

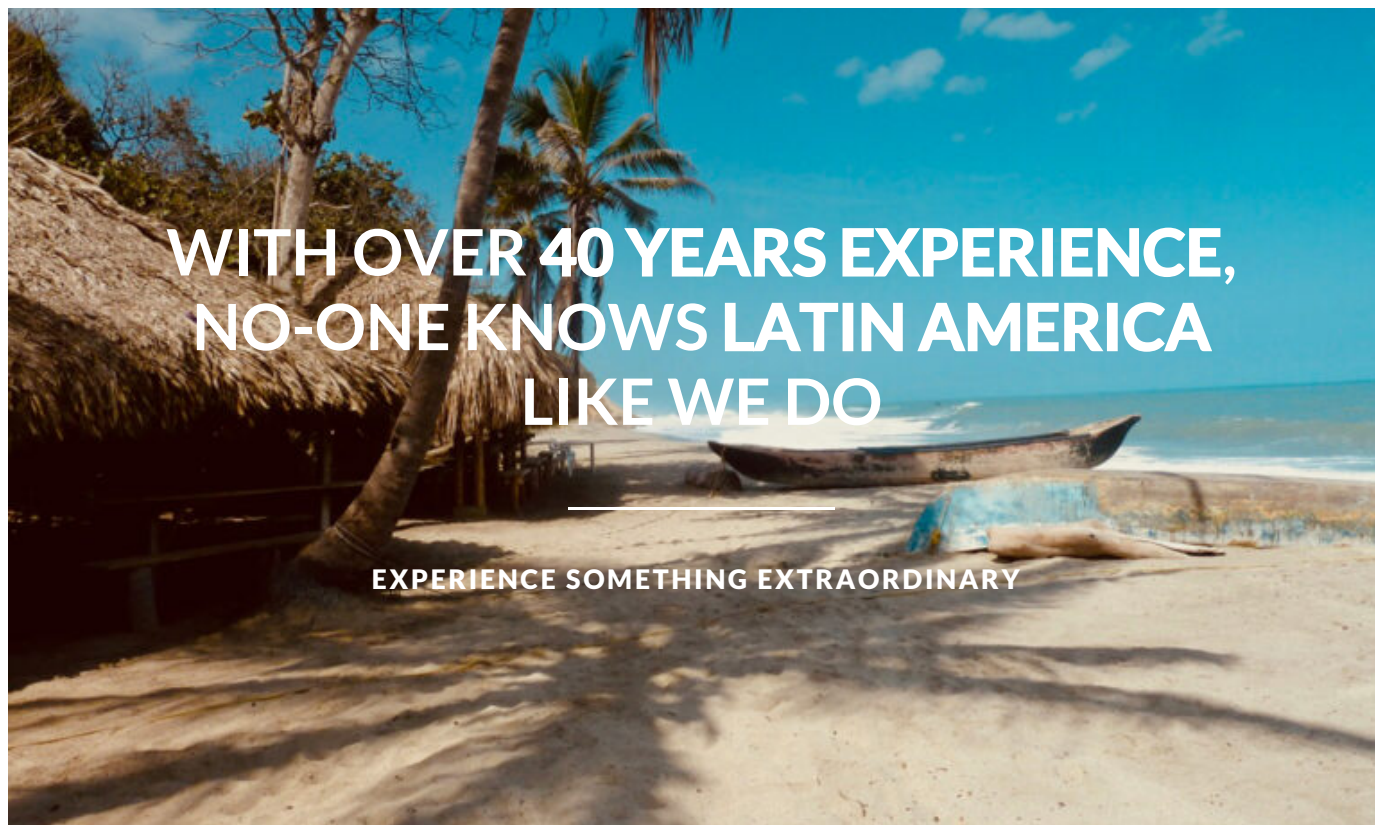


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

FAMILY COSTA RICA: JUNGLE WALKS AND TURTLE SPOTTING

14 days from **£3,825pp**

**COSTA RICA / SAN JOSE, CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AND CENTRAL VALLEYS / CARIBBEAN
COAST / ARENAL AND THE NORTH / PACIFIC COAST**



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

An action-packed family trip visiting well-organised national parks. Explore on foot, by kayak or zip-line, with steaming volcanoes and verdant jungle, while Pacific beaches are enlivened by monkeys and parrots.

DAY 1	Arrive in San José, transfer to hotel.
DAY 2	Drive and boat to Tortuguero Jungle Reserve.
DAY 3	Wildlife-spotting excursion and village visit in Tortuguero.
DAY 4	Fly and drive to Arenal volcano area.
DAY 5	Guided river rafting expedition.
DAY 6	Guided adventure to the hanging bridges.
DAY 7	Transfer to Savegre.
DAY 8-9	At leisure; optional activities
DAY 10	Transfer to Manuel Antonio on the Pacific coast.
DAY 11	Guided exploration of Manuel Antonio National Park.
DAYS 12-13	At leisure
DAY 14	Transfer to San José airport for international flight home.

ITINERARY

This compact country is bursting with an extraordinary diversity of landscapes, flora and fauna, and this family journey explores its well-organised national parks in an active way, with the children wowed by canoe trips, suspended bridges and a beachside camp where monkeys roam free.

Begin with a guided waterborne exploration of the Caribbean jungle channels and mangrove forests to see wildlife in the Tortuguero reserve. Later, scramble over hanging bridges suspended over waterfalls and forest and recover with a bathe in naturally heated thermal springs in the shadow of the picture-perfect Arenal Volcano. Move on to another wildlife experience in a Pacific-coast fixed safari camp, and end the holiday on the sunny beaches of popular resort at Manuel Antonio.

Costa Rica is one of the most peaceful and stable countries in the world: and the people are among the friendliest in Latin America. The comprehensive network of national parks with their extensive trails is always very accessible. In line with its love and respect for the great outdoors, Costa Rica also has been at the vanguard of adventure tourism, with lots of activities on offer from zip-lining to white-water rafting.

DAY 1

Arrive in San José, transfer to hotel.

You will be met at the airport by our local representative who will take you to your hotel in the modern capital.

DAY 2

Drive and boat to Tortuguero Jungle Reserve.

Today you'll head off to discover the Caribbean coast with a few days most rewarding wildlife spotting. This is true wilderness: it isn't the Caribbean of resort hotels, sugary beaches and piña coladas. You take a 3-4hr drive northeast, including a short bumpy ride through banana plantations to Caño Blanco dock.

Then it's an hour's boat ride along the shore hugged by twisted mangrove swamps before you arrive in the small, ramshackle and remote village of Tortuguero. You'll be staying in the eco-friendly Tortuga Lodge, where large screened open-frame windows allow the nocturnal symphony of the forest (such as the roar of howler monkeys) into your room. Each also has a wide veranda with a hammock overlooking the river. There is an attractive pool area and adjacent hammock rancho.

The park was originally intended to conserve a major nesting beach of the Atlantic green sea turtle: if you travel between July and October we include a nighttime visit to the local nesting beach. You might be lucky enough to see them laying their eggs. Leatherbacks still visit Tortuguero but numbers are dwindling.

DAY 3

Wildlife-spotting excursion and village visit in Tortuguero.

Set off on a wildlife adventure on a guided boat trip through the mangrove forest of Tortuguero National Park, now one of the last protected areas of tropical rainforest in Central America, with 11 different natural habitats and a huge range of endemic wildlife, much of which can be spotted as you glide through the water.

There are 3 species of monkeys (spider, howler, and white-faced). Three-toed sloths and river otters are often seen along the natural inland waterways and canals. Caimans, iguanas, river turtles, lizards and poison dart frogs inhabit the area, along with over 320 species of birds including 3 of toucan and 8 of parrot.

You'll also have a guided tour of the settlement of Tortuguero including a visit to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation Museum. Flanked by rivers and waterways on one side and Caribbean beach on the other, this faraway village serves as a sleepy hub for visitors to the area, human and otherwise.

DAY 4

Fly and drive to Arenal volcano area.

Fly to La Fortuna (Arenal) in a Cessna (or equivalent) light aircraft: a 30-minute airborne adventure where you skim over the countryside with volcano views. Land at a small airstrip and continue by road to your hotel (30 mins – 1 hour). A modest 1,674m high but an impressive conical mountain dominating the surroundings, Arenal volcano last erupted in 1998.

These days, lava flow and volcanic eruptions are infrequent and there has not been any significant activity since 2010. However, as seismic activity is often unpredictable the situation may change by the time you travel. Even without any recent volcanic activity, the region is still considered to be one of the highlights of a visit to Costa Rica. Your lodge is on the road between La Fortuna de San Carlos and Arenal Lake, and is surrounded by dense tropical rainforest. There are two pools, a spa and a Jacuzzi. The al fresco restaurant is nicely situated beside the pool.

There are many adventurous excursions offered from the lodge including hikes to waterfalls, kayaking, river rafting, horse riding, canyoning and quad bike rides.

DAY 5

Guided river rafting expedition.

The grade 2-3 white-water rafting trip is fairly serene: piloted by expert guides, appropriate for beginners and older children. But it's exciting enough for seasoned rafters, with flat, crystal clear pools interspersed by more turbulent rapids. You are collected from your hotel and escorted to the river (90 mins). You'll have a safety briefing and training before entering the water.

At the end of the rafting adventure your private transportation will be waiting to take you to the operations centre in Sarapiquí where you will be able to shower in time for a buffet lunch. You then have time to walk in the tropical gardens and over a hanging bridge to give you a different perspective over the water.

DAY 6

Guided adventure to the hanging bridges.

Guided walk through rainforest close to Arenal. The exciting 3km long trail takes you through primary forest over bridges so you get a real close-up experience as you spot wildlife and exotic plants. There should be good views of the Arenal volcano and neighbouring reservoir.

The trail is linked by six hanging bridges and eight fixed bridges, some measuring up to 22m in length and constructed from steel and aluminium to 'blend with the natural environment.' With a maximum grade of seven degrees, the carefully engineered trail is accessible to most ages and levels of fitness. The circuit will take around 2 hrs.

DAY 7

Transfer to Savegre.

Transfer by road to Savegre on the central Pacific coast. The whole length of this coastline is dramatic, with rugged hills stifled by jungle foliage tumbling down to a serrated shore-line, with little sandy coves and longer sweeps of sand where Pacific rollers crash onto the golden beach pitted with driftwood.

One of the delights of Costa Rica for families with children is being able to "camp", safely, in the bosom of a tropical natural environment, surrounded by the sights and sounds of living jungle.

DAY 8-9

At leisure; optional activities

At leisure at the lodge. Explore the area, take optional activities or just relax and enjoy the lodge facilities. It's a fantastic one-in-a-million wilderness wildlife experience for a family. There is a range of activities available to book locally, from rafting to horse-riding and hiking.

DAY 10

Transfer to Manuel Antonio on the Pacific coast.

Drive 30km up the Pacific coast and arrive at Manuel Antonio beach resort, situated next to Manuel Antonio National Park, one of the smallest but best-loved nature parks in Costa Rica. Its setting is lovely – wild, tropical beaches and rocky outcrops backed by lush forest. It has a network of trails where you may see a variety of reptiles, as well as monkeys, sloths, armadillos, racoons and hundreds of bird species.

Close by, Manuel Antonio beach is also one of the most popular in the country, with a number of high quality hotels, condominiums and resorts. 30 years ago, when we first went there, its fudgy sands were visited only by monkeys and backpackers. Now you'll find tourists from all over the world, especially the USA, but it is still a gorgeous place graced with exquisite natural beauty. (Note that there are strong currents, you can't just run into the sea here).

DAY 11

Guided exploration of Manuel Antonio National Park.

Guided discovery on foot of the jungle trails in Manuel Antonio National Park.

DAYS 12-13

At leisure

Time to sit back and relax on the beach or by your hotel's swimming pool. If you're looking to do something more active, we can arrange for you to go kayaking through the mangroves of the Damas Island estuary, 15km north of Manuel Antonio.

DAY 14

Transfer to San José airport for international flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Guided boat excursion in Tortuguero National Park

Guided turtle nesting walk in Tortuguero (July-October)

Guided tour of Tortuguero village and Sea Turtle conservation museum

Guided river rafting from Arenal

Guided excursion to the hanging bridges at Arenal

Guided excursion in Manuel Antonio National Park

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

TRANSPORT

1 flight by light aircraft; 3 scenic road journeys.

ACCOMMODATION

This trip combines small, friendly mid-range hotels with well-equipped rooms with private bathroom and comfortable but not luxurious wildlife and beach lodges, and a tent camp.

MEALS

Breakfast daily

Lunch: day 5

Full board: days 2, 3, 7, 8, 9.

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

14 days, 13 nights: San José 1; Tortuguero 2; Arenal 3; Savegre 3; Manuel Antonio 4.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Costa Rica is the colón.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in San José: taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip and in many shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that you also take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency in San José at the beginning of your trip, and possibly some travellers' cheques, though these are increasingly falling out of use. (American Express cheques are the most widely accepted). Dollar bills should be in good condition; soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can exchange sterling but the rate may be unfavourable and there are fewer outlets providing this service. US dollars cash is widely accepted for payments.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US\$40 per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Generally this holiday is suitable for all able, reasonably fit visitors, including families with children.

Bear in mind it is a relatively active trip. River rafting here is gentle and appropriate for beginners. Walks vary in length and cover some uneven terrain. On the whole the trails are good, and paths are linear, so you can turn back if you feel that you do not want to carry on. All activities are closely monitored by qualified guides.

CLIMATE

The trip covers climates ranging from tropical lowland to more temperate zones in the highlands. Those travelling between May and October journeys should encounter high temperatures (around 35°C) and high humidity in the lowlands. The 'official' rainy (green) season is May to October.

December to April visitors will still encounter high temperatures in lowland areas, but cool evenings around Arenal and San José with temperatures falling to around 5°C. Rainfall and humidity will be lower at this time.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Bring plenty of light cotton clothing and good, comfortable walking shoes. A waterproof jacket is also necessary. We suggest that you plan to 'layer' your clothing; it is easier and more efficient to put on a couple of light layers than one thick jumper, and sensible to have long sleeves for areas where mosquitos may be lurking. Sandals are a good informal option for evenings. Protection against the sun (sunblock, sun hat) and mosquito repellent are essential and you should bring swimwear. A daypack is useful for carrying around sunblock, guidebook, water and any extra layers. Rafting or aqua shoes are highly recommended on this trip as are binoculars if you have them.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in Central America.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

RECOMMENDED TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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