

TOUR CODE: CR-02
TOUR TITLE: As Nature Intended

ITINERARY OUTLINE

DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM ***** - ARRIVE SAN JOSÉ (1 NIGHT)
DAY 2 SAN JOSÉ - TORTUGUERO (2 NIGHTS)
DAY 3 TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK
DAY 4 TORTUGUERO – PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUÍ (1 NIGHT)
DAY 5 PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUÍ - LA SELVA - CROSS CULTURAL CONNECTION –
LA FORTUNA/ARENAL AREA (2 NIGHTS)
DAY 6 SKY TREK & LA FORTUNA FALLS
DAY 7 DEPARTURE FROM SAN JOSÉ



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

TORTUGUERO: Tortuguero National Park (Canal Boat Tour, Hike), Caribbean Conservation Corporation's Visitors' Center and Museum
SARAPIQUI: Bat Tour, La Selva Biological Station Tour, Costa Rican Cooking Classes or Craft Workshop (choose one)
ARENAL: Eco Termals Hot Springs, Sky Tram and Sky Trek, La Fortuna Falls, Arenal Volcano at Night

DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM *** - ARRIVE SAN JOSÉ (1 NIGHT)**

The group will be met at the SJO airport by the Stecmatours' English speaking private guide. We will board our own private coach and transfer to our hotel in San José or near the SJO airport.

Meals: dinner

DAY 2 SAN JOSÉ - TORTUGUERO (2 NIGHTS)

Leave your hotel in San José early in the morning. Admire the biodiversity of an astonishing area in Costa Rica as we drive by Braulio Carrillo National Park, a primary forest in 95 % of its extension. Have a taste of our delicious Costa Rica breakfast en route. Be our special guest in banana processing plant and learn more about one of Costa Rica's prime products (subject to availability). Board a comfortable boat upon arrival to the port and let this extraordinarily exotic paradise you, as you travel along the Tortuguero Canals. Have a one-in-a-lifetime experience in this unique place surrounded by a great variety of flora and fauna of breathtaking beauty. After lunch, we will visit the **Caribbean Conservation Center and museum**, and the picturesque tiny village of Tortuguero. A delightful dinner will be served upon arrival to the lodge.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 3 TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK

MORNING TOUR: Enjoy nature at its best as you undertake a journey through the canals at dawn, and take your best Shots of a real Caribbean sunrise.

After breakfast, get ready to Tortuguero Hill or travel along the well known Tortuguero Canals and have the experience of your life in this unique paradise of magnificent flora and fauna. Enjoy a delicious lunch at the lodge. Take your time to enjoy our private trails, ride a boat through the canals or just relax.

NIGHT TOUR: Walk on the beach and admire the green Turtles nesting (July through September). Within **Tortuguero National Park**, four different species of sea turtles nest are present: the green turtle, the hawksbill, the loggerhead, and the giant leatherback. The prime nesting period is from July to mid-October (with Aug-Sept being the peak months). If your tour falls within a Turtle Nesting season we will do a 2-hours tour on the beach accompanied by the guide of the National Park who will take us to the place where the green turtles lay their eggs and so watch silently the whole nesting process.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 4 TORUGUERO – PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUI (1 NIGHT)

Today we will leave Tortuguero and journey to our hotel in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. We will arrive at our hotel late this afternoon. This evening we will embark on a guided **Bat Tour**. Bats represent 50% (110 species) of Costa Rica's mammals, and this tour will dispel many myths you may have heard about these wonderful mammals and provide a wonderful education on the world of the bats. We begin our adventure by watching a multi-media presentation on the history of bats, their classification system, diversity, adaptations, reproduction methods, and threats. Next, a trained guide will lead us on a safe tour where we will have an opportunity to touch, feed and release safely captured bats. We will also take a short, guided walk to see the mist nets used to gently catch the bats. They are kept in captivity for less than 2 hours and the professional methods used assure the wellbeing of the animals.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 5 PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUI - LA SELVA BIOLOGICAL STATION - CULTURAL CONNECTION - ARENAL AREA (2 NIGHTS)

This morning we will visit La Selva Biological Station, one of the most important sites for Tropical Ecosystem Research in the world. It is comprised of 3,988 acres of old growth and disturbed tropical wet forest and a pioneer site in education, research, conservation and ecotourism in Costa Rica since 1963. In fact it was one of the first private protected areas in the country and part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Species diversity is spectacular, including more than 1,850 species of vascular plant flora, 350 species of trees, more than half of the 886 species of birds in Costa Rica, five of the six species of felines in the country, more than 70 species of bats, approximately 500 species of ants and thousands of reptiles, amphibians and other insects. During this nature walk we will learn about the amazing natural history (flora and fauna) of the tropical forest.

This afternoon you can **choose** one of these two Cross Cultural Connections.

One option will be to take Costa Rican Cooking Classes, where we will learn how to make a traditional meal and then enjoy our creation. This class will offer you the opportunity to learn how to make traditional Costa Rican dishes. The classes are led by a local community member, and everyone participates in the cooking process. You will learn about the history, botanical names, and cultivation of each fresh ingredient. The menu consists of *guacamole* (a dip made with avocados), *batidos* (milkshakes), *empanadas* (turnovers), *tortillas* (flat bread), and *patacones* (fried green plantains). Enjoy trying all of your culinary creations at the end of the class!!

The other option will be to engage in a Costa Rican Craft Workshop. This is an educative and creative class where you will learn from a local artisan how to make jewelry with rainforest seeds, woodworking, rainforest painting, and palm frond weaving. Only natural resources are used during the class and you will be able to take your creations back home.

Late this afternoon we transfer to our Arenal hotel. This evening we will relax at the Eco-Termales Hot Springs and have the opportunity to submerge ourselves in the natural medicinal waters. The springs include several pools with varying water temperatures in a natural setting.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 6 SKY TREK & LA FORTUNA FALLS

This morning we will travel to the Arenal Rainforest Reserve, where our morning begins with an Aerial Tram Tour. Telefericos with open carriages will whisk us up the northern slopes of the Cordillera de Tilaran to the lookout point at 4,250 feet. From here you will have an amazing view of Lake Arenal and the volcano. Our day will also include Sky Trek in the Arenal Reserve. This exciting adventure combines walking, hanging bridges and the thrills of a canopy tour (zip lines) into one adventure. This afternoon we will hike to the impressive Río Fortuna Waterfall in a lush jungle setting. After viewing the falls from the top, we will take another hike (*weather permitting*) down a steep path to the pool formed by the waterfall. We can swim in the pool, the calm pool just around the bend, or join the locals at the popular swimming hole under the bridge. This evening we will travel around Arenal Volcano to a viewing spot where, if we are lucky, we will witness Arenal Volcano hiss and spray lava.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 7 DEPARTURE FROM SAN JOSÉ

Our rewarding tour will come to an end as our private guide accompanies us to the SJO airport for the return flight home.

Meals: breakfast

PRICE BREAKDOWN
Valid until December 31st 2011
Rates are in US\$ per person in twin or in double room

Paying people	Vehicle	Rate
40-50	Bus 50 or 52 seats	825
36-39	Mid-size bus 40 seats	825
30-35	Mid-size bus 40 seats	850
24-29	Mid-size bus 34 seats	860
20-23	Small bus 26 seats	870
18-19	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	870
16-17	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	880
14-15	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	905
12-13	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	940
10-11	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	980

Triple reduction: 85
 Single supplement: 185

Following services are included in the rates above:

- Accommodation in tourist or superior tourist class hotels with private facilities guaranteed in each room
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Admission fees to the tourist attractions **bold and underlined** indicated in the itinerary
- PRIVATE English speaking guide 24/7 throughout the itinerary
- PRIVATE transportation with air conditioning for the arrival transfer SJO airport – hotel
- PRIVATE transportation with air conditioning from the second day to the day before the flight departure with exception of day 3 while in Tortuguero
- One envelope per room containing following information kit:
 - ✓ Welcome letter
 - ✓ Detailed day-by-day itinerary
 - ✓ Brochures of the hotels, local operators and ICT (Costa Rican Tourism Board)
 - ✓ Stecmatours contacts phone numbers
 - ✓ Emergency phone numbers
 - ✓ Costa Rica map
 - ✓ Sheet for the evaluation of the booked services

Important notes:

- We have quoted standard room in all hotels
- The private English speaking guide will be lodged at the same group's hotels
- Twin room: one bed per person guaranteed
- The program during the Tortuguero days can slightly vary depending on the booked hotel
- The boat transfers to/from Tortuguero are on seat-in basis
- Allowed luggage in Tortuguero: max 12 kg per person

Thanks!

STECMATOURS

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