



CAPTIVATING COSTA RICA

This scenic little country of high volcanoes, rich forests and white beaches is brimming with wildlife, from magnificent coloured birds and bright tree frogs to elusive rainforest mammals.



Jaguar



Much of the wildlife found in Costa Rica can be found in other parts of Central America. However, nowhere else is it as accessible and visible. Its national parks are well-organised, the guides are first rate, travel is easy and the accommodation options are excellent.

There aren't many places in the world where you awaken to the bark of a troop of howler monkeys, stroll along a deserted beach and spot a formation of scarlet macaws in the sky, gasp as a trio of toucans flies over your head as you raft over a rapid or drive along the road to see a sloth asleep in a tree. In Costa Rica the wildlife is simply spectacular and you have a real chance of seeing a tapir, sloth, ocelot, anteater, coati, agouti, caiman, iguana, numerous species of snakes, tree frogs, monkeys and magnificent butterflies or many of over 850 species of birds. Even the elusive jaguar is occasionally seen prowling through the jungle. There are five different locations that we have recently experienced and agree are the best in Costa Rica to encounter wildlife.

Manuel Antonio National Park

Just a four hour drive or short flight away from the capital San José, Manuel Antonio is one of the easiest national parks to visit in Costa Rica. Right on the Pacific coast the park contains some beautiful beaches and there are well kept walking trails throughout the forest which provide a



Three-toed sloth



Iguana



Red-eyed tree frog



FACT FILE

A two week trip to Costa Rica incorporating at least two of the mentioned national parks costs from £2,095 per person including international flights. For further details please call Nick, Mark or Paula on 01993 838 600.

sanctuary for hundreds of species of butterflies, hummingbirds, toucans, coatis and clambering monkeys to name but a few. Although busy and fairly built up, this is the best place in Costa Rica to indulge in a few days of relaxation on a white sandy beach in truly beautiful accommodation combined with the opportunity to view the myriad wildlife on your doorstep.

Corcovado National Park

The Osa Peninsula is one of the most special and remote areas that can be visited in Costa Rica. It's tucked away in the south-west and as such is less accessible than other parts of the country which only adds to its appeal. It's a haven for those willing to make the effort, with a landscape of beautiful beaches, winding riverways, tangled mangroves, swamps and lush rainforest. The biological diversity in the area is immense, much of which is protected by the Corcovado National Park which was created in 1975. The park is particularly excellent for spotting rare tropical forest mammals, especially margays, ocelots, tapirs and even jaguars. The bird-watching opportunities are fantastic too, with flocks of scarlet macaws screeching from palm tree to palm tree and hundreds of other species to be found. Most of the accommodation on the peninsula is only accessible by boat which in itself is an experience as you zoom along the Pacific coastline. This is a real highlight of any trip to Costa Rica.

Tortuguero National Park

On the Caribbean coast, Tortuguero National Park is a magnificent bio-diverse, dense network of canals, swamps and waterways easily accessible by road or plane from San José. A few days stay in your river front lodge roaming the park by boat and on foot provides you with the opportunity to see an abundance of wildlife including sloths, iguanas, poison dart frogs, monkeys, crocodiles, alligators and, if you are very lucky, jaguars. As with most waterway locations the birdlife is equally prevalent. The carefully protected green, leatherback, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles also draw visitors to the park between July and October, when they climb out of the ocean and lay their eggs on the protected beaches of its shoreline.

Saripiqui National Park

Saripiqui is home to La Selva Biological Station and can easily be accessed by canal from Tortuguero National Park and by road from San José. The station provides a superb insight into the biosphere of the rainforest which is home to some 400 species of birds, 450 species of trees and over 100 species of mammals and is situated in one of the last remaining areas of primary rainforest in Costa Rica. Lodges are simple in style, but if you are looking for something a little off the beaten track this is a great place to spend a couple of nights.

Monteverde and Santa Elena cloudforests

The cloudforest reserves in the north of Costa Rica are one of the best places for birders. Lush with thick foliage, they are a haven for hundreds of species of birds, insects, and butterflies. Monteverde has six distinct ecological zones and is an excellent place to find the notoriously resplendent red and green Quetzal, and there are numerous fine lodges in the area. It is a fabulous place to walk, especially in the early morning amongst shrouds of magical mist or atop canopy walkways, and adrenalin junkies can fly through the forest by a system of zip wires.

Mark Garrett, Nick Giles & Paula Kirby
Costa Rica specialists

WEB PLUS

www.audleytravel.com/centralamerica
Pre-register for a copy of our new Central America brochure