

# EXPLORE!

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## Highlights of Costa Rica + Beach Extension

COSTA RICA - TRIP CODE BCCB

WILDLIFE

### Why book this trip?

A perfect week's getaway for travellers in search of Costa Rica's natural beauty. From brightly coloured toucans to slow-moving sloths, the tropical forests of this tiny country teem with life. Volcanoes loom over wild rivers, and white-sand beaches nestle beneath a vivid green background, providing a wealth of rich and varied ecosystems for the wildlife lover.

- **Monteverde** - Explore the forest trails of this cloud forest reserve, a biodiverse paradise for nature enthusiasts
- **Adventure** - Whitewater raft, fly through the canopy on a zip wire or hike on volcanoes
- **Manuel Antonio** - Spend an additional 2 nights relaxing on the stunning Pacific coastal beaches of this laidback town



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 10  
Lunch: 1



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader / Driver



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus



**ACCOMMODATION**  
10 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in San Jose

Arrive in San Jose. The cosmopolitan Costa Rican capital lies in a fertile valley at an altitude of 1150 metres. Coffee and sugar cane are big industries here and coffee is even planted between new buildings and along the roadside on the outskirts of the city.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting, and for those that wish there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in San Jose at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into San Jose's Juan Santamaria International Airport (airport code SJO) which is 18km, around thirty minutes from our hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose head out to explore the city which is easy to navigate with a grid pattern of avenues and streets with a good choice of local eateries, which you may choose to sample this evening. The National museum (Museo Nacional De Costa Rica) is also well worth a visit.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Autentico Hotel (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Visit the Poas Volcano; try out traditional oxcart painting**

This morning, an hour's drive will take us to the Poas Volcano National Park, where the smoke from one of Costa Rica's most active volcanoes rises majestically from the tropical rainforest. At almost a mile in diameter, the main crater is one of the largest in the world. Due to recent volcanic activity, time at the crater viewpoint is restricted to 20 minutes. If activity increases again the authorities may choose to close the park, and in that case you'll visit the Doka coffee estate, including a tasting session of Costa Rica's finest export.

After our visit to Poas, we'll continue on to the town of Sarchi, well known throughout Costa Rica for its beautiful and intricate arts and crafts. It is famous for producing colourful and decorative oxcarts, which are a huge part of Costa Rican culture today, and even considered one of Costa Rica's national symbols. We're going to meet one of the town's hard-working artisans and learn to paint a traditional oxcart with some of the patterns and designs familiar to the area.

Finally, we travel to Arenal (approximately 2.5 hours), where we will catch our first sight of the famous Arenal Volcano. This classic cone, which rises to 1633 metres, is covered by a tangled mass of vegetation on one side, while the other is starkly barren. Our accommodation for the next two nights is in La Fortuna. The town was renamed after a big eruption in 1968, when it was seen as being 'fortunate' that its location, on the volcano's eastern side, saved it from decimation. This evening, we can make the most of the local geothermal activity by enjoying an optional bathe in nearby hot springs.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel San Bosco Inn (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 3 - Volcano hike in Arenal; free afternoon with options including wildlife spotting

This morning we will explore the Arenal Volcano National Park, home to one of the most majestic volcanoes in Costa Rica. We will take a walk on the flanks of the volcano where we will learn more about the science and history behind the volcano, and we walk up to a viewpoint for a closer look.

In the afternoon you're free to explore the area as you choose. There are local treks to waterfalls and along lava trails whilst those keen to relax can enjoy spa treatments with volcanic mud. For wildlife lovers there is the option to join a wildlife spotting tour, seeking the famous sloth, the poisonous blue jeans dart frog and the multi-coloured toucan.

Your Tour Leader will be able to provide information on all the options.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel San Bosco Inn (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 4 - Lunch with a family in Nuevo Arenal; drive to Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve

This morning we drive around Arenal Lake to Nuevo Arenal where we visit a local family who own a small 'soda' (typical restaurant). On the side of this, they train injured horses in the Costa Rican 'paso' tradition (a sort of dressage step), and do equine therapy in the local community. We'll have lunch here with them and can learn a bit more about their life in this rural area of the country.

Following this we will up into the cloud forest region of Monteverde - one of the most well-known places in Costa Rica to see wildlife. The last part of our journey is on bumpy roads, but we are rewarded with a two-night stay here to enjoy all that this area has to offer. Tonight we'll venture into the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve for a night walk, seeking out the night creatures that roam the undergrowth.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Heliconia (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

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### **DAY 5 - Nature walk in the cloud forest searching for wildlife; free afternoon**

This morning, we will have a guided tour of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, walking the paths that wind their way through gigantic ferns, ducking underneath the lichen and moss that hangs from the giant trees. The jungle floor is often littered with blossoms that fall from the high canopy providing a carpet of colour amidst the endless green. The famous, but now very rare, resplendent quetzal is fairly commonly seen in this area, one of the last remaining places in Central America where its habitat has been preserved. Sacred to the ancient Maya and Aztec peoples, it is considered one of the most beautiful birds in the world and the best time to see it is during its breeding months of March and April.

The rest of the day has been left free to enjoy one or several of the many optional activities available in the area. One of the most popular activities in the area is to walk the hanging bridges that extend over the reserve, giving you the chance to take a bird's eye view over the canopy. Couple this with the thrill of zooming through the trees on a zip wire and it makes an exhilarating afternoon. For something less adrenaline-filled, choose to visit the local butterfly or orchid garden.

Your Tour Leader will be able to offer advice on the options available.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Heliconia (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Drive south to Manuel Antonio National Park**

Leaving the cloud forest behind us this morning, we descend to the Pacific Coast, enjoying staggering views over the Gulf and Peninsula of Nicoya. Heading south, we cross the Rio Tarcoles Bridge from

which huge crocodiles are regularly seen. We then pause at Carara Biological Reserve, famed for the scarlet macaws and abundant birdlife which populate this transitional forest. Finally, we continue along the Pacific Coast to Manuel Antonio National Park, where we will spend the next five nights.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Tabulia Tree Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Explore Manuel Antonio's wildlife and beaches**

This morning, we explore the Manuel Antonio National Park, famed for its beautiful beaches and rich wildlife. During our time in the park, we are likely to see white-faced capuchin monkeys, coatimundi (part of the racoon family) and the tiny squirrel monkeys. This is also one of the best places in Costa Rica to see sloths. The majority of a sloth's diet comes from buds and leaves. As leaves provide little energy, sloths move only when necessary and even then very slowly so they are easy to spot.

The remainder of the day can be spent relaxing on the white sandy beaches, enjoying a swim in the warm azure waters. The sunsets from this coast are spectacular and have to be seen to be believed.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Tabulia Tree Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 8 - Free day in Manuel Antonio National Park

Today is free to relax in Manuel Antonio. You could choose to revisit the park, or relax on the beaches around the town of Manuel Antonio. There are also lots of other activities on offer if beach time isn't for you, including white water rafting or snorkelling trips.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Tabulia Tree Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 9 - Free day; optional activities

This morning we say goodbye to the Tour Leader and the rest of the group, who will be travelling back to San Jose for their flight home today. Those of you who have chosen to extend your stay with some time at the beach will remain at the Hotel El Faro, with its fantastic location at walking distance to the beach, as well as the National Park and the golden sands contained within. The hotel is uniquely designed from shipping containers, built into the hills of Manuel Antonio. The views from the rooftop restaurant and infinity pool are unbelievable, looking over both the beach and the surrounding forest. There are also several bars and restaurants in the small village of Manuel Antonio to spend the evening.

The National Park is closed on Mondays, but there are lots of other activities on offer if relaxing on the beach isn't for you. Catamaran tours, horse-riding trips and rafting are all available.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Tabulia Tree Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 10 - Free day; optional activities

Options today include another visit into the National Park for wildlife spotting opportunities, or you may wish to simply relax on the beach.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Tabulia Tree Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 11 - Travel back to San Jose International Airport where the trip ends.

Departing Manuel Antonio this morning we drive 160km, approximately four hours, back to San Jose's Juan Santamaria International Airport (airport code SJO), where we will arrive at about 11am and this is where our trip ends. If you are booking your own flights, the earliest your flight can depart is 1pm.

For those on later flights a private transfer can be arranged at additional cost later in the day if desired, or alternatively it is a short taxi ride into San Jose city if you wish to leave the airport and explore further. It's also possible to extend your stay in Manuel Antonio if you would like some additional time at the beach.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information



# 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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Christian, Roman Catholic	Spanish

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Arenal - Hot springs US\$ 42 (US\$ 72 with dinner) plus transport; Waterfall walk US\$ 18; Chocolate tour entrance. US\$26 with transport US\$38; Sloth tour; US\$60 with transport US\$68

Monteverde - Canopy bridges US\$ 46; Canopy zip wires US\$ 56; Canopy zip wire and Bridges US\$ 91; Butterfly garden entrance US\$18 with transport US\$ 25 ; Orchid gardens US\$ 15

Manuel Antonio - Isla Damas Boat trip US\$72; Catamaran and Sunset tour US\$92; White Water rafting Grade III US\$103; cooking Lesson US\$85 (meal included); Jungle Night walk US\$69; Surf Lessons US\$75; Horseback riding US\$73 (lunch inc.); Whale Watching US\$150 (from July 15th to October 15th)

## Clothing

Lightweight clothing is essential in midsummer though a warmer jumper is advisable for cooler evenings in the highlands (Monteverde can be very cool at night). A good waterproof is essential, and you could consider waterproof trousers. The jungle lowlands around Arenal are hot and muggy, and it can rain at any time of year. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are recommended on jungle walks.

## Footwear

Lightweight trail/walking boots for jungle walks, comfortable shoes/trainers and sandals. In the rainy season waterproof boots are recommended.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daysack. Remember, you are expected to carry your own baggage - don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

We recommend a sunhat, sunscreen, a small umbrella, a torch, insect repellent, a travel adaptor and a water bottle. Binoculars are essential for bird and animal spotting, and, for those interested, we also recommend bringing snorkelling equipment for your time at Manuel Antonio National Park.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 30, approx. 18'600 Colones for group tipping

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

## 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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£13	£13	£3	£1.3

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency

Costa Rican Colon (CRC)

### **Recommended Currency For Exchange**

You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the CRC is approximately CRC 800 to the British Pound. USD are accepted in some shops / restaurants. We recommend you take some emergency cash in USD as the GBP exchange isn't very good. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may not be accepted. Please check on line for up to date information

### **Where To Exchange**

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### **ATM Availability**

ATMs can be found in the major towns and cities for cash withdrawals in Colones. Always have some cash back up as they are not always reliable

### **Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

### **Travellers Cheques**

We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus

### **Accommodation notes**

In Manuel Antonio we use a quirky hotel called El Faro. Constructed from shipping containers that have been carefully put together to blend in with the hillside around the coast, the hotel is unusual and stylish. From the rooftop pool there are fantastic views out to the ocean, perfect for a sunset rum punch.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety 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.

## Price Guarantee

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

## Visa and Passport Information

Costa Rica: Citizens from the UK, US, Canada and most EU countries do not require a visa for a stay up to 90 days. Citizen of Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information.(Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## **Ability to swim**

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

## **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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Additional Information**



## Why book this trip

We have created this tour for travellers who want to discover all of the major Costa Rican highlights but are short of time. Including the wildlife of Manuel Antonio, the cloudforest at Monteverde and Arenal's conical volcano, this trip will not disappoint.

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## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**