

EXPLORE!

Tailormade Costa Rica and Panama Explorer
12 days

Costa Rica - Trip code TMCR3

Tailormade Costa Rica and Panama Explorer Holidays

Panama City to San Jose the scenic way!

Combining Panama's Spanish colonial roots in the capital city and the tropical islands of Bocas del Toro, with Costa Rica's rich tropical rainforests and soaring volcanoes, this 12 day trip is full of natural highlights, abundant wildlife and exciting activities.

Enriching tailormade journeys – for you

This bespoke journey features some of our favourite spots in Costa Rica. You can choose to take our destination experts' recommendations and travel just as you see the itinerary here, or contact us to add your own special touches; maybe add a trip to visit the Embera tribe in their village or an extra boat safari in Tortuguero National Park. We're here to design your perfect holiday.

Call us on 01252 883 184.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Depart UK

Depart the UK for Panama City, arriving the same day. On arrival, transfer to your hotel.



Accommodation: Aloft Panama (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



None

DAY 2 - Visit Casco Antiguo and Panama Canal

This morning you visit 'Casco Antiguo', meaning Old Quarter, it is the heart of colonial Panama City. Its ramparts were built to fend off marauders and encircle the promontory, and a stroll along the top affords views of the 'Bridge of the Americas' and far in the distance the skyscrapers of the modern city, a total contrast to the Spanish plazas and colonial buildings all around you. You'll see the cathedral, Presidential Palace, National Grand Theatre, the prison chambers and the French Plaza along the way. Your journey continues to the Miraflores Locks to see the famous Panama Canal and appreciate the scale of this engineering miracle. Running 50 miles, the canal was carved out of the rainforest and through hillsides, lakes were dammed and locks built. After a serious French attempt costing in excess of 20,000 lives, the US successfully completed this remarkable endeavour after 10 years of toil in 1914. You will have the opportunity to watch a short video about the canal and see the exhibits in the centre. Your last stop is the Panama Biomuseo, developed with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, where you can visit the permanent Bridge of Life exhibit to learn about the important research taking place in order to understand our biologically diverse planet.



Accommodation: Aloft Panama (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Lunch

DAY 3 - Gamboa Rainforest visit

This morning you travel a short distance out of the city to Gamboa Rainforest. Taking an aerial tram ride over the rainforest canopy you may see butterflies, sloths and white-faced capuchin monkeys. Gliding over the tree-tops allows for a very different perspective

of the forest. Following your tram ride you may wish to visit the orchid farm, where these exotic flowers flourish in the tropical climate; the butterfly farm where visitors can see some of the 20 species native to Panama, or the aquarium where you can learn about over 100 freshwater fish found in the country. This afternoon you depart Panama City and fly to Isla Colon, Bocas del Toro.



Accommodation: Bocas Del Toro Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 4 - Day tour of Bocas Del Toro islands

Bocas del Toro is an archipelago made up of a number of beautiful forested islands lying in the warm Caribbean waters stretching almost to the Costa Rican border. Today you have a full day tour to explore the surrounding area, starting with a visit to Dolphins Bay, where a number of dolphins frolic in the still waters. Next, you arrive at Coral Caye, where you stop for a relaxing lunch, with time to swim and snorkel in the clear water to see colourful fish and coral. Finally, you head to Cayos Zapatillas, within the Bastimentos Marine Park, these two islands are some of the most beautiful in the area, with untouched, white-sand beaches, coral reefs and clear water.



Accommodation: Bocas Del Toro Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast Lunch

DAY 5 - Free day on Isla Colon

You have a full free day today to enjoy fully this lovely island. There are a number of optional activities that you might like to try. The island is ringed with stunning beaches and there are opportunities to snorkel or dive the rich waters off-shore. You may like to take a boat trip around the archipelago, to discover islands such as Isla Bastimentos with its lovely beaches and tropical forests. The marine park itself can also be visited and is an important nesting ground for sea turtles, as well as being an important reserve for an abundance of marine and land based life. Alternatively take a stroll through the small town, with its laid-back Caribbean vibe it's easy to spend a day wandering around the shops, enjoying something to eat and watching the world go by.



Accommodation: Bocas Del Toro Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 6 - Transfer to Costa Rica

Depart Bocas Del Toro by boat, heading to Almirante on the mainland, you'll then turn north and journey overland to the Costa Rican town of Puerto Viejo. You'll cross the border at Sixaola and follow the coastline to the Caribbean town Puerto Viejo. The rest of the day is free to relax or wander the quiet streets, which have a distinctly Caribbean feel.



Accommodation: Caribblue Caribbean Resort (or similar)



Premium Hotel

DAY 7 - Drive and boat to Tortuguero

Departing this morning overland to Moin, you then transfer by boat and arrive at your lodge in the Tortuguero National Park, where you will spend the next two nights. As you travel through a fascinating network of jungle waterways, it is easy to understand why this area is often described as a 'mini Amazon'. Its complex canal system and narrow lagoons link small isolated settlements and are rich in fish, including rainbow bass and grouper. You may see a caiman on the canal bank or toucans flying overhead as you slowly make your way to your lodge. After lunch you'll take a short boat ride to the carless village of Tortuguero where you may wish to visit the Sea Turtle Conservancy Museum.



Accommodation: Evergreen Lodge (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast Lunch Dinner

DAY 8 - In Tortuguero National Park

Tour the canals of Tortuguero National Park where you may see river turtles, spectacled caiman, southern river otters, and spider, howler and Capuchin monkeys. Tortuguero is also home to dozens of species of birds such as kingfishers, parrots and parakeets, hawks and eagles, and over 50 species of freshwater fish including rainbow bass and grouper. If you are lucky you might spot an endangered West Indian Manatee. The afternoon is left free for optional activities, rent a canoe or just relax at the hotel.



Accommodation: Evergreen Lodge (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast Lunch Dinner

DAY 9 - Transfer to La Fortuna

Departing Tortuguero this morning, you transfer to the charming town of La Fortuna. The base for exploring Arenal Volcano is just four miles from the national park and on a clear day, the majestic volcano can be seen looming over this peaceful town.



Accommodation: Arenal Paraiso (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Lunch

DAY 10 - Arenal Volcano hike and hot springs

This morning has been left free to explore at your leisure. This afternoon, hike a short distance in the national park and, subject to cloud conditions, you will be rewarded with fabulous views of Arenal volcano, while the sun sets around you. En route back to the

town you will stop at the thermal baths for a rejuvenating soak and dinner.



Accommodation: Arenal Paraiso (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Dinner

DAY 11 - Transfer to San Jose

Leaving the beauty of Arenal National Park behind you will transfer back to the capital city.



Accommodation: Park Inn, San Jose (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

DAY 12 - Depart San Jose

Unfortunately, time to leave Costa Rica for your return to the UK.



Breakfast

Tailormade Expert



Meet Sarah Slocomb,
Regional Specialist for Costa Rica

Call on 0844 875 1897

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 11
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 3



Transport

Private car
Flight
Boat
Shared car



Trip staff

Local guides
Driver(s)



Accommodation

11 nights premium hotel

Trip information

Country information

Holidays to Costa Rica

Climate

Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page. Costa Rica has a tropical climate with high temperature humidity and rainfall. The average temperature is 21°C in the highlands and variable in the lowlands. The rainy season is from May to November and the summer from December to April, but it does still tend to rain, usually in short bursts. Bear in mind that Costa Rica has 12 microclimates and weather can vary significantly in one day.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Christian, Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Budgeting and packing

Country Information

Holidays to Costa Rica

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket

restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£13

Dinner price

£13

Beer price

£1.8

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Costa Rican Colon.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD can be used in some places in Costa Rica

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Premium

On premium level tailor-made tours you will stay at comfortable mid-range hotels, chosen for their location, ambiance or local character. Your rooms will be clean and well-appointed, with en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning or heating as necessary. Standard level hotels normally have restaurants, bars and often other amenities such as a swimming pool and gardens, offering a good level of comfort at a reasonable price.

Aloft Panama

Aloft Panama is a large modern property offering comfortable and spacious accommodation. The property has a contemporary feel, decorated with bold and colourful lighting. Rooms have a flat-screen TV, air-conditioning and fridge. There is a snack bar providing light-bites, bar, gym and outdoor pool. The hotel is walking distance from the shopping district and restaurants.

Bocas Del Toro Hotel

Bocas Del Toro Hotel combines simple elegance with the historical ambiance of Caribbean exotic wood. Rooms have a nautical feel, fitted with modern facilities, and balconies overlook the ocean or town.

Caribblue Caribbean Resort

Caribblue Caribbean Resort offers large hardwood bungalows nestled in within tropical gardens. The junior suites are decorated in a modern style and each has a balcony and hammock to relax on.

Evergreen Lodge

Evergreen Lodge is ideally located just five minutes from the entrance to Tortuguero National Park. The rooms are spacious, and designed to complement the jungle surroundings.

Arenal Paraiso

Situated in front of Arenal Volcano, the hotel offers excellent views from the balcony of every room as well as an array of activities in the vicinity. This large hotel is surrounded by lush gardens where guests will find a good-size swimming pool with a wet bar. The hotel also has a first class spa, sauna and two restaurants.

Park Inn, San Jose

The Park Inn by Radisson is a large and modern option for a stay in San Jose. Rooms are spacious, fitted with all mod-cons required for a comfortable stay. The hotel has an onsite gym, pool and restaurant.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Holidays to Costa Rica

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
