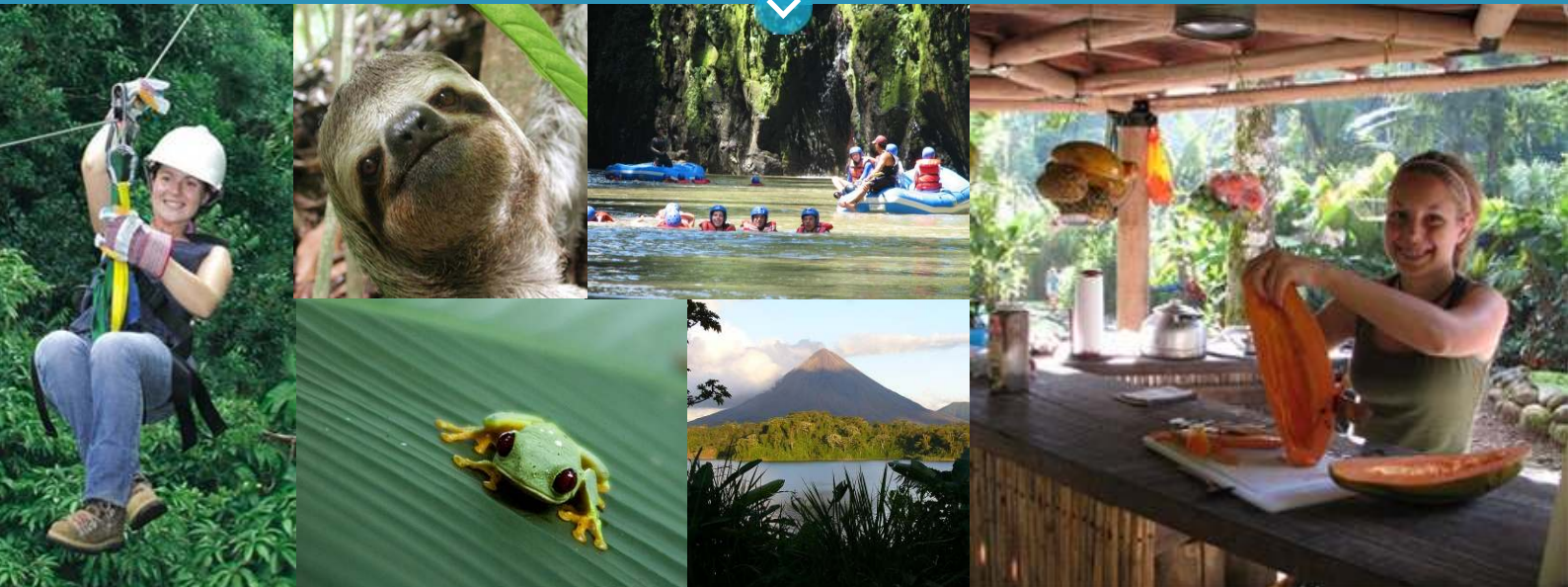


# Costa Rica

## Matriarchs, Magma and Monkeys



Journey into the depths of Costa Rican culture in this fantastic 15 day central American adventure. Meet tribes-women of the Cabecar and Bribri indigenous communities, experience the thrills of white water rafting and see the country's incredible flora and fauna from land, water and even from air in a zip line adventure through the tree tops! During this trip we will experience the traditional and modern ways of life of Costa Rican women from several walks in life and learn about the skills which they value, not to mention taking home the recipe for an unbeatable chocolate cake! This itinerary really does have it all...



### Recommended itinerary:

**Day 1: Depart UK and Arrive San Jose** On arrival in San Jose, we will meet our Trip Leader at the airport and transfer to our hotel in San Jose.

Culture shock rating:   
Physical rating: 

**Day 2: Walking City Tour and San Jose Central Market** Our first morning in Costa Rica will be spent on a fascinating walking tour of the city's main historical landmarks including the National Theatre and the Metropolitan Cathedral. After lunch, we will visit the San Jose Central Market, a maze of narrow alleys with over 200 shops, stalls and cheap restaurants known as 'sodas'. Here we will have the opportunity to meet local Costa Rican women who work in the markets selling a vast array of products from snakeskin boots to fruit and veg and herbal remedies.

**Day 3: Rafting to El Nido del Tigre Camp** This morning we will be transferred to the rafting gateway of the raging Pucare River where we will embark on our white water rafting adventure. Our journey will take us through pristine rainforest spotted with waterfalls to the El Nido del Tigre Camp, where we will spend the night nestled in the sounds of the rainforest.

**Day 4: Visit to the Cabecar Indigenous Community** Despite being the largest indigenous community in Costa Rica, the Cabecar community is the most isolated. Luckily, our rainforest camp means we will enjoy a three hour trek through the spectacular flora and fauna to reach their reserve. Here we will meet with local women to learn about the traditions of their matrilineal culture. Later, we will return to our riverside camp for another night in the wild.

**Day 5: Rafting and Transfer to Cahuita Beach** Today we say goodbye to our home in the rainforest as we embark on another white water rafting journey, stopping en-route to hike to some of the area's stunning waterfalls and enjoy a well deserved lunch ashore. We will then transfer to the breath taking Cahuita Beach where we will stay overnight in cabins.

**Day 6: Visit to the Bribri Indigenous Community and Sloth Sanctuary Visit** This morning we will meet an indigenous family from the Bribri Community to learn about women's roles in this matrilineal society. We will also learn about the properties of local plants and the processes involved in making chocolate, something which only the women are allowed to do! This is incredibly important to the Bribri culture where chocolate is used in purification rituals, food and medicine. Afterwards, we will visit the Sloth Sanctuary to learn about these beautiful animals and the work in rehabilitation and research which the sanctuary undertakes.

**Day 7: Transfer to Gandoca Manzanillo and Cookery Lessons** Today we will transfer to Gandoca Manzanillo, a wildlife refugee and rustic town where we will spend the next few days. The community here live off of turtle protection, tourism,

volunteer coordination, construction and banana farming and many local women also receive tourists as a source of income. We will be staying at Maria's property: Cabinas Rinconcito. This afternoon we will receive a cookery lesson from Maria herself who will show us how to make the traditional Rondon Dish.

**Day 8: Coconut Oil Making** This morning we will learn from Maria, along with a few other women of the Gandoca Community, how to make coconut oil from scratch. It only requires a few simple tools but a lot of patience! There may be free time in the afternoon to explore the area or relax.

**Day 9: The Ancient Art of Cocoa Cake** Having already learnt a little about the importance of cocoa in Costa Rican culture, we will impound on our knowledge today as we learn how to make cocoa from scratch and the way the Gandoca people make the dried, natural cocoa into a cake mix—we predict a Great Costa Rican Bake Off ahead! After feasting on our efforts we will return to Cahuita to spend another night in the cabins.

**Day 10: Transfer to Tirimbina Research Station and Hike** Today we will transfer to Tirimbina Research Station and embark on a short hike to familiarise ourselves with the area.

**Day 11: Activities at Tirimbina Research Station** We will have a full day to take part in the activities on offer at Tirimbina. This could include taking part in their frog or bat programmes, learning about forest composition or discovering the wonders of ecology and diversity in the rainforest.

**Day 12: Transfer to La Fortuna and Zip Line Tour** This morning we will transfer to La Fortuna before experiencing the rainforest from a whole new perspective: a zip line tour! We will glide across twelve cables through the Arenal river canyon, spotting waterfalls, wildlife and racing the birds through the sky!

**Day 13: Safari Float Tour** Today we will explore the river in a more relaxed manner, floating downstream to see the abundance of wildlife the rainforest has to offer. We will stop en-route at the Finca de Don Pedro, a local farm where Don Pedro and his wife will teach us about the Costa Rican way of life 70 years ago and how to make Costa Rican tortillas, a much needed snack!

**Day 14: Arenal Volcano Hike and Hot Spring Visit** Our hike will take us to Arenal Volcano where a naturalist guide will lead us on a gentle rainforest hike. We will have the opportunity to spot some diverse flora and fauna including monkeys, toucans and sloths. We will then reach natural hot springs where we can relax in the soothing water and soak away our aching muscles. In the afternoon we will transfer to San Jose ready for our flights the following day.

**Day 15: Depart Costa Rica and Return to UK** It is now time to wave goodbye to Costa Rica and our Trip Leader as we fly back to the UK.

**Important Information:**

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.

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|  | <b>DAYS FOR GIRLS</b> This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: <a href="http://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls">www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls</a> |
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**The School**  
Travel Consultancy

For more information and a detailed quote, please contact us:

telephone: 01392 660056

email: [schools@thestc.co.uk](mailto:schools@thestc.co.uk)

website: [www.thestc.co.uk](http://www.thestc.co.uk)

