



# COSTA RICA: SECLUDED WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

August 23 - 31, 2024   September 4 - 12, 2024 (Sold Out)



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## Trip Highlights

**OBSERVE** nesting and / or hatching sea turtles on the Caribbean Coast

**EXPLORE** Tortuguero National Park by foot, boat & kayak (kayaking is optional)

**SIP** organic, local coffee and / or cocktails by the pool in a paradiscal setting

**FLY** to the Pacific Coast and stay at a unique and award-winning ecolodge situated within a primary rainforest

**WATCH** monkeys swing and birds sing while you eat delicious meals

**VISIT** Corcovado National Park, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet

**LEARN** about sustainability and conservation from friendly locals





## What's Included

- 8 Nights at Four-Star, Eco-Chic Wilderness Lodges
- 24/7 Gondwana Trip Leader
- Transportation: two chartered internal flights, boats/ferries, and ground transportation in comfortable passenger vans/minibuses with professional, local drivers
- All Meals (alcohol & gratuities not included)
- National Park fees
  - Local Guides
- All Tours and Activities noted in the itinerary





## Tour Dates

Limited to just 13 guests

➤ August 23 - 31, 2024

➤ ~~September 4 - 12, 2024~~ — Full

## Price

\$7,495 per person

\$1,200 single supplement for a private room is added for solo travelers



## Costa Rica Tour Map







## TOUR ITINERARY



## Day One

Upon arrival in San Jose exit the airport with your luggage and look for a driver holding a sign with your name on it and the Gondwana Ecotours logo. Following a short walk to the van, load up for a 30-minute transfer to Finca Rosa Blanca, beautifully situated away from the hustle and bustle of the capital.

We rendezvous for a meet & greet with the guides and your fellow travelers in the late afternoon, followed by a welcome dinner at the attached farm-to-table restaurant El Tigre Vestido.

**Dinner included.**



“

I can't say enough about Gondwana Ecotours. Absolutely amazing. We did the Alaska trip last year and had a fantastic time. They take care of everything. The guide was spot on and all the tours were hands on for the most part.”

- Mike S.



## Day Two

After breakfast and a cup of that famous Costa Rican coffee, we head out via van/minibus to start our adventure. Enjoy a 2-3 hour scenic drive, then we board a motorized boat for a forty five-minute ride up the river towards Tortuguero, a coastal village on the Caribbean coast.

Here, situated right on the river and adjacent to the beach, is our home for the next few nights. La Tortuga Lodge is a four-star boutique hotel surrounded by its own reserve. Tortuguero National Park is next door with a rainforest-framed sandbar whose beaches are a major nesting site for green turtles. The park's freshwater canals, wetlands and forests shelter wildlife like jaguars, tapirs and manatees.

If conditions allow and we get permits from the National Park Lottery (we have multiple nights to try), we'll look for nesting sea turtles this evening. If lucky, we get to stand mere feet from a 300-pound Green Sea Turtle while she lays 80-100 eggs, covers up her nest, perhaps digs a false nest to throw off predators, and, finally, after more than an hour, returns to the sea.

**Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.**





## Day Three

Following an early breakfast at the lodge we join a local naturalist guide for a 3-hour boat expedition into Tortuguero National Park. The crisp morning hours are a period of intense activity for wildlife (toucans, monkeys, caimans, sloths, otters, etc) in the rainforest as they forage for their first meal of the day. We glide through remote backwater creeks and lagoons seeking encounters with the abundant wildlife that resides here.

We return to the lodge in time for lunch and some free time to relax. In the afternoon we take a short boat ride into town where we journey back through time and glimpse the fascinating local history and culture on a tour of Tortuguero Village.

Visit the Sea Turtle Conservancy center and museum, local artisan shops, a general goods store, and walk down the quaint streets lined with colorful Afro-Caribbean homes. You'll have some free time to explore and sample the rich and savory Creole cuisine unique to the area before returning to the lodge via boat.

**Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.**





## Day Four

This morning we explore one of the most beautiful destinations on Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast. We travel by boat down the Caño Palma channel, flanked by dense jungle foliage. The canal reflects light off the surface, which produces a magical mirror effect, a natural phenomenon resulting from the accumulation of tannins in the water.

We arrive at Laguna 4 and set out on a walking tour of the neighboring rural community and a small farm nestled along the beautiful coastline. We meet the family of Don Coco and Doña Katherine, who show us what local life is like and share food prepared over a crackling wood stove. Afterward you have the option of kayaking the inlet canals before returning back to the lodge.

Escorted by the best Tortuguero Guides available, we walk the beach just before sunset in search of a turtle nest with eggs that have begun to hatch. If we're lucky, we observe baby turtles dig their way out of the nest and then make their way from the beach to the ocean. Those who avoid the predators waiting for them both on land and in the ocean will return to this very beach 25 to 30 years from now—and the life-cycle begins anew.

**Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.**







## Day Five

After an early breakfast, we take a short boat ride to Tortuguero's airstrip where we board a chartered flight to the Osa Peninsula. Situated on the Pacific Coast, the Osa Peninsula is "the most biologically intense place on Earth" according to National Geographic. Nearly all of Costa Rica's mammal species make the Osa their home, as well as a large number of birds, reptiles and insects. The pristine rainforests, secluded beaches and raw natural beauty of the Osa Peninsula make this untouched region among the most captivating in Costa Rica.

After arriving in Puerto Jimenez we enjoy a special lunch and then in the afternoon we drive about an hour through the countryside to Lapa Rios, our home for the next few days. We check-in to our villas and tour Lapa Rios, an award-winning sustainable lodge with its own private nature reserve. Enjoy free time in the late afternoon—relax or take in the sights and sounds—before a delicious dinner at the restaurant, which overlooks the rainforest canopy and ocean.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**





## Day Six

Today you discover Corcovado National Park, considered the “crown jewel” of Costa Rica’s extensive National Parks system. Spanning 47,000 hectares, it is home to some of the world’s rarest wildlife including jaguars, peccaries, tapirs, 450 bird species + nearly 700 plant and tree species.

Accompanied by a naturalist guide, this full-day tour includes lunch and a roundtrip private boat ride. Starting with a “wet landing” on the beach, you’ll explore on foot, pausing frequently to search for wildlife, and learn about the various conservation initiatives and research that takes place within the park. Enroute we pass by impressive cliffs, caves, and rocky islands home to marine birds and frequented by pods of dolphins. If the tides are right, you’ll be able to depart or return right from Playa Pan Dulce, just below Lapa Rios. Otherwise, a 30-minute trip by car may be required to reach the launch dock.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**





## Day Seven

This morning you can join an optional sunrise birding tour. We'll provide a pair of binoculars so you can seek out hundreds of bird species, including scarlet macaws and toucans. It's great fun for avid birders and novices alike!

After breakfast we go for a hike along the nearby beaches and secondary forest, stopping along the way for the guide to point out some of the most lively and active creatures in the rainforest. We'll be back at the lodge for lunch and free time in the afternoon to lounge by the pool or at the beach.

After dusk, experience the magic of the rainforest at night on a guided walk near the lodge. Be ready to be mesmerized by the hidden world of unusual nocturnal creatures, including frogs, kinkajous, and other rainforest-dwellers.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**

## Day Eight

After breakfast it's time to head back to Puerto Jimenez for a direct flight to San Jose. After landing we'll drive back to Finca Rosa Blanca with time to unwind in the afternoon, followed by our farewell dinner where we'll toast to our adventures together in Costa Rica.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**





## Day Nine

After breakfast, we'll make time for an organic coffee plantation tour right at the lodge before we head to the international airport. From origin to harvest, we follow Café Rosa Blanca on its earthy journey from red coffee cherry to roasted brew. We visit the "Beneficio," or processing area, where the pulp is first removed from coffee cherries before the beans are ready to ferment and dry. Once dry, the beans are sorted, roasted, and finished in the Roasting and Packing House. You can purchase coffee to take home with you for gifts—or to remind you of the beautiful Costa Rica mornings on this adventure.

**Breakfast included.**

“

Gondwana takes a unique approach to planning a trip and wants it to be not just a vacation but an exchange between cultures. One can take part in as much or as little of this exchange as one wants but Gondwana lays the foundation and makes it accessible and available.”

**- Melanie F.**







## ACCOMMODATIONS





## Finca Rosa Blanca

### Heredia (Nights 1 & 8)

Finca Rosa Blanca is an organic coffee farm and luxury inn set in the lush coffee highlands near San José and the SJO airport. Named one of Fodor's Best 100 Hotels in the World and a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, Finca Rosa Blanca is one of the best boutique hotels near San Jose, Costa Rica; a respite, a retreat, and the place where sustainable travel and boutique luxury meet. At the heart of Finca Rosa Blanca: 14 villas, suites and studios – each unique and each a work of art.



## La Tortuga Lodge

### Tortuguero (Nights 2, 3 & 4)

Situated on the Caribbean coast and tucked between the Tortuguero River and gorgeous plantation-style gardens, Tortuga Lodge & Gardens offers an award-winning getaway unlike any hotel in Costa Rica. Just outside your door, the pristine rainforest surroundings beckon you to explore the mysteries of this complex ecosystem. A river lodge built in harmony with its tropical environment, this hotel offers a tranquil, relaxing and exclusive experience. Each of the 29 rooms features sweeping views of the Tortuguero River and luxury amenities. Thoughtful guest comforts range from free Wi-Fi and nightly turndown service, to rubber boots, walking sticks, and umbrellas available for rainforest excursions.





# Lapa Rios

## Osa Peninsula (Nights 5, 6 & 7)

Long before the pillars of sustainable tourism were established, Lapa Rios was envisioned as a project whose objective it would be to protect its endangered surroundings.

Today, the 17-bungalow lodge preserves more than 1,000 acres of primary and secondary rainforest, and supports the local community. Since its opening in 1993, Lapa Rios has won numerous awards and has been featured in publications worldwide.

Guests staying at Lapa Rios can look forward to once-in-a-lifetime rainforest adventures, wildlife encounters, and ocean activities. While some come with a bold spirit for exploring and others in search of nature's tranquility, both will find myriad opportunities to connect with this enigmatic ecosystem. Lapa Rios creates an intimate and authentic experience, at once luxurious, educational and inspiring.







## PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

# ARENAL VOLCANO

Visit the famed Arenal Volcano without the crowds of the nearby gateway town of La Fortuna. After a comfortable stay on an organic coffee farm just outside of San Jose, our driver guide and trip leader will accompany you to Arenal Observatory Lodge, the only hotel located inside Arenal National Park. The well-maintained hiking trails on-site offer plenty of chances to view wildlife, including three kinds of monkeys, anteaters, coatis, and more than 500 species of birds. You'll have chances to see colorful birds (maybe even toucans) with the backdrop of the looming volcano right from your dinner table. Later we hike to a small waterfall (go for a swim too if you wish), hike the 1968 lava field trail with an expert guide, and enjoy a night tour in the rainforest to look for nocturnal wildlife. On our way back to San Jose, we stop for a farm-to-table cooking class with a wonderful local family. If this is your first time to Costa Rica, this is a pre-trip not to be missed!





## Arenal Volcano Inclusions

- Three nights accommodation: two in Arenal and one in San Jose
- All tours and activities listed in the itinerary
- All meals listed in the itinerary
- Transportation and guides
- National Park fees

## Dates & Price

August 22 - 25, 2023

August 20 - 23, 2024

September 1 - 4, 2024

\$1,895 per person (price based on double occupancy)

\$310 single supplement (for solo travelers)





## Arenal Volcano Day One

Upon arrival in San Jose, your driver is waiting for you as you exit the terminal with your luggage. Look for a person holding a sign with your name on it and the Gondwana Ecotours logo. Enter the van and enjoy the 30- minute transfer away from the hustle and bustle of the capital to Finca Rosa Blanca. Join a meet & greet with the guides and fellow travelers in the late afternoon followed by a welcome dinner at the adjacent farm-to-table restaurant El Tigre Vestido.

**Dinner included.**

## Arenal Volcano Day Two

We depart for Arenal National Park after breakfast via van/minibus, stopping on the way for a unique family-run chocolate tour at an ecological garden, complete with a typical homemade lunch. We stop in the town of La Fortuna for dinner and arrive at Arenal Observatory Lodge with plenty of time to get a good night's rest. You likely came to Costa Rica to experience its rainforest, volcanoes, and nature and the Arenal Observatory Lodge & Spa gives you unparalleled access to this extraordinary ecosystem. There are 870 acres to explore, including 270 acres of natural primary rainforest with rivers and waterfalls. This is the only hotel located within the Arenal Volcano National Park.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**







## Arenal Volcano Day Three

If you wake up early, get up and enjoy local coffee on the large deck outside the lodge restaurant, while observing birds feeding against the backdrop of the volcano. Arenal National Park is a birding hotspot and the views from the lodge are stunning. After breakfast, we take a short drive to the 1968 lava fields. We hike with a guide for a few miles through different landscapes to an incredible viewpoint close to the volcano. Here you'll find yourself traversing ancient lava flows turned into stone while taking in views of the Arenal Lake and the landscape that surrounds it.

Back at the lodge, enjoy a short, relatively easy walk in the late afternoon to a small waterfall (approx. 30 minutes each way). The surrounding forest is lush with ferns and palms and if you are feeling like it, you can even take a dip. In the evening, we enjoy a guided night tour at the lodge, searching for red-eyed tree frogs and other nocturnal creatures.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**





## Arenal Volcano Day Four

Enjoy a small family-owned farm tour, right at the river's edge, and then enjoy a participatory, delightful lunch. We help prepare and eat a delicious Casado cooked on a wood stove, and also make our own tortillas. An emphasis is placed on using traditional cooking methods and fresh and organic products harvested from the farm's greenhouse and fields.

After lunch, savor a cup of freshly brewed coffee while sitting on the deck watching the birds and listening to nature. Following lunch, our driver/guide brings us to Finca Rosa Blanca for a meet & greet with the rest of the group who have just flown in. Tonight's welcome dinner is at the farm-to-table El Tigre Vestido Restaurant.

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**







# Arenal Observatory Lodge

## Arenal National Park

Resting on a ridge amid tall pine trees and luxuriant rainforest, Arenal Observatory Lodge is the only hotel that is located inside the Arenal Volcano National Park.

Seven miles (11 km) of well-maintained hiking trails wind through the Lodge's 870-acre (352-hectare) property. These walking paths cut through primary and secondary rainforest, past waterfalls, and across verdant pastures. Lots of wildlife lives in the area, including three kinds of monkeys, anteaters, coatis, raccoons, deer, and more than 500 species of birds.

The 48 rooms of this family-friendly hotel are spread out across various buildings within the property and are comfortable and spacious, some boasting wonderful views.







## GENERAL INFORMATION





## Our Guides

We work with a carefully selected crew of expert, local guides and escorted by a Gondwana Trip Leader. Our local guides know these parts of Costa Rica very well and are knowledgeable about the area's geography, natural history, flora and fauna. All of our guides are personable, professional, courteous, friendly, and excited to show our guests some of the most incredible parts of Costa Rica. We typically assign guides to specific departure dates a few months out and you'll receive more information about your specific guide or guides before you travel.

Did you know that all of the accommodations on our main itinerary are four stars?! Our pre-trip is a four star hotel near San Jose and a great three star hotel inside of Arenal National Park.



## FAQ - GETTING THERE AND BACK

### **Is This Trip For Me?**

- Our Secluded Wildlife Adventure requires moderate mobility and physical fitness. You should be able to walk on trails for at least three miles unassisted with moderate elevation gains to 200 feet (61 meters) and should be able to enter and exit vans, buses, boats, and small aircraft without assistance. We spend a significant amount of time on the water, so guests should feel comfortable on boats.

During the visit to Corcovado National Park, there's a chance we will have to exit and enter the boat from the water, so you must be physically capable of climbing up and down short stairs or ladders and wading in up to two feet (0.61 meters) of water. The itinerary includes two domestic flights using safe, but small aircraft.

### **When should I arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica?**

- You should arrive in San Jose during the morning or afternoon on Day 1 of the tour. If you wish to arrive early and spend more time in San Jose, let us know if you would like help setting up extra nights at the hotel.

### **What if I want to come explore other parts of the country before Day 1?**

- We recommend joining our pre-trip Arenal Volcano extension! It's an incredible region with great wildlife, culture and unique landscapes!

### **What do I need to do to prepare for my journey?**

- Book your flight to San Jose for anytime on or before Day 1 of the trip. After booking your tour with us we'll send you a pre-trip guide that includes all the information you need to prepare for your trip, including a detailed packing list.

### **Are all the internal flights included?**

- Yes. All domestic flights in Costa Rica are included in the tour price. Round trip international flights to San Jose are not included and you'll have to book those on your own.



## FAQ - GETTING THERE AND BACK

### **What if I want to stay after the trip ends?**

- For those of you who want to stay longer we would be happy to share suggestions.

### **How do I sign up?**

- Secure your spots with a \$500 per person deposit (via phone, email, or on our [website](#)) that is fully refundable within 30 days of payment, provided your trip starts at least 121 days from the time of booking. The remaining balance is due 120 days before the tour departs. Read our complete [Booking Agreement here >](#)
- After signing up, we will send you a confirmation message and valuable information to prepare you for the trip. We will also send you two easy forms to submit with your registration information and flight details.



## WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

Our promise is to deliver handcrafted travel experiences that enrich your mind, body and soul. We strive to put our values into practice with every Ecotour that we create.

**AUTHENTIC** Our adventures are filled with nature and culture that will amaze, enlighten and deeply connect you with the region.

**FLEXIBLE** There are multiple opportunities during the trip to customize your experience with a variety of day excursions.

**LOCAL GUIDES** Enjoy the unbeatable experience of local guides who love to share their country, culture and customs.

**SUPPORT** Our team will be available for any assistance you need before the trip. We will provide a detailed pre-trip guide and packing list so you know what to expect and what to bring.

**CHARITY** A portion of our proceeds is donated to a local charity in Costa Rica that supports Sea Turtle Conservation.

**SUSTAINABLE** Our ecotours are completely carbon neutral as verified by Cooler.

**LOW IMPACT** Our ecotours leave a small impression on the environment because of the small group size of 13 and the unique activities, such as local sustainability and organic farm tours.

**UNIQUE LODGING** Feel the heart of the destination by staying at memorable boutique hotels. We book at locally owned and eco-friendly hotels whenever possible.





We hope you'll join us in Costa Rica!

A \$500 per person deposit is all that's needed to reserve this adventure. Contact us via phone or email to reserve your spot!

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Visit us anytime at [GondwanaEcotours.com](http://GondwanaEcotours.com) to plan your next adventure!