Last Updated: August 15, 2012

Project Costa Rica - CRPJ

15 days: Costa Rica

What's Included

5 days of volunteering at sea turtle conservation project, Guided sugar cane and coffee tour, Guided visit to Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve.

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VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2012 - December 31st, 2012

Trip Style

Volunteer:

Service Level

Basic:

- Excellent value, amazing prices, quality experiences
- Simple and clean hotels, guesthouses and hostels chosen for location and character
- Affordable public and private transport for maximum cultural interaction
- Plenty of optional activities tailored to your interests and budget

Physical Grading

3: Trips may include activities like hiking, biking, rafting or kayaking. No sweat, right?

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive San José

Arrive in San José at any time. There are no planned activities so check into our hotel and enjoy the city.

Located in the central highlands, San José enjoys a moderate climate. The heat and humidity of the coast and lowland areas may affect you, with a general sense of lethargy and/or loss of appetite. This is no cause for alarm, it is simply your body's reaction to the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water (bottled water is available everywhere) and do not attempt too much in any given day. We prefer fan-cooled rather than air conditioned rooms to avoid having to acclimatize to the heat and humidity every time you go outside. This is also a more eco-friendly approach.

Like most cities, San José has its good and bad sides. It is the centre of government, theatre, and art, as well as of air pollution and congestion. It has beautiful parks and museums, and a few beggars on the streets. It is big and often noisy, but even from its crowded downtown streets, you'll often enjoy a view of the surrounding lush mountains.

Start your exploration of the city in the main plaza, a great place to people-watch. A mime, juggler, marimba band, magician, or storyteller may be performing for whatever is collected when the hat is passed. Artisan booths are common, creating a regular arts and crafts fair atmosphere.

A source of pride for the ticos (as Costa Ricans are known) is the National Theatre. Inaugurated in 1897, the building was paid for by coffee growers through a voluntary tax on every bag of coffee exported. The National Museum, housed in the Bellavista Fortress, offers exhibits on pre-Columbian art, colonial art and furniture and religious art within a 19th century building that was converted from a military fortress after the army was abolished.

The Museum of Costa Rican Art, located in La Sabana Park, was once the international airport; the museum is now housed in the old terminal building. The Jade Museum is on the 11th floor of the Instituto Nacional de Seguros building. In addition to the marvellous collection of jade objects, there are pre-Columbian ceramic and stone works as well as displays with archaeological and ethnographic information. The Gold Museum is located underneath the Plaza de la Cultura. Its spectacular collection of indigenous gold art belongs to the Central Bank of Costa Rica.

The best and least expensive places to buy souvenirs in San José are the markets. The two main ones are the ones in Plaza de la Cultura, which is an outdoor open market, and the Central Market, where handicrafts are sold along with boots, fish, flour, herbal remedies, shirts and everything else you can imagine. Always watch your belongings and be ready for crowds. If you plan on spending a few days in San José after your tour, there are a number of activities within the city and area that you can participate in, many of them outdoors.

Probably the hardest thing you will do in San José, other than get safely across busy streets, is keep the street numbering systems straight. Street and avenue numbers are posted on buildings at the corners of some intersections. Keep looking as you walk, and you will eventually find one.

Day 2-7 Sea Turtle Conservation Project (6B,5L,6D)

Following an early morning departure from San José we travel approximately 5 hours by bus to Playa Matapalo, a small village located on the central pacific coast. We spend the next 5 days working alongside local and international volunteers to help protect endangered sea turtles.

The best time to visit this project is from June - November with the best chance of working with the turtles during these months.

Volunteer activities include long night beach patrols to protect the nests, data collection, area clean-ups, general cleaning and maintenance, the construction of breeding grounds and other infrastructure, as well as the possibility of monitoring of the baby turtle hatchery, counting baby turtles and releasing them.

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hours
Approximate Distance: 220 km

Day 8-10 Monteverde

Today we travel to the misty mountain air of the Monteverde Cloud Forest. Spend two days exploring Monteverde and the Forest Reserve, truly a nature lover's paradise. Local guides are extremely knowledgeable about the area and passionate about conservation of this precious ecosystem. The unique community has several local co-operatives worth visiting including artist collectives and a cheese factory. If you're there at the right time of year, you may be lucky enough to see the Resplendent Quetzal, one of the most beautiful and elusive birds in the world. Optional activities include traversing a series of suspension bridges through the jungle canopy, a butterfly garden and a thrilling canopy zip line.

Enjoy an included "El Trapiche Tour" to learn more about Costa Rican culture, including sugar cane processing, coffee production and other aspects of local agriculture. This hands on included tour is not to be missed and will leave you with a better understanding of Costa Rica.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your ziplining experience will be on either Day 9 or 10.

Monteverde or Green Mountain, is exactly what you find at the end of the long, rutted dirt road through the mountains. The surrounding pastures were once covered with dense forest, but today only a small piece of it remains. That piece of forest has been preserved as the Reserva Biologica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Cloud forest is much like a rainforest, but much of the moisture comes not from falling rain but from the condensation left by the nearly constant cloud cover that blankets the tops of mountains in many parts of the tropics. Monteverde Reserve covers 1600 hectares of forest and is home to a great variety of wildlife. More than 2,000 species of plants, 320 bird species and 100 different species of mammals inhabit this small area. The Santa Elena Reserve, another park contiguous with Monteverde, is less well known and visited but also worth seeing. All proceeds from this park profit the local community.

Quakers from the United States founded the village of Monteverde in the 1950s. Looking to leave behind the constant fear of war and objecting to being forced to support continued militarism through their taxes, the Quakers chose Costa Rica because of its commitment to a non-militaristic economic path—Costa Rica’s army was dissolved in the 1940s. Since its founding, Monteverde has grown slowly as others who shared the original Quaker founders’ ideals moved to the area. Although the Quakers came here to farm the land, they recognized the need to preserve the rare cloud forest that covers the mountain slopes above their fields. The community is very different from those on the coast, and offers several souvenir shops and the Quaker cheese factory, which is definitely worth a visit. Make sure to try their ice cream!

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours
Approximate Distance: 260 km

Day 11-13 La Fortuna

Travel by bus, boat and bus to La Fortuna, a town located at base of the Arenal Volcano, an excellent base for area explorations. Take an unforgettable night hike around the base of the volcano to see the top glowing an eerie red, accompanied by a soundtrack of monkeys and the rumblings of the volcano in the distance. Hike the area’s nature trails, swim in chilly La Fortuna waterfall or join a canopy tour and catch a bird’s eye view of the forest greenery. Other optional activities include full-day white water rafting on the Toro or Arenal Rivers, mountain biking, caving, horseback riding, or a tour of the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. Like much of Costa Rica, the area is a birders’ paradise, with over 600 species as permanent residents. Finally, after a long day of exploring, take a relaxing soak in lush cascading hot springs. Soak in one of the natural thermal baths and rivers under the shade of the surrounding canopy.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your rafting and canyoneering adventures will either be on Day 12 or 13.

Set on the northern plains of Costa Rica, Arenal Volcano sits on the southeast shore of artificial Lake Arenal (77 square kilometres, or 48 square miles). Separating the mountain ranges of Guanacaste and Tilarán, the lake was created by a hydroelectric dam. Winds sweeping off the Caribbean Sea reach speeds of 48 to 72 km/hr (30 to 45 mph), across Lake Arenal you can find one of the best locations in the world to go windsurfing. Arenal is especially impressive at night, when the glowing molten lava is blasted into the ink-black sky. Even during the day, its reflection on Lake Arenal is truly enchanting.

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours
Approximate Distance: 50 km

Day 14 San José

Return to San José for some last minute shopping and a final night on the town.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours
Approximate Distance: 150 km

Day 15 Depart San José

Depart San José at any time.

What's Included

5 days of volunteering at sea turtle conservation project, Guided sugar cane and coffee tour, Guided visit to Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve.

Highlights

Patrolling for sea turtles laying their eggs, chilling out on the beach and watching the waves lap at the coast, searching for the elusive quetzal bird, soaking in the hot springs of Arenal Volcano

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1) Be prepared for rain and lower temperatures during the winter season (June-November), especially in Costa Rica's central valley.
2) There is no guarantee that you will see turtles coming onshore to lay eggs. This is a natural occurrence and as such it is not possible to schedule sightings.
3) Food and accommodation is quite basic at the Matapalo Turtle Project.
4) For the nighttime beach patrols at the Matapalo Turtle Project, dark clothes are a requirement. These patrols are approx 12km in length and can be quite physically demanding.
5) The Matapalo Turtle Project has a strict no alcohol policy. While staying at the project on Days 2-7, G Adventures volunteers must abide by this.

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders, a G Adventures representative, or an expedition team. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide

information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, avg 10.

Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and are likely to be of a variety of ages too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Meals Included

6 breakfast, 5 lunches, 6 dinners.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. The above information applies to G Adventures group trips. Please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow USD290-380 for meals not included.

Transport

Public bus, taxis, walking.

Single Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Simple hotels (8 nts), multi-share basic lodge (6 nts).

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops, with the following exceptions: Nights 2-7 in Playa Matapalo during the volunteer stay.

About Accommodation

Please note if you are a single traveller, you can expect to share accommodation with one or two other travelers of the same sex for the duration of your trip. Using multi-share accommodation when available helps us to keep our operating cost down, and these savings are passed onto you. If you are traveling with a friend or companion, we will attempt to keep your accommodation on a twin or double basis, however, ask you to be open to the idea of occasional multi-share rooms.

While volunteering, your accommodation will be in a basic, large, multi-share room.

Joining Hotel

Boutique Hotel Casa Las Orquideas
75 mts. oeste del Auto Mercado Los Yoses
PO Box #1101-2050
San Jose, Costa Rica
Tel: (506) 2283-0095

Joining Instructions

The best way to get to the arrival point hotel is via taxi from the airport. There are fixed (official) rates at the airport counter. It is a 25-30 minute drive (depending on traffic) into the city.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day during which no activities are planned.

Your Tour Leader will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. The Tour Leader will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact G Adventures during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call our local office in San José, Costa Rica. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so that we may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

G Adventures San José, Costa Rica,
Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm local time (GMT –6).
Tel: Int. Dialing Code +506 2224-5560.

Costa Rica Emergency Cell Phone: +506 8322 9140 (after office hours).

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office in Costa Rica, we have a toll-free line within North America (or our regular direct line), which will connect you directly with our Toronto office.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Outside North America, Australia and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack (whichever you find easiest to carry). A good size daypack is also essential.

Checklist

- USD cash
- Credit and/or debit card (see spending money)
- Travellers cheques (optional to bring a small amount as backup, though they are sometimes difficult to cash and usually at a fee)
- G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and trip details

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Camera and film
- Reading/writing material
- Binoculars
- Plastic bags or cover for backpacks
- Fleece top /long sleeve top (for hikes, jungle treks etc..)
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Small towel and swim wear
- 5 shirts/t-shirts
- Sun hat
- 2 pair of shorts
- 2 pairs of long trousers
- 1 pair hiking pants/track pants
- Hiking boots/ sturdy walking shoes
- Sport sandals (suitable for water if you are planning on rafting and/or waterfall rappelling/abseiling)
- Rain poncho/umbrella
- Sunblock
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Towel
- Watch or alarm clock
- Water bottle
- Pocketknife
- Insect repellent for mosquitos and sand flies
- Mosquito Net (optional)
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sleep Sheet
- Travel Pillow
- First-aid kit(should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

For volunteer portion of this tour:
Dark colored clothing for the turtle walks is necessary, no white or bright colours. Purchasing a red filter for your flashlight or buying a headlamp with a red light setting is recommended for the night beach patrols. Mosquito repellent, towel and sturdy walking shoes are also recommended.

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.

Destination Guide

For practical information on weather, typical costs, visa information, special events and much more, our Destination Travel Guide is the place to visit! This handy guide will tell you everything you need to know about everywhere we go! Head to http://www.gadventures.com/travel-guide for detailed information on the countries and cities we visit.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for

drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances. Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work in Latin America. Check with your bank. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies. Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US dollars cash and cards with travellers cheques as backup is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds.

Please be advised that it may be difficult to exchange travellers' cheques during the first week, as the group will be travelling in remote locations. Bringing enough cash is recommended.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than 100USD (or equivalent).

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD $200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

Costa Rica airport exit tax: $28USD

Tipping

It is customary in Latin America to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Please note that in Costa Rica, a 23% charge is added on to almost every meal (13% tax, 10% tip). Further tipping for wait staff is appropriate in the case of excellent service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from $5-10 USD per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your tour leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures Tour Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline $20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

CUSTOMIZE YOUR ADVENTURE
Our trip designers work very hard to assemble the life-altering experiences that fill this brochure. That said, our travellers are a diverse group driven by all sorts of different tastes, motivations and interests. What’s a trip designer to do? The solution? Theme Packs! Specially designed for travellers with unique interests, theme packs are optional add-ons to your G adventures trip that make your adventure more you-centric. Theme Packs must be booked prior to departure.

Theme Packs available on this trip:
COSTA RICA ADRENALINE THEME PACK

Loaded with high-adrenaline pursuits like waterfall-rappelling, rainforest-ziplining, canyon-trekking, river-rafting and other so-amazing-they-need-a-hypen activities, the adrenaline pack pushes Costa Rica to the limit and beyond.

CANYONEERING Arenal, Half-day Rappel, down-climb, river-trace and descend huge waterfalls in the rugged mountains and lush rainforests around Costa Rica’s arenal volcano.

RAFTING Rio Balsa, Half-day Paddle through rolling rapids, then splash about in tranquil river pools in an isolated rainforest river canyon with the help of experienced river guides.

ZIPLINING Monteverde, Half-day Get a true bird's-eye view of the rainforest canopy as you soar through the trees on a tarzan swing, a giant rappel and a 450-foot-high zipline.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ON TOUR
All prices are per person, in USD amounts and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

La Fortuna/ Arenal:
Rafting Class III and IV (Full day – 7 hours) $75 (includes fruit on the river and lunch)
Rafting Class II and III (half day – 4.5 hours) $65 (includes fruit on the river and lunch)
Canyoning/Rappelling tour $75 (includes breakfast or lunch depending on tour time – 4 hours)
Mambo Combo (Rafting II and III with Canyoning) $139.50 (8 hours)
Venado Cave Spelunking $55 (4 hours)
Stand up Paddle $65 (4 hours)
Mountain biking $59 (4 hours)
Caño Negro Reserve $55 (8 hours)
Volcano walk/viewpoint/dinner and entrance to hot springs $45 (incl. transportation)
Viewpoint/dinner/entrance to hot springs $36 (incl. transportation)
Hot springs only $20
Hot springs with dinner $25
Cerro Chato Extreme Hike (6 hours) $59
Safari float $45 (4 hours)
Horse trip to waterfall $42 (4 hours)
Bike Rental $15/day
Volunteer Program at Proyecto Asis (feeding animals, playing with animals, baby monkey, and some physical work, includes snack) $59 (4 hours)

Monteverde:
Ziplining $45
Hanging bridges $25
Horseback riding ($25 for 1 ½ hours, $30 for 2 hours, $45 for 3 hours)
Butterfly garden $12
Frog Pond $12
Serpentarium $10
ATV $50 for a single, $75 for a double
Night Walk $22
Orchid Garden $10
Cheese Factory $10
Bat Jungle $10

San José:
Adventure Combo (Canopy & Horseback Riding) (L) $107
Adventure Combo (Canopy & Rafting) (L) $107
Combo Tour (Doka - Poas - Cataratas) (B,L) $96
La Paz Waterfall Gardens (Late departure) $75
Poas Volcano (Half Day) $46
San Jose City Tour $39
The Best of the Pacific (Punta Leona) (B)(L) $115
Rafting Class IV Pacuare (B)(L) $99
Irazu, Orosi and Lankaster Gardens(L) $81
RAM LUNA (Show and Dinner) $69

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

As of November 1st, 2007, the Costa Rica government, requires those entering Costa Rica from certain countries in South America

and Sub-Sahara Africa, to have an International Certificate of Vaccination against Yellow Fever. Those affected countries are: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, French Guiana and Venezuela.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

Like any city where tourism is on the increase, crime also tends to increase and while San José is not a noticeably dangerous city, there are certain precautions you should take. Make sure that you are aware of your things at all times and don't go out carrying expensive gear or jewellery.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.
Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

-
www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Responsible Travel

Being a responsible tour operator is at the heart of what G Adventures is all about. From the start, G Adventures has been committed to offering low-impact tours that benefit traveler and host alike. While our sustainable tourism policies are constantly evolving, our commitment to socially conscious, grassroots style travel has never changed. We work with local communities, businesses and individuals to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that help local economies while minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts.

We would like to give you a couple of tips to start you thinking about traveling sustainably.
-Please bring rechargeable batteries, a battery charger (and plug adapter if necessary). Batteries are incredibly toxic and many places that we travel do not have proper disposal facilities. Rechargeables are best but if this is not possible we recommend that you bring any used batteries back home with you for proper disposal.
-Please ask before taking pictures. Just as you would not like to have a stranger come up to you and take a picture of you while sitting on your front porch either do the locals of the places that we visit. As you can imagine pictures of their children are also not appreciated.

For more information about our commitment to responsible travel, please visit the Sustainable Tourism section of the G Adventures website: www.gadventures.com

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program
Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Volunteer Component

Sea Turtle Project – Matapalo Beach
The Playa Matapalo Sea Turtle project is a science based conservation program which was created with the purpose of protecting

female sea turtles, their nests and hatchlings laid on Matapalo beach against poachers and natural and introduced predators. Using a man-made shelter called a "vivero" to protect the eggs of this endangered species, the program has ensured the survival of the sea turtles and increased number of sea turtle hatchlings in the area. Local staff and volunteers also collect information about nesting activity which is shared with the community and local and regional authorities.

Project Location:
Matapalo beach, famous for its beautiful sunsets, is a 10 kilometer stretch of grey sandy beach that lies between the Hatillo and Portalón rivers on the central pacific side of Costa Rica. The station facilities are located 2 kilometers from the main road of the village and 200 meters away from the beach. Behind the house is a lagoon which is surrounded by 3 kilometers in both directions of mangrove stands with a rich diversity of birds, mammals and reptiles.

General Volunteer Duties may include:
- Evening/night beach patrol (12 km)
- Hatchery surveillance to watch for hatching turtles
- General infrastructure maintenance
- Hatchery building
- Counting baby turtles and releasing them
- Making Information signs
- Beach clean-up

The tasks described above will vary and depend on what stage the turtle eggs and hatchlings are at when each volunteer group arrives.

1) Be prepared for rain and lower temperatures in the evenings
2) There is no guarantee that you will see turtles coming onshore to lay eggs. This is a natural occurrance and as such it is not possible to schedule sightings.

Accommodation is a simple hotel. Rooms are multi-share.
Meal: All meals are provided during our stay and are typical Costa Rican dishes including rice, beans, pastas and grains, meat, fruits and vegetables.

Is this trip for you? Participants on this tour are generally conservation minded-people looking for an exciting vacation after contributing some hard core man hours to saving turtles on endangered public beaches.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletter_signup

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for Planeterra's monthly news to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by The Watering Hole, our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the Departure Lounge section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.

Keeping in Touch

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly commonplace and cheap throughout the regions we visit, and have quickly become the preferred way for our CEOs and travellers to stay in touch. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency

while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our Emergency Contact. We recommend that family and friends don't try to contact you through phoning hotels en route, as our hotels are subject to change, and our hotel receptions often don't have English speaking staff.

Recommendation

Want to see the Caribbean? Add our 4-day Turtles and Tortuguero trip TCRTTC.