



COSTA RICA

Off The Beaten Track – Southern Wildlife Adventure

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



ITINERARY

Off The Beaten Track

15 DAYS • 14 NIGHTS

Cartago – Tapanti – Orosi – Ujarras – San Gerardo de Rivas –
Golfito – Uvita - Bahia Ballena National Park

HIGHLIGHTS

- The beautiful and scenic Cabo Blanco National Park
- Bioluminescent waters of Tambor, a truly magical sight
- The historic and marvellous town of Cortago
- The ancient ruins of Ujarras
- Irazu Volcano National Park

THE WILD COSTA RICA



TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Exploring
Tour Start	San José
Tour End	San José
Accommodation	Hotel
Included Meals	14 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 6 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Easy

This 15 day Costa Rican adventure is a great opportunity to explore this beautiful country away from the tourist trail. Concentrating on the more remote locations you will be able to experience the stunning volcanic regions and central cloud forests. Kick back in an isolated lodge in the rainforest and enjoy the jungle lined beaches.



Pioneer Expeditions
Stable Cottage • Chydyok Road • Chaldon Herring • Dorchester • DT2 8DN
t 01202 798922 • e info@pioneerexpeditions.com

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COSTA RICA *an overview*

Eco-diversity like no other - Costa Rica encases 500,000 different species which account for roughly 4% of the world's plant, insect and wildlife species. Witness Sloths, Monkeys, Frogs, Snakes, Turtles, Iguanas, Humming Birds and so much more. Wander through tranquil bird-packed cloud forests and rich rainforests brimming with a plethora of spectacular wildlife. As well as its head-turning abundance of wildlife, this Central American paradise is famed for its never-ending activities, making it an adventure-seeker's dream; the vast array of activities widely on offer include Zip-lining, White-Water Rafting and Trekking. The incredibly beautiful east and west shores that run down the sides of Costa Rica display gorgeous paradise beaches lined with jungle, such as the secluded sandy stretches of the laid-back Caribbean coastline and the 'sun and surf' pacific stretches containing some great marine life. Become acquainted with the warm friendly locals, offering huge smiles, an easy-going manner and 'Pura Vida's. Despite receiving a heavy influx of tourists in recent years, there are still some extraordinary hidden gems and quiet spots to be found which will allow the more adventurous of tourists to experience nature, activities and culture that the typical tourists let pass them by.

WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.

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DAY 1: Arrive to COSTA RICA

You will be greeted at the airport where the driver will transfer you to Cortago. The night will be spent in the Paraiso Oroca Lodge.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
n/a



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Arrival

DAY 2: SCENIC VIEWS AND ANCIENT RUINS

After breakfast you will meet your guide and you will set out by car to the amazing Irazu Volcano, followed by a tour of Cortago, one of the oldest towns in the country. The trip will continue to the Tapanti National Park and the scenic Orosi valley. The last destination before the return to the hotel are the ancient ruins of Ujarras.

Irazu Volcano National Park

One of the most frequented national parks in Costa Rica situated close to the city of Cartago. The park is the site of a reforestation project to restore the area which was destroyed by the eruptions. The forest is made up of conifers and other exotic and native species and also a native forest consisting mainly of oaks and alder, protecting the watershed of the Reventado River.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture & Exploring

DAY 3: Guided walk around LOS QUETZALES NATIONAL PARK



On this day you will receive a private guided transfer to San Gerardo de Rivas and receive a guided walk at the Los Quetzales National Park before driving to El Pelicano hotel situated in the foothills of Chirripo National Park (the highest peak of Costa Rica).



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
1h Drive & 2h Drive



Activity:
Transfer & Exploring

DAY 4 & 5: Explore CHIRRIPO NATIONAL PARK

The activities on these two days are based on your personal preference as you might choose to relax at the hotel, explore the National Park of Chirripo or book an alternative onsite.

Chirripo National Park

The Chirripo National Park is one of the wildest parks of Costa Rica as it has the country's highest peak and miles of trails that any explorer would love. It encompasses one of the largest ecological zones in Costa Rica and protects a huge number of important ecosystems.



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Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 6: Visit the beautiful NAUYACA WATERFALL

Today you will embark on a private and guided transfer to Golfito with a stop at the wonderful Nauyaca waterfall where you will be able to enjoy swimming in this marvellous location.

The Nauyaca Waterfalls are located in an approximately 8 meters wide canyon and reach forty-five meters in free fall. This place is ideal for adventure lovers as it is recognized as one of the most beautiful places in Costa Rica's South Pacific.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
1h Drive & 2h Drive



Activity:
Transfer

DAY 7: Transfer to NICUESA LODGE



On this day, you will be transferred to the remarkable Nicuesa Lodge where you will be spending the next 3 nights.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
1h Drive



Activity:
Transfer

DAY 8 & 9: Days at Leisure at the stunning NICUESA LODGE

During these two days the activities that you will participate in will be chosen by personal preference.

The Nicuesa Lodge is a sustainable tourism hotel located in the spectacular southern Pacific Coast rainforest by the Osa Peninsula. It is built on a 165-acre private rainforest reserve. This trip includes the rainforest package which offers many great opportunities for various activities such as kayaking, rainforest hiking tours, botanical garden tours, snorkeling, fishing, jungle river tours and more.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
Personal Preference



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DAY 10: Head towards the pristine Whale tale, shaped beach of Uvita

Your lodge has its own private little bay just beyond Uvita.

Playa Uvita is situated within the Marino Ballena National Park.

Accessible throughout the year as the weather is good most of the time, Playa Uvita is a 2-mile white sand beach with moderate waves and crystal clear blue waters. It's the primary entrance to the incredibly beautiful Marino Ballena National Park which protects both coast line and sea.

Overnight at La Cusinga Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
2.5hr & 1.5hr Drive



Activity:
Wildlife

DAY 11: VISIT THE STUNNING MARINO BALLENA NATIONAL PARK

The park is most well-known for the Humpback Whales that migrate here annually to rear their young. Visitors are becoming more and more aware of the beautiful beaches in the area creating a year round flow of tourists versus just during whale season. The back drop for the area is just as spectacular with towering lush green mountains shrouded in clouds that quickly descend to sea level. The beaches of Uvita are all protected within Marino Ballena National Park. Therefore, there is an entrance fee, which must be paid at the ranger stations in order to access them. There are facilities at the ranger stations including restrooms and fresh water.



Overnight at La Cusinga Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 12: At leisure to enjoy the coast and surrounding area

Day at leisure.

Overnight at La Cusinga Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
**60min Boat Ride
& 20min Drive**



Activity:
Transfer



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DAY 13: OCEAN KAYAK AND SNORKEL TOUR

This tour begins at low tide as the waves shift to one side of the Whale's Tail, which is a good spot for snorkeling. Paddling to this point will take between 30 to 45 minutes. The snorkeling portion of the tour will take between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours and will give you the opportunity to see a variety of fish and coral species, such as Giant Conch, starfish, Parrotfish Snapper, Damsels, eels, Moorish Idol, Surgeon Fish, and various types of coral species. Catch a wave and ride back into shore on your kayak. Then, enter a small mangrove forest in Ballena Marine Park where it is possible to spot sea birds, toucans, and some small reptiles.



Overnight at La Cusinga Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
1hr Drive x 2



Activity:
Kayaking

DAY 14: AT LEISURE OR OPTIONAL WHALE WATCHING TOUR

The tour is at additional cost as its seasonal although dolphins and other marine life can be spotted at different times of the year.

Costa Rica has the longest whale watching season in the world! Humpback whales, pilot whales, blue whales, and Pseudo-Orca whales have all been seen off the Costa Rican coasts. The most popular of these is the humpback whale which can be seen nearly year-round. From December to early April, the Northern Hemisphere California Humpback Whales come to the Pacific Coast to breed, and from late to July to November, the Southern Hemisphere Antarctic Humpback Whales come to the Pacific. Whales can be seen all along the Pacific Coast, but are found in the largest concentrations along the Southern Coast and Osa Peninsula.

Overnight at La Cusinga Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
Tour

DAY 15: Time to head HOME

Private transfer back to San Jose Airport or spend a night in San Jose before heading home.



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
20min drive
30min flight



Activity:
Travel

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included

- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch,

Not Included

- Meals other than mentioned



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D=dinner)

- Accommodation as described
- Welcome kit and briefing
- Kayaking
- All Transfers
- Domestic flight to San José
- All necessary entrance fees
- All guided tours
- Taxes

- International flights
- Tips
- Personal expenses

ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

	Location	Accommodation	Example
Night 1 & 2	Cartago	Hotel	<i>Paraíso Orocaý Lodge</i>
Night 3 & 4 & 5	Playa Herradura	Hotel	<i>El Pelicano</i>
Night 6	Golfito	Hotel	<i>Casa Roland Golfito</i>
Night 7 & 8 & 9	Osa Peninsula	Hotel	<i>Nicuesa Lodge</i>
Night 10 -15	La Cusinga Lodge Uvita	Hotel	

WHEN TO GO...

It is important to keep in mind that the weather varies in every region in Costa Rica as in forests the weather is generally more humid; however North Pacific areas tend to have a lower temperature. Costa Rica is a tropical country and it is located close to the equator, however the weather pattern varies in different zones across the country. As Costa Rica is located close to the equator the hours of sunshine only slightly change throughout the year. The warm weather of Costa Rica attracts many families, newlyweds and adventurers to experience this “One of the most biologically intense places on earth” as described by the National Geographic.

December - April (Dry Season)

- Peak time for visitors to explore Costa Rica as this season brings a lot of sunshine making it perfect for exploring the rainforests or enjoying the beach.
- The cooler months of the year are November, December and January, however the temperatures during the dry season remain pleasantly in the highs.

May - November (Rainy Season)

- During June and July the rainfall lowers and Costa Rica’ forests burst with greenery, however the rest of the months have a higher amount of rainfall.
- The average rainfall in Costa Rica is about 95 inches, however certain rare mountainous areas can get as much as 25 feet of rainfall in a year.
- During the rainy season, the mornings may be sunny, but showers are expected in the afternoons.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activity Duration	Varies
Season	Pending



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Best Time To Go	December - April
Group Size	N/A
Group Departures	This is run as a private trip, so we are able to suit your dates and requirements. We can also tailor the trip to suit your requirements.
Difficulty Level	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'difficult level' (7 + hours of activities per day). This means you will need more than a basic level of fitness and some specific training may be required.

THE PIONEER BOOKING PROCESS

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

