

# EXPLORE!

## TRIP NOTES



### Comfort Itinerary Version (COMFORT)



TRIPDURATION  
**12**  
DAYS



**Tour Type:** Tailormade

**Trip Code:** TMCR3

### Trip Essentials

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

**Included Meals:** 11 breakfasts, 5  
lunches, 3 dinners

**Transport:**

**Countries:** Costa Rica, Panama



# Tailormade Costa Rica and Panama Explorer

## 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.

## 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.

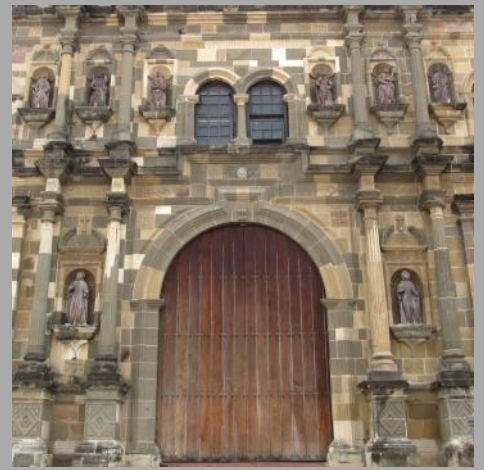
### Your Tour Leader

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 Depart UK

Depart the UK for Panama City, arriving the same day. On arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Overnight: **Hotel**




 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Visit Casco Antiguo and Panama Canal

This morning you visit 'Casco Antiguo', meaning Old Quarter, it is the heart of colonial Panama City. Its ramparts were built to fend off marauders and encircle the promontory, and a stroll along the top affords views of the 'Bridge of the Americas' and far in the distance the skyscrapers of the modern city, a total contrast to the Spanish plazas and colonial buildings all around you. You'll see the cathedral, Presidential Palace, National Grand Theatre, the prison chambers and the French Plaza along the way. Your journey continues to the Miraflores Locks to see the famous Panama Canal and appreciate the scale of this engineering miracle. Running 50 miles, the canal was carved out of the rainforest and through hillsides, lakes were dammed and locks built. After a serious French attempt costing in excess of 20,000 lives, the US successfully completed this remarkable endeavour after 10 years of toil in 1914. You will have the opportunity to watch a short video about the canal and see the exhibits in the centre. Your last stop is the Panama Biomuseo, developed with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, where you can visit the permanent Bridge of Life exhibit to learn about the important research taking place in order to understand our biologically diverse planet.

Overnight: **Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 3 Gamboa Rainforest visit

This morning you travel a short distance out of the city to Gamboa Rainforest. Taking an aerial tram ride over the rainforest canopy you may see butterflies, sloths and white-faced capuchin monkeys. Gliding over the tree-tops allows for a very different perspective of the forest. Following your tram ride you may wish to visit the orchid farm, where these exotic flowers flourish in the tropical climate; the butterfly farm where visitors can see some of the 20 species native to Panama, or the aquarium where you can learn about over 100 freshwater fish found in the country. This afternoon you depart Panama City and fly to Isla Colon, Bocas del Toro.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 4 Day tour of Bocas Del Toro islands

Bocas del Toro is an archipelago made up of a number of beautiful forested islands lying in the warm Caribbean waters stretching almost to the Costa Rican border. Today you have a full day tour to explore the surrounding area, starting with a visit to Dolphins Bay, where a number of dolphins frolic in the still waters. Next, you arrive at Coral Caye, where you stop for a relaxing lunch, with time to swim and snorkel in the clear water to see colourful fish and coral. Finally, you head to Cayos Zapatillas, within the Bastimentos Marine Park, these two islands are some of the most beautiful in the area, with untouched, white-sand beaches, coral reefs and clear water.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5 Free day on Isla Colon

You have a full free day today to enjoy fully this lovely island. There are a number of optional activities that you might like to try. The island is ringed with stunning beaches and there are opportunities to snorkel or dive the rich waters off-shore. You may like to take a boat trip around the archipelago, to discover islands such as Isla Bastimentos with its lovely beaches and tropical forests. The marine park itself can also be visited and is an important nesting ground for sea turtles, as well as being an important reserve for an abundance of marine and land based life. Alternatively take a stroll through the small town, with its laid-back Caribbean vibe it's easy to spend a day wandering around the shops, enjoying something to eat and watching the world go by.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 6 Transfer to Costa Rica


Depart Bocas Del Toro by boat, heading to Almirante on the mainland, you'll then turn north and journey overland to the Costa Rican town of Puerto Viejo. You'll cross the border at Sixaola and follow the coastline to the Caribbean town Puerto Viejo. The rest of the day is free to relax or wander the quiet streets, which have a distinctly Caribbean feel.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 7 Drive and boat to Tortuguero


Departing this morning overland to Moin, you then transfer by boat and arrive at your lodge in the Tortuguero National Park, where you will spend the next two nights. As you 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. You may see a caiman on the canal bank or toucans flying overhead as you slowly make your way to your lodge. After lunch you'll take a short boat ride to the carless village of Tortuguero where you may wish to visit the Sea Turtle Conservancy Museum.

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

## DAY 8 In Tortuguero National Park

Tour the canals of Tortuguero National Park where you may see river turtles, spectacled caiman, southern river otters, and spider, howler and Capuchin monkeys. Tortuguero is also home to dozens of species of birds such as kingfishers, parrots and parakeets, hawks and eagles, and over 50 species of freshwater fish including rainbow bass and grouper. If you are lucky you might spot an endangered West Indian Manatee. The afternoon is left free for optional activities, rent a canoe or just relax at the hotel.

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

## DAY 9 Transfer to La Fortuna

Departing Tortuguero this morning, you transfer to the charming town of La Fortuna. The base for exploring Arenal Volcano is just four miles from the national park and on a clear day, the majestic volcano can be seen looming over this peaceful town

Overnight: **Premium Lodge**

**Swimming Pool Available** 


 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 10 Arenal Volcano hike and hot springs

This morning has been left free to explore at your leisure. This afternoon, hike a short distance in the national park and, subject to cloud conditions, you will be rewarded with fabulous views of Arenal volcano, while the sun sets around you. En route back to the town you will stop at the thermal baths for a rejuvenating soak and dinner.

Overnight: **Premium Lodge**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 11 Transfer to San Jose

Leaving the beauty of Arenal National Park behind you will transfer back to the capital city.

Overnight: **Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 12 Depart San Jose

Unfortunately, time to leave Costa Rica for your return to the UK.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 11 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 3 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.

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## 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

### Panama

**Lunch £:** 7.00

**Dinner £:** 10.00

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## 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

### Panama

**Bottle of Beer £:** 3.00

**Water £:** 0.70

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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.

### Panama

**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 not widely accepted outside Panama City.

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

**Local Currency:** Balboa.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US dollars are legal tender in Panama. Notes should be in good condition, otherwise they might be difficult to use.

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

## 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.

## 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.

**EXPLORE!**  
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE  
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

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

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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.

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## 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.

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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.

### **Panama**

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**

### **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.

#### **Panama**

Panama has a tropical climate with high temperature and humidity, the average temperature 30°C. The rainy season is from May to November and the summer from December to April. The rainfall is of a tropical nature, falling for 1-2 hours in the afternoon.

## **General Information**

### **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

#### **Panama**

**Population:** 3,405,813

**Size of Country:** 75,517 sq km

**Major Language:** Spanish

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Time Difference to GMT:** -5

### **Electric Supply & Plugs**

#### **Costa Rica**

2 Pin Flat

#### **Panama**

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: itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in . 1/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 1.

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