



AltruVistas and Ethical Traveler Present:



World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica November 10-19, 2014 | 10 Days

Renowned internationally as a model for sustainable development and frequently featured on Ethical Traveler's annual Top 10 Best Ethical Destinations report; Costa Rica has been lauded as the birthplace of ecotourism. Join AltruVistas and Ethical Traveler on *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica**, a 10-day journey to explore Costa Rica's abundant natural treasures and rich cultural heritage while meeting and speaking with government organizations, NGOs and locals to gain a first hand understanding of the economic importance and impact of tourism on this Central American nation that attracts 1.7 million tourists a year.

Home to about 5% of the existing biodiversity in the world and with nearly a quarter of the country reserved as natural protected territory, Costa Rica is celebrated as one of the oldest democracies in the Americas. Since gaining independence from Spain in 1821, the country has embraced progressive policies that champion social and economic development. Costa Rica abolished its military forces and reprioritized resources to health and education in 1949 and aims to be a carbon neutral country by 2021. In addition to the impact of tourism, *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica* also explores the country's other main commodities - coffee and banana - for a solid understanding of the economic benefits and challenges facing the country today.

Some highlights of *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica* include speaking with representatives of the Ministry of Tourism to understand the impact of tourism on the country, meeting and visiting the Bribri indigenous tribe to learn about their culture; a guided hike in Tortuguero National Park, an important nesting site for the endangered green turtle; meet ACAPRO (Organic Producers Association of Peasants) representatives to understand sustainable development from this fair-trade association of producers, and many more opportunities to speak and engage with locals and NGOs chartering a sustainable future for Costa Rica. Rounding out our activities will be a stay at Casa Calateas, a community-owned eco lodge above the hills of Cahuita National Park with spectacular views of the Talamanca mountain range. Join us on this unforgettable journey as we discover Costa Rica's natural treasures and learn about life in this dynamic country from its cultural mélange of indigenous peoples and descendants of European, Afro-Caribbean and Asian immigrants.

Co-sponsored* by Ethical Traveler and AltruVistas, *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica*, adheres to the highest responsible tourism practices and aims to support and economically benefit local communities we visit while concurrently promoting cross-cultural understanding between visitors and locals.

**World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica* itinerary was developed in collaboration by Ethical Traveler and AltruVistas. Tour registration and all trip logistics and facilitation are handled by AltruVistas.

Note: This itinerary is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control such as weather; road conditions; and flight, train and boat schedules.

For more information or to register for the trip, please contact:
Malia Everrette, Founder/CEO of AltruVistas ~ malia@altruvistas.com ~ +1-415-735-5407

ITINERARY DETAILS

Day 1 | Mon, Nov 10

Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica

Meals: L, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

On arrival at Aeropuerto Internacional Juan Santamaría in San Jose, transfer to the group hotel. Afternoon orientation meeting led by your local guide to discuss program logistics, group expectations and travel in Costa Rica. Your Ethical Traveler representative provides an overview of the organization's mission and the 13 Tips for the Accidental Ambassador.

Following the orientation, briefings by local Costa Ricans (Ticos) to explore cultural, social, economic and environmental issues that surround ecotourism in Costa Rica today. Scheduled for our meeting is a young professional and expert on Afro-Caribbean culture and a biologist of the Latin American Water Tribunal. Welcome dinner to sample local cuisine follows.

Day 2 | Tue, Nov 11

In San Jose

Meals: B, L

Overnight: 3-star hotel

Enjoy a city tour of San Jose to explore the city and country's history and cultural sites in the morning. Highlights of the tour include Democracy Place and the National Museum, the Courts, Los Yoses, San Pedro Mall, Hispanidad Fountain and the Rodrigo Facio Campus at the University of Costa Rica. We finish our city tour with stops at the impressive pre-Columbian Gold Museum and the spectacular National Theater.

In the late morning, we visit the Ministry of Tourism and speak with its representative to discuss Costa Rica's status as an ecotourism destination. The briefing includes tourism statistics, the impacts of tourism on the economy and efforts to ensure sustainability. Lunch meeting with a representative from an NGO devoted to recycling projects. Afternoon visit with Coocafe, a coffee research institution to learn about the importance of the coffee industry in Costa Rica. Dinner and evening activities on your own tonight.

Day 3 | Wed, Nov 12

San Jose/Siquirres/Limón

Meals: B, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

After breakfast we leave for Limón, famous for its thriving Afro-Caribbean community, on the Caribbean coast. Part of the community traces its roots to Jamaican laborers who worked on a late nineteenth-century railroad project connecting San José to Puerto Limón. Others trace their roots to the Nicaraguan, Panamanian, and Colombian turtle-hunters who eventually settled along the province of Limón's coast. The Costa Rican government did not recognize Afro-Caribbean people as citizens and restricted their movement outside Limón province until 1948.

Enroute to Limon, we stop at the town of Siquirres to visit a banana plantation to learn about Costa Rica's second most important commodity. Beside coffee production, banana plantations were a key part of Costa Rica's historical exports.

After lunch we visit JAPDEVA (Board of Port Administration and Economic Development of the Atlantic Coast of Costa Rica), an organization maintaining the canals, ports and railways of Limon province, for a briefing on the social and economic conditions of this region. Following our day activities, we check into our hotel and rest before meeting with JAPDEVA union leaders for dinner.

Day 4 | Thu, Nov 13

Limón

Meals: B, L

Overnight: 3-star hotel

Morning tour of Limón to learn and experience the rich cultural diversity of its inhabitants. La Uvita Island, 20 minutes off shore is where Columbus first arrived in 1502. Limón is home to the most African descendants brought from Jamaica to build the railroad and shelters the biggest Chinese population in the country. Talamanca, one of Limón's counties, is home to the most numerous indigenous groups, the Bribri and Cabecar, as well as to the richest biodiversity in the country.

After lunch we visit the Bribri tribe and have requested a meeting with Timoteo Jackson, a Bribri Indian chief and a member of ADELA (Action Against Oil Exploration). He will introduce his tribe's ancient culture, the use of their land and the negative implications of the UPOV (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants) law on native Costa Ricans that recently was approved by the Costa Rican parliament. Following our meeting, we visit ACOMUITA Asociación Comisión de Mujeres Indigenas de Talamanca), a fair trade organic cocoa plantation and processing plant run by Bribri women.

We return to Limón in the afternoon. You're on your own for dinner and free to explore the area's nighttime activities.

Day 5 | Fri, Nov 14

Guacimo/Tortugero

Meals: B, L, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

After breakfast, we travel to Guácimo by motorcoach. We spend our day meeting with Foro Emaus (For the Defense and Promotion of Environmental and Human Rights in the Banana Industry of Costa Rica) and communities and families whose farming and tourism-related activities are being seriously affected by massive pineapple plantations.

In the afternoon, we leave for Caño Blanco to embark on a boat to Tortugero National Park (The Land of the Turtles), located in the Tortugero Conservation Area and an oasis of rainforest, mangrove forests, swamps beaches and lagoons. This national park was established in 1975 by the Costa Rican government with the assistance of CCC (Caribbean Conservation Corporation) to protect the endangered green turtle. In the 1960s, the green turtle was close to extinction due to heavy hunting of the female turtles as exports for turtle soup. Today Tortugero beach is the most important nesting site for the endangered green turtle in the Western Hemisphere. Giant leatherbacks, hawksbills, and loggerhead turtles also come here to nest.

Dinner and presentation on the incredible biodiversity of the region. The national park is also host to incredible biodiversity of insects, resident and migratory birds, and mammals; including jaguar and monkeys. We also learn about the park's four biological stations — the John H. Phipps Biological Field Station, the Caño Palma Biological Research Station the ASVO

station (Asociación de Voluntarios para Servicio en Areas Protegidas) and the GVI Jolava Biological which operates from the area immediately around the village and concentrates on research and conservation of the local ecology, particularly the turtles.

In the evening, we enjoy a guided tour to see the turtles' arrival (you need rubber boots.) Hopefully, we'll witness a nearly sublime moment when the handsome Green Turtle drags herself to the beach, digs a nest, lays the eggs and goes back to the sea.

Day 6 | Sat, Nov 15

In Tortuguero National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

After breakfast we enjoy a guided hike in Tortuguero National Park, a vast alluvial floodplain formed by the meandering of deltas from rivers flowing into the ancient Nicaraguan Trench. The location of the area makes it one of the wettest regions in the country. Unfortunately, uncontrolled tourist activity is now evidencing a serious effect.

Following lunch, we take a guided tour through a small village and enjoy time to engage with the local community. In the afternoon, we meet with a group of activists to talk about their impressions concerning sustainability and the impact of corporate tourism in the area. There is a movement to examine green washing and "eco" tourism in Costa Rica and a push for the industry to adopt more fair or socially and environmentally responsible forms of tourism.

Day 7 | Sun, Nov 16

Tortuguero National Park/Caño Blanco

Meals: B, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

In the early morning, you have an optional eco-adventure to rowboat through the canals. Following the excursion, we check out of our hotel and return to Caño Blanco. Enroute, we lunch in Piñeras del Caribe, a model pineapple plant with interesting social and sustainable programs.

On arrival in Caño Blanco, we transfer to our group hotel: Casa Calateas, an eco lodge. Situated in the middle of a tropical forest, Casa Calateas is just 15 minutes away from the main beaches. It's also a perfect site to view birds and animals. Casa Calateas is an example of the effort some Costa Rican peasants are making to deal with the impact of globalization while rescuing jungle for the future generations. Dinner with invited speaker Luis Zuñiga, our host, to talk about rural community tourism.

Day 8 | Mon, Nov 17

Talamanca/Cahuita/Calateas

Meals: B, D

Overnight: 3-star hotel

After breakfast we visit ACAPRO (Organic Producers Association of Peasants), in Hone Creek, Talamanca. Here we learn about sustainable development in Costa Rica from this fair-trade association of producers and buyers of organic products.

Following lunch in Cahuita, we meet with an ecologist to discuss the future of the Indian reservations and coastal regions in the face of potential tourism development and oil explorations in the area. In the afternoon, we enjoy a number of cultural activities in

Calateas: meeting with Manuel Monestel, a professor, researcher, compiler and interpreter of Calypsonian musical tradition; indulging in a rondon dinner (traditional Caribbean meal); and dancing with a local Calypso group.

Day 9 | Tue, Nov 18

Meals: B, D

Calateas/San Jose

Overnight: 3-star hotel

We make a leisurely return to San Jose in the morning while stopping at a few beautiful stops along the way. On arrival in San Jose, we meet with our last NGO, to learn about the current social and economic conditions in the country, including a discussion of CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement), and its impacts on society and the environment. We check into our group hotel following the meeting and rest before our farewell dinner in the evening.

Day 10 | Wed, Nov 19

Meals: B

Transfer to airport for flight home

After breakfast, checkout of the hotel and transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

PRICE & INCLUSIONS

Tour Prices:

10-12 participants: \$2610 per person

13-16 participants: \$2410 per person

*Single rooms are available for an additional \$500. If you are a single traveler, we will try to match you with another solo traveler of the same sex for twin share accommodations.

Tour price is inclusive of the following:

- Accommodations at 4-star hotels
- Accommodations on a double occupancy basis
- Meals as indicated in itinerary
- Local English speaking guide accompanying the group throughout the tour
- Program activities as specified in itinerary
- All entrance fees to sites as specified in itinerary
- Honoraria for guest speakers and donations to community groups and organizations in itinerary
- Vehicle transport as specified in itinerary
- Donations to organizations visited in itinerary
- Bottled water
- A year subscription to the Earth Island Journal, published by the Earth Island Institute (EII). Ethical Traveler is a project of the EII.

Tour price does NOT include of the following:

- Alcoholic, soft drinks and imported mineral water

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- Domestic nor international flights to Costa Rica and airport taxes
- Services not mentioned in the program.
- Meals not mentioned in the program
- Expenses of a purely personal nature.
- Room service charges.
- Transportation of luggage in excess of weight allowance.
- Conveyance fees used for private purposes.
- Travel Insurance (We strongly advise that each participant arrange for their own travel insurance).
- Optional activities specified in the itinerary

REGISTER FOR TOUR OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

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ABOUT

About Ethical Traveler

Ethical Traveler (ET), a project of the Earth Island Institute, is the first grass-roots alliance uniting adventurers, tourists, travel agencies, and outfitters — everyone who loves to travel, and sees travel as a positive force in the world. ET feels that all travelers are, in effect, freelance ambassadors. Ethical Traveler also believes that we have the ability to join our voices, and to use our economic power to strengthen human rights and protect the environment. For more information on Ethical Traveler, please visit www.ethicaltraveler.org.

About AltruVistas

Altruvistas builds dynamic philanthropic relationships through socially responsible customized journeys, intentional meso-financing programs & professional fellowships. Our mission is to provide you with ethical, comprehensive, educational and philanthropic travel planning services so that you can have the adventure of a lifetime that is culturally insightful, engaging, comfortable, and worry-free while also synergistically benefiting the local economy, our hosts, important causes and even highlights the good work you are doing in the world! For more information on AltruVistas, please visit www.altruvistas.com.

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