**Costa Rica Family Discovery**

**HIGHLIGHTS:**
- Explore Tortuguero National Park by boat and stay in a riverbank lodge
- Visit the famous Sloth Sanctuary
- Visit La Paz Waterfall Gardens for birdlife, butterflies & frogs
- Enjoy a wild night walk in Tirimbina Biological Reserve
- Take a dip in Arenal’s hot springs
- Guided day trip exploring Manuel Antonio National Park
- Relax on sandy beaches and dip your toes in both the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean
- Spot monkeys, toucans and other tropical wildlife
- National parks and nature reserves: Tortuguero, Cahuita, Tirimbina Biological Reserve, Arenal Volcano and Manuel Antonio

**TRIP OVERVIEW**

Costa Rica is swathed in heavy areas of cloud forest, jungle and areas of lush vegetation, making it an attractive destination for visitors. Deep in the forest, very little light makes it through the upper canopy so fog gathering high up condenses onto leaves of trees, dripping onto the plants below further promoting life.

Costa Rica supports an enormous variety of wildlife, primarily due to its geographical position, its climate, and wide variety of habitats. The main explanation for Costa Rica’s vast biodiversity is that the country, together with the land now considered Panama, formed a bridge connecting the North and South American continents. This bridge allowed the very different flora and fauna of the two continents to mix. Costa Rica is home to more than 500,000 species, which represents nearly 4% of the total species estimated worldwide.

The laid-back Caribbean vibe of Costa Rica’s palm fringed beaches is enhanced by its natural setting, revealing another world within a country already so rewarded with natural treasures. Beneath the water surface live extensive coral reef ecosystems populated by colourful tropical fish and intricate coral reefs. They provide relaxation and downtime after walking the extensive jungle trails and exploring some of the world most superb national parks.

This tour is suited for families who have a keen interest in nature, adventure and wildlife, and covers all aspects of Costa Rica including wildlife, beaches, hot springs, and optional activities to tailor to your preferences.

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**TOUR AT A GLANCE:**

**Costa Rica**

- **Length:** 15 days
- **Departs:** San José
- **Trip code:** PCO
- **Please note:** Minimum age on this tour is 5 yrs old

**Accommodation:**

14 nights comfortable hotels and lodges

**Meals:**

- 14 breakfasts
- 3 lunches and 2 dinners

**Staff:**

Professional tour leader

**Group size:** Maximum 16

**Transport:**

Private vehicle and boat

Please see our website for detailed destination information and insider tips.
Day 1-2: San José and La Paz Waterfall Gardens  Spend your first day settling into Costa Rica’s capital before meeting your group leader and travelling companions at the evening welcome briefing.

After breakfast, you will meet your guide at 9:00am in the hotel lobby for a short drive to La Paz Waterfall Gardens. Located within the transitional forest between the Central Valley and the Northern Lowlands, La Paz Waterfall Gardens hosts a wide variety of plants and bird life amongst stunning scenery. A short walk along a trail within the rainforest brings us to a great viewpoint from which to watch the cascading falls. Entrance to the gardens includes a visit to the petting zoo, frog exhibit, aviary and butterfly observatory. In addition monkeys, sloths and toucans also inhabit this area, providing a great introduction to the incredible diversity of Costa Rica. This afternoon is free to relax and enjoy the hotel swimming pool, or explore San José at your own pace.

Accommodation: 2 hotel nights | Meals: Breakfast (x2) included

Day 3: Tortuguero National Park  An early departure this morning leaving San José behind as we travel to the north-east of Costa Rica to Tortuguero National Park in the Caribbean Lowlands. Accessible only by boat or light aircraft, Tortuguero’s vast network of waterways, canals and swamps is remarkably tranquil, unspoilt and devoid of noise pollution. On reaching the pier we board a small motorboat for the one hour fifteen minute journey to our lodge, which is nestled on a small strip of land between the Caribbean Sea and the main lagoon. Our afternoon is spent in Tortuguero village, where it’s possible to visit the Sea Turtle Museum (a donation will be requested at the entrance). Tortuguero is probably most famous as a nesting site for the endangered Green turtle, which can be seen arriving onto the beach to lay eggs from late July to October (as part of an optional excursion). Hawksbill, Loggerhead and Giant Leatherback turtles also nest in this region, and during November to January baby turtles start to hatch and make their way towards the ocean.

Accommodation: Pachira Lodge (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner included

Day 4: Tortuguero National Park  A morning boat trip enables us to discover the extraordinary flora and fauna of Tortuguero, passing serenely along the waterways. At this time of day, wildlife is usually at its most active and with the help of our expert guide we are likely to encounter monkeys, caiman, iguanas, butterflies and many of the 300+ bird species recorded here. You return to the lodge for a hearty breakfast by the river. The lodge is a tranquil spot to relax this afternoon if you want to take some time out to enjoy the facilities, or alternatively you can join a second boat trip or visit the beach or follow a short walking trail through the forest.

Accommodation: Pachira Lodge (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner included

Day 5: Cahuita  Leave Tortuguero the same way we arrived by taking a small boat to Siquirres pier. Your bus will be at the pier waiting to drive us to the region of Cahuita on the Caribbean coast, where you check into your hotel and have the rest of the afternoon to enjoy the pool, beach or discover your new surroundings. Caribbean culture pervades this part of Costa Rica and is reflected in the music, food and laid-back lifestyle. Cahuita’s famous white-sand beach is fringed by tall palms, behind which the dense, wet tropical forest of Cahuita National Park can be found.

Accommodation: Atlantida Lodge (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast, lunch included

Day 6: Cahuita National Park  After breakfast, you drive to Aviarios del Caribe, Costa Rica’s famous Sloth Sanctuary. This rescue and rehabilitation centre conducts research into sloths and works tirelessly with the goal of releasing sloths back into their natural habitat. It was recently the subject of an Animal Planet TV show called ‘Meet the Sloths’. You’ll learn all about these fascinating animals on a two hour tour of the sanctuary, where you visit the sloth nursery, meet ‘Buttercup’ and take a boat tour along the river to see sloths, monkeys, butterflies and birds in the wild. This afternoon, you return to Cahuita and visit the National Park, 2711 acres of land including 600 acres of coral reef.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Breakfast (x2)

Day 7-8: Sarapiqui  You depart for Sarapiqui, a region blessed with abundant vegetation and the beautiful Sarapiqui River. Sarapiqui is one of the main areas of banana production in Costa Rica, although coffee, cardamom, cacao, corn and other fruits are also grown here. This region is also gathering a reputation as a great spot for adventure seekers with plenty of optional activities to keep you entertained! This evening, you take a night walk through Tirimbina Biological Reserve to have a different perspective on the rainforest and its many inhabitants.

On day eight, there are various optional excursions to try today: join a chocolate tour in Tirimbina Biological Reserve, take a safari floating trip down the Sarapiqui River, have a go at white water rafting on grade II and III rapids or join a canopy tour and zip-line through the forest. Alternatively, there are a number of nature walks to enjoy in the beautiful surroundings.

Options:
• Tirimbina Chocolate Tour: USD 30
• Safari Float: USD 56
• White water rafting grade II and III: USD 56  (ages 9 and up only)
• Canopy tour: USD 56
• La Selva Biological Reserve Nature Walk: USD 35

Accommodation: 2 nights El Bambu Hotel (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast (x2) included

Day 9-10: Arenal Volcano National Park  Transfer to the area surrounding Arenal Volcano. Following a massive eruption in 1968, Arenal was Costa Rica’s most active volcano until recently when it entered a resting phase. As well as the volcano, this region has plenty to offer, with thermal waters, waterfalls and Lake Arenal waiting to be discovered. The rest of the day is free to explore the area, either at your own pace or on one of the optional excursions available. You could take the Sky Tram adventure (with an optional zip-wire through the canopy) or have a go at canopying.
The following day, you have a guided nature walk through Arenal Volcano National Park. The park has a great system of trails passing through secondary forest and near lava fields created by previous eruptions. In the late afternoon we visit Kalambu Hot Springs as a group to enjoy a hot thermal bath from the volcanic spring water and have a chance to splash around - a refreshing end to the day. Please note that on weekends or Monday, you will visit an alternative hot springs called Ecotermales.

Options:
- Hanging Bridges: USD 54
- Sky Tram/Sky Walk: USD 67 (ages 5 and up)
- Sky Tram/Sky Trek: USD 81 (min height 120 m)
- Canyoning: USD 103

Accommodation: 2 nights Arenal Montechiari (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast (x2) included

Day 11-12: Jaco and Manuel Antonio National Park

You’ll travel southeast along the coast, following the Pan-Am Highway to Jaco (near Playa Hermosa) passing African oil palm and teak plantations on the way. Your hotel is on the coast in Playa Hermosa, located right on the waterfront. You spend the next three nights here, with easy access to the beach. Depending on your time of arrival, you should have some time to enjoy various optional activities this afternoon, visit the beach or enjoy the hotel swimming pool.

On day 12, you drive to Manuel Antonio. Manuel Antonio National Park consists of a vast marine reserve as well as 1,700 acres of mangrove swamp, primary and secondary rainforest. The forest vegetation stretches as far as the high-tide line and provides a stunning backdrop to the expansive sandy beaches, forested islands and dramatic rocky headlands. You’ll enjoy a guided nature walk today which should enable you to have some very close wildlife encounters. White-faced Capuchin monkeys play in the trees and are frequently sighted on the beaches, whilst noisy Howler monkeys are usually heard moving through the trees and calling to each other before they are seen. The endangered Titi monkey (Squirrel monkey) are fewer in number but can sometimes be spotted in this area. Iguanas, agouti and two and three toed sloths are also commonly sighted in the national park. Manuel Antonio’s beaches are considered to be some of the most beautiful in the country. In the late afternoon, you return to your hotel.

Accommodation: 2 nights Terraza del Pacifico (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast (x2) included

Day 13: Jaco

Today has been left free for you to relax in Jaco make the most of the hotel swimming pool, visit the beach or try one of the many optional excursions available.

Accommodation: Terraza del Pacifico (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast included

Day 14-15: San José

Today it’s time to return to San José. If you wish to travel into the downtown area there is time to explore the modern capital and pick up some souvenirs. Alternatively, you can relax by the hotel swimming pool.

On day 15 the tour comes to an end after breakfast.

Accommodation: Country Inn & Suites (or similar) | Meals: Breakfast (x2) included

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

There are many opportunities for optional activities during your tour. Your tour guide will organise these on your behalf and you will pay locally in cash. You’ll find the main optional activities listed above under each itinerary day description, along with guideline prices.

**PHYSICAL RATING/PREPARATION**

**Family**

On all trips the staff are there to help ensure the holiday runs as smoothly as possible and, in the unlikely event that it does not, to sort out the best possible alternatives. What they cannot do is act as child minders or babysitters; they will treat your children as ‘young adults’, but it is your responsibility to look after your young ones. During free time or if you decide to opt out of part of the itinerary, you are responsible for your family and any arrangements that need to be made. Under no circumstances should this responsibility fall on our staff or any of your fellow travellers outside of your immediate family.

**TOUR ITINERARIES**

Although each tour follows an itinerary, there is a certain amount of flexibility and from time to time your tour guide may suggest changes. This may be due to road conditions, weather or a visit to a special attraction or event that happens to be in progress. Flexibility is key and often a side diversion will be a highlight of the tour. Hikes and optional activities cannot be guaranteed and may vary depending on ability, group interest, local weather conditions and time of year.

Driving distances are not huge and most roads are good, some are of poor quality/pot holed, which can result in slow driving times. There are a few long drives but most should not be more than three to four hours.

All details are provided in good faith. Due to the nature of travel, this information can change and should therefore be taken as an indication only and not as a contractual obligation on the part of Grand American Adventures. If you have any questions, please contact us.

This dossier is valid for all tours departing in 2018. Itineraries may be subject to change with the publication of our 2019/20 brochure in Autumn 2017, at which point revised 2019 dossiers will be made available.

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

“Our Guide (Dennis) – was very knowledgeable, efficient, flexible and helpful. The whole holiday was very enjoyable but highlights were the turtle watching in Tortugero, white water rafting on the Pacuare River, ziplining in Monteverde and the stay at the Punta Leona Hotel. The variety of wildlife and rainforest in all the different regions and Manuel Antonio at the end was great. My son really enjoyed the zip wire in Monte Verde.” – Mr Steven Lyle
**BEFORE YOU DEPART**

**PRE/POST TOUR HOTELS**

This tour begins and ends at our gateway hotel in San Jose. We offer you the option to book additional hotel nights before or after your tour however, they should be booked prior to departure with our reservations team. See below for joining and end hotel details.

Please note some hotels may take a debit or credit card as a deposit at check in. They may also take an amount to cover incidentals. Funds can be held until check out at which time the amount actually incurred will be charged. Please clarify with the hotel when you check out that all deposits will be refunded as promptly as possible.

**FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS**

For anyone leaving from the UK we would be pleased to book your flight in conjunction with your tour. Please contact us for competitive prices on flights departing from most UK airports.

If you are booking your own flights, you are free to arrive at any time on day one but it is advisable that you arrive in plenty of time to reach your joining hotel and attend your welcome meeting. The tour finishes on the morning of day 15 and you are free to depart after this.

Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any delays, cancellations, changes to your flights, or any missed flights. We are unable to delay a tour, or finish a tour early due to your flight times.

**VISA AND RULES FOR ENTRY TO THE USA**

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for UK passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Holders of British, US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and most EU passports can enter Costa Rica for a stay of 90 days without a visa. Proof of onward travel may be required when entering Costa Rica - we suggest you take a print out of your flight details in case officials ask to see them.

All passengers flying via the USA will have to clear immigration during transit. Prior to travel you must apply for an Electronic Travel Authority (ESTA) under the Visa Waiver Programme. If you’re not a UK citizen please check with your local U.S. Embassy. Visa regulations can change without notice so please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required. The visa requirements for your trip may vary depending on where you are going, and where you are from. It is important that you check which visas you will need, and apply for each of the necessary visas whilst in your home country. Please bear in mind that some tours may spend time in more than one country.

**IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS**

On entering a country you will need to proceed through customs. As long as you have a valid passport and the necessary visa/s you will have no problems. You may be asked you intend to support yourself during your visit, if this happens please present your return airline ticket and tour voucher.

**DEPARTURE TAX COSTA RICA**

There is an international departure tax on leaving San José at the end of the trip; this was US$29 at the time of writing, but this is subject to change and isn’t applicable for all airlines. At the time of writing, United and American Airlines include this tax in the cost of the ticket.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue service). You will be asked to provide details of your insurance policy, including insurer, policy number and phone number before embarking on the trip.

We offer an insurance policy that is designed specifically to cover the potential risks on our tours – particularly the many optional activities offered. If you do not take our policy, you must ensure that the policy you do take offers an equivalent level of protection and covers you for the activities involved – be aware that some policies do not include, or restrict, coverage for this type of travel. There may be cheaper policies available, but this does not mean it may be better value – we strongly advise you check fully what will and won’t be covered. Any claims concerning matters for which you are insured must be directed to your insurers.

**Please note:** We can only offer cover for passengers residing within the European Union.

**HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

If you have any medical conditions, take prescribed medicines, or have a condition that will affect your participation in the tour, you must inform Grand American Adventures or your travel agent at the time of booking. Please be aware we may require a doctor’s note prior to travel for some conditions. This information is essential in case of emergency. All of our vehicles carry a basic first-aid kit however, our leaders are not legally allowed to administer medicine. For everyday use you should bring your own medical supplies, such as pain relievers, antibiotic cream and upset stomach relievers, in addition to sunscreen and insect repellent.

**VACCINATIONS**

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip however, Hepatitis A is recommended.
Dengue fever and/or Chikungunya are known risks in places visited on this trip. Both are tropical viral diseases spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for either, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Zika fever is a mosquito borne viral disease and a known risk in places visited on this trip. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Please note that if you will be entering Costa Rica from most South American countries you will need to have proof of Yellow Fever vaccination. You should contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up to date information.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional. 

**WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR**

**SpendIng Money**

The national currency of Costa Rica is the Costa Rican Colon (CRC), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 750 to the UK£ and 576 to the USS.

It is best to take US dollars to Costa Rica, as sterling is difficult to exchange and the rate can be poor. In practice, US dollars are widely accepted as payment in Costa Rica.

It is important you advise your bank prior to leaving your home country of your intended travel, so they do not block your card citing the reason as fraud.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are increasingly available in Costa Rica and are now present in most tourist areas. A flat fee of up to USD3 and a small commission usually applies with debit card withdrawals. MasterCard and Visa are quite widely accepted in the bigger hotels, restaurants and tourist shops, though not, of course, in rural areas. Always check the handling fee when paying by credit card, as it can be high. We recommend that you bring some small denomination notes (USD1 and USD5 notes) since getting change is often a problem when paying for small items/taxis.

**Extra Expenses & Spending Money**

Colons (CRC) cannot be bought or sold outside Costa Rica. It is best to take US dollars to Costa Rica, as sterling is difficult to exchange and the rate can be poor. In practice, US dollars are widely accepted in Costa Rica.

You should allow extra to cover the cost of those meals not included in the price of the holiday. Approximate costs are given for guidance only, and may vary widely according to location and type of establishment.

Coffee/tea USD 2-5Soft drink USD 2-5Medium beer USD 3-7Local snack lunch USD 10Three course dinner* USD 35Bottle of wine USD 40Bottle of water USD 2*reasonable mid-range tourist class restaurant.

**PRE-PAID CURRENCY CARDS**

It is personal preference as to how you take your money and it’s recommended to take some cash with you to be prepared when you arrive, but Grand American Adventures is pleased to endorse FairFX prepaid currency cards. Please ask one of our sales consultants or visit www.fairfx.com/refer/grandamericanadventures to find out how to receive a FREE currency card, worth a retail value of £9.95.

**TIPPING**

Tipping is an accepted part of everyday life, and - although it is always at your discretion - you will be expected to tip to reward service. Your group leader will be able to give you an indication of when and how much is appropriate. This can vary widely, but please allow £25 per person (including children) for this trip. Porters at the airport and hotels are normally tipped about USD$1 per piece. Also, if you wish to tip your group leader (in recognition of their contribution towards your overall enjoyment of the holiday), a suggested guideline would be approximately £1 to £2 per person, per day.

**LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE**

At time of writing the standard weight limit for hold luggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is 23kg. We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, you should contact your airline carrier to confirm luggage restrictions prior to departure.

**TEMPERATURE CHART**

Costa Rica is located 10° north of the equator and has an almost perfect tropical climate. The average temperature is 12°C – 22°C in the highlands, and from 22°C - 27°C in the lowlands. There is a rainy season from May to November when there are daily downpours, though these are usually quite short and there is still plenty of bright sunshine, so the midsummer is not necessarily a bad time to go. December to April is the driest time of the year but you should still expect some rain. Many areas visited on the trip are hot and humid throughout the year.

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C / F Conversions: 30ºC = 86ºF 0ºC = 32ºF 10ºC = 50ºF 20ºC = 68ºF 30ºC = 86ºF 40ºC = 104ºF
PACKING TIPS

CLOTHING
Please keep in mind that our dress tends to be informal. It is advised that you take a practical selection of clothes for both warm and cool climates to suit the season. Please see the temperature guide showing the highs and lows that can be expected in key locations that your tour visits. However please remember that this is just a guide and you may encounter a wide variety of temperatures en route due to altitude and unforeseen weather conditions – so it’s best to be prepared!

Besides your essential clothing, here’s a checklist of other items you may wish to take:
- Waterproof jacket/trousers or rain poncho
- Warm sweater / fleece
- Casual ‘evening out’ clothes
- Hiking shoes / boots
- Long sleeved shirts and trousers will help prevent mosquito bites
- Shorts
- Personal first aid kit
- Dry bags
- Comfortable day shoes
- Sandals or flip-flops
- Swim wear
- Sun hat / sunglasses
- Camera / binoculars
- Small flashlight / head torch
- Sunscreen / insect repellent
- Travel power adaptor (optional)
- Toiletries/personal medicine
- Small daypack
- Dry bags

Plastic bottles are a big issue in many countries where recycling isn’t yet widely available; they often end up in landfill sites or get burnt, both processes are harmful to the environment and we would like to reduce our impact here. For your trip, we have decided to include drinking water in order to reduce the amount of plastic used. This means that safe filtered drinking water will be available throughout which means all you need to do is bring a bottle to re-fill along the way. Please add this to your packing list! Please keep in mind that our dress tends to be informal. It is advised that you take a practical selection of clothes for both warm and cool climates to suit the season.

CLOTHES WASHING
A laundry service may be available in some hotels, but we recommend you take bio-degradable travel detergent so you can wash clothes as you choose. Ask your tour guide for local information.

FOOTWEAR
As our family tours are quite active, we recommend comfortable shoes to make walking and sightseeing more enjoyable. In national parks, the trails tend to be of a decent standard although there may be uneven surfaces so it is best to wear covered shoes with ankle support. If you do not own a pair of walking boots or trail shoes then sports trainers will suffice although this is a personal choice. Wet weather can make the ground muddy at times.

BATTERY CHARGING
Many of our travellers bring mobile phones, music devices and cameras that require frequent battery charging during a tour. Your hotel room will have an electrical outlet (just remember your international adaptor!) You may want to consider bringing extra batteries to avoid missing out on that amazing photograph.

JOINING YOUR TOUR

TOUR AND ACCOMMODATION VOUCHERS
A tour voucher will be emailed to you once your balance has been paid in full. Vouchers for any hotel nights you have booked before or after your tour as well as any additional day tours will also be sent to you. You can print off the PDF vouchers or download to your smartphone. For those without email access your vouchers will be posted. Please make sure that these vouchers are correct.

JOINING POINT
San José can be very busy during the main tourist season and for this reason the joining hotel can change. Please see your tour voucher for hotel details.

Airport transfers are included for anyone booked to fly into San José. It is important you advise us of arrival and departure flight details no later than one month prior to departure to secure you free transfers. If you decide to take a taxi from the airport, this will cost approximately US$30 with a duration of about 20 minutes.

ARRIVAL COMPLICATIONS
Sometimes the unexpected can happen; your plane may be delayed or you may even miss it! If you have missed your tour departure, first check with the hotel to see if your tour guide has left you a message. If not, call the relevant emergency number and speak to our staff who will be happy to help you catch up with the group. Please note that you are responsible for any extra travelling expenses incurred due to you missing your tour’s departure, so please be on time.

FINISHING POINT
This tour ends on the morning of day 15 in San José. If you require accommodation for the last night, it is essential that you book this before your tour departs.

EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS ASSISTANCE
In the event of an emergency or if you wish to report a problem on tour please do not hesitate to call our toll free* 24-hour emergency contact number. Remember, if we don’t know about it we won’t be able to do anything about it.

Phone number for family to contact you in case of emergency:
Tel: +44 844 326 7041
ABOUT OUR TOURS

TRANSPORTATION

The majority of our travel will be done in an air-conditioned 16 seater minibus, but we also use small motor boats to access remote parts of the itinerary, such as Tortuguero. There is a shared transfer to Tortuguero in a larger coach.

ACCOMMODATION

14 nights in comfortable hotels and lodges.

There are swimming pools in all locations. In Tortuguero we stay in a beautiful lodge, perfect for wildlife viewing and bird watching. In Cahuita our hotel is usually Atlantida Lodge, which is the most simple accommodation that we use on the holiday. It has been chosen due to its location in this small laid back village on the Caribbean coast. Atlantida Lodge is a very short walk to the beach and the best option in the area. Please note that whilst visiting Manuel Antonio National Park we usually stay in Jaco, around 1.5 hours away. This enables us to have beach front accommodation away from the incredibly busy tourist areas of Manuel Antonio.

Whilst we will do our very best to ensure that families are roomed close together (in some cases, we can arrange adjoining rooms), we can’t guarantee this. Most family holidays occur during peak season and we sometimes have little to no control over where you will be put. You need to come prepared for this.

ROOMING IN HOTELS

Family of two or four  - All family groupings of two and four will be put into either one or two twin rooms. How you decide to share is up to the discretion of the adults.

Family of three  - Wherever possible we will put you in a triple room. Please be aware that in some places triple rooms are in short supply. This means that, in practice, a triple room will often simply be a twin room with a mattress on the floor or a further bed added. Where it is impossible to provide a triple room, you will have to decide which of your party takes the single room.

Family of five or more  - For larger families, we will provide twin rooms as standard, with a triple room if there is an odd number.

Whilst we will do our very best to ensure that families are roomed close together (in some cases, we can arrange adjoining rooms), we can’t guarantee this. Most family holidays occur during peak season and we sometimes have little to no control over where you will be put. You need to come prepared for this.

SECURITY

No matter where you find yourself in the world, you need to look after your valuables. In general, the safest place for items such as passports, flight tickets and cash is on your person or in a hotel safe where available, and do not leave valuables in the vehicle. When in doubt consult your tour guide.

We would like to remind you that you are ultimately responsible for your personal safety, but for that of the group and other travellers.

MEALS

All breakfasts, 3 lunches and 2 dinners are included in the price of the tour. Vegetarians are well catered for but please inform us before departure of any special dietary requests.

Costa Rican specialities include ‘Gallo Pinto’, a black bean and rice dish considered to be a staple part of the local diet. Soups and stews are also common, and fresh fruit is abundant and will no doubt be one of the highlights of your time in the tropics.

YOUR TOUR LEADER

Your tour leader will take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your tour, they will drive the van taking you from A to B and make sure everything runs smoothly. Your tour leader is there to make sure you get the most out of your tour; organising activities, providing information and answering any questions you may have as well as sorting out any queries or problems you may encounter. If you have any particular interests or things you would like to do on your tour, then please let your tour leader know at the beginning of the tour and they will do their best to help you. We will also use specialist tour guides in certain locations, to provide in depth information. If for any reason you have an issue and do not feel comfortable raising this with your leader, please contact info@grandamericanadventures.co.uk.
THE GROUP

The maximum group size is 16 and you will travel in a group with a few other families. This family tour is designed for children five years and over, and there must be a least one adult and one child under the age of 18 to travel on a family tour. Other than that, everyone is welcome on our family tours; single parent families, grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends too – the more the merrier! Your fellow travellers will come from a range of countries worldwide (average of two-three nationalities per group), all sharing a passion for discovery.

Our tours are a unique holiday experience and much of your enjoyment will come from sharing and bonding with other families. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of bringing a positive attitude with you on tour; a sure guarantee to enjoying each and every moment, even in the adversity of the odd rainstorm!

Grand American Adventures travellers will join our trusted sister company for this tour.

RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

We are committed to offering low impact tours that benefit the places and communities we visit as well as our travellers. It is important for us all to be aware of the delicate balance that exists in the variety of natural wonders you will visit. National parks and monuments, archaeological sites and other sensitive areas should and must be treated with respect.

We are proud supporters of Bay Area Wilderness Training (www.bawt.org), a charity based in Oakland California which works to connect disadvantaged children in the local urban area with the great outdoors. Their work helps to provide these young people with life changing experiences which they can apply to every day life.

We also support the American Hiking Society (www.americanhiking.org), which champions conservation issues in the United States and represents millions of hikers committed to preserving America's vast network of hiking trails and their surrounding ecosystems.

Whenever possible, we use local accommodation and activity providers. We also shop locally for groceries, eat in small family-run restaurants and visit local shops whenever possible. This all brings economic benefit to the local communities that we visit.

Responsible Tourism on the Costa Rica Family Discovery...

With its abundant natural diversity, Costa Rica has a world renowned tradition of conservation. On this trip we visit national and private parks. Entrance fees directly support conservation efforts in the areas we visit.

Our tour guides will educate travellers on how best to interact with the wildlife in the parks, for example advising people not to feed the animals to stop them becoming dependent on hand-outs from humans. Our leaders also educate all groups to keep to the path to avoid upsetting the balance of nature.

All tour guides are local Costa Rican’s who were selected for their knowledge and enthusiasm, and weekly payroll goes towards supporting families and communities. By employing local leaders we are maintaining the skillset for future generations.

FEEDBACK AND REVIEWS

We want to hear about your experience and stories from the road, so please feel free to e-mail us any comments, feedback or reviews whilst you are on tour or when you return home to: comments@grandamericanadventures.com.

WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS!

We can always use your holiday snaps and short videos to better depict and promote all the fascinating places we visit. Whether it’s hiking the trails or enjoying a great meal, there’s no better way to share your Grand American Adventure. So if you want to send over a couple of your best shots (max 10MB) please e-mail them to comments@grandamericanadventures.com. You know what they say, a picture’s worth a thousand words!

HOW TO BOOK

Contact us by telephone, email or via our website to check availability for the tour you are interested in. We can normally hold a seat on ‘option’ for up to three days to allow you time to finalise your travel arrangements. In order to secure your place we require a deposit (full payment within eight weeks of travel) and an agreement from you to our terms and conditions. Check availability early to avoid disappointment: www.grandamericanadventures.com

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Please contact our UK Sales team on:
Tel: +44 (0)208 682 8921
Enquiries: info@grandamericanadventures.com

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