

Jungles & Volcanoes of Costa Rica

Trip style: Guided Walking Holidays

Destination:  Costa Rica

Trip code: CRA14-WHW10

Grades: 1, 2

Carbon Footprint:  2825kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Our Costa Rica holidays tick-off all the highlights of this ecologically rich wonderland. You'll experience the steamy jungles of the 20,000-acre Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge and sail down the Frío River searching for sloths and monkeys swinging from the trees. Head into the fog-shrouded landscapes of a Costa Rican cloud forest to spot rare tropical birds, and be wowed by walks along the lava fields and trails of Arenal Volcano National Park. Equally impressive is Rincón de la Vieja National Park where smoking craters and fumaroles hint at the massive geothermal forces at work below the earth. You'll even squeeze in time to relax on the paradise beaches of Guanacaste.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Admiring Costa Rica's tropical birds including the rare quetzal
- Discovering the active Arenal and Rincón de la Vieja volcanoes
- Relaxing on a boat ride through Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge
- Tucking into a homecooked dinner with our local family hosts
- Visiting Santa Rosa National Park

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Gatwick including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks with local leaders
- 14 nights' touring accommodation across Costa Rica
- 14 breakfasts, 9 lunches & 14 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- Visit to Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge
- All in-destination transport

TRIP SUITABILITY

This holiday offers a mix of sightseeing and a choice of walks. Easier walks range from 0.5 to 3 miles (1 to 5km) on undulating terrain; harder walks are 4 -5 miles (8km) with up to 1,291m of descent.

ITINERARY

Day 1: San José

We arrive in San José and transfer from the airport to our hotel, which is set in its own private botanical gardens. We are joined here by our without-flight guests and enjoy a welcome dinner. Minimum altitude 1,200m Maximum altitude 1,200m

Day 2: San Gerardo De Dota and the Quetzal Valley

If you wake early, why not visit the botanical garden to start your day, before we drive into the mountains to the area known as the Quetzal Valley where Costa Rica's rich birdlife thrives. With luck, we'll spot the valley's namesake bird, the resplendent quetzal. We'll stop for lunch at Mirador de Quetzales, then walk along the cloud forest trails in search of rare wildlife and flora. The evening's yours to enjoy before dinner back at the lodge. Minimum altitude 2,700m Maximum altitude 2,800m Distance: 3km

Day 3: Quetzal Valley and Reserva Savegre

You'll experience the cloud forest of Reserva Savegre today, taking the Los Robles trail to reach the viewpoint, then returning along La Quebrada trail with a boxed lunch included for our journey. You can spend the afternoon relaxing back at the hotel or if you want to explore further in your own time, why not complete one of the shorter trails such as Canto de la Aves or Los Pioneros. Minimum altitude 2,200m Maximum altitude 2,600m Distance: 7.8km total. Steep ascent at the start and over three hours' walking time

Day 4: Sarapiquí

We'll drive across mountainous areas including the Braulio Carrillo National Park to Costa Rica's Atlantic region and Sarapiquí. We'll visit an Organic Pineapple Farm, run by a local family to learn about pineapple cultivation and its importance for the local economy. The tour includes a tractor ride around the farm and an opportunity to taste their produce, including a pineapple cocktail. Once we arrive at the hotel, you'll have free time before dinner. Minimum altitude 100m Maximum altitude 100m Distance: 2km with multiple stops (two hours)

Day 5: Sarapiquí to Arenal

We'll head into the jungle to explore the tropical rainforest on Selva Verde's 500-acre private reserve with our expert naturalist guides. Then we'll travel to the Arenal Volcano area and La Fortuna to check in to our hotel and relax for the afternoon. Minimum altitude 100m Maximum altitude 100m Distance: between 3km and 5km. On the longer route, the last 200m has a steep incline

Day 6: Arenal Volcano

Explore the western side of the volcano on the Arenal 1968 trail named after the year it dramatically erupted. Hike the old lava flow trails and enjoy a picnic lunch, before a relaxing afternoon at our hotel. In the evening we'll drive to the neighbouring town of La Tigra where a local family will host us on a nocturnal rainforest nature walk followed by traditional homecooked meal. Minimum altitude 600m Maximum altitude 900m Distance: 3.2km (1.5 hours) or 5.3km

(2.5 hours) with an ascent of approximately 150m to a viewpoint La Tigra night walk minimum altitude 500m and maximum altitude 600m. Distance: 1 km

Day 7: Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge And Frío River

This morning, we'll head to Los Chiles to visit the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. A slow river boat ride will take us along the Frío River, a biologically diverse wetland conservation area where you're in with a chance of spotting monkeys, caimans, turtles, sloths, and butterflies. Our lunch is included today and later you'll have time to relax before dining out at a restaurant in La Fortuna.

Day 8: Rincón De La Vieja Volcano

We'll travel to Rincón de la Vieja Volcano in Guanacaste. Then we'll head to our hotel which will be our base for the next three nights.

Day 9: Rincón De La Vieja Volcano

Taking our packed lunch, today we'll hike through the Rincón de la Vieja National Park today, home to over 300 species of birds. We'll see part of the Colorado River and several active fumaroles of this geyser volcano. Minimum altitude 1,400m Maximum altitude 1,800m Distance: from 2.8km to 7.6km

Day 10: Rincón De La Vieja Volcano

Today is a free day for you to relax and enjoy this diverse setting, with lunch included at the hotel if you plan to stay and relax here. There are waterfall hikes and volcanic mud baths to experience, or you can relax in the Rio Negro Hot Springs. If you're feeling adventurous, there are a range of optional activities on offer including ziplining and canyoning.

Day 11: Santa Rosa National Park And Guanacaste Beaches

The beautiful Guanacaste beaches are in reach today. On the way, we'll stop at Santa Rosa National Park. Explore the trails and learn more about its history before journeying through several picturesque towns to reach the coast and our final beach-side accommodation.

Day 12: Guanacaste Beaches

You have a full day of free time and leisure. Relax by the pool, enjoy a refreshing dip at the beach, or discover one of the many optional activities.

Day 13: Guanacaste Beaches to San Ramón Cloud Forest

After a last morning at the beach, we'll head to our final destination, the San Ramón Cloud Forest – an important area of biodiversity which is nestled between the picturesque mountains of Alajuela province in the Central Valley.

Day 14: San Ramón Cloud Forest

We explore one of the most remote and peaceful areas in Costa Rica today - the waterfalls of Bajos del Toro. Surrounded by jungle and misty rain clouds, these beautiful falls offer freshwater pools to bathe in mid-hike. We'll take a packed lunch to enjoy as we take a break to soak up the scenery. In the evening, there's a farewell dinner at our hotel. Minimum altitude 890m Maximum altitude 1,125m Distance: 1km – 1.5km trail

Day 15: Poas Volcano and Departure Day

Leaving the mountains today, we'll head back to San José for our evening departure flight. On the way, we'll visit the Poas Volcano for a short walk around the crater. Weather permitting, we'll take in views of one of the largest volcano craters in the world. We'll also visit Botos Lagoon, an extinct volcanic crater housing a huge variety of wildlife, plants, and flowers. After enjoying a traditional lunch, with-flight guests will transfer to the airport for our overnight flight back to the UK. Minimum altitude 902m Maximum altitude 2,708m Distance: 1km with small number of steps

Day 16: Arrive UK

With-flight guests arrive back in the UK

Hotel Bougainvillea, San José - Costa Rica

Located just 10 minutes from downtown San José, the Hotel Bougainvillea is surrounded by large, beautiful tropical gardens – the ideal start to your holiday.

Selva Verde (Lodge), Sarapiquí - Costa Rica

Selva Verde is an eco-lodge featuring 45 comfortable rooms built on platforms so you can truly appreciate the surroundings of the Sarapiquí River. There are two restaurants, a swimming pool, plus a suspension bridge over the river and several forest trails.

Savegre Hotel Natural Reserve & Spa Lodge, San Gerardo de Dota -

Savegre Mountain Lodge is an ideal place to rest and relax in the peaceful surroundings of a Costa Rican cloud forest. Rooms come with all mod-cons, plus a private terrace overlooking the tropical scenery.

Volcano Lodge & Thermal Resort, Arenal Volcano - Costa Rica

Living up to its name, this tropical retreat puts you at the foot of the mighty Arenal Volcano. There are two swimming pools and two bubbling hot tubs, all backed by views of Costa Rica's most famous volcanic giant. Superior rooms all have private terraces with outdoor seating, while Costa Rican dishes and a long list of drinks are served in the hotel's restaurant and bar area.

Papagayo Golden Palms Beachfront Hotel, Guanacaste Beaches - Co

This boutique beachfront property sits in 10-acres of tropical greenery and puts you on the doorstep of the Gulf of Papagayo. There's a small pool surrounded by shade-giving palm trees, plus leafy garden paths that lead to the stretch of secluded white sand beach known as Playa Panama. On the dining scene, the thatched-roof restaurant offers a wide range of dining options while the bar serves up fresh cocktails.

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel, San Ramon Cloud Forest - Costa

Built by former Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo, Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Nature Reserve, is a charming mountain hotel located adjacent to a working dairy farm. The 34 well-appointed casitas are comfortable replicas of traditional adobe farmhouses, complete with whitewashed walls, tile floors, cane ceilings, and wood-burning fireplaces.

Hacienda Guachipelín (Lodge), Rincón de la Vieja - Costa Rica

Located at the foot of the Rincón de la Vieja volcano, Hacienda Guachipelín offers the ideal setting to explore this fascinating region. Our Superior Rooms offer comfortable, down-to-earth accommodation set amongst the property's ancient tempisque and cedro amargo trees.

Bahia del sol Beach Front Boutique Hotel, Guanacaste Beaches (M)

The Bahia del Sol Beach Front Boutique Hotel, complete with a pool, jacuzzi, and a spa, tropical gardens and an extensive beach front with its golden sand and the spectacular sunsets of the Pacific Coast. The spacious, air-conditioned rooms come with terrace and garden views, featuring flat screen TV and tea & coffee making facilities. The Restaurant serves gourmet tropical cuisine in addition to a pool and snack bar on site.

Aranwa Sarapiquí Rainforest Lodge, Sarapiquí (March 2026)

The hotel is located close to the Tirimbina Biological Reserve, within lush green gardens and comes complete with a swimming pool, a spacious terrace, relaxing restaurant and bar. Spacious rooms feature Wi-Fi, a safe, en-suite facilities, with a covered terrace to enjoy views of the rainforest or fragrant gardens.

Vaccinations & health information for Costa Rica

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see if any health precautions are needed. The following websites provide a wealth of information on travelling and health: www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk Medical services are not free to visitors and health insurance is therefore a necessity. Vaccines: Hepatitis A, Typhoid & Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Diphtheria, malaria and rabies prevention may be recommended too. Mosquitoes, chiggers and a little biting black fly can present a problem if you are allergic to bites. Ticks are present but no diseases are known to be spread by them. Most people are not bothered at all. A spray repellent with DEET is recommended. Malaria is present in Costa Rica, although more towards the south and Atlantic coast, away from the areas we will visit. We would urge you to consult your GP before you depart for up to date information. COVID-19 Many countries have lifted their COVID-19 restrictions but there are several with rules still in place. Please be aware that these restrictions can change frequently so you should consider packing a box of lateral flow tests and some FFP2 facemasks in case required. If you test positive on one of our holidays you may be asked to isolate and be unable to continue your holiday with the group. With this in mind, we recommend you have full COVID-19 insurance cover. If you test positive, please inform your HF Holidays Leader and the hotel management who will confirm any local restrictions and what to do next. We ask you to please check the FCDO website for the most up-to-date COVID-19 advice well in advance of travel.

Passport & Visa information for Costa Rica

Passports A full passport is required and must be valid for one day beyond the date of departure from Costa Rica.
Visas British citizens with full right of residence in the UK do not require a visa for Costa Rica. Those who do not have British passports should check requirements with the embassies or consulates of Costa Rica.

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Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)
