



COSTA RICA FAMILY ODYSSEY

A tropical green adventure into rainforests, volcanoes and beaches



Expertly designed for nature-oriented families with kids ages 7 and up

DURATION:	8 days / 7 nights
SEASON:	November through April
DEPARTURES:	Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 and maximum of 12 participants.
TRIP RATING:	Moderate nature, cultural, educational and family-friendly Tour, Grade (I): This first-class soft adventure is an activity-oriented program featuring walking tours through forest and National Parks (2-3 hours in duration at elevations below 9,000 ft). Also floating or rafting, wildlife viewing, zip lining, snorkeling, surfing and sea kayaking.

2024/25 DATES: On request any week of the year during the travel season.

INTRODUCTION:

At the heart of Central America, Costa Rica shines as one of the happiest and most peaceful countries on earth. Adventurous families with kids (or kids at heart), couples and nature-lovers of all stripes will find magical moments and make fond memories in this diverse and safe outdoor wonderland. Approximately 25% of the country has protected forests, parks and reserves offering more than 100 different protected areas to visit.

Southwind Adventures brings you the essence of Costa Rica – a classic, family-friendly journey that includes all the ‘musts’. Experience the pristine white sand beaches of Tamarindo. Get active on hiking trails, river floating, or paddling a sea kayak. Relax in a hot spring and in comfortable, environmentally friendly lodging. Spot exotic wildlife like howler and squirrel monkeys, tree frogs, sloths, turtles, butterflies and birds galore. Seek thrills on a zip line, tree canopy walk, and exploring Arenal – Costa Rica’s most beloved volcano. Costa Rica is calling all adventurers – time to answer!

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- Stand at the rim of a volcanic crater at Poas Volcano National Park
- Get sprayed by the fine mists of a waterfall at La Paz Waterfall Gardens
- Float on a raft down a rainforest river surrounded by jungle wildlife
- Zip from treetop to treetop on a 7-cable long canopy tour
- Hike around Costa Rica’s most active volcano – Arenal
- Visit big cats under threat at a puma rescue center
- Traverse 6 suspension bridges at the Arenal Hanging Bridges Park
- Snorkel among tropical fish, sea turtles and manta rays in secluded beach coves
- Balance on a surfboard and catch a wave as you learn the basics
- Paddle a kayak along a saltwater mangrove estuary

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01: TO SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

Depart home and arrive this afternoon to Costa Rica's capital city, **San José (SJO)** (elev 3,845 ft). Meet your Southwind representative and transfer to the nearby **Hotel Bougainvillea** set on a peaceful 10-acre property surrounded by lush tropical gardens. Meals are on your own today.

DAY 02: SAN JOSE / POAS PARK / LA FORTUNA

Start the day with a scenic drive to **Poas Volcano National Park**, passing by coffee plantations and farms en route. After a brief stop at the visitor's center, a short walk takes us to a spectacular view of the main crater – rising up to 8,885 ft. and measuring almost a mile in diameter! The crater's sulfuric pool still bubbles and puffs smoke into the air, reminding you that it's active and this path experiences occasional closures. Don't forget binoculars on this visit to spot some of the 80 species of birds found in this park.

Back in the vehicle, we'll have a 40 minute drive to **La Paz Waterfall Gardens**. At an altitude between 4,000 and 5,000 feet, both cloud forest and rainforest coexist here. Get ready for a truly magical experience. Here, you'll find the largest butterfly observatory in the world, and five striking waterfalls. We'll walk through the hummingbird garden where you may see up to 24 species of these vibrantly colored birds! Reach Colibries restaurant where a scrumptious local lunch awaits. After lunch, we continue our explorations with a nature walk along the La Paz River towards the lively waterfalls to feel their mists from above and below. Time permitting, we'll also visit the nearby orchid garden and the frog pond.

After driving 2.5 hours, we arrive to **La Fortuna** (stopping to stretch in Aguas Zarcas). Check-in to the **Arenal Springs Hotel** (1,150 ft), located just five miles outside town with a perfect view of Arenal Volcano. Families with children will enjoy the several thermal pools and cascades which vary in temperature nestled among the lush resort gardens. (B,L)

DAY 03: ARENAL / LA FORTUNA

This morning we drive 30 minutes to Peñas Blancas River for a floating adventure on the river. The **Peñas Blancas Safari Float**, absorb the sensory stimuli of the jungle on a peaceful 2-hour float trip down the river. You will experience a relaxing ride, led by a bilingual naturalist guide that interprets the flora and fauna we see along the way. Animals like sloths, monkeys, toucans, crocodiles, Jesus Christ Lizards (they walk on water!) and turtles might cross your path. Overhead, the forest canopy is alive with the squawks and warbles of an array of birds and perhaps monkeys and sloths.

Lunch today will bring us to a nice and cozy restaurant in La Fortuna (Cafe Mediterraneo Restaurant & Pizzeria). This afternoon, harness up for an adventure among the treetops at the **Arenal Mundo Aventura zip line!** Reaching the 60 ft. tall observation deck, you will be guided to the first platform to start the canopy tour. All equipment is high quality and meets the international safety code. The cables span lengths of at least 650 ft., and each of the seven cables is a different treetop thrill. Afterwards you can visit the Maleku Cultural Rescue Center. A tractor ride will bring you back to the start for a short drive back to the **Arenal Springs Hotel**. Dinner is on your own this evening to try the resort's Ti-Cain restaurant featuring an array of vegetables and fruits that are cultivated in the hotel grounds. (B,L)

DAY 04: ARENAL / LA FORTUNA

To start the day, we'll explore **Mistico Arenal Hanging Bridges Park**, located near Arenal Lake in a natural green wonderland. A journey of two miles covers 16 bridges (six of them are suspension bridges!) and visits a waterfall that cascades down from almost 150 feet. Here you'll spot more than 700 species of plants and 300 species of birds. Favorite animal sightings are the toucans, poison dart frogs, howling spider monkeys and white-faced capuchin monkeys.

Next stop is the **Arenal Vida Campesina** to experience a snippet of life in the Costa Rican countryside. Meet with a farming family that grows typical crops and practices sustainable agricultural techniques. Together, you'll enjoy a traditional lunch with freshly harvested vegetables and tortillas that you can help make over a warm wood stove. By the end of the visit, you'll be amazed with your newfound knowledge of sugarcane, coffee, bananas, biogas, organic foliar fertilizer, and the history of cacao. Time permitting, you'll also help out with reforestation by sponsoring the planting of a tree.

The afternoon takes us to **Ecocentro Danaus**, a forest regeneration project teaching sustainable use of the land. There are good chances to see two and three toed sloths, the poisonous red frog, the red-eyed tree frog, birds, guatusas, basilisks, and iguanas. Along the path, you'll come upon a tree nursery, a butterfly farm and a natural lagoon, Maleku

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Indigenous Cultural House, and a garden of medicinal plants and orchids. Return to **Arenal Springs Hotel** to finish the day with a soak in the hot springs, where cascades provide a natural massage before dinner on your own to sample the resort restaurant's tasty menu. (B,L)

DAY 05: ARENAL / TAMARINDO

This morning we drive to **Arenal National Park**, covering 29,692 acres with diverse species, innumerable rivers, waterfalls, thermal hot springs, and of course, the majestic **Arenal Volcano** (5,480 ft.). The volcano looms large over the rolling green hills around its base. Although currently in a resting phase, Arenal remained the country's most active volcano for the past 43 years. Since 2010, however, the volcano's activity has decreased significantly. It's still alive; it's just sleeping. The gentle 3-hour hike begins on one of the trails close to the volcano. This trail will take us through the dwarf cloud forest themed with rich bird life that includes Costa Rica's national bird, the clay-colored robin; renowned for its melodious song. We'll get to walk over recent lava flows. Exploring the area around the volcano, we'll see how the flora and fauna are reclaiming the formerly devastated landscape. Today the volcano quietly heats local spring waters that are diverted into hot springs resorts and spas.

After hiking, take a lunch break in one of La Fortuna's fine restaurants, Novillo del Arenal. Specializing in beef, this restaurant also has a privileged view of Arenal Volcano. Then we'll depart on a 4-hour drive to Tamarindo, in the Guanacaste region, with a special stop en route – a visit to the **Las Pumas rescue center**. This shelter helps to protect numerous types of Costa Rican jungle cats such as panthers, pumas, and ocelots that have been injured or abandoned and need rehabilitative care. It's a good opportunity to see and learn about some unique animals, many of which are protected species affected by habitat destruction, hunting, and illegal animal trafficking.

Then, we'll continue driving into the seaside town of **Tamarindo**, on the Costa Rica's northwest Pacific coast. Both nature lovers and beach bums will find plenty to do here. Tamarindo is famous for its stunning beaches, its marine national park and wildlife refuge. It is also a favorite place for surfers. Arrive in town and check-in at **Tamarindo Diria Beach Resort**. The beach front lodge is situated on a two-mile stretch of white sand and warm blue water. You're free this evening to stroll along the beach at sunset and explore dinner options at the hotel's poolside restaurant. (B,L)

DAY 06: PACIFIC COAST / TAMARINDO

After a short drive to the nearby marina, you'll join other adventure-seekers for a morning excursion aboard a **sailing catamaran** named *Marlin del Rey*, *New Marlin* or *Lazy Lizard*, giving us access to some of the most beautiful secluded white sand beaches and snorkel locations in Costa Rica. You'll have the chance to spot marine wildlife such as dolphins, sea turtles, tropical fish, manta rays and perhaps whales. How you want to experience the pristine Pacific and marine fauna is up to you – choose from guided snorkeling, swimming, kayaking, fishing, or simply relaxing on board. The crew will keep you refreshed with snacks, fruits and cold drinks.

Lunch today will be at one of the best local restaurants in town – The Seasons by Shlomy or Dragon Fly Bar & Grill. Back at the hotel we have some time at leisure to prepare for our next adventure. This afternoon we head back to Tamarindo beach, one of the best beginner surfing areas in Costa Rica. After being outfitted with a board, leash and rash guard, a bilingual instructor and his assistants will give you a safety talk and the art of **surfing** begins! When you feel confident enough to get out into the water, your instructor will accompany you into the waves. You'll get plenty of individual attention, with a ratio of three students per instructor. Children under 10 need a private lesson so an instructor can provide extra attention to them.

After an active day working up an appetite in the water, relax back at the Ocean front **Tamarindo Diria Beach Resort**, and peruse the facilities with a delightful dinner at the Hotel's Matapalo restaurant on your own. (B,L)

DAY 07: PACIFIC COAST / TAMARINDO

Just outside of Tamarindo lies a lovely 1500-acre estuary, a saltwater river surrounded by mangroves that are home to an abundance of wildlife within the **Las Baulas National Marine Park**. The best way for nature lovers to explore the area is by kayak (departure time according to tide). Guides will take you through a safety briefing and fit you with your kayak (double or single), life jacket and paddles before setting off into the natural mangrove ecosystem. Spend 3 hours paddling along the estuary found between Tamarindo Beach and Playa Grande and spotting an array of wildlife like howler monkeys, iguanas, raccoons and crocodiles. Look out for great herons, egrets, roseate spoonbills, kingfisher, ibis and osprey along your way.

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Back at the resort for lunch on your own and some leisure time to relax. This afternoon is a relaxed 2-hour **horseback riding excursion** in pristine nature on a 1,500 acre private ranch with a local cowboy guide. Horses are well trained and friendly. No traffic or cars – just green jungle trails. You will see a gorgeous 360 degree sunset view when you reach the top of the mountain. It's a beautiful and laid-back Costa Rican experience. You will also see amazing trees and wildlife such as howler monkeys, iguanas, and exotic birds.

Back at the **Black Stallion Ranch**, a special farewell BBQ buffet feast awaits under the stars of Guanacaste. You'll savor organic farm-raised chicken, ribs, steak, pork, and Chorizo sausage, plus veggies, drinks and a delicious tropical dessert. It's a truly authentic regional farewell experience. Vegetarian BBQs are available on request. We make sure it's a fun and delicious evening that will not be forgotten. Bring a camera and a good appetite! Later on, return to **Hotel Tamarindo Diria** for the final night of your Costa Rican adventure. (B,D)

DAY 08: TAMARINDO / DEPART LIBERIA / HOME

After a leisurely breakfast and beach time, we transfer 1-hour to the airport in Liberia (LIB) to check-in for the international flight home. Arrive in your gateway city this afternoon and make onward connections home. (B)

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY:

- Although we do our best to adhere to the above schedule, this itinerary is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control, including group pace and acclimatization, weather, road, trail and sea conditions, flight delays or cancellations, as well as changes in plane schedules.
- This trip is suitable for healthy participants accustomed to outdoor activities, age 7 and up.
- On Day 02, if time and trail conditions permit at Poas Volcano National Park, we'll walk a half mile through a dwarf cloud forest to Botos Lagoon, a crystal clear rain-fed lake within an extinct volcano crater, surrounded by jungle.
- On Day 03, more adventurous families may opt for the Balsa River Rafting Tour, a two-hour descend on class II-III rapids with a minimum age of 10, instead of the Peñas Blancas River floating. Subject to river water levels.
- On Day 06, depending on the particular departure and sea conditions, the surfing lesson may be provided in the morning and the catamaran ride in the afternoon.
- On Day 07, depending on season and tide levels, guests may opt for a catamaran ride rather than kayaking.
- Changing the dates of the week on this itinerary may affect the flow of activities as some of the visits may not be available every day. Depending on final flight schedules, some of the activities may follow a different sequence. Distances and altitudes are approximate and travel times indicated do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, etc.

2024 LAND COST for a private guided trip: 4-6 participants: from \$5,400 p.p.d
7-12 participants: from \$5,000 p.p.d.
Single Supplement: from \$1,450

2024 Land Costs are valid for departures through April 2025.

p.p.d. = per person based on double or triple occupancy not including airfare.

Children's Discount: Kids age 7-11 at the time of travel are entitled to a discount of \$500 ppd. Kids age 12-17 at the time of travel receive a discount of \$250 ppd on the Land Cost. Discounts are not combinable, nor can they be used in conjunction with other promotional offers unless specified.

Note: End of the year or holiday departures between December 15 and January 06, could have a Land Cost surcharge of 10-20%. For these departures we recommend making reservations 8 or more months in advance.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Southwind's ticketing specialist can assist with all your air travel – providing an airfare quote to match your itinerary, personalized support for seating, monitoring schedule changes and coordinating directly with the airlines if any adjustments are needed. Round-trip international air from US gateways (Miami, Ft Lauderdale, New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Atlanta, Houston & Dallas) is approximately \$500-\$900 per person. Airlines offering service arriving to San Jose (SJO) and departing from Liberia (LIB) include American, United, Delta, JetBlue and Southwest. There are no in-country flights necessary for this trip. You have the option to arrange your own flights or redeem award travel yourself if you prefer. Tickets should only be purchased after Southwind notifies you that your trip is confirmed. The airlines request that tickets match your passport name. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind provides flight booking details for your travel dates.

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SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- **In-country transfers** as noted and ground transportation in comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- **Accommodations in first-class (4 star) hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to customize the itinerary and arrive early or extend your stay. Double rooms (with king/queen bed) for parents and/or Triple/Quadruple rooms for families can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer very few rooms with Triple/Quadruple beds. Also, very few connecting or adjacent rooms are available at certain hotels.
- **Meals** as indicated (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required). For other diets, consult your Southwind travel specialist before making a reservation.
- **Guided tours** (as listed) conducted on a private basis (except the Arenal zip line and the Catamaran excursion at Tamarindo when other hotel guests or travelers may join) by knowledgeable, professional English-speaking native guides experienced with family travel (includes applicable entrance fees).
- An **English-speaking guide/escort** will lead the entire trip (Day 01-08). An assistant guide is provided for groups with 9 or more participants.
- Single Supplement provides single room accommodation in all hotels. Due to the limited number of rooms at the small boutique hotels, there is a maximum of 2 singles allowed per group. If you require single accommodation, making reservations well in advance is recommended.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic nor international flights.
- Tours, meals (at about \$30-45 each per person) or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Early check-in or late check-out at hotels.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in trip preparation such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets, travel insurance, and additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

OPTIONAL HOTEL UPGRADES:

All hotels in the Family Odyssey have been selected based on their outstanding adherence to international standards, attention to quality and detail, and rich offering of amenities and comforts. However, upon request, we can upgrade your stay to the finest properties to be found in each location or the best Suites for 5-star luxury and VIP treatment.

San José: Upgrade to the deluxe Marriott or the lovely Xandari Hotels.

Arenal: Upgrade to the luxurious Springs Resort & Spa, Tabacon Grand Spa Thermal Resort, or the exclusive Arenal Nayara & Spa Hotel.

Guanacaste: Consider the Cala Luna Hotel on Langosta Beach near Tamarindo. Or choose the elegant 5-star hacienda-style JW Marriott Guanacaste Resort & Spa, the Four Seasons at Papagayo Peninsula or the Paradisus Playa Conchal Hotels, all of which are Guanacaste's prime oceanfront properties.

Due to high demand these reservations are recommended at least 4-6 months in advance.

Upgrades are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed.

WEATHER: Costa Rica enjoys a warm tropical climate year-round, with a rainy season between May and November. Average high temperatures are in the lower 80s, with average low temperatures in the mid-60s year-round. The weather varies considerably based on the region, with microclimates that depend on elevation and geography. The climate on the Pacific coast is humid and warmer, and in the highlands expect less humidity and cooler temperatures. Costa Rica is a year-round destination, but ideal time to visit is during the "summer" dry season of December-April.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, natural events, medical reason, quarantine, local strikes, personal injury/illness (for you, your traveling companion or family members at home), could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important.

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Southwind recommends **Travel Insured International** which offers coverage options at a good value. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you can still receive coverage if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip, but you do need to purchase a plan **within 21 days of your deposit**. Southwind can provide eQuote for insurance to review upon receipt of your deposit and Trip Reservation eForm. [Learn more about coverage offered by Travel Insured International](#)

HOW TO SIGN UP: Please complete Southwind's Trip Reservation eForm. There are fields for up to 6 travelers per form with the same address. The deposit is **\$1,500 per person**, [please click here to pay your deposit](#) by any major credit card through our secure CardConnect system. In the total amount due box, enter your deposit amount (without a comma) based on the number of travelers in your party. If you prefer, you can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements by phone or send a check. You will receive confirmation of your deposit.

Reservations can be accepted up to 60 days before departure, provided services and space are available. Due to the popularity of Costa Rica, we recommend making reservations at least 4 months in advance for non-holiday or about 1 year prior for holiday departures. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive comprehensive pre-departure planning documents by email.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 120 days by Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, check, or electronic funds transfer. You can split your balance on two cards. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due.

Specific policies will be outlined in your finalized custom trip proposal. General policies can be found under the current [Terms & Conditions](#) on Southwind's website.

We look forward to having you travel with us in Costa Rica!

Southwind Adventures, Inc

Your Latin America Travel Specialist since 1990

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