

Kat's Great Adventures

Costa Rica – El Camino de Costa Rica Hiking Tour 2023

Guided Tour

10 Days / 9 Nights



El Camino de Costa Rica is a remote and unique experience that connects the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean with world-class trekking through the beautiful mountains of Costa Rica. It is designed to attract adventurers looking to immerse themselves in this tropical destination, off the beaten path. Rural community involvement is integral to the experience and cultural exchanges are a daily occurrence through food, conversation, and the warm welcome at the comfortable lodgings. On this 10 day tour, professional local guides will lead guests along routes through breathtaking locations from sea to sea! The hikes crisscross the mountains through rain and cloud forest reserves, coffee, sugarcane, and banana plantations and past private fincas and ranch lands, deep valleys, rushing rivers and waterfalls. Add this the all the unexpected bonus experiences and we assure you there is not another trip like this that celebrates the diversity of Costa Rica!

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TICO # 50022092

Itinerary Day to Day

Day 1: Arrival in San Jose

After passing through Immigration in the San Jose Airport, you will be met by a member of the National Chamber of Tourism (CANATUR) and given a sticker with your name on it. A tour representative will be waiting to greet you and transfer you to your hotel in San Jose.



Day 2: Pacuare Nature Reserve

Following a hearty breakfast and fresh Costa Rican coffee, you will be transferred to the Local Terminal in San José and connect with a morning flight to Tortuguero. Upon arrival at the local airstrip you will cruise the canals of Tortuguero National Park by boat – with an eye out for animals in the lush rainforest – this is a great introduction to Costa Rican wildlife! Your immersion into Costa Rica continues with a delicious not-to-be-missed local lunch at Miss Junie's. Miss Junie inherited her "soda" – basically a thatched roof structure with tables and chairs – from her grandmother, Miss Bell, in the 1970's. The tables have stories to tell after feeding hungry visitors for over 70 years – some of the more notable include the scientist Dr. Archie Carr and even the likes of Che

Guevara and Fidel Castro! Today, Miss Junie's is considered one of the best Caribbean restaurants in Tortuguero, serving up fresh flavor and sharing local customs with visitors. No lunch is complete without dessert and Cloyd, a local personality in his own right and Miss Junie's son, steps in to provide his "coconut tour", highlighting nearly lost dessert recipes made from coconuts and other local ingredients. After lunch, embark on a last boat transfer south to Reserva Pacuare. Reserva Pacuare is a rustic lodge with unique Caribbean charm built for biologists. The food is ample and simple, the rooms are comfortable and clean (*note some rooms share a bathroom). The Reserve buildings are located in front of the Caribbean Sea, where sea turtles can be seen with luck many months of the year at night (March – September). The Reserve, famous for its turtle nesting activity, specializes in sea turtle research programs and encourages guests to be part of it. If time permits, you'll be invited for a walk around the trails of the reserve.



Day 3: Rios Tropicales Lodge – Pacuare River - Trek: Las Brisas - Tsiobata Indian Reservation 16 km

Wake up to the sound of howler monkeys in the canopy and waves breaking on the beach in front of your room. After breakfast, you'll board an early boat transfer and then bus transfer to Las Brisas de Pacuarito for the beginning of the most adventurous and challenging trek of this tour. All along, there will be ample opportunity to meet native Costa Ricans and learn more about their way of life in this part of the country – your local guide will even teach you a few words in the “lengua Cabecar”! Today will lead you through parts of Costa Rica little known to visitors and locals alike! You will walk through a native Indian village to Tsiobata and parts of the Barbilla National Park - Cabecar Reservation complex. Glimpse locals in traditional huts and magnificent rainforest trees – more than 1,000 years old! Take in the amazing plant diversity of this ancient forest – with large morpho butterflies flitting along your path. Toward the end of the hike, your surroundings open up as you walk through various farms growing bananas, cassava, corn, and raising pigs and chickens – a wonderful opportunity to learn about native farming practices on this side of the country. The hike wraps up as you arrive on foot to your river lodge on the beautiful and mighty Pacuare River.



Day 4: Casa Turire Hotel – Turrialba - Rafting Pacuare River, Class III-IV 2.5 – 3 hours

Today allows you to rest your legs a bit after yesterday's trek – yet you'll cover ground in a different manner. Following breakfast, head out for a day on the water surrounded by some of Costa Rica's most pristine rainforest. After a full safety briefing, set off in state-of-the-art rafting equipment to raft 30 kilometers of the famous Pacuare River through world class III-IV rapids. A delicious picnic is served by the river. Near the town of Siquirres at the take-out you will take a land transfer to the verdant town of Turrialba. The Turrialba Valley is lush and exceptionally productive for local agriculture – guarded by

the impressive Turrialba Volcano. Your hotel tonight is Casa Turire, a beautiful hacienda located on farmland on the shores of La Angostura Lake. There are canoes and kayaks to take out on the lake, or you may opt to walk the beautiful gardens teeming with colorful tropical birds.



Day 5: Hotel Rio Perlas Spa and Resort – Orosi - Trek: El Humo - Tapanti 16 km

This morning you begin with a transfer to the small village of el Humo and start your trek through coffee and cane fields! The path then leads to secondary gravel roads with soft ups and downs and small stream crossing. The first half of the trek is through rural ranch lands before you reach the Tapanti National Park. During this part of the day you will begin the climb from the lowlands and the rainforest to the highlands and the mystic Costa Rica Cloud forest – at the higher points, the vistas along the cordilleras is superb. This will be your first opportunity to see the emblematic birds of the cloud forest as well as chat with local "campesinos" of the high mountain – the first growers of coffee! After a lovely local lunch you will begin a



steep descent, with views of the beautiful Orosi valley ahead of you, before you ultimately reach Kiri Lodge at the entrance of Tapanti National Park. Here you will be picked up and taken to your lodging at the beautiful Río Perlas Spa and Resort – submersed in nature and tranquility.



Day 6: Verdesana Forest Lodge – Cartago - Trek: Muñeco - Verdesana 14 km

Following a hearty breakfast, you will walk right out of the hotel for your day's hike. Cross over a small stream and across the soccer field of Muñeco de Navarro. Then, away from the farming roads, you will experience a cloud forest trail at its most glorious stage: mushrooms, birds, flowers and primary forest with old big trees dominating the canopy. Though this is rated as the second-most difficult day on the trail due to the terrain, the scenery is so beautiful that you almost forget! The day begins at an elevation of 1,666 meters and you'll spend the day climbing to 2,166 meters. Along the way, you'll see indicator plants of cooler temperatures compared to a few days

ago in the Cabecar Reservation. For example, you'll find crops like coffee, large epiphytes such as "Barba de Viejo" and orchids covering the canopy branches, and breathtaking mountain views. Today also provides an excellent opportunity for cloud forest birdwatching – keep an eye, and ear, out for bellbirds and quetzals! At the end of the trail, you will reach Palo Verde del Guarco, a beautiful region located in the cooler cloud forest belt of the Talamancas. To celebrate your efforts on the trail, your local guide will treat you to a mountainside lunch featuring fresh, local dishes, served up with amazing views. Once at the lodge, we suggest a stroll around the grounds – you'll be delighted by the display of the many hummingbird varieties that visit the "opossum tail hedges" grown there!

Day 7: Palenque Tarrazu – Tarrazu - Hike: Jardín de Dota - San Pablo 12 km

This morning will be an early departure from your lodge as we make our way to the Pacific side of the country. You will notice the weather change and the day heats up much faster with the heavy sun so hiking in the early part of the day is ideal. You will be driven to Jardín de Dota where you will start your hike along local secondary roads with amazing vistas. Along the route you'll find the first typical crops of the Pacific side of the mountains of Costa Rica, such as coffee, tomato trees and avocados. You will have ample opportunity to meet local people and experience the local culture of the area firsthand. A very big highlight of the day is meeting the owner of El Casquillo Farm where you'll enjoy a lunch featuring healthy cooking with veggies straight from the garden. The farm is owned by Ms. Felicia and everyone loves her! Not only is she an incredible cook but she spends time sharing about her organic and sustainable farm, invites diners to tour her kitchen, and shares how she has turned her home into a self-described "smart house" by saving water and energy.



Day 8: Villas Lirio – Manuel Antonio - Hike: Napoles - Esquipulas 18 km

Today is your last hike of this Costa Rica Adventure. After breakfast you will be transferred toward the village of Napoles. Step by step today, you will feel the warm weather of the Pacific Ocean. A special highlight of the day will be a visit with Don Lilo and his wife Maria – learning about their coffee farm and "trapiche" or old school sugar cane mill as well sharing a tasty treat! They're known to offer us a private tortilla making class that you can enjoy with a fresh locally grown coffee in their house. A very lovely couple to spend time with! You will be entering the foothills in Esquipulas and eventually the rainforest lowlands near Quepos! This last section has spectacular views of the Pacific waters in the middle of large coffee groves and vast mountains. As you look

back at the week you've enjoyed, you realize the diverse landscapes and thereby plant life and wildlife that makes up this beautiful little slice of Central America. The intense beauty of the country only topped by the incredible welcome of the locals you've met and have been hosted by along the way! A last transfer near Naranjito will take you to the coast but not before we stop into a small local bar for a "mercedita cerveza" – or well-deserved beer! Enjoy the last two nights at and around the beaches of Manuel Antonio.

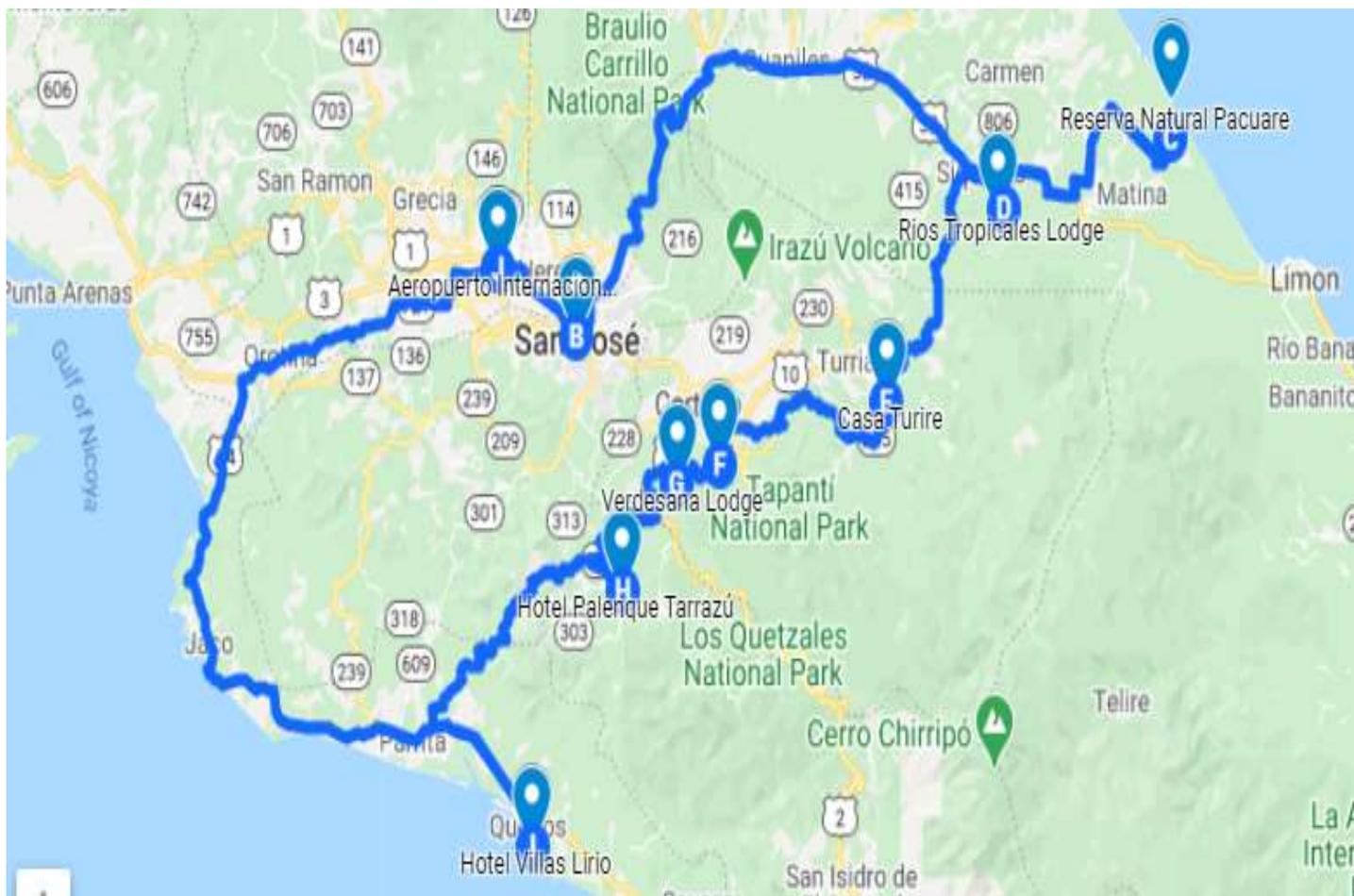
Day 9: Manuel Antonio

Leisure day to enjoy the hotel facilities, the beach or take an optional hike into the National Park of Manuel Antonio.

Day 10: Manuel Antonio

Pick up at your hotel for a departure transfer to San Jose International Airport for your international flight back home. Check in 3 hours prior to your scheduled flight time.

Route



Technical Characteristics:

Route Profile: Hard. Challenging daily treks from 16 – 18 kilometers. Rugged ascents and descents. Elevation from sea level up to 2733 meters. You need to be reasonably fit and used to long treks on uneven terrains. White water rafting experience is not necessary, but while you are on the raft you need to paddle most of the time.

Distance: Hiking 76 km
Rafting 30 km

Travel Season: Departures any day on request from January to August, November

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Price per Person

Double Occupancy	\$ 4295.00 USD
Single Supplement	\$ 500.00 USD

*Based on 4 people participating in tour

Accommodation:

3* hotels and lodges



Included:

- Private land transfer service from the airport to hotel at start of tour, and from hotel to airport at end of tour
- Accommodation for 9 nights
- Meals according to program (8 x breakfasts, 8 x lunches and 3 x dinners)
- Private early land transfer to Local Terminal in San José. Local/ regional flight to Tortuguero including boat ride service to your hotel in Tortuguero
- Tortuguero National Park Tour followed by a local lunch in town my Miss Junie's
- Afternoon Coconut Show with Cloyd
- Boat transfer service to Barra Pacuare and connect with Pacuare Reserve
- Boat transfer service to Goshen Dock and connect with land transfer to Las Brisas
- Manuel Antonio National Park Private Guided Tour including lunch en route

Not Included:

- Airport departure tax (\$29 USD)
- Travel insurance
- Gratuities
- Any lodging, tours or meals not specified in the itinerary
- Extras in hotels (laundry, phone calls, room service, etc.)
- Personal equipment

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