



Coast to Coast Rainforest **COSTA RICA**

 **Activity:** Trek **Grade:** 3 Tough **Duration:** 11 Days

Our adventurous coast to coast challenge involves crossing from the Pacific Coast to the Caribbean on foot. En-route we see Irazu and Turrialba, the country's highest active volcanoes, as we trek from coffee plantations and oak forests into dense tropical rainforest.

Costa Rica's cloudforests and rainforests are justifiably world-famous for their diver-

sity and this is a wonderful opportunity to experience one of the world's most incredible eco-systems. We see colourful butterflies and tiny tree-frogs, and will hear howler monkeys and exotic bird calls as we trek.

This is a tough, strenuous challenge over a range of wild terrain – it's adventurous, rewarding and a world away from the norm!

“*This was my first such experience and challenge and I only wish I hadn't waited so long!* - *Laura*

CHALLENGE GRADING

Our trips are graded from Challenging (Grade 1) to Extreme (Grade 5).

This trek is graded Tough (3). Main challenges lie in the long days over steep terrain, with paths often slippery and overgrown, in humid conditions.

Many factors influence the Challenge Grading, such as terrain, distances, climate, altitude, living conditions, etc. The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

Our grading levels are intended as a guide, but span a broad spectrum; trips within the same grade will still vary in the level of challenge provided.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: San Jose

We meet in the evening at our hotel in San Jose. **Night hotel.**

Day 2: San Jose – Pacific Coast – Londres

After an early morning breakfast and trip briefing, we transfer by bus to a beach near Quepos on the Pacific Coast. Turning inland, we start our trek at Finca Maritima and set off on our adventure across Costa Rica! Our route takes us through palm oil plantations and agricultural land which is predominantly flat, before reaching the foothills of the more remote and forested highlands. Londres, the site of our evening's camp, is a small farming community on the edge of the rainforest. **Night camp.**
Drive approx 4 hours; trek approx 12km (7.5miles) / 4-5 hours

Day 3: Londres – San Isidro

Today we trek from Londres to the small village of San Isidro along good tracks and paths that gradually climb up to the edge of the rainforest. There are several demanding ascents and descents and several stream crossings and it can be quite muddy, but we are rewarded by fabulous views down to the Pacific Coast. We pass through thriving rural communities that provide us with a great insight to life in this part of Costa Rica before arriving at our homestead, where we camp for the night.

Night camp.

Trek approx 18km (11miles) / 8-9 hours



Day 4: San Isidro – Betania

After a good night's sleep we rise early and head off into the rainforest. Our trail is initially steep with several stream crossings as it takes us into dense vegetation, very different to our surroundings yesterday. Watch out for wildlife such as beautiful tree frogs, some no larger than your fingernail, which are perfectly camouflaged amongst the leaves and vegetation of the forest. It is often quite dark and damp in the dense vegetation of the rainforest as sunlight cannot penetrate the canopy above our heads. The trail is slippery and we have to clamber over and under enormous roots and fallen trees as agile spider monkeys mock our progress from above. We continue until we reach a clearing and our accommodation at Betania in the Cascades area. **Night camp.**

Trek approx 8km (5miles) / 5 – 6 hours

Day 5: Betania – Naranjo – Quetzal y Tucan

Today is our most strenuous day: a long route on challenging terrain with demanding, muddy ascents and descents. We start early; a steep, narrow and often muddy ascent takes us up to a high ridge in dense rainforest (1765m / 5791ft). Keep your eyes open for the many wonderful birds and the occasional small group of howler monkeys – small but extremely loud! Our track then undulates continuously, climbing to another ridge where we have lunch. Our tracks are narrow with thick vegetation towering up to each side, and we cross several rivers and cascades. Reaching our high point of 1965m / 6447ft, we descend sharply to the Rio Brujo. We cross a stream and embark on a steep climb along a narrow trail on the other side. Following slightly better trails that undulate through the jungle with further stream crossings, the track becomes wider as we make our way further into cloudforest to our farmstead at Quetzal y Tucan. **Night camp.**

Trek approx 17km (10.5miles) / 10 – 12 hours

Day 6: Quetzal y Tucan – Santa María de Dota

Today's trek takes us through small communities and agricultural land to our camp near the small town of Santa Maria de Dota. We leave this amazing area of rainforest with its huge variety of flora and fauna behind us with mixed feelings; sad to leave such an incredible habitat behind us, but perhaps glad to rejoin less challenging paths! We trek on wider, easier tracks, but there are still several steep climbs before us, which take us to a high-point of 2045m / 6709ft. We then descend towards Santa Maria de Dota. Very picturesque, the town lies in a green valley surrounded by coffee plantations, forested hills and distant mountain peaks and feels very busy after our time in the rainforest. **Night camp.**

Trek approx 19 km (12miles) / 7 - 8 hours

Day 7: Santa María de Dota – Volcan Irazu – Turrialba

An early start sees us driving towards the spectacular Volcan Irazu (3432m/11,260ft). We enjoy fabulous views over the region, and, cloud level permitting, to neighbouring Volcan Turrialba. These two peaks are among the highest active volcanoes in Costa Rica, and dominate the surrounding landscapes. Today's trek takes us between the two, on relatively good tracks

though farmland and jungle before dropping downhill for over a mile. We load back into the vehicles for a short transfer to our campsite near Turrialba. **Night camp.**

Total drive approx 4 - 5 hrs; trek approx 13km (8miles) / 5 - 7 hours

Day 8: Turrialba – Linda Vista – Rio Pacuare

A short drive takes us to our trailhead at Linda Vista, and we set off through the rainforest towards the Pacuare River. This is our last section of trekking in such lush vegetation, and it's a beautiful area. We follow good tracks which gradually ascend through forest – look out for toucans overhead – and then take narrower, more challenging paths through rainforest. This section can be muddy and is strewn with boulders and tree roots, but an easier track eventually leads to our comfortable riverside camp at El Nido del Tigre (Tiger's Nest), named for the giant patches of ginger plants that carpet the forest floor. **Night camp.**

Trek approx 10km (6miles) / 5 – 6 hours

Day 9: Rio Pacuare – Caribbean Coast

After an early breakfast and a last look at the river, we leave the wonderful atmosphere of this jungle camp and trek out of the rainforest to the small town of Santa Marta. Here we meet our vehicles and have a lovely drive along the beautiful palm-tree-lined coastline towards Cahuita National Park. The final section of our Costa Rica trek takes us, very aptly, along the beach – a wonderful end to our challenge! Our wide, level track turns into a narrow trail which winds alongside the white sands of the Caribbean coast. We may see wildlife such as capuchin and howler monkeys and crab-eating raccoons. We reach our hotel in the small town of Cahuita, and for the first time in a week can enjoy the comforts of a hotel! We meet later in the evening for a slap-up barbeque and celebrate our huge achievement. **Night hotel.**

Drive approx 2 hours; trek approx 12km (7.5miles) / 3 - 4 hours

Day 10: Free day Cahuita

Cahuita's black-sand beach is within walking distance of the town, and you can swim or surf in the warm Caribbean waters. Slightly further away there are white-sand beaches and coral reefs perfect for snorkelling, and the Cahuita National Park with its diverse wildlife. We have the day free to relax and enjoy our surroundings. (Lunch and Dinner not included) **Night hotel.**

Day 11: End of service

Depending on whether the arranged time is suitable, the option to join the main group airport transfer to San Jose is available.

Arenal Volcano Adventure Extension Available – Adds 4 Extra Days Hike the slopes of the perfect cone of Arenal Volcano, and choose from a wide variety of activities in and around the area before moving on to Monteverde cloudforest reserve. **See website for further information.**

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

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