



*Tour:*

Costa Rica Wildlife Rescue

*Specialization:*

Biology, Zoology, Veterinary Care, Geography & Culture

*Itinerary:*

8-days / 7-nights

Costa Rica Wildlife Rescue					
BIG CATS, MONKEYS, SLOTHS & SEA TURTLES - Service & Volunteerism					
Day	Morning		Afternoon		Evening
1	Travel to San Jose, Costa Rica and transfer to hotel			Welcome, Safety & Orientation	Welcome Dinner
2	Transfer to Reserva Pacuare, Caribbean Coast	Sea Turtle Monitoring / Rescue / Education / Evening Nest Safeguarding / Census Documentation / Dinner at Eco-Lodge			
3	Sea Turtle Monitoring / Rescue / Education	Transfer to Talamancan Montane Forests	Tree Climbing & Zipline at Selva Bananito Lodge	Selva Bananito Lodge Orientation	Dinner at Eco-Lodge
4	Big Cats - Jungle Hike, Wild Cat Projects - Monitoring & Assistance, Camera Maintenance, Scientific Documentation, Wildlife Assist; Dinner and Jungle Overnight				
5	Wildlife Camera and Track Monitoring	Travel from Jungle to the Caribbean Coast		Arrive and Check-in at Puerto Viejo	Dinner
6	Morning Hike & Snorkeling - Cahuita	Jaguar Rescue Center - Focus on Monkeys & Sloths		Free Time	Dinner
7	Initial transfer to San Jose	Pacuare River (Class III-IV) or Reventazon River (Class II - III) Whitewater Rafting	Arrive San Jose, check-in and get settled	Farewell Dinner in San Jose	
8	Transfer to Airport, return flight home				



As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an “example” of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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## Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet!

“If there is one place on Earth you should travel for an eco-experience, it's Costa Rica. No matter which place you visit in Costa Rica, the wildlife and nature is accessible and unparalleled, even after all these years of being known as *the world's favorite eco destination*. When it comes to wildlife in Costa Rica, in the jungles or at the beach, you'll see tons of monkeys, sea turtles, the ever-present coatimundi, humpback whales off the coast, colorful Scarlet Macaws in the almond trees, feathered friends of all kinds, and if you're lucky — you might even spot a puma or margay on the trail.” - TravlinMad

### **Day 1**

*Dinner (dependent upon arrival time)*

Travel to Costa Rica via air, arriving at Juan Santamaría International Airport. After boarding your transportation, your group will be swiftly transferred to your hotel. After getting checked in, we will have our Welcome, Safety & Orientation meeting and then dependent upon your arrival time, your group will reconvene for dinner later in the evening. If you experience a late arrival, head for bed and we will start in the morning!

**Sample Hotel: Country Inn & Suites by Radisson** - Located northwest of downtown San José, the Country Inn & Suites by Radisson offers a modern retreat near local markets, restaurants, and shops. After landing at Juan Santamaría International Airport, students can kick off their trip in two outdoor pools. Ready to explore? Delve into local history with live music and re-enactments at Pueblo Antiguo, purchase souvenirs from the stores at Plaza Real Cariari, or head into downtown to enjoy parks, museums, and entertainment venues. Stay connected using free Wi-Fi, workout in the fitness center, get caught up in the business center. Breakfasts are served at the hotel.



### **Day 2**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Rise and shine San Jose! After a great breakfast, we'll start our tour off by traveling to the Reserva Pacuare on the Caribbean Coast. Get ready to learn all about **Leatherback Sea Turtles**.

**Pacuare Reserve** - Located between Tortuguero and Limón on the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica, students will be immersed in sea turtle projects and research on a working reserve with almost 2000 acres of tropical forest. This area is one of the most important nesting sites for endangered leatherback sea turtles in the country. Pacuare Reserve and the surrounding canals are rich in wildlife, with more than 300 recorded



species of animals, 3 species of monkeys, over 200 species of birds, and rarer species such as jaguar and ocelot. Additionally, the park is also known as a nesting site for the Agami Heron.

Pacuare Reserve has been working for 25 years in protection of the Leatherback Sea Turtles, collecting data about nesting trends, population status, and nests survival. From March to July, our students are invited to join in for the turtle census and witness the nesting process at close range - an unforgettable experience for all. From June to September, thousands of baby leatherback turtles hatch - another great spectacle of nature to behold! The 3.72 miles of coastline are walked every night during the nesting and hatching season by the research assistants, students and volunteers. Every night, three different shifts cover the beach from 8 pm to 4 am, to minimize the loss of sea turtles. There's also a morning count to check for new activities or hatchlings emerging. The leatherback turtle rookery of Caribbean Central America represents one of the four largest remaining rookeries worldwide, together with French Guiana/Suriname, Gabon and Trinidad.

Schools need to be aware that activities vary depending on the time of travel. At times it may involve maintenance or pre-season preparations, and the actual turtle projects will depend on whether it is nestling, hatching or no-turtle season. Either way, your volunteer activities are very welcomed!

### Research Methods:

- Tagging the turtles with external metallic tags and internal PIT tags (passive integrated transponders)
- Collecting biometric data; length and width of the shell
- Checking for damages or injuries
- Counting eggs and deciding the destination of the nest, either in the original place where the turtle laid, or moved to a different, safer location of the beach

Other monitoring programs developed at Pacuare Reserve include:

**Jaguar & Prey Monitoring Program** - Pacuare Reserve protects 800 hectares, has several sightings of wild cats, the Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) being the most common. For a better understanding of the conservation needs of jaguars and their prey, the Pacuare Reserve has a camera trap monitoring program. Key priorities of the Jaguar & Prey Program include:

- Estimating the current density of jaguars, other wild cats, and their prey in the Reserve.
- Estimating the abundance of other mammals in the Reserve.
- Understand the biological corridor used by the jaguars and propose activities to protect it.



**Monkey Population Ethology Program** - Pacuare Biological Reserve hosts 3 species of monkeys that are being monitored: the white-faced monkey (*Cebus imitator*), howler monkey (*Alouatta palliata*) and spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*). Social learning is a complex cognitive phenomenon, related to the learning process and knowledge transmission, and this program is trying to describe the different behaviors and social learning process that the different species show.



**Agami Heron Nesting Monitoring Program** - Pacuare Reserve collects data on the nesting population and colonial breeding of Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*). From a conservation perspective, monitoring and conservation of this population is critical, especially because it is the **only known nesting site in the Caribbean of Costa Rica**. Twice a week, our researchers and visitors take a walk to the nesting site and start the data collection inside the blind, where the group can hide from the agamis and they can continue with their regular behavior.



Students will spend the day working on various projects and then having dinner and overnighing at the reserve.

### **Day 3**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Good morning Costa Rica! This morning we'll continue with our turtle projects – monitoring, measurement, and more. After breakfast and lunch, we'll transfer to the Talamancan Montane Forests.



**Canopy Platform & Zipline at Selva Bananito Lodge** - This adventure tour combines a rare opportunity to view the primary rainforest from our 100-foot high platform and the adrenaline rush of a zipline. Cables and equipment exceed the highest safety standards in Costa Rica and are designed to allow guests of all ages to enjoy this fabulous activity. We'll hike for 30 minutes through open fields and into the rainforest on part of the Natural History Trail to get to the jumping off point. Then, get strapped in, hold on, and enjoy the ride! Experience a true vertical descent with the optional rappel from the platform.

After our thrilling afternoon, we'll settle in. Dinner will be served at the lodge.

**Selva Bananito Lodge** - Nestled in the Talamanca Mountains on Costa Rica's Caribbean slope, this private reserve is an important buffer zone to the International Park La Amistad. The Ecolodge has achieved worldwide recognition as a model for Costa Rican ecotourism and is home to abundant Jaguar, Puma, Ocelot and many more critically endangered wildlife species that are monitored with trail cameras.



This evening we'll have dinner at the lodge and then free time to explore.

### **Day 4**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Rise and shine Ticos! Today we're headed into the jungle!

**Big Cat Projects** – Get your jungle gear on and bring plenty of bug spray, we're going in! Spend a day discovering the Costa Rica jungle and tracking the big cats! Groups will participate in monitoring assistance, camera maintenance, scientific census and documentation, along with wildlife assist if needed. We'll be spending the night deep in the jungle this evening.



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## **Day 5**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Good morning Costa Rica! We'll start the morning finishing up with our project work and camera maintenance. In the early afternoon we'll return to the lodge, have lunch and then we're off to Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean coast!

**Puerto Viejo** – Gorgeous beaches, lush jungles, abundant wildlife, and a laid-back atmosphere: Welcome to Puerto Viejo! This Caribbean-vibe coastal town is located in the southeast of Costa Rica, known for the Salsa Brava surf break and beaches like black-sand Playa Negra. The Jaguar Rescue Center rehabilitates animals and Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge has rainforest, wetlands and mangroves. You'll want to spend days sipping coconuts on deserted beaches, spotting wild sloths or monkeys, experiencing raw chocolate, and discovering cute roadside cafes.



After arriving, we'll get settled in, hit the beach, have some time to explore, and have a great dinner!

## **Day 6**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Rise and shine Puerto Viejo! This morning we'll drive up the coast a bit for a morning hike and snorkeling in Cahuita. In the afternoon, we'll be helping at the Jaguar Rescue Center, known for their monkey and sloth rescue program.

**Cahuita National Park** – Cahuita National Park in the Limón Province was created in 1970 as a National Monument to preserve the coral reefs off the Caribbean coast. Later, the area was reformed as a national park. It's a nesting ground for sea turtles, but that's not all you may see if you go snorkeling. Eels, sea cucumbers, manta rays, 3 species of sharks and sea urchins call the coralline reef home. There are at least 35 species of coral, 123 species of fish and many mollusks and crustaceans.





**Snorkeling in Cahuita** - Cahuita National Park is best known for the coral reefs close to shore. In the dry season, there is good snorkeling and you're likely to see light yellow brain, elkhorn, and blue staghorn corals, sea fans, and gorgonians as a backdrop to other marine life. Unfortunately, the reef is struggling for survival. An earthquake in 1991 lifted a large portion of the coral by about 10 feet, some of it was exposed to the air and sun at low tide and rapidly perished.

**Cahuita Forest Hike** - The hiking trails are excellent routes to spot some of the brightest and most colorful birds in the world - green ibis, yellow-crowned night herons, northern boat-billed herons, Swainson toucans, keel-billed toucans, Rufous kingfishers, and the Central American curassow. Some of the mammals which can be spotted are pacas, northern tamanduas, sloths and mantled howler monkeys.

Later, we'll be visiting the Jaguar Rescue Center.

**Jaguar Rescue Center** - The Jaguar Rescue Center is a temporary or permanent home for ill, injured and orphaned animals. With a focus on monkeys, sloths, other mammals, birds and reptiles, the JRC provides veterinary services, round-the-clock care and comfort to animals that would otherwise be unable to survive in the rainforest or the waters of the Caribbean.



Your visit to the Jaguar Rescue Center will be guided by professionals who have extensive training with these endemic animals. Described by its founders as a world-class tour in which you will see things you would not even have known to look for, and learn things you could have never imagined. As you explore the rescue center, you will come in close proximity with monkeys in the trees, wild cats, sloths, anteaters, birds flying free and see some of the most venomous snakes in Costa Rica which are housed in terrariums imitating their natural habitat. There is also a sloth station where you can get close to the baby sloths. All 6 species of wildcats in Costa Rica are endangered due to habitat loss, poaching and illegal trafficking. The most frequent wild cats that are receive at the Jaguar Rescue Center include: Margays, Ocelots, Jaguarundis and Pumas.



*Since we started our work in 2008 we have rescued an average of 500 - 700 animals per year and successfully released over 40% of them back into their natural habitat.*



The Jaguar Rescue Center is not a zoo; it is a truly fascinating rescue and educational center that offers a unique hands-on and up-close animal experience with rescued animals while they regain their strength to return to the wild. Each admission counts as a donation to rehabilitating their rainforest guests, so with our visit, we'll be supporting this incredible conservation initiative.

This evening we'll be spending the night in Puerto Viejo or Cahuita, dependent upon conditions.

### **Day 7**

*Breakfast, lunch & dinner*

Good morning Costa Rica! This morning we'll start to make our way back to San Jose, stopping for some major fun en route!

**Whitewater Rafting** – Groups will be able to get into adventure as we visit either Pacuare River for Class III-IV whitewater, or opt for Reventazon River with Class II-III whitewater. Internationally certified, bilingual rafting guides will steer you through lively rapids as you travel down the breathtaking Reventazon Valley. Look for toucans, kingfishers, herons, iguanas, and emerald basilisks along the way. All activities include full training and gear. Safety is of the utmost importance.



After our thrilling afternoon, we'll load back into the coach and continue to make our way to San Jose. Once there, we'll get settled into our hotel for the evening and then have our Farewell Dinner. The evening is free for packing, get-togethers, or an activity in San Jose. Please let us know if we may set up anything for you.

### **Day 8**

*Breakfast*

It's time to pack up and head home! Following breakfast and dependent upon our flight departures, we'll start to say goodbye to Costa Rica as we head off for our flight home; taking memories with us that will last forever!



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# COSTA RICA WILDLIFE RESCUE

**Minimum Booking Numbers:** 20 students

**What's Included:**

- Roundtrip international flights
- 7-nights' accommodation in Costa Rica
- Breakfasts, lunches & dinners daily (except travel days)
- Transportation for programmed activities & airport transfers
- Pacuare Reserve – Sea Turtle Monitoring, Education, Volunteering & Evening Nest Safeguarding
- Tree Climbing & Ziplining Adventure
- Big Cat Jungle Project – Monitoring, Camera Maintenance, Documentation, Wildlife Assist
- Cahuita National Park Hike
- Snorkeling in Cahuita National Park
- Jaguar Rescue Center – Private Tour & Service Project with focus on sloths and monkeys
- Whitewater Rafting on Pacuare River or Reventazon River
- Personal Tour Ambassador
- Fund-a-Forest: A tree is planted in the name of each guest
- Dollar\$ For Scholars: \$2 donation in the name of each guest
- 24-hour emergency cover

**What's Not Included:**

- Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
- Luggage fees if not included with airline ticketing
- Coach transfers to/from home airport
- Lunches on travel days and meals not shown in itinerary
- Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
- Passport or Visa costs
- Additional Sightseeing / Entertainment Options
- Any gratuities** – Drivers, Housekeepers, Ambassador, National Guide

**Currency Notes:**

If you plan to travel to Costa Rica, you will most likely want to carry the local Costa Rica colon (currency) to purchase goods and services. The colon is named after the Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus (Colon is Spanish for Columbus). The colon is primarily carried in bill form as 50, 100, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 (referred to as toucans), and 10,000 denominations. In coin form, the colon is carried as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 100 denominations. [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

Most every business / vendor in Costa Rica will accept **USD** (United States Dollar) for payment. Many items in local stores and hotels are priced in USD and not in Colons. **Please make sure to enquire about currency markings prior to purchase.**

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.





## SAMPLE PACKING LIST – COSTA RICA!

- Raincoat / Umbrella
- 1 Long-sleeved Shirt
- Mosquito Repellent & Anti-Itch Cream
- Sunscreen / Sun Cream
- Flashlight / Head Lamp
- Hiking Boots, Athletic Shoes; Water Shoes; Beach Sandals
- Camera & Binoculars if desired
- Bathing Suit
- Water Bottle (provided in your pre-travel pack)
- 4 – 6 pairs of Shorts
- Short-sleeve or non-sleeved T-shirts
- 1 Fleece or Sweatshirt
- Cash for Lunches on Days 1 & 8
- Staff Credit Card for emergency medical needs (Note: Typical medical facilities will require payment at the time service is rendered and then the group should request reimbursement upon return)
- Cash for any Gratuities / Tips

*Please know that gratuities (tips) are totally discretionary however they are customary and assist in making up the general basic wages for service personnel. Gratuities are generally paid in local currency or USD, paid per person. Suggested minimums are:*

- ❖ Bus Driver = \$16 - \$20 per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
- ❖ Costa Rica National Guide = \$30+ per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
- ❖ Ambassador = \$30+ per person on tour, dependent upon service levels
- ❖ Waitstaff for services other than normal mealtimes = 15-18% of total bill

**PASSPORT COPY** - Please bring at least one photocopy of your passport's information page. In case of the loss of a passport, the passport owner can use this copy to get a new passport reissued relatively quickly. Additionally, participants may be asked to show proof of nationality to authorities, so this should be carried on your person always.



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