

Coast to Coast in Costa Rica



TRIP OVERVIEW

Explore laidback coastal cities, wildlife-rich national parks and dramatic volcanic landscapes on this tour through the natural wonders of Costa Rica. Spot unique wildlife and colourful underwater reefs in Puerto Viejo, walk among the treetops in the Monteverde Reserve, and journey from smouldering volcanoes to cascading waterfalls in La Fortuna on this breath-taking 15-day tour.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Costa Rica. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to San José D

Depart London on your scheduled flight to San José, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 2: San José to Puerto Viejo de Limon B/L/D

This morning, enjoy a sightseeing city tour of Costa Rica's vibrant capital city. Witness the city's main historical landmarks, starting in the eastern part of the city at Democracy Plaza and the National Museum then journeying through the city centre to the parks, museum and stadium to the west. After lunch, travel to Puerto Viejo, a laidback coastal city with a strong Afro-Caribbean influence and stunning stretches of beach.

DAY 3: Puerto Viejo de Limon B/L/D

Experience fantastic snorkelling and scenic nature walks as you take in Costa Rica's famed wildlife and natural reserves. Board a boat and travel to Cahuita National Park where you can snorkel along the 600-acre-long coral reef – a gloriously colourful haven for marine life. Snack on fresh tropical fruit as your boat returns to shore then take a leisurely guided hike through Cahuita's vivid rainforest, enjoying far-reaching ocean views and the chance to spot howler monkeys, sloths, armadillos, toucans and macaws. At the end of your picturesque hiking trail, feast on a Costa Rican-Caribbean lunch before returning to your hotel in Puerto Viejo.

DAY 4: Puerto Viejo de Limon to Sarapiquí B/L/D

After breakfast, transfer to the Sarapiquí tropical rainforest, crossing valleys and mountains dotted with picturesque villages before checking into your lodge nestled in the heart of the rainforest reserve.

DAY 5: Sarapiquí B/L/D

Wake to the singing of birds and the relaxing sounds of the tropical rainforest and enjoy breakfast in your verdant surroundings. Make your way to the Sarapiquí River where you will float down the river in a raft, surrounded by incomparable jungle beauty. Enjoy two hours immersed in the lush tropical rainforest, floating along the Sarapiquí River which lies next to important reserves renowned for their biodiversity. Exotic amphibians, countless tropical birds, otters, fish, sloths, iguanas, and incredible flora will make this experience unforgettable. Disembark and journey to a nearby pineapple plantation where you'll travel into the fields on a specially designed coach pulled by a tractor. Learn about the growth of organic pineapples and other sustainable crops produced here, including yucca, lemon, guanabanas, and peppers. Enjoy delicious smoothies and slices of fresh, organic pineapple as you listen to Costa Rican folktales then return to your lodge.

DAY 6: Sarapiquí to La Fortuna B/L/D

Journey through lush plantations and cattle ranches, finally arriving at

your hotel in La Fortuna. Marvel at the fantastic views of the mighty Arenal Volcano which forms a dramatic backdrop and enjoy the remainder of the day to explore this tranquil, mountainous town

DAY 7: La Fortuna B/L/D

Hike through the cool undergrowth of La Fortuna, a scenic 40-minute walk that ends at the site of the thundering La Fortuna Waterfall. Witness the natural beauty of the cascading water as it emerges from dense jungle, falling into the emerald pool at its base. Relax or swim in the refreshingly cool waters before lunch at a nearby restaurant. In the afternoon, follow the lava trails around the base of the Arenal Volcano, formed by the lava flow of the 1968 eruption. The hike provides extraordinary views of the Arenal Volcano and Monteverde mountains, and the chance to spot local flora and fauna and enjoy some birdwatching.

DAY 8: La Fortuna to Monteverde B/L/D

Travel to Monteverde, a small community located at the top of the Tilarán Mountain Range that boasts spectacularly diverse cloud forest reserves. On arrival, enjoy a free afternoon to explore the town or relax in your hotel.

DAY 9: Monteverde B/L/D

A full day observing Monteverde's natural beauty starts with a visit to the Sky adventure park. Here you will enjoy the flora and fauna of the area; The sky walk combines trails and suspension bridges, with lengths of 984 feet and heights above the canopy of Monteverde cloud forest. In the afternoon, gain insight into Costa Rica's greatest agricultural produce. Learn more about the wonderful world of coffee before you participate in a chocolate-making session and taste the region's cacao beans. A sugarcane demonstration follows, allowing you to extract sugarcane juice the traditional way before enjoy a glass of fresh juice and pieces of cane.

DAY 10: Monteverde to Rincon de la Vieja B/L/D

Depart Monteverde and travel to Rincon de la Vieja, home to the majestic Rincón de la Vieja Volcano. Check into your hotel with the remainder of the day at leisure.

DAY 11: Rincon de la Vieja B/L/D

Set out on today's tour of the majestic Rincón de la Vieja National Park, dominated by two active volcanoes. Friendly ranch horses will carry you on a 45-minute to the Las Pailas entrance of the Rincon de la Vieja National Park. Meaning "The Cauldrons" in Spanish, the Las Pailas area shows off the awesome power of the Rincón de la Vieja Volcano, and you'll witness steam and sulphur pouring out of the ground while nearby pools bubble with hot volcanic water. After this unique experience, ride to a nearby canyon then walk along a short trail to the base of the canyon where the picturesque Oropendola Waterfall plunges into a turquoise pool. After a relaxing swim and time at the waterfall, travel back to your hotel on horseback.

DAY 12: Rincon de la Vieja to Manuel Antonio B/L/D

Journey to Manuel Antonio, home to lush tropical forest, powder-soft beaches, and colourful coral reefs, where the rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 13: Manuel Antonio B/L/D

Visit the stunning Manuel Antonio National Park home to spectacular white-sand beaches, tropical lowland wet forest and coral reefs. The area is home to an astonishing variety of exotic wildlife that you can seek out on a guided rainforest walk from white-faced and squirrel monkeys to three toed sloths, iguana and toucans.

DAY 14: Manuel Antonio B/L/D

Today is at leisure for you to explore the beauty and unique atmosphere of Manuel Antonio.

DAY 15/16: Manuel Antonio to San José to UK or Extension B/L

Transfer to the airport in San José, stopping for lunch along the way. Board your overnight, return flight to the UK or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Costa Rica. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. If you are staying in a lodge during your tour, plumbing and electricity supplies can vary and, in some cases, infrequent, with electricity only being accessible during certain times of the day. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in San José you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Best of Costa Rica**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Best of Costa Rica representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact Best of Costa Rica during your stay the details are:

Best of Costa Rica

Robledal, Uruca, San José. Ave 29A

Contact number: 00506 2290 1302

E-mail: mercuryholidays@bestcostaricadmc.com



Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **Best of Costa Rica**

Contact details:

24 hour telephone: 00506 8936 1212

Email address: mercuryholidays@bestcostaricadmc.com

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen, insect repellent and hat
- Waterproof lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Lightweight clothing (jeans are not recommended)
- Sweater
- Swimwear
- Camera and charger

- Small day pack for hikes/treks
- Lightweight/travel towel
- A plug adaptor - the electricity supply is 120 volts and 2 or 3 flat pin plugs
- Binoculars
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for your trip to Costa Rica. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destination's Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity. Please note if your flight is via America an ESTA will be required.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks

vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Tour Guides - National Guide

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. You will also be joined by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll

around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Coast to Coast in Costa Rica is intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. Our guides will always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Tipping

It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £2-£3 per person per day. This is a total of £45 per person to budget for tips on your trip. You may give the tips to the guide and driver personally at the end of the tour for your convenience. Tips are accepted in any currency.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Electricity Supply

The electricity supply is 120 volts and 2 or 3 flat pin plugs in Costa Rica.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Costa Rica is the Costa Rica Colon, known as CRC, but US Dollars are also widely accepted in the major cities. It is preferable if

you have smaller denominations. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in the local currency. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £200- £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

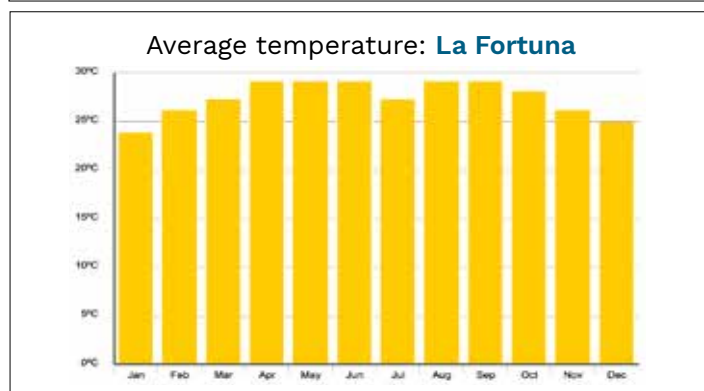
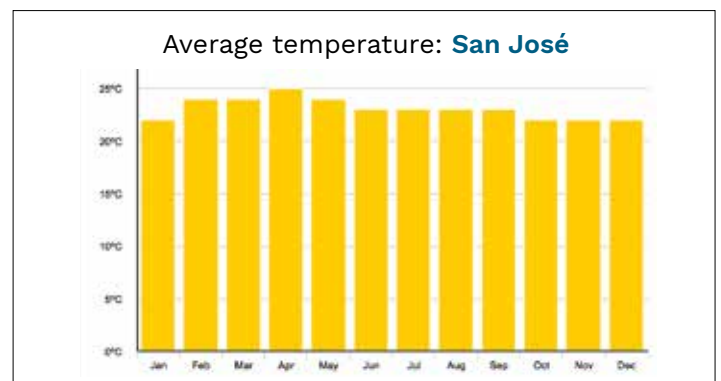
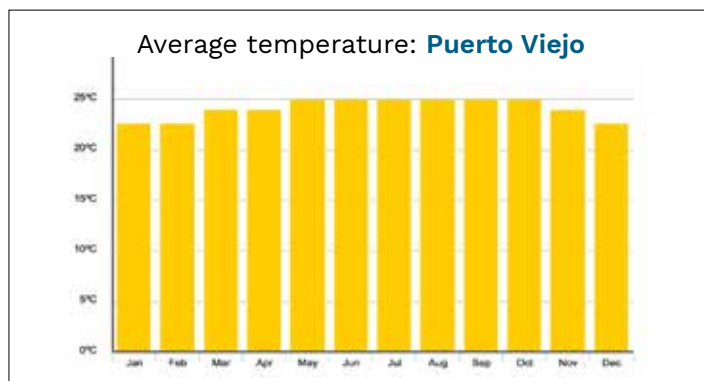
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Manuel Antonio Beach Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



El Parador Hotel



TRIP OVERVIEW

Enjoying beautiful beaches and varied wildlife, Manuel Antonio is one of the most popular regions to in Costa Rica. Your add-on offers the chance to explore this picturesque area or simply unwind on its pristine beaches.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Manuel Antonio.

Manuel Antonio

Situated close to the magical national park, Manuel Antonio is one of the most picturesque parts of Costa Rica's coastline, affording stunning views and beautiful beaches. Your stay on the white sandy shores offers the opportunity to take part in some of the various activities on offer in the local area including hiking, guided tours and canopy walks.

Hotel Information (3 or 4 nights depending on departure date):

Your stay will take place at one of the following resorts:

5★ El Parador Hotel on Bed & Breakfast

Address: Manuel Antonio Norte, Quepos 6350, Costa Rica,
Contact number: 00506 2777 1414

OR

4★ San Bada on Bed & Breakfast

Address: Manuel Antonio, Quepos, Aguirre.
Contact number: 00506 2777 5333

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

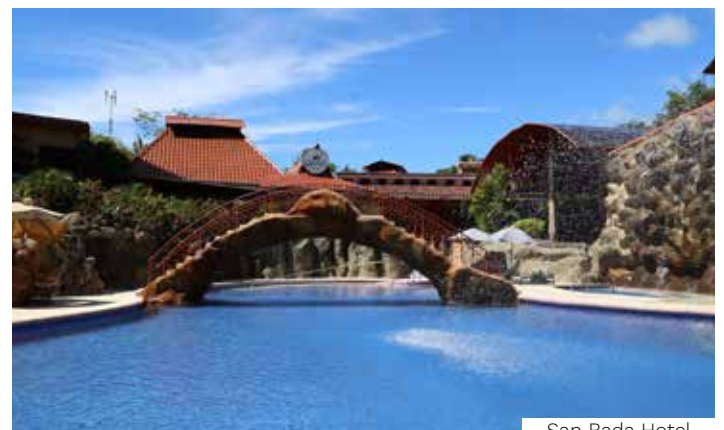
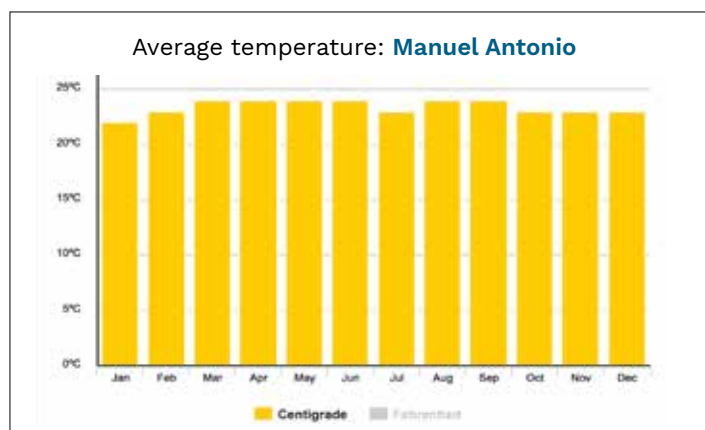
Tour Guides

Your stay in Manuel Antonio is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



San Bada Hotel

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Tortuguero Mini Tour Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Round off your tour with a mini tour of Tortuguero National Park. Tortuguero, which translates to 'Turtle Catcher', is renowned as the breeding ground of the green turtle and offers spectacular coastal scenery in addition to unique flora and fauna.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Tortuguero.

DAY 15: Manuel Antonio to San José B/L/D

After breakfast transfer to San José, stopping for lunch along the way. Upon arrival in San José, you will be transferred to your hotel for the evening. Upon arrival at the hotel enjoy a cup of Costa Rican coffee while you watch the daily life of the locals.

DAY 16: San José to Tortuguero B/L/D

Early this morning, head to the Tortuguero National Park, journeying through small towns and extensive banana and pineapple plantations on the way. Swapping from car to boat you will travel along rivers and canals into the park which is an excellent opportunity to get an introduction to the unique wildlife and the scenery of the region. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and after lunch, you'll visit the village of Tortuguero. Later you'll return to the hotel for dinner and your overnight stay.

DAY 17: Tortuguero B/L/D

Following breakfast, you will join a guided walk along the private paths of the hotel. Returning for lunch, you will then take a boat tour through the park's canals. Famed for being the home of five species of sea turtles, along with numerous birds, amphibians and other animals, Tortuguero National Park is a sight to behold. Between July and September, there's also an optional night excursion to see the sea turtles nesting.

DAY 18: Tortuguero B/L/D

This day is yours to spend at leisure in Tortuguero.

DAY 19: Tortuguero to San José B/L/D

This morning, we will journey back through the canals to reach the pier where your ground transportation will meet you. Travel back to San José for your last night in Costa Rica.

DAY 20: San José to the UK B/L

Transfer to the airport for your return flight back to the UK.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover personal purchases, laundry service, souvenirs, drinks plus any meals not included.

Tour Guides

This is a partially escorted tour extension, meaning that you will be escorted by a local, English-speaking guide during excursions.

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour. Land/boat transfers and the excursions will all be shared with other lodge guests.

Hotel information

Tortuguero (2 or 3 Nights): 3★ Pachira Lodge

Address: Pachira Lodge, Tortuguero

Contact number: 00506 2257 2242

San José (2 Nights): 4★ Crowne Plaza San Jose Corobici

Address: Contiguo al Parque Metropolitano La Sabana, Sabana Norte, San José Province, San José, 10108

Contact number: 00506 2543 6000

The hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Please note: For extensions falling between certain dates, your stay in Tortuguero will be 2 nights long and the day at leisure in Tortuguero will not apply. The duration will have been confirmed at time of booking.



Pachira Lodge

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**