

ROAD TRIP · COSTA RICA

With children in 14 days

14 days · Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí – Tamarindo

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Short drives, lots of animals and a beach as a reward: frogs at Sarapiquí, ziplines at Arenal, hanging bridges at Monteverde, mud baths and Tamarindo.

Length	14 days, 13 nights
Distance	590 km, 6 driving days
Behind the wheel	12 h 50 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – San José (SJO), Liberia (LIR) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí	Days 1–2	**6**
La Fortuna	Days 3–5	**8**
Monteverde	Days 6–7	**10**
Rincón de la Vieja	Days 8–9	**12**
Tamarindo	Days 10–13	**14**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí	100	2 h	
2		Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí			
3		La Fortuna	80	1 h 10 min	
4		La Fortuna			
5		La Fortuna			
6		Monteverde	110	2 h 40 min	
7		Monteverde			
8		Rincón de la Vieja	130	3 h 10 min	
9		Rincón de la Vieja			
10		Tamarindo	100	2 h 30 min	
11		Tamarindo			
12		Tamarindo			
13		Tamarindo			
14		Flight home from LIR	60	1 h 20 min	

590 km · 12 h 50 min behind the wheel · on average 100 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 San José (SJO), drive to Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí · About 100 km, 2 h
Day 3	Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, drive to La Fortuna · About 80 km, 1 h 10 min
Day 6	La Fortuna, drive to Monteverde · About 110 km, 2 h 40 min
Day 8	Monteverde, drive to Rincón de la Vieja · About 130 km, 3 h 10 min
Day 10	Rincón de la Vieja, drive to Tamarindo · About 100 km, 2 h 30 min
Day 14	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 1–2

Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí Heredia

Toucans and poison dart frogs at La Selva

Land at San José (SJO), drive to Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí: about 100 km, 2 h

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- La Selva biological station
- Rafting on the Sarapiquí
- Chocolate tour at a cacao farm

With an extra night

With an extra night: rafting on the Sarapiquí, or a second early bird walk.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ La Selva bird walk — roughly €50 a person
- ☐ Sarapiquí rafting — roughly €80 a person
- ☐ Chocolate tour — roughly €30 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 3–5

La Fortuna Alajuela

The cone of Arenal volcano

Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, drive to La Fortuna: about 80 km, 1 h 10 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- Lava trails in Arenal National Park
- La Fortuna waterfall
- Hanging bridges through the rainforest
- Hot springs at the foot of the volcano

With an extra night

With an extra night: canyoning or rafting on the Balsa, or a day along Lake Arenal.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Arenal hanging bridges guided tour — roughly €60 a person
- [ ] Tabacón hot springs — roughly €90 a person
- [ ] Zipline over the rainforest — roughly €80 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Alojamientos N&S · 3★
  La Fortuna de San Carlos
- [ ] Cabañas Litos · 3★
  Av. 331
- [ ] Jarabacoa Family Hostel · 3★
  san isidro de peñas blancas
- [ ] Natural Green Lodge · 3★
- [ ] Fortuna Retreat · 3★
  C. Don Vital Castro

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DAYS 6–7

Monteverde Puntarenas

Walking in the cloud forest

La Fortuna, drive to Monteverde: about 110 km, 2 h 40 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
- Hanging bridges through the canopy
- Hummingbirds at the Hummingbird Café

With an extra night

With an extra night: the Santa Elena reserve, or a coffee and chocolate tour.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Cloud forest with a nature guide — roughly €50 a person
- [ ] Cloud forest night walk — roughly €30 a person
- [ ] Monteverde zipline — roughly €80 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] El Nido Lodge · 3★
  50m este de gasolinera 606
- [ ] ÉWA Homes Monteverde · 3★
- [ ] Finca Aquarius · 3★
- [ ] The Green Tree Lodge · 3★
  60109
- [ ] Villa Golondrina · 3★
  Calle los Leitón

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DAYS 8–9

Rincón de la Vieja Guanacaste

The mud pots and fumaroles of Rincón de la Vieja

Monteverde, drive to Rincón de la Vieja: about 130 km, 3 h 10 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:

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DAYS 10–13

Tamarindo Guanacaste

Surfing and sunset at Playa Tamarindo

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

4 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	Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí	€110	–	€70	**€180**
2	Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí	€110	–	€70	**€180**
3	La Fortuna	€130	–	€70	**€200**
4	La Fortuna	€130	–	€70	**€200**
5	La Fortuna	€130	–	€70	**€200**
6	Monteverde	€110	–	€70	**€180**
7	Monteverde	€110	–	€70	**€180**
8	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
9	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
10	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
11	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
12	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
13	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
14	Flight home from LIR	–	–	€70	**€70**

Flights	€1,800
Hotels	€1,630
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€910
Total	**€4,340**
	€2,170 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/family-14-days/

PHOTOS

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Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí	Great kiskadee in Costa Rica 01.jpg · Bernard Gagnon, CC0
La Fortuna	nature/la-fortuna-waterfall_01_l.jpg · Press photo
Monteverde	nature/group-birdwatching-closeup-curi-cancha-reserve-monteverde.jpg.webp · 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

Map: US Census Bureau (public domain), roads © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL). Type: Playfair Display and Inter (SIL Open Font License).

THE ROUTE

Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí (2) · La Fortuna (3) · Monteverde (2) · Rincón de la Vieja (2) · Tamarindo (4)

Short drives, lots of animals and a beach as a reward: frogs at Sarapiquí, ziplines at Arenal, hanging bridges at Monteverde, mud baths and Tamarindo.

14 days · 13 nights · 590 km

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