
- Departure tax (US\$29 per person)
- Optional tours
- Any expenses of personal nature such as hard/soft drinks, laundry, phone/fax calls, tips etc.
- Tips and gratuities.

