

Trek Costa Rica



ACTIVITY

Trek

ACCOMMODATION

Camping

CHALLENGE FACTORS

Terrain

DURATION:

10 days

GRADE



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 large colourful butterflies and tiny tree-frogs, and hear howler monkeys and exotic bird calls as we trek.

This adventurous challenge sees us trekking through Costa Rica's wild interior towards the warm waters of the Caribbean. En-route we see Irazu, the country's highest active volcano, as we trek from coffee plantations and farming communities into dense tropical rainforest. Our journey also takes us white-water rafting through the rainforest, which gives us an unforgettable adrenaline rush, but is also wonderfully serene in the calm stretches. Free time at the coast rounds off this unique adventure.

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

This trip generates around **81 kg of CO₂ per person**. Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to San Jose

On arrival, we transfer to our hotel and relax! Night hotel.

Day 2: San Jose – Volcan Irazu – Santubal

We begin our Costa Rican adventure with a drive to the spectacular Volcan Irazu (3432m), the country's highest active volcano! The short walk up to the crater rim stretches our legs, and we can enjoy breath-taking views down into the vivid green crater lake, and across to neighbouring Volcan Turrialba. In really clear conditions, it's possible to see both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts! We then drive to our trek start-point, near the small coffee-growing highland town of Santa Maria de Dota. This afternoon's walk forms a good introduction to the terrain we'll be facing: varied, with plenty of hills! Good tracks lead us through sections of farmland interspersed with lush tropical rainforest, before a smaller trail takes us downhill to the Rio Pacuare. We cross the river and ascend the other side of the valley; a demanding trail at times. Thick vegetation towers each side of us. 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.

Drive approx. 3.5-4 hours total; Trek approx. 4-5 hours

Day 3: Santubal – Mollejones

Today's route takes us alongside the Pacuare as we follow it downriver. As well as the incredible scenery, one of today's highlights is the opportunity to witness the unique way of life in the vibrant indigenous settlements we pass, before narrow trails take us into tropical jungle. A steep descent brings us to an impassable river canyon, where we leave the valley floor and head steeply uphill. Through breaks in the vegetation, we can enjoy views of the surrounding mountains and ridges, cloaked in forest. We finally come to the lively village, welcoming village community of Mollejones, which at over 1000m above sea-level, is our highest point on the trek. Night camp.

Trek approx 7 – 8 hours

Day 4: Mollejones – El Nido del Tigre

A beautiful day awaits! Relatively good tracks bring us from the charming town of Linda Vista through farmland and forest before a winding trail leads us deeper into the rainforest of Bajo Tigre. Surrounded by lush tropical beauty, we feel a world away from home! En route to the river, we take a detour to a stunning hidden waterfall, where we can plunge in and cool off! Feeling refreshed, we continue on to our beautiful riverside camp, El Nido del Tigre. Designed to be as sustainable as possible, with involvement from the local communities, this comfortable camp lies in a serene spot on the banks of the Pacuare River. Here you can relax in a hammock, lulled by the sounds of the river and the rainforest, looking out for toucans and other birds overhead. Night camp.

Trek approx. 6 – 7 hours

Day 5: Day-Hike to Indigenous Community

Staying two nights at this secluded camp allows us to explore the surrounding rainforest, and we set off today on forest trails, hugging the riverbanks of the Pacuare, as we trek through this scenic reserve. We visit an indigenous community, where we discover the traditional huts and rich traditions of the local people, and can learn about their way of life. We then continue with an exhilarating climb into the mountains, tackling a 700m ascent with magnificent viewpoints along the way over the surrounding mountains, and down to the river below – where tomorrow's big adventure will take place! Back at camp, you can settle back in your hammock and enjoy the

peaceful surroundings. Night camp.

Trek approx. 9-10 hours

Day 6: Rafting to Pacuarito

Today we switch walking boots for paddles, and enjoy a full day of rafting! This beautiful stretch of water includes several adrenaline-pumping white-water rapids (grade II – IV) 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. Our river journey 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 break for a hike to explore spectacular hidden waterfalls, and a delicious riverside lunch. This day becomes a firm highlight for most, whether it's the first experience of rafting or not. As the river levels out and the current slows, we take out at a beautiful finca (farm) in the heart of banana-plantation country. The warm welcome on arrival gives us yet more memories to treasure. Night camp.

NB: No previous rafting experience necessary; all safety kit, a full safety briefing and expert guidance included

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

Day 7: Pacuarito – 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, 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. 3 - 4 hours

Day 8: 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 9: Cahuita – San Jose; Flight departs

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 10: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to San Jose
- All known airline taxes
- Transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation on twinshare basis - hotels and camping
- Group camping equipment
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Local guides, cooks and drivers
- Local support and back-up equipment
- White-water rafting, including all safety equipment and instruction (no experience necessary)
- Entrance to Irazu Volcano and Cahuita National Park
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Sleeping bag and sleeping mat
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, drinks and tips for the local guides and support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Inbound airport departure tax
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. 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 are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

We camp at ranches and homesteads, usually in two-man expedition-style tents (ie sleeping-room only); some permanent camp-sites use larger pre-erected tents. Most night-stops have wooden sleeping-platforms and overhead shelters for tents, with use of communal rooms for cooking and dining, and toilets and showers. They are atmospheric places to stay, whether in small communities or remote rainforest, and add to the overall experience. Sometimes we may bed down as a group on the floor of homesteads or community halls instead of camping outside. Hotels at start and end of the trip are of a 2-3* standard or equivalent.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis. Some nights are usually twin-share. On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal rooms such as dormitories, huts, local homestays, etc., depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that each person completes the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option.

When it comes to tent sharing, we do not offer a single option unless there are exceptional circumstances, for logistical and safety reasons.

We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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[Trip grading explained](#)

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

Terrain varies from clear wide tracks and small village roads to muddy, root-covered, slippery paths in the rainforest. There are many steep inclines and descents, made more difficult in wet and humid conditions. Leaders and guides are always on hand to help with the many stream crossings. Part of the trek is extremely remote; if the leaders have concerns over your fitness or ability to cope with this section, they will advise that you travel with the vehicles to re-group at a suitable point.

Rafting Information:

All safety equipment is provided, with a full safety briefing and support staff. It does not matter if you have never been white-water rafting before – you just need a sense of adventure! Between rapids, the river is calm and beautiful – relax and enjoy it!

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to

your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



ARENAL ADVENTURE

The perfect cone of the Arenal Volcano is one of the must-see sights of Costa Rica. Thought extinct until 1968, it was until recently the most active volcano in Costa Rica. Though less active since 2010, it is not uncommon to see glowing lava trails on its slopes at night. With the small town of La Fortuna, dominated by the volcano, as your base, you can take advantage of the many activities in the area.

After a hike on the crater's slopes, you can choose how to fill your time – and there are plenty of options! From kayaking to wildlife-spotting trips, canopy tours to relaxing hot springs, there is plenty for everyone.

We then move on to Monteverde, the country's most famous cloudforest reserve and one of the best places to get up close to the treetop canopy – here again you are free to choose your own activities.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.



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 12 Mar 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.