

# EXPLORE!

## TRIP NOTES



### Family Rainforest Adventure (FCC 2018)



TRIPDURATION  
**15**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Classic

**Tour Pace:** Full On

**Tour Type:** Small Groups

**Accommodation**

**Grade:** Standard

**Trip Code:** FCC

#### Trip Highlights - Family Rainforest Adventure

- ✓ Volcanoes - Discover active volcanoes and gigantic craters
- ✓ Wildlife - Look out for some of the world's weirdest and most wonderful creatures, such as howler monkeys, sloths and beautifully-coloured birds
- ✓ Monteverde - 'Fly' through the canopy of this cloud forest; Spot the famous quetzal bird
- ✓ Jungle - Cruise along the waterways of the Tortuguero 'mini Amazon'
- ✓ Golden beaches - Share the beach with sun-bathing iguanas and capuchin monkeys in Manuel Antonio National Park
- ✓ Guayabo - Visit an ancient Indian ceremonial site

#### Trip Essentials

**Accommodation:** 3 nights Premium Hotel  
9 nights Standard Hotel  
2 nights Premium Lodge

**Included Meals:** 13 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

**Start Point:** Join trip: San Jose  
**End Point:** Trip ends: San Jose

**Transport:** Bus, Boat

**Countries:** Costa Rica

**Minimum Age:** From 7 years

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## Family Rainforest Adventure

Towering volcanoes, long sandy beaches and unspoilt tropical rainforest are all part of this holiday to Costa Rica. Journey from the Caribbean to the Pacific ocean through one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world. Cruise through jungle waterways, discover cloud forest trails home to the Resplendent Quetzal, arguably the most beautiful bird in the world, learn how to make chocolate, relax on golden sand beaches and zip wire through the forest canopy. Costa Rica is truly a magical, all round family destination.

### TRIPLE ROOMS

This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

### Why Book this trip

If you want a destination that is relatively untouched by mass tourism and your family want to be overwhelmed by a locations beauty and diversity, then Costa Rica is a great choice. The diversity of the country, including its landscapes and jungles are all absolutely breath taking. From rainforest to volcanoes to waterways and finally to beaches. This trip is active - you can try out white water rafting, rock jumping, zip wiring along a 1km wire high above the cloud forest, horseback riding and see and hear an active volcano and if you don't mind getting up close to frogs, spiders, bugs and monkeys then our 'Rainforest Adventure' holiday is for you.

### Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

### Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

### Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

### Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

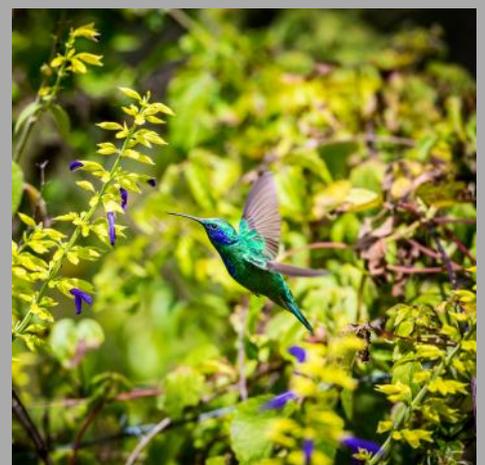
## Your trip itinerary

### Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

### Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.



## DAY 1 Join tour San Jose

After arriving in San Jose, we will check-in to our conveniently-located hotel which will be our base for the next two nights. San Jose lies in a fertile valley at an altitude of 1150 metres. Coffee and sugar cane are big industries here and coffee is even planted between new buildings and along the roadside on the outskirts of the city.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 



**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Trip to Doka Coffee Estate and city tour in San Jose

Normally this day would be planned to visit the volcanic crater of Poas. However, due to recent activity at the Poas volcano, and the closure of the National Park, we'll now visit Doka Coffee Estate - the largest coffee plantation in Costa Rica. Here we'll be given a guided tour around the coffee plantation, which will include coffee tasting and a visit to the roasting room. After our visit to the Doka Coffee Estate, we'll continue onto the town of Sarchi, well known throughout Costa Rica for its beautiful and intricate arts and crafts. It's famous for producing colourful and decorative oxcarts, which are a huge part of Costa Rican culture today, and even considered one of Costa Rica's national symbols. We'll have time to explore the artisan town, visit the largest and oldest oxcart factory, and see Sarchi's church unusually painted pink and blue. Following our visit to Sarchi, we'll then visit the neighbour town of Grecia. A small farming town with beautiful mountain landscapes and rich scenery, Grecia is an important agricultural hub of the country, producing sugar cane, organic coffee and pineapples. The town is home to Cathedral de le Mercedes, a gothic style church made of metal pieces. This afternoon, an orientation tour of San Jose will help us to gain a feel for the city centre and main sights, including the National Museum. Should the Poas Volcano stabilize and the Poas National Park reopens, then we'll revert back to our original plans on this day to visit Poas Volcano.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 Drive to Turrialba via a visit to the colonial city of Cartago and Guayabo

This morning, if the Poas Volcano is still closed we will have short visit to the old colonial capital of Cartago, before heading to the Irazu Volcano, where we'll visit the viewpoint with views of the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea on a clear day. If the Poas Volcano is reopened, we will not visit Irazu but instead continue from the city of Cartago to Guayabo National Park which is the largest archaeological site to be found in Costa Rica. Largely unexplored, the area contains ancient trails, bridges, water tanks and homesites, as well as petroglyphs estimated to be about 3,000 years old. We also visit the excavated Aboriginal Ceremonial Centre at Guayabo which dates from 1000 to 1400 and is one of the country's most important archaeological sites. Here, uncovered paved streets and water channels help us to understand about village life in that era. We then continue our journey to the town of Turrialba which is famous for its lush natural beauty and where we will spend the next two nights. Its fertile land makes it an important agricultural region for coffee, sugar and Macadamia nuts, with its cheese being popular throughout the country. This evening, your Tour Leader may be able to organise an optional visit to a typical 'Finca', where you can enjoy dinner prepared in a traditional family way.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 4 In Turrialba optional rafting

Today is free for you to spend as you wish. You may choose to try whitewater rafting on the Pejibaye River and with grade II to III rapids (operates between May and November), this is a fun ride with plenty of birds to spot in the trees along the banks. Alternatively, you may choose to visit CATIE Research Centre (Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigacion y Ensenanza). Recognised throughout the world as an important agronomic station, its environmental development projects seek to enhance human wellbeing and protect natural resources. Its botanic garden is a special place to relax, surrounded by the calls of birds, the whisper of the giant Guanacaste Tree and the imposing Ceiba.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 5 Drive and boat cruise through the jungle waterways to Tortuguero

Our drive to Cano Blanco takes us through extensive banana plantations. From Cano Blanco or La Pavona, a boat will take us to our spectacular lodge in the Tortuguero National Park, where we spend the next two nights. As we travel through a fascinating network of jungle waterways, it is easy to understand why this area is often described as a 'mini Amazon'. Its complex canal system and narrow lagoons link small isolated settlements and are rich in fish, including rainbow bass and grouper. They also support an abundance of birds, such as heron, stork and kingfisher. We will also take a short walking tour of the carless village of Tortuguero. Our lodge is in an idyllic setting, perched on a small slither of land between the Caribbean Sea and the waterway.



Overnight: **Premium Lodge**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6 View turtles laying their eggs in Tortuguero National Park

To kick off our day, there is the option of a bird watching trip by boat at dawn. Amazingly, the country's different species outnumber those found in the whole of Europe with stork, parrot and hummingbird being among the many birds to be spotted. Later this morning, we will head out on a jungle trek to understand more about the area's unique ecosystem. It's amazing to think that 33% of the jungle's total biomass is made up of ants and termites. This afternoon, we will take to the waterways for further exploration and on our travels, we may come across the howler monkey, aptly named by the way it noisily protects its territory and if you are lucky, you may also see the elusive ocelots cat and jaguar. Throughout the year, you may be lucky enough to see different species of turtle nesting close to our lodge. The best time to see this spectacle is between June and September, when over five-thousand green, leatherback and the 700-pound loggerhead turtles come ashore to nest on Tortuguero's beaches. At this time of year, there is the option of an evening turtle walk to take in this spectacle.

Overnight: **Premium Lodge**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7 Visit La Tirimbina for a chocolate tour

Leaving our lodge this morning, we travel by boat back to Cano Blanco, before heading on to Puerto Viejo Sarapiquí. After lunch, we plan to visit La Tirimbina for a chocolate tour, where we learn about the natural and cultural history of the Cacao tree. We watch how the farmers convert the cacao fruit into chocolate with the possibility to taste the various types of handmade chocolate that is produced.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 8 Drive to Arenal area via a nature reserve at the foot of an active volcano

This morning's drive skirts around the great central volcanic massif, passing through fertile farmlands that are rich with tropical crops. Soon we catch sight of the famous Arenal Volcano. This classic cone rising to 1,633 metres is covered by a tangled mass of vegetation on one side, while the other is starkly barren. Having remained dormant for hundreds of years, it erupted unexpectedly in 1968 destroying the small town of Tabacon on its west side. After this, it was known for its regular explosions which became a huge spectacle. However, since 2010, the volcano has gone quiet once more...but you never know when it will erupt again!. This afternoon, we drive to the Mirador del Silencio Reserve, where we can enjoy a short nature trail observing endemic flora and fauna at the foot of the volcano. Brimming with giant trees, weird and wonderful plant species and a spectacular view of Arenal, it's no wonder that the reserve has featured in several films. These include 'The Congo', 'Spy Kids 2' and 'After Earth', starring Will Smith. Many species of fauna can also be seen here, including different types of snakes, howler monkeys and many species of birdlife. Our accommodation for the next two nights is in La Fortuna. The town was renamed after the 1968 eruption, when it was seen as being 'fortunate' that it was located on the eastern side of the volcano.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 9 In Arenal area with optional whitewater rafting or walking to a waterfall

Today has been left free to explore the area as you choose. There are local treks to waterfalls where you can take a dip, as well as along lava trails. For the thrill seekers, optional whitewater rafting is available (operates between May and November) and we recommend making the most of the local geothermal activity by enjoying an optional bathe in the nearby hot springs.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 10 Drive to Monteverde cloud forest, cooking lesson and optional forest walk

Today we travel around Arenal Lake up into the cloud forest region of Monteverde - one of the most well-known places in Costa Rica to see wildlife. The last part of our journey is on bumpy roads, but we are rewarded with a two-night stay here to enjoy all that this area has to offer. Perched on the Continental Divide between the Pacific and the Caribbean, it is thought that there has been indigenous habitation in Monteverde since 3000 BC. However, the turning point in its recent history came in 1950, when a group of pacifist Quakers from Alabama moved here to avoid subscription in the Korean War. They sought a lifestyle in a country in which they could embrace their peaceful beliefs and continue to cultivate their dairy farms. These families went on to establish the community of Monteverde and some of its famed cloud forest reserves. Lunch today is an interactive affair, allowing the kids to cook up a Costa

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Rican treat for the adults in the group. Once we are all fed and watered, we can look forward to an afternoon of optional activities. There is a butterfly farm and ecological farm to explore, as well as an orchid garden and frog pools. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information on the choices available. This evening, there is the opportunity to go on a guided night walk in search of nocturnal species, such as pacas and tarantulas.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 11 Visit Santa Elena Reserve with free time to try a canopy tour or wire walkways

The famous, but now very rare, resplendent quetzal can be seen in this area, one of the last remaining places in Central America where its habitat has been preserved. Sacred to the ancient Maya and Aztec people, it is considered to be one of the most beautiful birds in the world. This morning, we will have a guided tour of Santa Elena Reserve, where 90% of the species found in Monteverde can also be seen. Quieter and less touristy than its famous neighbour, our visit here gives us a good chance of spotting wildlife. During our walk through this reserve, we will occasionally stop to watch the recordings of different trap cameras set up by the Santa Elena Conservation Project. These cameras are used to measure the number of times each animal visits an area and to study their behaviour once there. Monteverde is regarded as offering some of the best canopy experiences in the world and you may choose to 'fly' through the dramatic scenery on a zip-wire, or take a more sedate walk through the canopy on treetop walkways. Alternatively, you may choose to explore one of the other private forest reserves in the area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 12 Drive to Manuel Antonio National Park along the Pacific coast

Leaving the cloud forest behind us this morning, we descend to the Pacific Coast where we enjoy staggering views over the Gulf and Peninsula of Nicoya. Heading south, we then pause at Carara Biological Reserve, famed for the scarlet macaws and abundant birdlife which populate this transitional forest. Finally, we continue along the Pacific Coast to Manuel Antonio National Park, where we will spend the next two nights.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 13 In Manuel Antonio park area famed for its beautiful beaches and rich wildlife

This morning, we explore the Manuel Antonio National Park, famed for its beautiful beaches and rich wildlife. During our time in the park, we are likely to see white-faced capuchin monkeys, coatimundi (part of the racoon family) and the tiny squirrel monkeys. This is also one of the best places in Costa Rica to see sloths. The majority of a sloth's diet comes from buds and leaves but unfortunately leaves provide little energy and thus sloths move only when necessary and even then, very slowly. The remainder of the day can be spent relaxing on the white sandy beaches and enjoying a swim in the warm azure waters. The sunsets from this coast are spectacular and have to be seen to be believed.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 14 Manuel Antonio National Park. Drive to San Jose

After a morning relaxing on the beach, we leave the Pacific Ocean at about midday. Our journey back to Costa Rica's capital will take about four hours.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 15 Tour ends San Jose

Depending on your departure time today, you may wish to visit one of the several museums in town

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Notes

Accommodation and service levels in Costa Rica are in general of good standard as they are used to catering for the North American Market. Almost every hotel we stay in has air conditioning or fans. We try to avoid the use of the large chain hotels and try to use a mix of jungle and mountain lodges as well as small family run hotels. They all have private facilities. Several of our Costa Rica hotels are found on the outskirts of town - these have better facilities and larger grounds and we will have transport on hand to take us into town for evenings.

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

## Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Costa Rica

**Lunch £:** 13.00

**Dinner £:** 13.00

### Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

#### Costa Rica

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.80

**Water £:** 1.30

### Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

### Optional Excursions

Turrialba - Half day White-water rafting US\$ 80 (grade III) min age 12; Finca visit local farm and dinner US\$ 20.

Tortuguero - Bird watching tour US\$ 25; Turtle watching (in season) US\$ 30.

Sarapiquí - Bat tour (night walk) US\$ 24; River Boat trip ents US\$ 38 with transport US\$65; Safari Float trip US\$58 inc. transport; Cocoa tour US\$ 30

Arenal - Hot springs US\$ 37 (US\$ 57 with dinner) plus transport; Waterfall Walk US\$ 15; half day Safari float US\$ 60; Cano Negro excursion US\$ 75; White Water Rafting (minimum age: 10yrs old grade II or III) US\$ 73 full day US\$ 89; Farm to Table cooking class US\$67

Monteverde - Night walk in Reserve US\$ 48, Hanging bridges and canopy US\$ 50-81; Canopy tour US\$ 50, Butterfly farm ents US\$ 15 with transport US\$45; Coffee tour US\$ 35, Eco Farm ents US\$ 50 with transport US\$65; Walk in Monteverde Reserve \$20 - \$65 depending on numbers (Monteverde costs all include transport).

Manuel Antonio - Savegre river rafting US\$ 98.00 min. age 8; Damas Island Kayak US\$ 69.00 Ocean Kayaking & Snorkelling US\$ 69.00 Horseback riding and waterfall US\$ 69.00 Mangrove boat tour US\$ 69.00 Canopy Tour US\$ 71.00 Butterfly & Reptiles combo US\$ 69.00 Vanilla Tour inc. transport US\$ 65.00

### Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

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## Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$30 for tipping. 10% is expected in restaurants.

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## Foreign Exchange

### Costa Rica

**ATM Availability:** Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

**Local Currency:** Costa Rican Colon.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD can be used in some places in Costa Rica

**Where to Exchange:** Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

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## Joining your Trip

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

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### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at [www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk), in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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## Important Information

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers [www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore) who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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## Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at [www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety](http://www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety)

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting [cr@explore.co.uk](mailto:cr@explore.co.uk) or 01252 379438.

## Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Visa Information

Costa Rica: Citizens from the UK, US, Canada and most EU countries do not require a visa for a stay up to 90 days. Citizen of Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

## Lone Parents

### Costa Rica

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Costa Rican embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.



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## Vaccinations & Protection

### Costa Rica

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

## Preparing for your Trip

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### Climate

#### Costa Rica

Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page. Costa Rica has a tropical climate with high temperature humidity and rainfall. The average temperature is 21°C in the highlands and variable in the lowlands. The rainy season is from May to November and the summer from December to April, but it does still tend to rain, usually in short bursts. Bear in mind that Costa Rica has 12 microclimates and weather can vary significantly in one day.

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### Clothing

Lightweight clothing is essential in midsummer however a warmer jumper is advisable for cooler evenings in the highlands (especially in Monteverde). A good waterproof is essential, and you should consider waterproof trousers. The jungle lowlands are hot and muggy, and it can rain at any time of year. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are recommended on jungle walks. There is a laundry next to the hotel in La Fortuna / Arenal.

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### Equipment

We recommend a sunhat, sunscreen, a torch, insect repellent and a waterbottle. Binoculars are essential for bird and animal spotting.

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### Footwear

Lightweight trail/walking boots for jungle walks, comfortable shoes/trainers and sandals. Waterproof boots are recommended.

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### Luggage: On Tour

Please allow yourself one main piece of luggage and a daysac. Remember, you are expected to carry your own baggage, so don't overload yourself, a soft wheely bag may be easier to manage than a suit case.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

## General Information

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### Country details

#### Costa Rica

**Population:** 4,608,426

**Size of Country:** 51,100 sq km

**Major Language:** Spanish

**Religion:** Christian, Roman Catholic

**Time Difference to GMT:** -6

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### Electric Supply & Plugs

#### Costa Rica

2 Pin Flat

## Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

### Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

### Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

## Booking Your Holiday

### Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

### Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

### 100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

### Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2018 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2018. 2019/20 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2019.

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