

ROAD TRIP · COSTA RICA

Diving in Guanacaste

9 days · Playas del Coco — Tamarindo

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Diving in Guanacaste

Giant mantas and sharks at the Catalina Islands, a day at Rincón de la Vieja volcano and a finish at Tamarindo.

Length	9 days, 8 nights
Distance	260 km, 4 driving days
Behind the wheel	5 h 50 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Liberia (LIR), Liberia (LIR) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Playas del Coco	Days 1–4	**6**
Rincón de la Vieja	Days 5–6	**8**
Tamarindo	Days 7–8	**10**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Playas del Coco	20	30 min	
2		Playas del Coco			
3		Playas del Coco			
4		Playas del Coco			
5		Rincón de la Vieja	60	1 h 30 min	
6		Rincón de la Vieja			
7		Tamarindo	100	2 h 30 min	
8		Tamarindo			
9		Flight home from LIR	60	1 h 20 min	

260 km · 5 h 50 min behind the wheel · on average 60 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: Natural Earth (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at Liberia (LIR), drive to Playas del Coco · About 20 km, 30 min
Day 5	Playas del Coco, drive to Rincón de la Vieja · About 60 km, 1 h 30 min
Day 7	Rincón de la Vieja, drive to Tamarindo · About 100 km, 2 h 30 min
Day 9	Tamarindo to Liberia airport (LIR), fly home to Amsterdam · About 60 km, 1 h 20 min

Well prepared

Passport and entry

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 180 days. Your passport must be valid for the whole trip on arrival, and you show a return ticket at immigration. There is no ESTA or form beforehand; the departure tax is included in your air fare.

nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/costa-rica

Driving licence and 4x4

Your Dutch or Belgian driving licence is valid for 90 days. For Monteverde, Santa Teresa, Drake Bay and the Nicoya coast road you want a 4x4: dirt roads, potholes and in the green season rivers to drive through. The compulsory liability insurance (SLI/TPL) is always bought from the rental company, even if your credit card gives cover.

On the road

Count on 40 to 50 km an hour on average: mountain roads, lorries and villages. Don't drive after dark; it is dark by six, all year round. Waze knows every road and warns of closures. Never leave anything visible in the car, not even for a moment.

Money

The currency is the colón, but almost everywhere takes dollars and credit cards. Bring a few small dollar notes for tips and parking. Restaurants add 10% service to the bill; an extra tip for a good nature guide (about $10 a person) is customary.

When to go

The dry season runs from December to April: sunny on the Pacific side and in Guanacaste. May to November is the green season, with sunny mornings and afternoon showers, quieter and cheaper; September and October are the wettest months, except on the Caribbean coast, where they are the driest.

Parks and entry fees

The national parks cost foreigners about $12 to $18 a person a day. For Manuel Antonio, Poás, Irazú and Corcovado you buy your ticket online beforehand from SINAC; Manuel Antonio is closed on Mondays.

serviciosenlinea.sinac.go.cr

Health

No vaccinations are required when you come from Europe. Protect yourself against mosquitoes (dengue), especially on the Caribbean coast. Tap water is drinkable in most places; ask in remote areas.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] Driving licence and credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels, park tickets
- [ ] Rain jacket or poncho, even in the dry season
- [ ] Walking shoes that may get wet
- [ ] Insect repellent with DEET
- [ ] Reef-safe sunscreen
- [ ] Binoculars for birds and sloths
- [ ] A jumper for Monteverde and the volcanoes
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (120 volts)

DON'T FORGET



DAYS 1–4

Playas del Coco Guanacaste

Diving at the Catalina Islands

Land at Liberia (LIR), drive to Playas del Coco: about 20 km, 30 min

4 nights

DON'T MISS

- The Catalina Islands
- Playa Ocotal
- Sunset over Coco bay

With an extra night

With an extra night: diving at the Bat Islands, or snorkelling from the boat.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Two-tank dive at the Catalinas — roughly €140 a person
- ☐ Snorkel boat trip — roughly €70 a person
- ☐ PADI Open Water course — roughly €450 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 5–6

Rincón de la Vieja Guanacaste

The mud pots and fumaroles of Rincón de la Vieja

Playas del Coco, drive to Rincón de la Vieja: about 60 km, 1 h 30 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Las Pailas in the national park
- Oropéndola waterfall
- Hot springs and mud baths

With an extra night

With an extra night: tubing on the Río Negro, or on horseback through the dry forest.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Hot springs and mud bath — roughly €50 a person
- ☐ Zipline and river tubing — roughly €90 a person
- ☐ Horse ride through the dry forest — roughly €60 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 7–8

Tamarindo Guanacaste

Surfing and sunset at Playa Tamarindo

Rincón de la Vieja, drive to Tamarindo: about 100 km, 2 h 30 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Playa Tamarindo
- Playa Grande and the leatherbacks
- Playa Conchal

With an extra night

With an extra night: a sunset sail, or snorkelling at Playa Conchal.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Tamarindo surf lesson — roughly €60 a person
- [ ] Sunset catamaran sail — roughly €90 a person
- [ ] Estuary kayak tour — roughly €50 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Tamarindo Bay Hotel & Apartments- Self Check In, Adults Only · 3★ — roughly €570
  100 metros sur del Banco Nacional
- [ ] Baliyana Lodge · 3★
  San Antonio del Cruz
- [ ] Epic Tamarindo Boutique Hotel · 3★
  Calle Tamarindo, 1
- [ ] Casa Leona · 3★
  100 Meters Sur 75 Este del
- [ ] Casa Mapache Pool and Breakfast Available near Tamarindo Beach · 3★
  La Garita Nueva

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Playas del Coco	€120	–	€70	**€190**
2	Playas del Coco	€120	–	€70	**€190**
3	Playas del Coco	€120	–	€70	**€190**
4	Playas del Coco	€120	–	€70	**€190**
5	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
6	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
7	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
8	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
9	Flight home from LIR	–	–	€70	**€70**

Flights	€1,800
Hotels	€1,000
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€590
Total	**€3,390**
	€1,690 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

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About this booklet

Made on rondreis.expert. Your trip is still there, to change and print again: costa-rica.roundtrip.expert/tours/diving-guanacaste/

PHOTOS

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Playas del Coco	beaches/010-Playas-del-Coco-2.jpg · Press photo
Rincón de la Vieja	nature/family-friends-base-of-waterfall-las-chorreras-hacienda-guachipelin.jpg · Press photo
Tamarindo	Costa Rica Langosta Beach near Tamarindo 0208.jpg · ImagePerson, CC0

MAP AND TYPE

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THE ROUTE

Playas del Coco (4) · Rincón de la Vieja (2) · Tamarindo (2)

Giant mantas and sharks at the Catalina Islands, a day at Rincón de la Vieja volcano and a finish at Tamarindo.

9 days · 8 nights · 260 km