Costa Rica’s Natural Heritage

11 days from $3,981 total price from Miami
($3,795 air & land inclusive plus $186 airline taxes and fees)

In this small Central American democracy kissed by nature, our small group discovers a nation’s wealth in four distinct regions, from cloud forest to rainforest, Central Valley to Pacific Coast. As Costa Rica presents its staggering display of biodiversity – pristine landscapes, unique microclimates, exotic flora and fauna – we enjoy a relaxed yet comprehensive exploration that celebrates Costa Rica’s wide-ranging natural resources.

Day 1: Depart for San Jose, Costa Rica We arrive in the Costa Rican capital and transfer to our hotel located in the Escazu area outside the city. This afternoon and evening are at leisure.

Day 2: San Jose After meeting our Odysseys Unlimited Tour Director and fellow travelers at this morning’s breakfast briefing, we embark on an excursion to Irazú National Park, whose active volcano last erupted in 1994. At 11,260 feet, Irazú stands as Costa Rica’s tallest volcano, as well as its largest; and presents a spectacle of nature, as it rises from a flat, bare landscape coated in ash. We return to our hotel late this afternoon; tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner there. B,L,D

Day 3: San Jose/Arenal Region We leave this morning for the Arenal region, passing picturesque villages along the way. We stop at the Doka Coffee Estate, located on the fertile slopes of Poas Volcano, where we learn about coffee-making and Costa Rica’s coffee crop, one of the country’s largest exports. Continuing on, we stop in Carrizal at the family-owned Botanical Orchid Garden, with tropical trails, exhibits, nurseries, and gardens all dedicated to the wondrous orchid plant. After time to explore here, we travel on to Arenal and our hotel, which offers magnificent views of Arenal Volcano and where we dine tonight. B,L,D

Day 4: Arenal Region This morning we visit a local elementary school to enjoy a cultural exchange with the children and learn about Costa Rica’s vaunted educational system – the country boasts a literacy rate of more than 95%. We continue on to Eocentric Danaus, a biological reserve focused on conservation, environmental education, and sustainability. A series of trails winds through the secondary forest, where we see diverse flora, including orchids, bromelia, and heliconia, along with some of the preserve’s 150 species of birds, sloths, and bats, among other fauna. Highlights include a butterfly farm with 30 different species and a natural water spring that attracts waterfowl, alligators, and iguana. Later today there’s time for more volcano viewing before and after dinner (at a local restaurant) from a comfortable perch at our hotel. B,L,D

Day 5: Arenal Region On this morning’s visit to Arenal’s hanging bridges Sky Walk, we have the special opportunity to experience the rainforest from the canopy level as we traverse a series of five suspension bridges high above the forest floor. While we observe the rainforest from a unique perspective, our naturalist guide will point out some of the flora and fauna that thrive here. Then we return to our hotel, where the remainder of the day is at leisure to relax amidst the beautiful grounds and thermal waters. Lunch and dinner today are on our own. B

Your Small Group Tour Highlights

Irazú Volcano excursion • Doka Coffee Estate • Carrizal’s Botanical Orchid Garden • Visit with schoolchildren • Eocentric Danaus Biological Reserve • Arenal hanging bridges Sky Walk • Night viewing of Arenal Volcano • Monteverde Cloud Forest biological reserve • Tenisque River float safari • Three-night Guanacaste stay at a beachfront resort

Day Itinerary Hotel Rating
1 Depart U.S. for San Jose InterContinental Sup. First Class
2 San Jose InterContinental Sup. First Class
3-5 Arenal Region Arenal Manoa First Class
6-7 Monteverde Cloud Forest El Establo Mountain Hotel First Class
8-10 Guanacaste JW Marriott Guanacaste Sup. First Resort & Spa Class
11 Depart Guanacaste for U.S.

Ratings are based on the Hotel & Travel Index, the travel industry standard reference.

We see Arenal, one of the world’s most active volcanoes, from a safe distance.
Day 6: Arenal Region/Monteverde Cloud Forest
We travel today to the “green cathedral” of Monteverde. En route we stop to visit a non-profit handicrafts cooperative dedicated to enhancing the economic and social well-being of local women artists. After lunch on our own in Santa Elena, we continue on to our hotel, arriving late afternoon. We dine tonight at a local restaurant in Monteverde. B,D

Day 7: Monteverde
This morning we embark on a guided walk through Monteverde’s biological reserve, learning about the amazing biodiversity in this relatively small area. After lunch together we visit the Monteverde Bat Jungle to learn about Costa Rica’s diverse – and important – bat population. Late in the afternoon we return to our hotel for time at leisure before we dine together this evening. B,L,D

Day 8: Monteverde/Guanacaste
We depart by coach this morning for Guanacaste, Costa Rica’s stunning northwest Pacific coastal region. Along the way we visit Monteverde’s delightful Butterfly Garden, with a variety of species including the stunning blue morpho and the virtually transparent glasswing. After a stop for lunch, we reach our resort hotel overlooking the Pacific mid-afternoon. B,L,D

Pre-Tour Option
February 2-5, 2022
Tortuguero National Park
4 days/3 nights for $795 total price
Single Supplement: $145

Encounter exceptional biodiversity, from rainforest to marsh, where fresh water meets the sea to form canals, lagoons, and wetlands; and also to provide an important turtle nesting reserve. An ecological tour de force!

Your Tour Price Includes
• Round-trip transfers San Jose/Tortuguero by van and boat
• 3 nights’ accommodations: 1 night in San Jose at InterContinental Costa Rica (Superior First Class); 2 nights in Tortuguero National Park at Mawamba Lodge (First Class)
• 8 meals: 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners
• Included sightseeing: Tortuguero town and Caribbean Conservation Center; two boat safaris along the Tortuguero canals
• Services of an Odysseys Unlimited Tour Director
• Gratuities for dining room servers, airport and hotel porters, and all drivers
• $100 frequent traveler credit towards your next UCLA/Odysseys Unlimited tour ($200 after 3 tours; $300 after 10 tours)

Day 9: Guanacaste
A float safari on the Tempisque River highlights this morning’s excursion to the Palo Verde region, which is both an extraordinary wetland and also one of the world’s last tropical dry forests. In this unique ecosystem, we can expect to see abundant bird- and wildlife, including monkeys, iguanas, and crocodiles. After lunch together we return to our hotel mid-afternoon, with the remainder of the day at leisure along one of Costa Rica’s most beautiful Pacific Coast settings. B,L

Day 10: Guanacaste
Today is at leisure to enjoy the beautiful beach and other amenities of our hotel, including an outdoor infinity pool. Optional activities include kayaking, hiking, or visiting the lively town of Tamarindo. This evening we gather at a farewell dinner to celebrate our Costa Rican adventure. B,D

Day 11: Depart for U.S.
We transfer to the airport this morning for our return flights to the U.S. B

I’d recommend all UCLA Alumni Travel Tours – I’ve taken 13 of them.”
– Pam Higgins ’67, M.A. ’72, Ph.D. ’74

Tour Departs: February 5, 2022
Prices include international airfare and all taxes, surcharges, and fees

Miami $3,981
Boston, New York, $4,181
Tampa, Washington, DC $4,281
Atlanta, Charlotte, $4,281
Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, $4,381
Houston, Los Angeles, $4,381
Orlando, San Francisco $4,381
Baltimore, Cincinnati, $4,381
Denver, Detroit, $4,381
Minneapolis, Philadelphia, $4,381
Phoenix, Portland (OR), Seattle $4,381

Land Only (transfers not included) $3,495

Please call if your city is not listed. Prices are per person based on double occupancy and include airline taxes, surcharges, and fees of $186, which are subject to change until final payment is made. Single travelers please add $1,095. Your $500 deposit is fully refundable up to 95 days prior to departure. All 2022 tour prices above (excluding airline taxes, surcharges, and fees) are guaranteed.

Please note: This trip includes nature walks and lengthy coach rides over bumpy dirt roads. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to its fullest.

For reservations, call UCLA Alumni Travel at 310-206-0613 or email travel@alumni.ucla.edu