

# Wonders of Costa Rica

**April 10 - 19, 2023 • 10 Days • \$3875**

Costa Rica is an explosion of life! With a seashore to mountaintop topography, a tropical climate, and a geographical identity making it a land bridge between the Americas, it boasts a hospitable 12 ecological zones and 30 types of rain forests.

[Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Classic Curated](#)

- [Overview](#)

No other country on the planet has a greater number of species per square mile or offers so many fun and educational pursuits for the traveler in such a small package!

Our outstanding itinerary is filled with long-tested WAI favorites such as a central highlands coffee experience, a fun and educational chocolate tour (the 6th food group?!), a visit to a colorful butterfly conservancy, an early morning canal ride and walk in Tortuguero National Park, Cahuita jungle walking with howler monkeys, and several other Costa Rican “pura vida” (full of life) adventures!

Our hotels in particular on this tour are rural delights, with expansive gardens and beautiful locales, providing a wonderful retreat after a full day’s activities and a relaxing haven from which to observe the wildlife for which Costa Rica is so well known.

## Highlights:

- **Central Highlands** - with a coffee tour and lunch at a family-owned coffee plantation. Coffee is the bean that raised Costa Rica out of Central American poverty! NOTE: We will be in the Central Highlands for several days, but the coffee tour is an optional activity on Day 1 for travelers who arrive a day early on Day 0.
- **Arenal** - a picturesque, perfectly conical volcano whose slopes have provided a haven for an astonishing number of species
- **Tortuguero** - two days to explore this jungle hideaway for iguanas, monkeys, sloths, and toucans. Cruising through rain forest canals at dawn on the lookout for critters is a once in a lifetime experience!
- **Cahuita National Park** - boasting a memorable “dry jungle” trail along the Caribbean in the company of monkeys and other Costa Rican critters

## Including:

- Airport to hotel group transfers on first and last day
- All land travel by motorcoach as outlined
- Tourist-class hotel accommodations or better in remote, uniquely Costa Rican settings

(all facilities en suite)

- 20 meals: 9 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 8 dinners as listed (BLD)
- 10 walk routes
- Walking fees (6 stamps) for those collecting IVV credit (pending sanction approval)
- Cultural & historical expertise of a local guide throughout
- WAI guide service throughout - 2 guides
- All tipping for local guides, coach drivers and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy; a limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement for \$600. We also provide a roommate matching service.

### **Activities/Visits to:**

- Sarchi Oxcart Shop
- Butterfly Conservatory
- Arenal Sky Tram
- El Silencio Mirador Reserve
- Tirimbina Rainforest Center Chocolate Tour
- Jungle river cruise to Tortuguero
- Roundtrip boat transfer to Tortuguero Village
- Tortuguero wildlife canal cruise
- Tortuguero National Park
- Roundtrip boat transfer to Cerro Tortuguero
- Cahuita National Park
- Escazú Encanto de la Piedra Blanca Sugar Cane Mill and Mascarade visit
- More fun stops than we can list!

### **Optional Excursions:**

- Central Highlands Coffee Tour (Day 1)
- Arenal Sky Trek zipline experience (Day 3)

- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)



# Adventure Pace

**Tour Pace:** 1 2 3 4 5

**Walk Challenge:** 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

## Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

**Tour Pace:** On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

**Walk Challenge:** This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Contact Us](#)

## Important Info



### Group Size

Maximum 24 travelers.



### Hotels

Tourist-class hotel accommodations or better in remote, uniquely Costa Rican settings (all facilities en suite)



### Meals

21 meals: all breakfasts, 3 lunches and 9 dinners as denoted in itinerary (BLD)



### **Airfare**

Not Included. The official start and finish points for this Adventure are our beginning and ending hotels near Juan Santamaría International Airport in San Jose, Costa Rica (airport code SJO).



### **Transportation**

Included. We use motorcoaches seating about 40.



### **Traveler Age**

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

## **Itinerary**

*Click on each day to reveal more details. (BLD) refers to meals included - Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.*

### [Day 1-Apr 10: Arrive Costa Rica \(D\)](#)

Our Costa Rica Adventure begins today as travelers arrive into Costa Rica's Juan Santamaría International Airport. Our hotel is set beside a lovely pool amidst tropical vegetation in nearby La Garita. The timing of our Welcome Orientation meeting and dinner will be provided once all travelers' flight itineraries have been received.

*Travelers who opt to arrive a day early into this Central American paradise are invited to join us for a coffee plantation tour! A morning drive takes us through pastoral panoramas of the Central Highlands to a small, local coffee plantation. Here, we learn about the potent little bean that revolutionized Costa Rica's economy in the 19th century, then share lunch with our hospitable hosts in their pleasant plantation setting, a delightful cultural connection!*

*This excursion is about 4 to 5 hours long and may be offered in the morning or the afternoon. Price \$140*

### [Day 2-Apr 11 : La Garita - Arenal area \(BD\)](#)

### *Arenal Waterfall Walk – 4 km, rated 1B*

More scenic Central Highlands driving takes us north for a stop in the village of Sarchi to observe traditional methods of crafting wooden coffee carts, and browse during one of the rare shopping opportunities on this trip. From Sarchi, we continue to Arenal Volcano, stopping for lunch in one of the small towns en route. Our home for the next two evenings is a marvelous eco-lodge tucked away in secondary rainforest in the shadow of one of the planet's more active volcanoes. Upon arrival, a walk through the grounds to Danta Waterfall is available. The trail takes us from the lodge grounds to the Danta River to view the waterfall, and back through rolling farmland to the lodge.

The optional after-dinner activity is hunting for tiny, colorful Costa Rican poison arrow frogs!

### [Day 3-Apr 12: Activities in Arenal area \(BD\)](#)

*Lodge Rainforest Walk – 2 km, rated 1A*

*Butterfly Conservancy – 1 km, rated 1B*

After breakfast this morning, a wildlife walk guided by lodge staff shows us more about how life is hidden in plain sight in a Costa Rican rainforest. Later this morning, we visit a butterfly conservatory that houses the largest exhibition of butterflies in Costa Rica. Here we learn about the butterfly lifecycle, see butterflies from all four of the Arenal region's climate zones, and learn about butterfly, amphibian (i.e. frog), and rainforest regeneration research being done at the center.

Following a break for lunch, the afternoon activity takes us into the jungle canopy on the Sky Tram and Trek excursion—an excellent aerial tram/zipline experience. All of us ascend through the Arenal jungle on the slow-moving Sky Tram, enjoying expansive views and up-close-and-personal connections to the rainforest canopy. At the far end of the tram line, those ready for an adrenaline rush return via Sky Trek—whizzing through the jungle on ziplines with hearts pumping. Those preferring the more sedate pace of the Sky Tram have time to enjoy the views before returning by Sky Tram over the same route to the bottom station, there to be reunited with the Sky Trekkers. The Sky Tram experience is included; the Sky Trek zipline is an optional activity. Price \$80

### [Day 4-Apr 13 : Arenal – Sarapiquí \(BLD\)](#)

*El Silencio Walk – 5 km, rated 3B*

*Chocolate Rainforest Walk – 4 km, rated 2C*

On the opposite side of Arenal Volcano, El Silencio Rainforest Walk takes us into thick tropical jungle that opens onto breathtaking views of Lake Arenal and the volcano! Along the trail, watch for raucous howler monkeys, curious coatimundis, tiny whizzing hummingbirds, and brilliant Blue Morpho butterflies.

Following the walk, we board the bus for a drive to Sarapiquí, a region in northern Costa Rica boasting some of the country's richest pockets of untouched forest.

The afternoon activity is an enchanting visit to Tirimbina Rainforest Center. Here, on a plot of land that was once a cacao-growing plot, our guide shares the intriguing process of transforming cacao into chocolate, with the tantalizing possibility of sharing a few samples! Following this fascinating hands-on demonstration, the Chocolate Rainforest Walk takes us through a rainforest nature reserve, crossing several bridges and introducing us to multiple ecosystems.

#### [Day 5-Apr 14: Sarapiquí - Tortuguero \(BLD\)](#)

##### *Tortuguero Village Walk - 5 km, rated 1B*

Following an early morning drive to the Caribbean side of the divide, we board a jungle riverboat that winds through a labyrinthine network of canals and rivers to Tortuguero National Park. Our home for the next two nights is nestled in the Caribbean jungle, accessible only by boat or plane. This little strip of land sandwiched between the Caribbean and a watery world of lagoons and canals is caught in a time warp—no cars, no streets, and few signs of post 19th century life. Our “rooms” are all separate units, placed upon stilts in the jungle accessible on a raised boardwalk.

Following lunch, join us for a boat ride across the river to walk into Tortuguero village. Tortuguero is a watery paradise hiding on the north Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica shrouded in its own isolated reality. The 35 kilometers of black sand beach next to the tiny hamlet is the nesting site of more endangered green sea turtles than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere (nesting season is later in the summer). Our walk includes a short visit to the humble yet interesting Sea Turtle Conservancy.

A return boat ride brings us home to our lodge to rest, take in the ever-changing panorama of the forest around us, and join the group for dinner.

#### [Day 6-Apr 15: Activities in Tortuguero area \(BLD\)](#)

##### *Pachira-Aninga Tortuguero Nature Walk - 2 km, rated 1A*

##### *Cerro Tortuguero & San Francisco Walk - 3 km, rated 3B*

An unforgettable morning wildlife cruise takes us in pursuit of toucans, sloths, iguanas, monkeys, and other Costa Rican critters parading through this wildlife wonderland! A late morning walk on our lodge's nature trail provides another intriguing window into the vibrant life, sometimes lethal, waiting to be discovered in these Caribbean rainforests.

Later this afternoon, an ascent of Cerro Tortuguero on a new, easy-to-navigate walkway finishes with a stroll through the humble settlement of San Francisco, housing immigrants from nearby Nicaragua drawn to tourism jobs in Tortuguero.

### [Day 7-Apr 16: Tortuguero - Puerto Viejo \(BD\)](#)

We leave Tortuguero this morning for a return journey downriver. After a rendezvous with our bus, we stop for lunch, then continue further south along the Caribbean. Our destination is the laid-back south Caribbean town of Puerto Viejo near Cahuita National Park. Time moves slow in this isolated corner of Costa Rica as well—it's a great spot to unplug and unwind by the pool!

### [Day 8-Apr 17: Activities from Puerto Viejo \(B\)](#)

#### *Cahuita National Park Walk - 9 km, rated 1B*

Today's trail begins with a delightful couple of kilometers on a boardwalk through deserted rainforest. The remainder of the path then winds along a palm-lined trail through a completely different kind of Costa Rica jungle – a “dry rainforest”. The route through Cahuita National Park parallels a crystalline, sapphire sea offering opportunities to spot a menagerie of slinking sloths, brilliant butterflies, curious coatimundis, mischievous white-faced capuchin monkeys, and any number of winged denizens of the park.

Late afternoon is free to enjoy the laid-back vibe in town or lounge around the pool back at our lodge directly across the road from the beach. Dinner is on your own so feel free to explore the possibilities near the our lodge or stay “home” and eat in the lovely lodge restaurant.

### [Day 9-Apr 18: Puerto Viejo - La Garita \(BD\)](#)

We leave the Caribbean today to return to the Central Highlands. The day's main activity offers cultural connections in the colorful mountain town of Escazú. A sugar cane mill visit here provides a demonstration of traditional sugar production in Costa Rica. Don Gerardo's masquerade workshop then opens a fun window into Costa Rican culture by demonstrating the process of creating these colorful traditional “puppets” used to celebrate festivals and parades.

This evening, we stay in a lovely boutique hotel near Escazu. Join us tonight for a Farewell Dinner to reminisce about our explorations throughout captivating Costa Rica!

### [Day 10-Apr 19: Depart Costa Rica \(B\)](#)

We leave Costa Rica this morning on a return flight to the USA with fond memories of our adventures in this land of breathtaking beauty, diversity, and wonder!

## More Details

*Click on each heading for more details.*

### [How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a non-refundable \$300 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Soon after registration, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

### [What's a Classic Curated Tour](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are hand-crafted with the help of trusted in-country partners to tailor itineraries to WAI specifications.

When planning Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us inside these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see but touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, local walking guides amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

### [Walk Ratings](#)

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Walks that are oriented more towards education may take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we’re stopping less to talk. In most cases, we are not “strolling.” We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of “training” beforehand to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion.

If you have questions about your ability to participate, please contact our office at [fun@walkingadventures.com](mailto:fun@walkingadventures.com).

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

#### INCLINE

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.



3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

## TERRAIN

- A. Almost entirely on pavement.
- B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.
- C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

## [How is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official start and finish points for this Adventure are our beginning and ending hotels near Juan Santamaría International Airport in San Jose, Costa Rica (airport code SJO).

Airport to hotel shuttles will be provided on the first and last day.

Details about flight arrangements and recommended travel agent contact information will be provided by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

## [Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. This is now especially true in the era of COVID-19, which is typically treated like any other illness for travel insurance purposes. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provide air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or [llp@wtpdx.com](mailto:llp@wtpdx.com)

Sharon Mitchell: 971.261.2091 or [smitchell@wtpdx.com](mailto:smitchell@wtpdx.com)

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the [SquareMouth.com](https://www.squaremouth.com) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

Allianz

Betins

Travel Guard

Travel Insured International

*NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid*

*buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing “cancel for any reason” insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.*

### [What if WAI Cancels the Tour?](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 12 participants, in which case registered participants would receive a 100% refund of payments received.

This refund policy contains one exclusion. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Though it is rare, unforeseen circumstances can force us to cancel a tour. In cases where supplier’s non-refundable policies are imposed, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

### [COVID-19 Policies for This Tour](#)

WAI has relaxed our policies and currently require no mitigation procedures (current [WAI Coronavirus Policy](#)). However, Walking Adventures International policy includes endeavoring to comply with any COVID-19 policies in place in the destinations through which we travel.

Costa Rica has now dropped all COVID-19-related restrictions. As of the date of this writing (August 12, 2022) previous requirements for vaccination and filling out a digital Health Pass have been dropped.

We are not currently aware of any COVID-19 policies or restrictions that will impact this tour in Costa Rica.

WAI will update travelers upon learning of any changes.

Travelers participating in *Wonders of Costa Rica* must agree to abide by policies in place at the time of travel.

### [What Happens Next?](#)

Upon registering for this Adventure, you will receive a welcome email and initial invoice notifying you of your tour balance and due date. All payments for the tour or optional services/excursions can now be made online.

Soon after registration, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip.

Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure (January 10, 2023) and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the enclosed itinerary. Walking is still and always the best way to experience our world. Join us for this memorable Walking Adventure program through the Costa Rica—Land of Natural Wonders!

## Your Guides



### **Chrissy Jones**

Chrissy has traveled in Asia, Europe, and North, Central, and South America. She is immensely grateful for opportunities to discover and appreciate new environments and cultures. During the school year Chrissy works as a physical therapist supporting students



with physical disabilities. Her husband, Todd, often teams with Chrissy when his occupation as a teacher allows. During her fourth tour in Costa Rica in the past 4 years, Chrissy will be joined by WAI guide **Jana Dorway** and **Oscar Vargas**, our local Costa Rica guide. They look forward to sharing this land of natural wonders with you!



## **Jana Dorway**

Jana has always appreciated the experiential, paradigm-expanding value of travel. She has been privileged to explore destinations on 5 continents, generally with her husband, fellow WAI guide, Roger Dorway. Jana's career as a teacher provided her with a gift for connecting with people and since retirement, she has increased her commitment to discovering the world, fostering a growing desire to share cultural and historical insights as part of the WAI guide family. Jana is eager to share the *Wonders of Costa Rica* with you!



## **Oscar Vargas**

Over twenty years ago, Dan Friesen, WAI owner, met Oscar on the first WAI adventure in Costa Rica. On that tour, he provided excellent service as our coach driver. Oscar has since expanded his skills as a tour guide, has now earned a place in the top echelon of WAI favorite guides, and offers this window into his love of sharing Costa Rica. *“Growing up with the most incredible number of species of flora and fauna gave me a unique passion to share Costa Rica with visitors. For more than 25 years I have helped people explore the special culture, history, gastronomy, national parks, volcanos, and all the magic of the ecosystems. As an ambassador of the land of “Pura Vida”, I love to call visitors ‘amigos’.”*