

Arenal Volcano and Monteverde Region, Costa Rica



The areas around Arenal Volcano and the Monteverde cloud forest are truly ecological wonders. You will hear the deep rumbling of the world's third most-active volcano as showers of lava fall from a distance. The base of the volcano is alive with comforting hot springs and soothing warm mud baths, making for a unique experience found nowhere else. The Monteverde cloud forest is Costa Rica's most internationally recognized ecotourism destination. An ecological wonder hundreds of feet up in the rainforest canopy, the cloud forest is home to an overwhelming number of flora and fauna, as well as colorful parrots, monkeys, sleek mountain cats, and a host of other breathtaking wildlife.

You can combine your visit to the Arenal Volcano/Monteverde area with a stay in either the cosmopolitan city of San Jose or the beach region of Guanacaste or you can combine all 3 areas for a great Costa Rican adventure. If you'd like to combine 2 or 3 areas, contact a reservation agent for more information.

Package Includes:

- Choice of accommodations
- Hotel taxes

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should go?

Ecotourists

Jungle adventure amid some of the most unique flora and fauna anywhere is why Costa Rica is one of the planet's top destinations for out-of-this-world eco-vacations.

Adventure Seekers

The Arenal/Monteverde regions of Costa Rica are an adventurer's dream come true. Spouting lava flows, steep mountain hikes, high-flying zipline adventures, and countless ecological wonders are just a taste of some of the exhilarating activities found in these areas.

Families

Families can enjoy the expertly guided tours through the jungle in search of exciting plant and animal life native to the region, including colorful amphibians, tree-swinging monkeys, and leisurely moving sloths.

What's the climate like?

| | Winter | Spring | Summer | Autumn |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Average High | 73° F | 72° F | 78° F | 77° F |
| Average Low | 59° F | 60° F | 62° F | 60° F |
| Average Rainfall | 0.4" | 0.5" | 11.3" | 13.1" |

Costa Rica's year-round average temperature is 76°F. Costa Rica has 2 seasons; Rainy and Green (May-Nov) and Dry (Dec-Apr). Temperatures are dictated more by elevation and location than by season.

How do I get around town?

Transfers

Transfers are not included with our packages to the Arenal Volcano/Monteverde area. A rental car is recommended.

Car

A rental car is a great way to see the countryside and explore on your own, if you aren't taking any tours. However, keep in mind that many of the roads in the Arenal Volcano area and Monteverde are in poor condition with potholes, unpaved areas, and sharp turns, which make travel times longer than what you may expect. Due to the terrain and weather, it is best to rent a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Make sure to check with your car insurance company about coverage in Costa Rica, and don't leave any valuables in your car at any time. Do your driving in daylight hours (before 6pm), as it is much easier to navigate.

Taxi

A taxi is another method of transportation for getting around if you didn't rent a car. Make sure to only take metered taxis and/or agree on the price before you get in. Your hotel can help you determine what the taxi fare should be to your intended destination.

Bus

Bus travel is not recommended.

What kinds of dining and nightlife are available?

The food in Costa Rica is an eclectic blend of Caribbean, South American and native Indian cuisine. Dishes rely heavily on rice and beans, served to accompany various dishes. Bananas, succulent local fruits, and seafood remain popular staples throughout the region.

- **Don Rufino**
La Fortuna's most elegant restaurant, although still very casual. A popular tourist hangout, this restaurant serves up tasty local foods.
- **Rancho la Cascada**
The tall, palm-thatched roof in the center of La Fortuna rises above the other buildings. This restaurant has a fun atmosphere, with a large TV upstairs and neon signs and flashing lights. Spacious dining area is home to mid-priced Costa Rican fare.
- **De Lucía**
Lucía is a distinct restaurant with South American flair. The Chilean owner is eager to assist in choosing something from the elegant menu and is fluent in 5 languages. Entrees are served with grilled vegetables and succulent fried plantains. Monteverde
- **Sofía**
Sofía is one of the most stylish restaurants in the Monteverde area, though dressing up is not necessary. Attentive waiters serve up several different main courses, accompanied by an extensive wine and cocktail list.

There isn't a lot of nightlife in the La Fortuna area, as people tend to turn in early. Those looking for some action will find it at Volcán Look Disco, which bills itself as the largest disco in Costa Rica, outside of San José. Pizzeria Vagabundo turns into a lively bar in the evening, complete with foosball and pool tables.

Where should I go shopping?

Costa Rica has yet to evolve into a shopping destination. For souvenirs, the shops in your hotel are the best bet. Things to look for are coffee, woodcarvings, wood salad bowls and platters, ceramics from central Guanacaste, wonderful reproductions of pre-Columbian jewelry, and crafts from Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Beside coffee, you can also purchase a coffee-creme liqueur called Café Rica; a line of salsas from Tipica Tropical Sauce; and a unique condiment, Salsa Lizano, that Costa Ricans use as steak sauce.

When are the local events?

Bullfights

Various. Most towns have a permanent bullring (rondel), but some of them erect one for the fairs. In Tico (Costa Rican) bullfights, the bull is not harmed, though one might suspect he gets pretty irritated at times. The Costa Rican bullfight is more of an improvisation than an art, where the matadors scurry about, attempting to slap the bull between the horns. No harming of the animal is involved.

Fairs

Various. Costa Rica is famous for its fairs (ferias). It is almost guaranteed that some town, somewhere in Costa Rica is sponsoring one of these events just about every weekend year around. The one constant in every fair is the food. Most fairs offer truly excellent Costa Rica cooking.

Parades

Various. Parades are very popular in Costa Rica. The best ones are during November and December. These events are free to the public.

What are my sports and recreation options?

Hiking

The rainforests around Arenal Volcano and the Monteverde area are one of the Earth's most complex and important ecosystems to view wildlife, exotic plants, and spectacular waterfalls.

Horseback Riding

There's nothing like riding a sturdy horse through the rainforest. Let the horse lead you on an exciting journey through vibrant rainforests where unique flora and fauna unfold all around.

Kayaking

Depart from the delightful town of La Fortuna to enjoy a pleasant morning of kayaking on Lake Arenal with breathtaking views of the Arenal Volcano. On your trip you may observe different species of birds such as the "flycatcher," "kingfisher," "great blue heron," and "anhinga." Listen out for the disconcerting roar of the Howler monkeys.

Windsurfing/Kiteboarding

Take advantage of Lake Arenal's gracious winds and surf along beautiful blue waters, while enjoying superb vistas of the region's mountains. For the seriously adventurous, turn to the high-octane sport of kiteboarding, and get whisked high above the waves for some heart-pumping fun.

Travel tidbits

Must see spots

Tabacón Hot Springs

At Tabacón Hot Springs, enjoy natural thermal springs with a spectacular view of Arenal Volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in the Americas. Make sure to bring a swimsuit, or wear one under your clothes.

Arenal Volcano

Enjoy viewing stations around Arenal Volcano. Watch as lava slides down the sides of this impressive and lively crater. On a clear evening you can see rocks spewing skyward and molten lava rolling down its sides. Arenal has been in a constant state of activity—eruptions, accompanied by thunderous rumbling sounds, are sometimes as frequent as one per hour.

The Monteverde Cloud Forest

Monteverde is acclaimed as one of the most outstanding wildlife refuges in the New World Tropics. In this cloudforest there are more than 100 species of mammals, more than 400 species of birds including 30 kinds of hummingbirds, thousands of insect species and 2,500 species of plants including 420 kinds of orchids.

Important Tips

Alcohol

No alcohol is served the two days before Easter and the two days before and after a presidential election.

Clothing

You wouldn't think of it, going to the tropics, but if you are planning to go to the Monteverde Cloud Forest, it's advised to bring a jacket. The elevation is around 10,000 feet and it can get quite cool. A rain jacket is a must, remember you are going to a cloud forest.

Cash vs. Travelers Checks

It is advised to bring cash, not travelers checks to Costa Rica. Some large hotels will refuse them or will only give you \$25 cash because the banks often take a month to pay on them. Smaller hotels and merchants won't touch them, so it's really not worth bringing them. Plus, lines at banks to cash them can also be quite long—not something you want to spend your time doing on vacation. Cash or credit cards work best.

Driving

Driving in Costa Rica can tend to be a bit more of an adventure than in other vacation spots. Roads are often in disrepair and often warrant a 4-wheel drive vehicle. If they are paved, the road markings seem to be more of a suggestion, rather than the law and many roads are not marked at all. Watch out for people on bicycles and walking down roadways as well; pedestrians share the roads equally with cars.

Good to Know

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|----------------|--|
| Airport Name: | Daniel Oduber International Airport – Liberia Juan Santamaría International Airport – San José |
| 3-letter Code: | LIR (Liberia) SJO (San José) |
| Best Weather: | November - May |
| Best Values: | June - October |
| Currency: | Costa Rican colon or colones (plural) |
| Language: | Spanish is the official language of Costa Rica, although many people speak English, especially in tourist areas. |
| Time Zone: | Costa Rica is in the Central Time Zone. Costa Rica does not adapt to Daylight Saving Time, so during that time (April – October) the time is one hour later than Central Time. |
| Proof of | Government legislation requires all people traveling via air to and from the United States and Canada to have a valid |

Citizenship: passport. For details on passports, visas, and health requirements, see [Entry Requirements](#).

Tipping: A 10% service charge is usually added to the bill (or included in the prices on the menu). If you aren't sure if it has been added, ask. Additional tipping is not expected, but if the service has been especially good, some people leave a little extra.

Dress: Dress in the Arenal/Monte Verde area is very casual, with dressing up reserved for visiting churches.