

# NATURAL WONDERS OF COSTA RICA

*February 16-25, 2018*

Grab your camera and get ready for a wonderful vacation to Costa Rica! Witness bountiful wildlife in their natural habitat, enjoy relaxing dips in ecothermal hot springs, take a boat ride along remote, unspoiled sections of Tortuguero National Park to view wildlife. Tour the Arenal Volcano, considered one of the most active volcanoes in the world. You may witness the red lava streaming down the sides as you hear the volcano's grumbling. Relax as you soak in the ecothermal hot springs and perhaps watch the lava flow down the volcano—a spectacular sight! In Monteverde, visit the Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve, home to forest fauna such as jaguars, resplendent quetzal, monkeys, ocelots, and many species of birds. You'll also have a chance to visit local farms to learn about the local culture and industries. So be sure to grab your swimsuit and prepare yourself for a trip of a lifetime—a trip filled with wildlife, scenic waterways, tropical rainforests, and knowledgeable guides to help you learn about Costa Rica.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Roundtrip airfare from Burlington, VT
- **CARIARI** (Tour a banana plantation), **TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK** (Guided cruise through the canals to view wildlife; guided walk through the rainforest), **ARENAL** (Tour a pineapple plantation; sightseeing of La Fortuna town; visit Natura Park, Tabacón Hot Springs, and Arenal Volcano), **MONTEVERDE** (Visit the Sky Walk hanging bridges; Santa Elena Cloud Forest; Trapiche Farm tour & home-hosted lunch; farewell dinner), **SARCHI**
- 18 meals (7 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 5 Dinners)
- Full-time tour manager

## WHAT'S NOT

- Airport meals
- Optional excursions
- Gratuities (tour manager, local guide)
- Optional traveler's insurance

## ITINERARY

**Day 1** – Fly from Burlington, VT to San Jose

**Day 2** – San Jose – Cariari – Tortuguero National Park

**Day 3** – Tortuguero National Park Tour & Canal Cruise

**Day 4** – Tortuguero – Sarapiquí - Arenal

**Day 5** – Arenal – Arenal Volcano

**Day 6** – Arenal - Monteverde

**Day 7** – Monteverde

**Day 8** – Monteverde – Sarchi – San Jose

**Day 9** – Fly home.

## PRICE PER PERSON:

Triple	Double	Single
\$3499	<b>\$3599</b>	\$3999

\*20% Deposit due at reservation

\*Balance due by Dec. 6, 2017.

**POB 8585 \* Burlington, VT 05402**  
**802-540-0055 [champlaintours@outlook.com](mailto:champlaintours@outlook.com)**





## NATURAL WONDERS OF **COSTA RICA** Itinerary

### **DAY 1** Arrive in San José, Costa Rica

Upon arrival, you will be met by your Tour Director, who will help you check into your hotel.

### **DAY 2** San José--Cariari--Tortuguero National Park.

Journey east to the Caribbean shore and TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK. On the way, stop at a BANANA PLANTATION to see one of Costa Rica's main exports being harvested. Later, board a motor launch for your CRUISE along the Tortuguero Canals, waterways crisscrossing a national park dedicated to the protection of endangered turtles. The trained eyes of your guide and boatman help you spot freshwater turtles, caimans, herons, toucans, egrets, and monkeys. An afternoon at leisure lets you explore Evergreen Lodge until you meet for an informative slideshow presentation on the area.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

### **DAY 3** Tortuguero National Park Tour & Canal Cruise

A local Naturalist accompanies you on a leisurely BOAT RIDE along remote, unspoiled sections of the park's waterways, explaining the bountiful flora and fauna. Enjoy a fascinating stroll through an accessible portion of the nearby RAINFOREST. During the peak nesting season (mid-July to mid-October) you may be lucky enough to observe an endangered green turtle laying her eggs under the starlight on an optional tour.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

### **DAY 4** Tortuguero--Sarapiquí--Arenal

A morning boat transfer begins your journey to the Sarapiquí area. Tour a PINEAPPLE FARM, owned by a local family, and learn about the history, cultivation, and industry of pineapples. Continue to your hotel in the lush town of Arenal, located in the shadow of Arenal Volcano. After settling in, experience the magic of the resort's pool and hot spring-fed jacuzzi or consider a walk in the nearby nature trail in search of 300- to 400-year-old trees, poisonous frogs, monkeys, birds, and possibly small animals native to the area.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

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## DAY 5 Arenal. Excursion to Arenal Volcano

During your morning at leisure, you may wish to go on an optional horseback ride or float trip. Or, you can take advantage of your resort's amenities by walking along the shaded trails nearby. Later this afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the town of La Fortuna de San Carlos, offering spectacular views of the active Arenal Volcano. Visit NATURA PARK, where a Naturalist takes you on a guided tour of this ecological park that is home to a wide variety of plants and animals from the region. During your walk, keep an eye out for the toucans, iguanas, frogs, birds,

butterflies, and caimans commonly seen here. Next, drive to nearby famous TABACÓN HOT SPRINGS for a dip in the curative and relaxing pools. Later, enjoy a dinner at the hot springs.

 Breakfast  Dinner

## DAY 6 Arenal–Monteverde

After breakfast, continue to MONTEVERDE, where you will enjoy two days in the cloud forest. This afternoon, take a guided tour on the SKYWALK hanging bridges, which combines trails and suspension bridges through the canopy of Monteverde Cloud Forest, to search for flora and fauna.

 Breakfast

## DAY 7 Monteverde

This morning, visit SANTA ELENA CLOUD FOREST RESERVE for a walking tour. Located on the Continental Divide of Costa Rica, the Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve comprises an area of 765 acres, and is home to forest fauna such as the resplendent quetzal, jaguars, ocelots, monkeys, and numerous species of birds. With almost 100% humidity throughout the year, the cloud forest experiences almost 12 feet of rain per year. Later, visit the family-owned TRAPICHE FARM, where you will enjoy a homemade lunch. While here, learn about the production of sugar cane, coffee, and the traditional ways of cultivating bananas, arracacha (a local legume), avocado, macadamia nuts, as well as other products. The remainder of your day is at leisure. Tonight, your Tour Director hosts a farewell dinner, toasting an unforgettable discovery of Costa Rica.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

## DAY 8 Monteverde–Sarchi–San José

En route to San José, visit SARCHI Village, known as the center of Costa Rican handcrafts and where you will see the artists in their workshops making the famous oxcarts. Next stop is Grecia Village to see the metal church that was imported from Belgium to Puerto Limon in 1897. The church was transported by oxcarts to its present-day location, but sat in the plaza for 10 years before being reconstructed.

 Breakfast  Lunch

## DAY 9 San José

Your tour ends with breakfast this morning.

 Breakfast

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