

Costa Rica Coast To Coast Cycle



Duration: 11 days

Our adventurous coast to coast challenge involves crossing from the Caribbean Coast to the Pacific on the roads and dirt tracks of Costa Rica's hilly interior. En-route we pass lakes, volcanoes, rainforest and tropical plantations with small towns and villages providing plenty of cultural flavour.

Our epic ride starts where Christopher Columbus came ashore on the Caribbean, and takes in over 480km of spectacular scenery and fantastic cycling.

The heat, humidity and hills all add to the challenge – this is an unforgettable and strenuous challenge which is a world away from the norm!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London – San Jose

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

Day 2: San Jose – Limon – Finca Pacuarito

We drive to the Caribbean Coast and, after a group photo, start our epic ride! Heading along the coast, and at points cycling along the actual beach (a fabulous experience!) we enjoy the views of the sea before turning inland and riding through miles of banana plantations, mainly on dirt roads. Passing the communities of workers that process the thousands of hectares of bananas gives us a good insight into daily life here.

We camp at the Finca Pacuarito homestead. Night camp

Drive approx. 3 hours; cycle approx. 56km (4-6 hours)

Day 3: Finca Pacuarito – La Rita

Today we cross the heart of the Caribbean lowlands, a flat but challenging day in the heat, with half our distance on dirt roads. A small ferry crossing of the Pacuare River starts our day; we take three small boat crossings today, allowing us to avoid busy roads.

We then ride towards the bustling town of Siquirres, and continue across the lowlands on a mix of paved and dirt roads to the town to La Rita. Night camp.

Cycle approx. 72km (7-9 hours)

Day 4: La Rita – San Rafael

Our route today takes us through lush vegetation and tropical plantations, giving us a real taste of Costa Rica's natural beauty. We head towards the Sarapiquí River – keep your eyes peeled for monkeys and exotic birds – through landscapes of tropical rainforest, palm trees, and areas growing corn, coffee, cocoa, cardamom and hearts of palm.

We have a chance of a refreshing dip in the river before a picnic lunch, then head for San Rafael on hillier roads taking us into the heart of pineapple country. Night camp.

Cycle approx. 83km (6-8 hours)

Day 5: San Rafael – La Fortuna

We tackle rolling hills in the agricultural region of San Carlos, surrounded by plantations of citrus fruit, papaya, yucca and pineapples. The hills become more challenging as we hit dirt roads through stunning scenery, then we take paved roads towards the town of La Fortuna near the active Arenal Volcano.

Our camp tonight is close to hot springs, perfect for soaking those aching muscles! Night camp.

Cycle approx 72km (5-7 hours)

Day 6: La Fortuna – Tierras Morenas

Another hilly day awaits, as we take in the beautiful landscapes of Lake Arenal, the country's largest lake. The views of the clear water, Arenal's volcanic cone and the surrounding dense vegetation are beautiful, and form a real highlight of our trip. Our day ends with a steep climb up to the town of Tierras Morenas – a tough end to a memorable and rewarding day! Night camp.

Cycle approx 68km (8-10 hours)

Day 7: Tierras Morenas – Miravalles Volcano

As we cross the Continental Divide we are treated to sweeping views over the Guanacaste plains and the Pacific coastline – these vistas will spur us on today! Guanacaste is Costa Rica's main cattle ranching area and often nicknamed the 'wild west' of Costa Rica with its vaqueros, or cowboys. We pass through some of these ranches as we ride dirt roads through the forested foothills of the Tenorio and Miravalle volcanoes. Although Miravalle is now dormant, the area is dotted with signs of volcanic activity. The upper slopes are covered with protected cloudforest, home to a wide range of wildlife. By the end of the day we have left the tropical vegetation behind, for a drier and windier climate, which is great proof of our progress! Night camp.

Cycle approx 42km (5-7 hours)

Day 8: Miravalles Volcano – Hermosa Beach

A hilly morning is rewarded with an incredible 20km off-road descent to colonial Liberia, centre of Guanacaste – this large town is one of the oldest cities in Costa Rica and offers a totally different cultural experience to the small communities we have been passing through. After lunch we pedal our last miles on flat roads to Hermosa Beach on the Pacific Coast, where we have time for a swim in the surf to mark the end of our crossing. After time to freshen up, we gather for a slap-up dinner to celebrate our achievements this week. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 77km (6-8 hours)

Day 9: Hermosa Beach – San Jose

We have time to relax and enjoy the beach before the drive back to San Jose. Night hotel. *(Lunch and Dinner not included)*

Drive approx 4 hours

Day 10: Depart San Jose

Depending on our flight departure time, there may be time to explore before we transfer to the airport. *(Lunch not included if not in-flight)*

Day 11: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to San Jose return
- All meals except where specified, accommodation and camping equipment
- Discover Adventure leaders/mechanics; doctor with a group of 15 or more participants; local guides, cooks & drivers
- Local support and back-up equipment
- Entrance to Reserves and any sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Bike with front suspension (Trek or equivalent)

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Cycle helmet (compulsory)
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions and activities
- Airline taxes: we cap these so that £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | TOUGH (3)



Trip grades range from Challenging (1) to Extreme (5).

TOUGH trips can involve tough terrain, with some very rigorous days; weather, altitude and/or basic living conditions will add to the challenge. They demand good stamina, fitness and a determined attitude.

See [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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), 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, using two-man expedition-style tents (ie sleeping-room only). Some night-stops have wooden sleeping-platforms and overhead shelters, with use of communal rooms for cooking and dining, and toilets and showers. They are atmospheric places to stay, often with incredible views. Others are simpler, but usually still have access to communal facilities. Sometimes we bed down in larger groups on the floor of homestead rooms 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.

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

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.

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 [Fit For Travel](#) 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.



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 20 Sep 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.