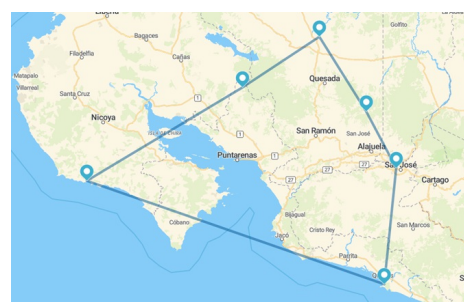




Costa Rica, 10 Days · Tailor-made by car

## Pura Vida Route

If anything defines Costa Rica, it's the word "nature". And in its purest state, without filters or add-ons. The whole country is a natural stage full of protected parks home to hundreds of plants and animals, many of them endangered. The show isn't just on the land, though. Underwater is a world awash with fauna and flora well worth discovering. Among its most famous inhabitants are the turtles that come to this corner of the globe to lay their eggs. The fascinating "Pura Vida Tour" will take you to some of Costa Rica's most impressive natural sites, such as the Poás and Arenal volcanoes, the Monteverde Cloud Forest and the Santa Elena Reserve. Countless trails through the rainforest will lead you to unique waterfalls, lakes and craters. But there'll also be time to enjoy the waters of the immense Pacific. We'll do so in the area of Guanacaste, where the ever-popular beaches of Tamarindo and Sámara await us. And also towards the south, staying in the vicinity of the Manuel Antonio Natural Park, where we'll find totally unspoilt beaches where our only company will be monkeys and raccoons. Come to Costa Rica and savour its cuisine and unmistakable way of life! Switch off from everyday life and let yourself be carried by what is known as the 'slow life'. Only then will you understand why everything here is Pura Vida, as the name of the tour suggests!



NATURE

FOR COUPLES

EXOTIC

**Departure date:** Departures from July 2026 till July 2027

**From:** London

## Travel details

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## ● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - SAN JOSÉ

Flight departure from the city of origin to San José, Costa Rica. After the necessary arrivals and customs formalities, you can pick up your rental car and start discovering why the motto of this country is as simple as the way of life of its inhabitants, who have made this country the happiest in the whole of Central America: Pura vida! After a quick bag drop at the hotel, we'll set out to explore the bustling and cosmopolitan San José. It's the capital of Costa Rica and one of the most populated cities in the country, so much so that half of all Costa Ricans live or work here. As soon as you arrive, you'll be struck by the hustle and bustle of this metropolis. A breakneck pace that couldn't be further apart from the peace and quiet that you'll come across in the surrounding countryside. One of the city's true treasures is its neoclassical-style Teatro Nacional. You won't be able to stop looking at it. It's best to park up the car for a while and stroll through the city centre. Next to the theatre is the Museo del Oro (Gold Museum) and just a few minutes away is the Museo del Jade (Jade Museum), which both showcase amazing pieces of Pre-Columbian culture. You can also wander along Paseo Colón and through the Parque Central until reaching the market. This is a somewhat maze-like place with countless aisles where you'll find practically everything. It's a great place to start tasting the local produce, as there's a wealth of wallet-friendly food stalls. You have the rest of the day off to walk or rest. Overnight stay in San José.

## ● DAY 2 · SAN JOSÉ - POÁS VOLCANO - ARENAL VOLCANO

After a typical breakfast, we'll set off on today's drive to discover a natural treasure not so far from San José: the Poás volcano, one of the most visited sights in the country. And this will also be your first real contact with local drivers. You'll come across lots of Costa Ricans whizzing around on motorbikes or scooters, so make sure you keep your eyes on the road. Signposts don't really abound here, so it's important to have a good GPS to guide you to your destination as directly as possible. To get to the volcano, take the road to Alajuela and then onto Poás Volcano Park, the oldest in Costa Rica. It'll be just over an hour on the Carretera 712 and Carretera 1 roads. Before venturing in, we recommend using a good mosquito repellent and plenty of sun cream. This will prevent insect bites and sunburn. Once ready, you can enter the park. It's one of the few volcanoes in the world that can be accessed by car practically up to the summit. Once you get to the car park, a gentle ten-minute walk will take you to the crater viewing point. The route is accessible for the whole family, so all you need are comfortable shoes and your eyes wide open to admire the beauty of its fauna and flora. This volcano is the most active in the country, although it hasn't erupted for more than sixty years. The main attraction is its 300-metre-deep crater with a magnificent lagoon in the middle. Just imagine, its waters are at a constant temperature of 40°C. The sulphur fumaroles are also a fascinating sight, as are the dry lava and ash cones that you'll come across if you decide to take a walk along one of the signposted trails. One of them will take you to Botos Lagoon, a fairly gentle hike that shouldn't take you more than thirty minutes. Then, it's back to the car. We still have a journey of almost three hours to our next destination. En route to the town of La Fortuna, nestled at the foot of the Arenal Volcano, we recommend a stop at the spectacular La Paz waterfalls, just a few minutes away from the Poás. The course of the river is dramatically interrupted here by the majestic falls surrounded by lush vegetation and which can reach a height of 28 metres. Enjoy the vistas while driving, as this area is home to some of the most important coffee plantations in Costa Rica. The Carretera 4 road will take you to the town of La Fortuna, location of tonight's hotel. We'll have time to leisurely explore the town tomorrow. Overnight stay in Arenal Volcano.

### ● DAY 3 · ARENAL VOLCANO

Let's start the day with a good breakfast! Today, we'll be visiting a local treasure, the Arenal Volcano National Park, which is famous for its spectacular views. Here you'll have great options to spend the day. We recommend an excursion on foot or on horseback along the trails of solidified lava that run through the rainforest, formed during the last eruption back in 1992. You'll also see the impact that the lava has on nature. From the Lavas viewpoint, you'll have the chance to photograph a solidified lava river dating back to 1968. While trekking through its lush rainforest, you'll see all kinds of animals such as coatis, monkeys and toucans. And you'll also have the chance to bathe in one of the natural pools with hot springs! Of course, before you dive in, check the temperature. Other must-sees are the Cerro Chato volcano or La Fortuna Waterfall. However, make sure you're well prepared and in comfortable clothes for the trek to this waterfall, as you'll have to go down and then up around 300 steep steps to get there. It's worth it, though, as you can take a dip in the stunning pool at the foot of the waterfall. If caving is your thing, we recommend a trip over to the Venado Caves, which were created more than 15 million years ago below sea level. It was the movement of local tectonic plates that formed these caves, which are today open to the public. If you don't mind ending up covered in mud (as at times you'll have to pass through underground rivers), venturing into these caves will be an unforgettable experience. But if you're looking for some rest and relaxation, there's also another alternative in this magnificent park. Head over to the Tabacón hot springs resort, which has rave reviews and is the ideal sanctuary for recharging your batteries. Overnight stay in Arenal Volcano.

### ● DAY 4 · ARENAL VOLCANO - MONTEVERDE

Today is a day to mix and match as you wish. You can take advantage of the morning to further explore Arenal Volcano, or go straight to Monteverde to discover this area of the country. If you want to enjoy the volcano and its surroundings, you should head over to Lake Arenal. This is Costa Rica's largest body of water and several villages were submerged during its creation. The northwest wind of Costa Rica is one of the most constant in the world and this lake is used to generate electricity throughout the region. And a wind that kitesurfing and windsurfing lovers go crazy about, as they whizz past the watchful eye of the windmills. Lake Arenal is considered one of the best windsurfing destinations on the planet, especially from the end of November to April. Even if you don't want to get into the water, you can follow some of the routes to discover this part of the Arenal jungle along its hanging bridges. If you decide to head for Monteverde, you only have to take into account that it's about three hours away if you take the Carretera 619 road. The route runs along Lake Arenal and starts off by climbing a steep road that glides between the hills and valleys of the Tilarán mountain range, which provide access to villages populated by agricultural workers in the lower hills. As you ascend, walking along a rustic unpaved road, plants begin to appear. After the village of Monteverde, you'll enter the cloud forest of this Biological Reserve. The well-known Monteverde Cloud Forest is a natural haven that contains 2.5% of the biodiversity of the whole planet. It's divided into two zones. One is Monteverde Rainforest and the other is the Santa Elena Rainforest Reserve. This huge nature reserve is home to more than 600 species of animals and over 2,000 types of plants. A variety so extensive that it will leave you speechless. Monteverde is also a Quaker settlement and became famous in the 1980s thanks to a report in the prestigious 'National Geographic' saying that it was the perfect place to observe one of Central America's most famous birds: the quetzal. There are hundreds of activities to do around here. Just plan the day well and choose the activity that best suits your tastes and budget. In the Butterfly Garden, you can observe more than 400 different species and study their life cycle. Want to discover even more secrets of the animal kingdom? At the Monteverde Theme Park, you can visit a fascinating frog pond. Here there are 25 species of frogs that live together in terrariums within the forest itself. Meanwhile, the protagonists of the reptile house are snakes, lizards and turtles. As you'll see, there's fauna of all kinds at this park, but also flora. Stepping into the Orchid Garden is akin to visiting the Garden of Eden. If you've always liked these flowers but find them difficult to keep, then your luck is in. You'll be given vital tips here on how to keep orchids flourishing at home, as well as being able to admire up to 400 different types. As for excursions, you also have a vast range to choose from. One of them will take you on a hike through the "Children's Eternal Rainforest", the largest private reserve in the country. Climbing lovers will find the highest peak in the area in Monteverde, the Cerro Amigos, which towers over the horizon at 1,842 metres above sea level. If instead you want to enjoy the scenery from a different perspective, you can plump for one of the horseback trails to admire the waterfalls or marvel at the sunset overlooking the Gulf of Nicoya. (Note: Suggested excursions and visits not included). Overnight stay in Monteverde.

## DAY 5 · MONTEVERDE

And onward on our adventure-packed journey! Take advantage of all the various activities on offer in Santa Elena. The country's first zip lines were built here, so you're in the best place to discover the canopy and fly through the forest while surrounded by jaw-dropping nature. If you're not too keen on heights, you'll also find activities to enjoy the views without having to dangle your feet in the air. You can do this by crossing picturesque suspension bridges and walkways or riding the transparent sky tram that runs through the cloud forest. Another trip, and that's sure to fascinate the little ones, is a tour of the factory where the Quaker community makes cheeses and other dairy products such as yoghurt and ice cream. You can watch the entire cheese-making process and meet the children of the group of pacifists who were drawn to Costa Rica in the 1950s by the disarmed environment. At sunset, we'll head back to Monteverde to enjoy some of its after-dark excursions that will show you the park in a very different way. Some will take you through the Escondido Valley canyon, while there's also the Santamarias Night Walk. Eighty % of the animals in the cloud forest are nocturnal, so if you want to see them in their natural habitat, this is the best possible option. Venture into the woods with a specialist guide and unearth the amazing nightlife of the cloud forest! (Note: Activity not included). Overnight stay in Monteverde.

## DAY 6 · MONTEVERDE - GUACIMAL - PACIFIC BEACHES (CHOOSE BETWEEN GUANACASTE OR MANUEL ANTONIO)

We'll leave Monteverde for good today to head over to the Pacific beaches, on the west coast of Costa Rica. On our itinerary, we can drive down to Guacimal, whose river is responsible for supplying water to the Monteverde Nature Reserve and coffee plantations in the area, and then hit the Pan-American Highway, which links the country from north to south and also passes through almost all the countries in the Americas, from Alaska to Buenos Aires. It's a comfortable, multi-lane road and will let you cover distances in less time than in previous days, but it is often very busy. Afterwards, we'll continue on the tour towards the beaches of the Pacific. From here, you can decide where you want to stay, either the area of Guanacaste or the area of Manuel Antonio. If you decide on the first one, you'll have to follow this road northwards towards the city of Liberia (capital of the region) and then continue towards the coast. If your option is Manuel Antonio, you'll have to follow this road southwards towards the Puntarenas turnoff and then continue towards Tarcoles, Playa Jaco. From here, keep driving along the coast to get to Quepos and Manuel Antonio. Below, we'll let you know everything you can see in both places so you can choose the destination that best suits your tastes.

**OVERNIGHT STAY IN GUANACASTE.** Our first option will take us to the area of Guanacaste, which is the perfect base for discovering its natural landscapes, volcanoes and turquoise blue waters. If you want to continue marvelling at its nature, here you'll find several National Parks for trekking and canal boat sailing, such as Palo Verde, Diría National Park, Santa Rosa National Park, the neighbouring Guanacaste Park, and Rincón de la Vieja Park. In the latter two, you can go hiking in search of their spectacular volcanoes: the Orosi and the Rincón de la Vieja. At this point in the trip, you'll probably have surrendered to Costa Rica's characteristic 'slow life'. And if you're tired, take a rejuvenating mud bath in one of the hot springs near these two volcanoes. You'll feel like a new person! However, if all you want to do is laze in the sun on a heavenly beach, switch off from everyday stress and take it easy, on the north Pacific coast you'll find some of the best beaches in the country, with a certain amount of tourist development. Beaches with white, pink or grey sand; and some with a fantastic choice of activities. Among our favourites are Flamingo, Tamarindo, Potrero or Samará, where you can enjoy sun, sea and activities such as surfing, sport fishing, water sports, diving... One of the most remarkable experiences on the tour is swimming with white sharks and tropical fish (using the appropriate and ultra-secure protection cages, of course). What's more, you can take a boat trip out to the conservation area of Isla Plata. It's just over an hour's drive from Liberia, the capital of Guanacaste, and is well off the beaten track. Nearby, on the coast of the Las Baulas National Marine Park in Guanacaste, is the place where hundreds of leatherback turtles, characterised by their black spots and ridged shell, will come and lay their eggs between the months of October and March. They do so mainly on Playa Grande. (Note: You can get to Playa Grande by car and this activity can only be done at night, accompanied by a guard and only when the turtles have already reached the sand. There's a maximum of 15 people per guide, so you must book in advance on the National Park website. It is forbidden to take photos with a flash or to shine torches onto the turtles). This National Park is also home to Tamarindo beach. Its waves are famous among surfing aficionados who flock here from all over the world. There's also an amazing marine world under the water. And even though it's a nature reserve, it's possible to fish here in the open sea. Just catch one of the sports fishing boats that set sail each day to guarantee a perfect marine adventure. At the end of the day, you can marvel at one of the world's most spectacular sunsets at Tamarindo beach. And make sure you sample some guaro, a traditional sugar cane brandy drink that has been made in the country since the 19th century.

**OVERNIGHT STAY IN MANUEL ANTONIO.** If you've chosen to stay in Manuel Antonio, there's also a whole world of

**OVERNIGHT STAY IN MANUEL ANTONIO.** If you've chosen to stay in Manuel Antonio, there's also a whole world of relaxation, sun-worshipping and enjoyment just waiting to be discovered.

To get there, we'll take the same road south all the way to Puntaneras, the country's main port with views of the Pacific.

We'll skirt along the coastline until reaching the towns of Quepos and Manuel Antonio, originally small fishing villages that have flourished thanks to tourism. Manuel Antonio instantly seduces travellers with a fascinating fusion of outstanding natural sites and a huge range of activities and water sports. The town is dotted with cute stores and craft markets, art galleries and a great selection of pavement cafes and restaurants that really liven up in the early evening. The park is one of the most famous in the country, as it's a natural paradise boasting 800-plus species of fauna and flora that will guarantee a continuous adventure. Stroll through the tropical forest and look out for the animals that you may come across... from titi monkeys to sloths. In the dry season, you'll definitely see them hunting for food near the beach, while in the rainy season you'll have to head deeper into the forest to track them down. Being inside a nature reserve, the beach here is totally unspoilt. It's amazing! You can take a dip in the sea practically by yourself, but watch out! A monkey or a raccoon might just skip over to your towel in search of food or some entertainment. At each end of the beach, there's another natural spectacle well worth a photo: iguanas basking in the sun. This is undoubtedly an image of Pura Vida!

Overnight stay in Guanacaste or Manuel Antonio.

## ● DAY 7 · PACIFIC BEACHES: GUANACASTE OR MANUEL ANTONIO

**OVERNIGHT STAY IN GUANACASTE.** If you've decided to stay in Guanacaste, you can get to know even more beaches on the north Pacific coast. This includes one of the most famous in Costa Rica: Sámara beach. Take out your camera and immortalise this authentic image of paradise. A dream come true. Welcome to the Pacific! Sámara is a long white-sand beach with palm trees and turquoise waters. You'll soon discover why it's considered one of the best beaches in the country. And it also has a whole load of activities which will be to your liking. You'll be able to dive among the marine fauna and coral reefs; have a go at surfing, windsurfing and kitesurfing; enjoy relaxing horseback rides... At the same time, it's a place for sitting back and relaxing. You'll be able to sign up to a yoga or pilates session with unique views you'll never forget. All at one with Costa Rica's nature. Pay attention wherever you look, because hundreds of exotic animals are sure to be watching you. You can do pretty much everything on the Pacific coast, such as visiting the Diría National Park. As well as being a nature reserve, the park has one of the largest concentrations of mahogany trees in the whole world. Fortunately, the Costa Rican government declared it a National Park and avoided the massive deforestation that the area had been experiencing.

**OVERNIGHT STAY IN MANUEL ANTONIO.** If you're staying in Manuel Antonio, you can go to Marino Ballena National Park, which is an hour's drive away. When you arrive, you must leave your car at the entrance of the park because vehicles are not allowed to enter. Of course, the reward for walking a few minutes is that you'll see a stunning beach known as Tómbolo de Punta-Uvita that has the shape of a whale's tail. To see it at its best, get there first thing in the morning when the tide is low. From here, there are boat trips to see humpback whales, dolphins, manta rays and hammerhead sharks. (Note: Whale-watching has two seasons, from mid-July to mid-November and from late December to April. Suggested excursions not included). You can also go snorkelling and admire one of the most outstanding coral reserves in the country, visit some of the local waterfalls or simply luxuriate in the waters of the Pacific.

Overnight stay in Guanacaste or Manuel Antonio.

## ● DAY 8 · PACIFIC BEACHES - SAN JOSÉ

IN GUANACASTE. Today's a good day to visit some of the beaches around Guanacaste. Our first stop is Conchal beach, which is an hour's drive down the Carretera 21 road. It's a beautiful beach famous for having sand composed of millions of tiny crushed shells. Later, you can drive for thirty minutes over to Bahía de los Piratas (Pirates' Bay), where you'll find a beach surrounded by islets that is perfect for watching the sun dip down into the sea at the end of the day.

IN MANUEL ANTONIO. If you're staying in Manuel Antonio, today is the day to visit the viewpoint of the only park in Costa Rica that Forbes Magazine included among the 12 best natural parks in the world. You'll need a good hour to leisurely drive along the track that takes you to Punta Catedral. En route, you might spot monkeys and sloths hanging from a tree and eating breakfast. What an experience! The views on arrival are spectacular. Vertical landscapes of pure nature that seemingly plummet down onto the shoreline. Later, you can have some beach time on Playa Espadilla. Other beaches in the park are Gemelas, Biesanz and Puerto Escondido, which is an 800-metre cove embraced by cliffs. It's only accessible on foot (just over 1 km) from Manuel Antonio beach. A tip before you go: keep an eye on the tide and plan well what time you'll leave the beach to avoid any last-minute surprises. What's for sure is that Biesanz and Puerto Escondido will be less crowded than other beaches. So don't hold back, lay out your towel and enjoy the day shaded by a palm tree.

Once you've spent the morning there, you can set off on the return journey to San José for dinner. To calculate at what time you should leave for the capital, bear in mind that there's a drive of 4½ hours from Playa Conchal, or just under 3 hours from Biesanz or Puerto Escondido on the Carretera 34 and then the Carretera 27 roads. Once you arrive in San José, we recommend savouring some local cuisine at one of its trendy restaurants. A recommendation? Try the famous ceviches or the excellent tamales, a mixture of pork, beans, rice, sweetcorn and vegetables wrapped in a banana leaf. Wash them down with some chan, a sweet drink made from chan seeds and which has a lavender-like flavour.

Overnight stay in San José.

## ● DAY 9 · SAN JOSÉ - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Night on board.

## ● DAY 10 · CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

## Your trip includes

### Your trip includes

- |                                             |                                         |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Return flight.                            | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in San José.   | ✓ Selected meal plan in San José. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Arenal Volcano. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Arenal Volcano. |                                   |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Monteverde.     | ✓ Selected meal plan in Monteverde.     |                                   |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Manuel Antonio. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Manuel Antonio. | ✓ Rent-a-car.                     |
| ✓ Insolvency protection.                    |                                         |                                   |

### Your trip doesn't include

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ✗ Departure taxes in Costa Rica. | ✗ Possible toll charges. |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|

## Destinations Visited

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San José



Poás Volcano National Park



Arenal Volcano



Monteverde



Sámara



Manuel Antonio xx



## Important remarks

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- Please check with your international vaccination centre about the recommended healthcare measures in Costa Rica.
- Driving in Costa Rica: 1. Due to the country's orography, and specially in the rainy season, it is recommended to choose an all terrain vehicle for the routes that are carried out, mostly to get to Monteverde and Rincón de la Vieja since these sections are unpaved. 2. Due to the routes being slow, the average speed in open areas should be approximately 50 kph (30mph) and 40 kph ( 25 mph) in the high areas.
- If the return flights call at any points within the United States, consult the documentation necessary to make such a stopover.
- Generally in Costa Rica the accommodation in the triple rooms have two double beds or one double and one single bed and the quadruple accommodation has two double beds.
- A travel insurance with the following coverages is required: \$50,000 in medical expenses and \$2,000 in quarantine costs.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The Manuel Antonio National Park is closed on Tuesdays.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.
- A credit card is requested to rent any vehicle and pay any insurance fee or additional service.
- Tickets to the National Parks not included, you can consult this website;  
<https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/resvlinea/Paginas/default.aspx>