

Wildlife and Birdlife of Costa Rica



Day 1: Arrive San José

You will be met on arrival at Juan Santamaría International Airport and transferred to the Hotel Alta for one night in a Deluxe room.

Hotel Alta

Located 5 miles west of San José in the exclusive Alto de Las Palomas, overlooking the beautiful Valley of the Sun, the Alta is a stylish boutique hotel with a classic Spanish colonial ambiance. It offers 23 spacious guest rooms and suites, all of which have been individually designed and furnished, with terracotta tiles, Italian leather furnishings, and fine linens. Each room open onto a private terrace overlooking the surrounding countryside.

La Luz Restaurant & Bar offers a blend of Costa Rican and Mediterranean cuisine, made with fresh produce sourced from local organic farmers. Other facilities at the Alta include a large swimming pool sheltered beneath a huge Guanacaste tree, gym and sauna.



Day 2: Tortuguero (B, L, D)

Depart San José this morning and drive through the spectacular Braulio Carrillo National Park en route to Tortuguero, stopping at Rio Danta for a delicious breakfast. From Rio Danta, the journey continues through banana plantations to the pier, where you board a boat for a two-hour ride through the canals to Mawamba Lodge, your home for the next three nights.



Mawamba Lodge

Mawamba lodge occupies a narrow strip of land between the Tortuguero Canals and the Caribbean Sea. It is surrounded by beautiful gardens, with direct access to the beach and only a few minutes walking distance from the town.

The lodge has 84 rooms, all with garden view, a ceiling fan and a safety box. Facilities at the lodge include a restaurant, bar and game room, cafeteria with free Wi-Fi connection, swimming pool, and garden with walking trails.

Activities available at Mawamba Lodge include night hikes along the network of private trails in Mawamba Park, sunset trips to the floating Katonga restaurant, fishing, kayaking and canopy tours. There is also a butterfly garden and frog farm in Mawamba Park, which can be explored independently or with a guide (guided visit included in the two-night package). All tours at Mawamba Lodge are led by a bilingual naturalist guide (English/Spanish).

In the afternoon, cross the river by boat and embark on a guided walking tour in the tropical rainforest of the national park, ending in Tortuguero village. Return to the lodge late evening, with time to relax by the pool or in a hammock before dinner.

From July to September there is an optional night tour to observe the turtles nesting on the beach.

Day 3: Tortuguero (B, L, D)

After breakfast, depart on a guided tour of Mawamba Park. This guided visit takes in the butterfly, frog and iguana enclosures, ending with a walk along the lodge's private trails. Lunch is included. In the afternoon, embark on a guided boat tour on the Tortuguero Canals.



Tortuguero is a network of navigable lakes, rivers and canals (both natural and man-made) that were in the past used for the transportation of goods, but which today are primarily used for observing the local wildlife. The climate is warm and humid, with an average daily temperature of 26°C. Warm days are tempered by trade winds; the evenings are cool.

Tortuguero provides sanctuary to an amazing array of animals, including 3 of the 4 species of monkey found in Costa Rica, crocodiles, caimans, basilisks and iguanas. More than 300 species



of bird can be seen in Tortuguero for all or part of the year. Present in the forests of Tortuguero are keel-billed toucans, slaty tailed trogons, Montezuma oropendolas, and a variety of parrots, while commonly seen along the canals are green and great blue herons, egrets, belted kingfishers, anhingas, jacanas, sun grebes and several species of hawks and kites. Other wildlife highlights include fishing bats, three-toed sloths, iguanas, basilisk lizards, poison dart frogs, and howler, white-faced and spider monkeys. The tracks of river otters, collared peccaries, and Baird's tapirs are often seen on the banks of rivers and canals. Caiman are commonly observed in the waterways,

which also are home to gar-fish, manatees, crocodiles, crustaceans, and an occasional bullshark. Jaguars, ocelots, and kinkajous inhabit the park, but are very seldom seen by visitors.

Day 4: Tortuguero (B, L, D)

Morning boat trip along the canals; afternoon at leisure.

Day 5: Tortuguero – Rancho Naturalista, Turrialba (B, L, D)

After breakfast, transfer back to the pier by boat and continue by bus to Guapiles. After a lunch stop at La Ceiba restaurant, meet with your driver and transfer by private vehicle to Rancho Naturalista in Turrialba, where you check in for two nights (double room, full board.)

Rancho Naturalista

Rancho Naturalista is set at an altitude of approx. 1,000m, on the Caribbean slopes of the Talamanca mountains, 2½ hours east of San José. From this enviable perch, the lodge's balcony and rooms provide stunning views of the Turrialba and Irazu volcanoes. And the weather – cooler and less humid than the coast owing to the altitude – tends to be wonderful year-round..

A western-style country homestead, the atmosphere at Rancho Naturalista is warm and relaxed. This comfortable lodge is known for its excellent food, which is prepared with the freshest local ingredients. The guest rooms – of which there are just 15, divided between the main lodge building and a series of wood cabins – are all furnished in their own unique style, some with private balconies.



The beautiful Turrialba Valley is irrigated by the pure and wild waters of the Reventazon River, which converted this land into a rich agricultural area over a hundred years ago. Rains throughout the year create a green collage of primary forest, biological corridors, and extensive plantations of coffee, macadamia and sugar cane, demonstrating a balance between agricultural development and the conservation of nature.

Day 6: Birding at Rancho Naturalista (B, L, D)

Embark on a full-day guided walking and bird-watching tour in the Cordillera de Talamanca range, accompanied by an experienced wildlife guide.

The Talamanca Mountains are a magnet for a great variety of migratory birds; over 430 species of birds have been recorded in the private forest reserve, including grey-headed chachalaca, collared aracari, keel-billed toucan, blue-crowned motmot and montezuma oropendola, grey-headed chachalaca, as well as several endemics.

Rancho Naturalista is a wonderful getaway for bird watchers, hikers, photographers and naturalists. The weather in this region is moderate all year-round – neither too hot nor too cold – making for a wonderfully pleasant hiking environment.

Following the birdwatching tour, return to the lodge for dinner and overnight.



Day 7: Turrialba – Cartago - Villa Blanca, San Ramón (B)

After breakfast, meet with your driver and transfer by private vehicle to San Ramón, where you stay two nights at Villa Blanca in a deluxe Casita.

Villa Blanca

Villa Blanca is a charming mountain lodge with a marvellous hilltop location. The lodge's centrepiece, la Hacienda, is a beautiful building with an interior garden and a cosy fireplace lounge. The Hacienda also houses the reception, lobby bar and restaurant. Surrounding this central hub are 34 Casitas and honeymoon suites, scattered throughout the property so as to resemble a small village. The rooms have ceiling fans, garden porches or terraces, and fireplaces.



El Sendero Restaurant serves a fresh, varied menu incorporating a fusion of traditional regional dishes, enhanced by unusual sauces and combinations of fresh herbs and vegetables, hand selected from the hotel's own organic gardens. Café El Bosque offers a light snack menu and freshly-brewed Costa Rican Coffee, while the Lobby Bar is the gathering point for before or after dinner drinks, where guests can get together to share stories and pictures of their adventures.

Villa Blanca is situated amid 3,000 acres of pristine cloud forest and dairy pastures. It has 3 km of well-maintained trails, designed with no staircases or steps. During your stay you have the option of self-guided excursions as well as guided tours with the resident guides. Los Angeles Cloud Forest Biological Private Reserve is an excellent spot for bird watching.

Day 8: Cloud Forest Bird Watching walk (B)

Depart after breakfast on a guided tour of the cloud forest, setting off in the cool morning air.

Villa Blanca is located in one of the most accessible cloud forest reserves in Central America. At only 1,200 meters above sea level, Los Angeles Private Biological Reserve represents one of the most diverse inventories of flora in Costa Rica. It is equally famous for its bird life, which include endemic birds such as the Orange-bellied Trogon and the Keel-billed Toucan.

Accompanied by a professional guide, you'll be able to make the most of this fantastic chance to explore the cloud forest, its gentle sloping pastures and its unique wildlife.

There is a permanent research centre in the grounds of the lodge where you can talk with the staff about their current programmes. The same staff also guide the walks around the property.



Day 9: Villa Blanca, San Ramón – El Remanso, Osa Peninsula (B, L, D)

After breakfast, meet with your driver and transfer by private vehicle to San José Airport, from where you fly to Puerto Jimenez. You will be met on arrival in Puerto Jimenez and transferred to El Remanso Lodge for three nights.

El Remanso Lodge

El Remanso Lodge is situated on the Osa Peninsula, close to the famous Corcovado National Park, where it nestles in the rainforest above the secluded and wild Pacific Beach. It is set in a 185 acre private reserve, part of the greater Osa Peninsula Wildlife Refuge.

The owner-operated El Remanso Lodge offers just 13 spacious rooms, from which guests can enjoy views of the forest canopy. The restaurant deck is built on top of a forest canyon, enabling great views of the underlying forest. Local chefs will surprise guests with two different menu options every day, an exciting mix of international cuisine, with a “tico” and tropical touch. The Mirador area of the restaurant offers comfortable lounge sofas in which to relax. Other facilities include a small swimming pool and poolside bar.

El Remanso was designed with strict ecological policies in mind and has been a pioneer in sustainable practices in the Osa Peninsula since its creation. With its lush forest, wildlife diversity and wonderful views, it is the ideal place to unplug from everyday distractions!

A variety of activities can be enjoyed at El Remanso: thrilling waterfall rappelling, early-morning bird watching, guided interpretative hiking, surfing, kayaking, tree climbing, and private meals amid the canopy. Of course you may prefer to simply relax on the wooden deck of the cabin while taking in the surrounds.



Days 10 to 11: El Remanso Lodge, Osa Peninsula (B, L, D)

At El Remanso Lodge there is a wide array of activities to choose from, ranging from the adventurous (waterfall rappelling, night hikes into the mysterious jungle) to the romantic (canopy breakfasts, sunset strolls along the deserted Pacific beach, dotted with natural tide pools). Activities can be arranged locally with the lodge.

A bird watching tour is included during your stay. The Osa Peninsula is well known as one of the world's best birding destinations. Hear the white hawk crying out in the afternoon, admire the scarlet macaws flying over your cabin, observe the toucans nesting in front of the restaurant or, if you get up early, you might be able to see the hummingbirds drinking from the morning dew.



Beautiful coloured honeycreepers, tanagers or the spectacular white crested coquette also figure among the species often seen during the birding tours.

Day 12: Departure (B)

After breakfast, transfer to Puerto Jiménez and fly to San José. On arrival, connect with your international flight home/onward travel arrangements.



Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£3,200 per person**, based on twin/double rooms. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Accommodation as per itinerary
- Meals and tours as described above
- Private transfers between destinations, except to and from Tortuguero, where transfer may be shared
- Domestic flights San José - Puerto Jiménez - San José

Excludes:

- Tips
- Optional tours
- Drinks with meals
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Travel insurance – ask for a quote

