

Trek Costa Rica – A Coast To Coast Adventure



Duration: 12 days

Our adventurous coast to coast challenge involves crossing from the Pacific Coast to the Caribbean on foot. En-route we see Irazu and Turrialba, the country's highest active volcanoes, as we trek from coffee plantations and oak forests into dense tropical rainforest.

Costa Rica's cloudforests and rainforests are justifiably world-famous for their diversity and this is a wonderful opportunity to experience one of the world's most incredible eco-systems. We see colourful butterflies and tiny tree-frogs, and will hear howler monkeys and exotic bird calls as we trek.

This is a tough, strenuous challenge over a range of wild terrain – it's adventurous, rewarding and a world away from the norm!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to San Jose

We arrive late afternoon / early evening, transfer to our hotel and relax! Night hotel.

Day 2: San Jose – Pacific Coast – Pueblo Nueva

After an early morning breakfast and trip briefing, we transfer by bus to a beach near Quepos on the Pacific Coast. Turning inland, we start our trek at a local school and set off on our adventure across Costa Rica! Our route takes us through palm oil plantations and agricultural land which is predominantly flat, before reaching the foothills of the more remote and forested highlands. These hills are a good warm-up for what lies ahead. We pass the River Naranjo on the way to the small village of Pueblo Nueva, the site of our evening's camp. Night camp.

Drive approx 4 hours; trek approx 4-5 hours

Day 3: Pueblo Nueva – Naranjillo

Today we continue on good tracks and paths that gradually climb up the Naranjo River Valley, giving us the chance to acclimatise to the terrain and humidity before tomorrow's more challenging day. There are several demanding ascents and descents as we follow the dirt tracks – muddy at times – through thriving coffee-producing communities that provide us with a great insight to life in this part of Costa Rica. We pass some impressive waterfalls and, if conditions permit, even trek right beneath one of them! Our efforts today are rewarded by fabulous views, and by the end of the day we will be able to look back down at the Pacific Ocean. Night camp.

Trek approx 8-10 hours

Day 4: Naranjillo – Santa María de Dota

After a good breakfast, we leave the community of Naranjillo, as we continue our trek east. Our route today is on undulating terrain, as we take on the infamous 'cemetery hill', with its steep sections through coffee plantations. Although it's hard-going, we are rewarded with incredible vistas of the surrounding mountains and endless hillsides of coffee plantations. We continue onwards, with more hills ahead us, with our efforts made worthwhile as we stop at a picturesque waterfall. If there's time we might be able to enjoy a refreshing dip in a local swimming spot. Our trek today finishes once we reach the highway, where we meet the awaiting vehicles for a short transfer to the town of Santa María de Dota, a picturesque town lying in a green valley surrounded by coffee plantations, forested hills and distant mountain peaks. Night camp.

Trek approx 6 hours; drive approx. 30 minutes

Day 5: Santa María de Dota – Santubal

We begin our day with a drive to the spectacular Volcan Irazu (3432m), the highest active volcano in Costa Rica, where from the crater rim we can see down into the vivid green lake in one of the craters. When there is minimal cloud the views reach to neighbouring Volcan Turrialba, and on a really clear day it's possible to see both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts! From here, we drive to our lunch stop before beginning our trek. Although the terrain is less challenging today, and very varied, it's still a long, hilly day. Good tracks take us through sections of farmland interspersed with tropical rainforest. We cross the Rio Pacuare, and ascend the other side of the valley; a demanding trail at times with thick vegetation towering up to each side. We may hear the occasional small group of howler monkeys – small but extremely loud! – and look out for the many colourful birds and butterflies. We camp at the small settlement of Santubal. Night camp.

Trek approx 4 hours; Drive 4-5 hours

Day 6: Santubal – Mollejones

Today's route takes us alongside the Pacuare as we follow it downriver. As well as the incredible scenery, one of the day's highlights is the chance to gain an insight into the unique way of life of the people in the few indigenous settlements we pass. Coming to an impassable river canyon, we leave the valley floor and head steeply uphill into

the mountains, where we thread our way through dense vegetation and hilly ridges. Our night's camp lies at the lively village community of Mollejones, which at 3000m is our highest point on the trek. Night camp.

Trek approx 7 – 8 hours

Day 7: Mollejones – Rio Pacuare

A long day takes us on uphill on relatively good tracks though farmland and jungle before a challenging descent takes us on a narrow mud track through rainforest to the banks of the Rio Pacuare and the gateway to our next adventure! This beautiful stretch of water includes several white-water rapids (grade II – IV; no experience necessary) but also plenty of time to sit back and enjoy the scenery. This is considered one of the best rafting rivers in the Americas, not just because of its exciting waters, but also because of the lush, pristine rainforest that surrounds it. Keep your eyes open for wildlife – there's a better chance of glimpsing creatures from the river than when walking through the dense vegetation. Arriving at our comfortable riverside camp, El Nido del Tigre, you can relax in a hammock, lulled by the sounds of the river and the rainforest, looking out for toucans overhead. Time permitting, there may be a chance for a refreshing river swim on arrival. Night camp.

Trek approx. 5 – 6 hours; raft approx 2 hours

Day 8: Rafting Rio Pacuare

After our taster yesterday, we prepare ourselves for a full day of rafting! Today's stretch of river will take about 5 or 6 hours, depending upon the water level, as we glide through virgin rainforest, passing cascading waterfalls and river-carved canyons. We manoeuvre our way through exhilarating rapids, and can examine the rainforest close-up at the water's edge during quieter sections. Along the way we trek up to a spectacular waterfall, and have a break for lunch during the course of the day. This will be an exhilarating day that becomes a trip highlight for many. We take out at a farm in the heart of banana-plantations country, providing yet more diversity for our Costa Rica experience, and camp here for the night. Night camp.

Raft approx. 5 – 6 hours; trek approx. 1 hour

Day 9: Rio Pacuare – Caribbean Coast

After an early breakfast and a last look at the river, we meet our vehicles and have a lovely drive along the beautiful palm-tree-lined coastline towards Cahuita National Park. The final section of our Costa Rica trek takes us, very aptly, along the beach – a wonderful end to our challenge! Our wide, level track turns into a narrow trail which winds alongside the white sands of the Caribbean coast. We may see wildlife such as capuchin and howler monkeys and crab-eating raccoons. We reach our hotel in the small town of Cahuita, and for the first time in a week can enjoy the comforts of a hotel! We meet later in the evening for a slap-up barbeque and celebrate our huge achievement. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 2 hours; trek approx. 12km / 3 - 4 hours

Day 10: Free day Cahuita

Cahuita's black-sand beach is within walking distance of the town, and you can swim or surf in the warm Caribbean waters. Slightly further away there are white-sand beaches and coral reefs perfect for snorkelling, and the Cahuita National Park with its diverse wildlife. We have the day free to relax and enjoy our surroundings. Night hotel.

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

Day 11: Depart San Jose

We have an early morning drive back to San Jose (approx 5-6 hours) and to the airport for our afternoon flight back to the UK. (Occasionally flights depart in the morning, in which case we'll drive to San Jose the evening before.)

Day 12: Arrive UK

GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 17 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.