



## COSTA RICA: PURA VIDA

*Itinerary*



PACIFIC OCEAN



COSTA RICA

SAN JOSE

TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK

TORTUGA LODGE

RIOS TROPICALES LODGE

PACUARE RIVER

<b>MEETING PLACE:</b>	Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José, Costa Rica
<b>MEETING TIME:</b>	A representative will meet you at the airport on Day 1
<b>RETURN TIME:</b>	Day 6 for flights departing after 11:00 AM
<b>RIVER RATING:</b>	Class III-IV
<b>RIVER:</b>	Pacuare River
<b>AGE LIMIT:</b>	Minimum age is 14
<b>TRIP LENGTH:</b>	6 Days / 5 Nights
<b>ACTIVITIES:</b>	Hiking, rafting, zipline/canopy tour, leisure kayaking

A week-long escape to raft the best river in Latin America, explore the unique wildlife of the rainforest canopy and witness the million-turtle nesting miracle in Tortuguero National Park. What, in the vicinity of paradise, could be a finer juxtaposition than mixing the pulse-quickening of a world-class wild river with the quiet awe of one of the greatest natural phenomena on earth: the annual turtle nesting on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica? Join us for the best of super natural Costa Rica on a tropical adventure based out of two of Central America's most legendary eco-lodges.

### **AWARD-WINNING NATURE-BASED ADVENTURES SINCE 1969**

O.A.R.S. has been in business for over 40 years and that is no accident. Great trips on some of the world's best rivers and coastlines are the recipe for this success. Always focused on our clients and their vacations, it is our genuine belief that river trips and nature-based adventures are extremely valuable life experiences. With that as our foundation, we have committed ourselves over the years to providing the best trips available, always with an eye on improvement.

## **PACUARE RIVER**

- The Pacuare River, or the Rio Pacuare, has been named one of the top 10 rivers in the world by National Geographic—winding through lush, primary rainforest offering unparalleled views of Costa Rican wildlife and natural beauty. The rainforests that surround the river are home to exotic species such as jaguars, monkeys, ocelots and a great number of birds including toucan, king fishers, herons, hawks, osprey, egrets and orioles. Add exciting Class III and IV whitewater rafting on warm, celadon-colored water and you can expect a tropical adventure packed with rich experiences that will last a lifetime.

## **TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK**

- The essence of Tortuguero is slow-moving tropical rivers. Everything about Tortuguero is defined by the rivers. They are the essential roads and soul of Tortuguero. Located on the Caribbean coast, Tortuguero National Park has incredible biological variety including rainforest, swamps, beaches and lagoons. The Park supports hundreds of species of trees and thousands of plant species which in turn attract an amazing number of birds including kingfishers, toucans, blue herons, peacocks and various parrots. The forests are home to jaguars, three-toed sloths and three of Costa Rica's four species of monkey, while the rivers house sensitive populations of manatees, caimans and crocodiles. The beaches in the reserve are key nesting grounds for endangered sea turtles such as Hawksbill, Loggerheads, Green and Leatherbacks. Our visit to the Park coincides with the turtle nesting season—an event not to be missed!

## **TURTLE NESTING**

- As part of a small group along with a naturalist, you'll witness a turtle nesting on Tortuguero Beach. It's a fascinating part of her lifetime adventure which started many years ago when she broke out of her own egg, climbed up through the warm sand, and stumbled down to the ocean shore—through a gauntlet of predators. She is the one in 10,000 who survived. She roamed for all those years through thousands of miles of ocean. Now she's much larger, protected by her shell and a long life of adventures that made her strong and safe. Amazingly, through her ability to sense the earth's magnetic field, she has returned to the very beach where she was born 30 years ago. She'll emerge from the ocean. You'll sit with her as she digs her nest and lays her 80 – 100 eggs. She will then laboriously cover the nest, perhaps digging a false nest to throw off predators before finally returning to the ocean. You will be there at the perfect time, at the perfect place, on that isolated beach, to meet her and grasp something about eternity.

## **Sample Itinerary**

We pride ourselves in running a relaxed and always flexible schedule. Every trip is different depending upon the group, other trips in the area and sometimes the weather. The following is a sample of what your trip might be like. (The itinerary is subject to change as it is dependent upon lodge availability, weather, water levels and participants' abilities)

### **Day 1: Arrive San José, Costa Rica**

- Arrive at Juan Santamaría International Airport. After passing through immigration you will be met by a Costa Rica Expeditions representative who will give you a sticker to facilitate clearing customs. When you are exiting the building, look for a Costa Rica Expeditions Guide in a bright orange or yellow shirt holding a sign with your name on it. He or she will take you to your hotel. *Tryp by Wyndham or similar*

### **Day 2: Pacuare River**

- Early morning pick-up from the lobby of your hotel in San Jose. Stop en route for a deluxe Costa Rican breakfast on the way to the river. Upon arrival at the launch area, your professional river guides will give an orientation and safety talk. Then it's down river on rafts for fun and exciting whitewater action on Class III-IV rapids. As we are swept down the Pacuare Gorge by the currents, soak in the natural beauty of the primary and secondary rainforests surrounding us. Water level permitting, a guide will lead us on a hike up one of the many gorgeous creeks that spill into the Pacuare. Upon our return to the riverbank,

we'll find a gourmet lunch prepared by the guides.

- Before we know it, we'll arrive at the unique Rios Tropicales Lodge where we can spend the afternoon relaxing, hiking or soaking in the waterfall and pools. After settling into your room, come on down to the open air dining area where the guides will have prepared fresh appetizers and the guest-acclaimed "famous jungle punch". As the sun dips behind the hills and the twilight fades, we will be treated to a delicious freshly prepared dinner with candlelight.
- Nestled in the jungle on a 2,000-acre private reserve at the mouth of the Pacuare Gorge, the Rios Tropicales Lodge offers very comfortable accommodations in "Cabecar Indian" style bungalows with spacious rooms, private bathrooms and hot water showers provided by the self-sufficient mini-hydro-plant that generates the electricity. Beautiful tropical gardens frame the native wood structures. The lodge is built as a sustainable eco-lodge—including the building materials, waste management system, recycling practices, and the clean, renewable energy that powers the entire facility. The lodge is a great starting place to explore the surrounding rainforest on self-guided trails or with a naturalist guide, relax in serene water pools or in a hammock overlooking the river, fly through the canopy on the zip-line tour, or watch the myriad species of birds and other animals in this wonderful location. Did we also mention sipping tropical cocktails and dining by candlelight with a delicious dinner?

*Rios Tropicales Lodge (B, L, D)*

### **Day 3: Rios Tropicales Lodge, hiking, zip line/canopy tour**

- Today is a full day at the eco-lodge: Rainforest canopy tours, hikes, relaxing and other activities are available. Wake up to the beauty of the light through the forest, the sound of toucans and the smell of coffee. This day is designed to enjoy the lodge and its natural surroundings. Here you will have the unique opportunity to experience the wonders of the rainforest canopy on the zip line course. The four distinctive platforms blend in seamlessly with the natural surroundings, giving you an amazing perspective of life in the roof of the jungle.
- In addition to the two to three hour canopy tour, you can choose a variety of hikes—a four to five hour hike high into the Pacuare Reserve, a two to three hour hike to nearby waterfalls and pools, or short walks near the lodge. This spacious property offers limitless places to get away from it all and enjoy nature. Just a short walk from the dining area, the lodge offers a sheltered hammock area that makes for the perfect spot to catch up on your reading, sip a cocktail, or just relax and take in the stunning beauty of this amazing retreat. *Rios Tropicales Lodge (B, L, D)*

### **Day 4: Pacuare River rafting, Tortuga Lodge**

- After a hearty breakfast and loading the rafts, we'll prepare to paddle down the Pacuare Gorge (another section of river) past gushing waterfalls, serene pools and pounding rapids. A snack stop by the riverside allows you to explore waterfalls and natural waterslides. An adrenaline-packed afternoon running rapids like Upper and Lower Huacas, Cimarron, Dos Montañas and many more will have you cheering ecstatically. Hot lunch will be served at Ríos Tropicales Operations Center. Showers, changing rooms, cold and hot drinks and snacks are also available. When you are ready, board your private minivan and depart for the one to two hour drive to the Caño Blanco dock where you'll board a boat with a local guide to Tortuguero. Late afternoon arrival at the Tortuga Lodge. After checking in to your room, there may be time to explore the beautiful gardens before dinner is served.
- Tortuga Lodge offers surprising luxury in one of the wildest corners of the earth. The lodge reflects the soul and the essence of the place that surrounds it—51,000 acres of the Tortuguero National Park. Situated on 146 acres of private land, Tortuga Lodge is remote and can only be reached by river or air. All rooms at Tortuga Lodge have almost as much window area as walls and are designed to bring the

outdoors in— allowing great views of the botanical gardens which lead into the surrounding forest. Your private porch also provides an excellent viewing platform to observe the abundant wildlife. Delectable meals featuring local fresh fruits and seafood are created by a master chef and served at the dockside restaurant. *Tortuga Lodge and Gardens* (B, L, D)

#### **Day 5: Tortuga Lodge / Turtle Nesting Tour / Kayaking**

- Enjoy a leisurely kayaking trip in the rainforest creeks near Tortuga Lodge. We travel first by motorboat from the lodge to the creeks where motorboats cannot go and where wildlife is most abundant. You'll find yourself blending in with the scenery as you paddle your boat slowly through the water, immersing you in a world where the forest merges with the rivers. This is a guided tour and takes approximately 3 hours.
- There is time this afternoon for a swim in the pool which was designed to blend into the river environment, or relax and read a book on your private porch overlooking the Tortuguero River. You may also want to explore the trails throughout the lodge's beautiful gardens and surrounding forest in search of the abundant wildlife.
- We depart the lodge this afternoon at approximately 5:00 PM. Come dressed in dark clothing so as not to be visible when walking the beach searching for a nesting turtle.
- On the way to the Jaloba Ranger Station at Tortuguero National Park, our naturalist will stop so we can take in the sights as there are many creatures that make their way to their homes for the night and others begin to wake and forage. As we arrive at the Jaloba Station, we'll find a delicious picnic dinner spread out on the bank of the Jaloba River. Savor the tasty picnic dinner as our guide shares his/her vast knowledge of the area and its inhabitants.
- After dinner, we take a 10-minute boat ride to the mouth of the Jaloba River where we'll disembark and begin to walk the beach in search of our turtle. While our primary objective is to witness the nesting process of the Atlantic Green Sea Turtle, we will also have the opportunity to observe the stars in the Caribbean sky, the bioluminescence on the waves, and if we're really lucky we may see a sign of jaguar coming to the beach also in search of a turtle. It's not unusual to find their tracks in the sand. (Yes, it's safe.)
- Once our leading lady is spotted coming up to lay her eggs, we will wait on the beach for her to find a spot that has just the right location and texture of sand. When she is satisfied, she will begin to dig and when her nest cavity has reached the depth she requires she will begin to lay her eggs. It is not until the laying of her eggs has begun that we will be able to approach her. At that point she enters a trance and is no longer disturbed by anything. Quietly we can kneel near her and observe this inspiring process.
- Once she is done, she will slowly and tiredly begin to cover up and compact her nest. She will then turn and laboriously make her way back to the ocean. We may decide to look for another turtle, or make our own way back to the lodge and our own comfortable beds. *Tortuga Lodge and Gardens* (B, L, D)

#### **Day 6: Departure**

- Early morning we cross the river to the Tortuguero airstrip where we will board a chartered flight to San Jose. Upon arrival, we will be transferred to the international airport for outbound flights. (B)

#### **What's Included?**

- Skilled professional guide service and naturalist
- 5-nights hotel accommodation (based on double occupancy)

For more information, call 1-800-346-6277 in the USA and Canada or 1-209-736-4677 outside the USA and Canada, or e-mail [info@oars.com](mailto:info@oars.com)

- All meals from breakfast on day 2 through breakfast on day 6
- All activities and equipment as outlined in the itinerary, including rafting, kayaking, zipline/canopy tour, hiking and a private turtle nesting tour.
- All transportation from arrival in San Jose on day one through departure from San Jose on day six.

### **What's Not Included?**

- Flights to and from San Jose, Costa Rica
- Single room supplement \$259
- Insurance of any kind, including travel or **mandatory** medical evacuation insurance
- Alcohol and personal items (an equipment list will be provided)
- Guide gratuities

### **SOMETHING VOLUNTARY**

- In reviewing your statement, you'll notice a \$1/person/day donation to Waterkeeper Alliance, a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to fishable, swimmable and drinkable waterways worldwide. One-hundred percent of these funds go directly to worldwide watershed protection and your contribution is tax-deductible. This donation is voluntary and may be removed from your invoice if you choose not to participate. *Please notify our office to delete the donation from your balance.*
- The O.A.R.S. Foundation is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with the express goal of providing opportunities for young people to experience the magic of a river trip. Visit [www.oarsfoundation.org](http://www.oarsfoundation.org) to learn more about how your tax deductible donation can change young lives for the better.

### **Terms & Conditions**

#### **Reservations & Deposit**

- A \$500/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.

#### **Cancellations & Refunds**

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, notify us as soon as possible. All payments are nonrefundable and we regret that we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, we strongly urge our participants to investigate trip cancellation insurance (see Insurance).

#### **Medical**

- Under most circumstances, if you are of an adventurous spirit and in reasonably good health, you should have no problem enjoying this trip. People with medical conditions, including pregnancy, should have a physician's approval before taking an adventure travel trip.

#### **Insurance**

- Although every effort is made to insure a safe trip for all, we require that you purchase medical evacuation insurance to participate in this expedition. Call Travel Insurance Services at 800-937-1387 or visit their website at [www.travelinsure.com/what/imedhigh.htm?32635](http://www.travelinsure.com/what/imedhigh.htm?32635) for inexpensive options that cover this requirement. We also strongly recommend that you protect yourself, your belongings, and your vacation through the purchase of a short-term traveler's policy. A trip cancellation policy covers your non-refundable payments in most cases, should you have to cancel your trip at the last minute due to illness or injury, as well as including the coverage required above. Trip participants should realize that in the event of illness or injury on a river trip, evacuation could be prolonged, difficult, and expensive. Personal belongings and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and we accept no responsibility for lost, damaged, delayed, or stolen property.

#### **Liability Waiver**

- Everyone is required to sign a standard liability release before the trip, acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety is of the utmost concern on our trips. However, due to the nature of the activities, a condition of your participation is that you will sign this form before the trip begins. Anyone who refuses to sign the form will not be allowed to participate, and consistent with Travel Outdoors, Inc. cancellation policy, there will be no refund of the trip fees at that time.

**Responsibility – An Important Notice**

- Travel Outdoors, Inc., Costa Rica Expeditions, Rios Tropicales and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the

participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services, and assume no responsibility however caused for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays, and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, force majeure, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, and discrepancies or change in transit over which they have no control. Reasonable changes in itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well-being of the participants, including cancellation due to water fluctuation, insufficient bookings (this trip requires a minimum of 4 guests), and other factors. There is risk in whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. Your guide will make every attempt to assist, but you must be strong and agile enough to “self-help” and “float-it-out” without further endangering yourself or others. We reserve the right not to accept passengers weighing more than 260 pounds or with a waist/chest size exceeding 56 inches.

- We are experienced at accommodating people with various disabilities. Please give us an opportunity to make you feel welcome. However, we need to discuss any special requirements ahead of time. We may decide, at any time, to exclude any person or group for any reason we feel is related to the safety of our trips. On advancement of deposit the depositor agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. Prices and itinerary are subject to change without notice.

**Costa Rica Expeditions and Rios Tropicales:**

- Costa Rica Expeditions and Rios Tropicales, travel partners of Travel Outdoors, Inc., are the operators of this adventure. Their staff members are the very best and will strive to ensure your complete satisfaction.

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