

COSTA RICA, Natural Wonder



Day 1 Home – Playa Hermosa

Fly from Sacramento to Liberia, Costa Rica. Your private driver will pick you up at the airport when you arrive on your late evening flight. After a 30 minute drive, you will check in to your spacious eco-lodge suite, located steps from the beautiful Playa Hermosa, a peaceful beach on the Pacific coast. Settle in and fall asleep listening to the sounds of the waves.

Hotel Bosque del Mar (3 nights) www.bosquedelmar.com

Day 2 Playa Hermosa

Sleep in, enjoy coffee on your balcony, and then have a late morning breakfast in the lodge's outdoor dining area. You have the entire day ~ relax on the beach or in the outdoor jacuzzi, go swimming in the ocean or the lodge's pool, watch the local monkeys swinging through the trees, walk along the beach and discover new sights and traditional restaurants, shop for snacks in the local market. In the evening, enjoy dinner and drinks on the terrace, watching the sun set over the Pacific Ocean. (B)

Day 3 Playa Hermosa – Guaitil – Playa Hermosa

Today you will enjoy a full day exploring the Guanacaste region. After a scenic morning drive through sabanero (cowboy) country, you'll arrive at the village of Guaitil, famed for its indigenous pottery hand-crafted by local villagers for centuries. At your next stop, you will board a boat and begin a cruise down the Tempisque River. Best known for its spectacular wetlands, this area acts as a sanctuary for both resident and migrating marine bird species. Also be on the lookout for monkeys, iguanas, scarlet macaws, anteaters, crocodiles and caimans, which all can be seen lingering along the banks of the river. After enjoying lunch at a typical Costa Rican restaurant, return to the lodge and enjoy the late afternoon and evening at your leisure. (BL)

Day 4 Playa Hermosa – Monteverde Cloud Forest

This morning, with your private driver, you will climb the Continental Divide to the Monteverde Cloud Forest enjoying scenic stops along the way. Upon arrival, you will settle into your garden view room in your lodge in the clouds. Take a tour of the lodge's lush flower and fern gardens and the butterfly and hummingbird gardens. In the evening, if you choose, you can go on a night walk with an expert guide and view nocturnal animal and plant species as you become part of the cloud forest's unique ecosystem. (B)

Monteverde Lodge & Gardens (2 nights) www.monteverdelodge.com

Day 5 Monteverde Cloud Forest

Experience a morning guided walk through the amazing Monteverde Cloud Forest Nature Preserve. You will learn about the variety of reptiles, butterflies, and hummingbirds in this fragile cloud forest ecosystem as your naturalist guide expertly leads you on a walk through the preserve. After lunch and a rest at the lodge, you can go on a coffee plantation tour and learn about the quality and importance of coffee and chocolate grown in this region of Costa Rica. Enjoy some tastings of both before returning to your lodge for an evening of relaxing and dining, surrounded by the orchid-filled gardens of your eco-lodge. (B)

Day 6 Monteverde -- Arenal

After breakfast, check out of the lodge and begin your journey to Arenal Volcano and rain forest region. Your driver will drive about 1 hour to Lake Arenal, Central America's largest lake, where you will cruise across the vast lake passing by vistas of coffee plantations and cattle farms. If the sky is clear, you will also have a spectacular view of Arenal Volcano from the boat. When you arrive at the other side, your driver will transfer you to the nearby Nayara Resort and Spa. Settle in to your private, luxurious casita with a private Jacuzzi on the balcony and a choice of taking an indoor or outdoor tropical garden shower. In the afternoon, join a group for a guided walk through the rainforest and the famous hanging bridges. In the evening, you have a choice of several resort restaurants, from casual to elegant dining. (B)

Nayara Resort, Spa & Gardens (3 nights) www.arenalnayara.com

Day 7 Arenal

This morning, you can enjoy a leisurely float trip down the scenic and peaceful Peñas Blancas River aboard a large, comfortable raft. Your guide will help you look for wildlife from sloths and crocodiles to giant iguanas. After your river float trip, take time to have lunch and shop for souvenirs in the nearby town of La Fortuna. The evening is at your leisure to relax, wander, swim, and dine at your resort retreat. (B)

Day 8 Arenal

Today you will experience a tram ride that will take you above the forest canopy. As you ride the tram with your expert guide, you will see a variety of plants and animals that make up the rainforest. If you're feeling adventurous, experience the exhilarating zip line (canopy tour) and soar above the rainforest, stopping at well-placed, professionally staffed platforms on your way to the forest floor. In the afternoon, on your last day in paradise, splurge on a luxurious spa treatment at the resort. (B)

Day 9 Arenal – San José

Depart the Nayara Resort with your private driver to San José. On the way, stop at the village of Sarchí to visit the oxcart painting factory, a Costa Rican colonial folk art. Check in to the grand colonial-style hotel in San José and have lunch at your leisure at one of the dining choices at the hotel or later, at a recommend restaurant in the city center. If you choose, take a taxi to the city center of San José to visit the Pre-Columbian Gold Museum. The museum has an extraordinary collection of gold objects that reflect the social structure and gold-working techniques of the Pre-Columbian peoples of Costa Rica. (B)

San José Marriott Hotel Hacienda Belen (1 night) www.marriott.com

Day 10 San José – Home

Depart the hotel by taxi for the nearby San José airport and your flight home.

Cost Estimate: \$2,500 - \$3,000 per person (depending on cost of airfare, choice of activities and additional meals; number of people sharing the private transfers)

Included in estimate:

roundtrip airfare from Sacramento; all accommodations; daily breakfast; private transfers; additional meals; activities and tours