

TOUR CODE: CR-01
TOUR TITLE: No Artificial Ingredients

ITINERARY OUTLINE

DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM ***** - ARRIVE SAN JOSÉ AREA **(1 NIGHT)**
DAY 2 SAN JOSÉ - GRECIA - MONTEVERDE **(2 NIGHTS)**
DAY 3 MONTEVERDE
DAY 4 MONTEVERDE - EL TRAPICHE – ARENAL/FORTUNA **(2 NIGHTS)**
DAY 5 BOAT TRIP TO THE CANO NEGRO WILDLIFE REFUGE
DAY 6 ARENAL - PINEAPPLE PLANTATION TOUR – PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUÍ **(1 NIGHT)**
DAY 7 SARAPIQUÍ - LA PAZ FALLS – POÁS VOLCANO - SAN JOSÉ **(1 NIGHT)**
DAY 8 DEPARTURE FROM SAN JOSÉ



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

GRECIA: Grecia World of Snakes
MONTEVERDE: Cloud Forest Reserve (Trail Hike), Canopy Tour, Frog Pond of Monteverde
EL TRAPICHE: Sugar Cane Tour
ARENAL: Eco Termales Hot Springs, Arenal Volcano at Night
LOS CHILES: Boat Tour (Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge)
SARAPIQUÍ: Pineapple Plantation Tour, Costa Rican Cooking Classes, Bat Tour,
LA PAZ: Waterfall Gardens (La Paz Fall, Butterfly Garden), Poás Volcano
SAN JOSÉ: Tiquicia Dinner and Show

DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM ***** - ARRIVE SAN JOSÉ (1 NIGHT)

The group will be met at the SJO airport by the Stecmatours' English speaking private guide. We will board our own private coach and transfer to our hotel in San José or near the SJO airport.

Meals: dinner

DAY 2 SAN JOSÉ - GRECIA - MONTEVERDE (2 NIGHTS)

Our morning begins with a visit to the **Grecia World of Snakes**. This serpentarium contains more than 150 snakes, representing more than 50 species. It is located in the picturesque little town of Grecia, renown for its unusual metal church, painted a deep red with white gingerbread trim. After lunch at a local restaurant on route, we continue to our hotel in Monteverde, which has earned its fame as one of the most outstanding wildlife sanctuaries in the world. Positioned atop the Continental Divide in Western Costa Rica, the preserve extends down both the Caribbean and the Pacific slopes. The resultant combination of climatic and geographic factors creates temperature and humidity gradients that change dramatically over relatively short distances.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 3 MONTEVERDE

Today we will enjoy the Monteverde Cloud Forest. We begin the day with a **Trail Walk in the Monteverde Reserve**, where we will view the diverse selection of flora and fauna as the reserve is home to six different vegetation communities, over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, 120 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 2,500 species of plants (among them 500 different kinds of orchids).

This afternoon we will enjoy the **Original Canopy Tour**, where we will go soaring from platform to platform through the canopy of the rain forest. We will enjoy a sense of freedom and adventure like none other in the world. Located high up near the peak of Costa Rica's distinguished Monteverde Cloud Forest is where the first The ORIGINAL CANOPY TOUR was created. The tour is located in a private reserve behind the Cloud Forest Lodge a short drive up the hill behind the Hotel Sapó Dorado a few minutes drive from downtown Santa Elena. The tour starts with a short, guided hike through the private 70-acre reserve of the Cloud Forest. The first part of the tour will take you through primary (old growth) and secondary (new growth) forest. As you fly through the treetops listen closely for the vast variety of birds that can be seen and heard throughout the preserve. Then, just when you think you have become one with the canopy we get your blood pumping with a drop back down to the forest floor. From the ground you leave again for the cloud forest canopy and the tour ends with an exhilarating rappel down from "Scary Tree". The name of this last tree says it all! This tour makes for an unbeatable vantage point for observing the surrounding rainforest where bird watching abounds! Please note that the minimum age in our Costa Rican locations is 5 years old. There is a weight restriction of about 265 pounds although the weight is more a function of body shape than weight itself. This tour lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours depending upon group size and needs. What to wear? Long pants or shorts, T-shirts, hiking shoes or sneakers and insect repellent.

This evening we will visit the **Frog Pond of Monteverde**, where we will enjoy a tour to view and learn about a variety of species housed in a series of glass terrariums. Come to visit us and admire 20 species of amphibians such as the colorful poison arrow frog, the large marine toad and the famous red-eyed tree frog. Our mission is to give the opportunity to everyone to see the wonders of the amphibian world and work towards the conservation of frogs and toads of Costa Rica. Amphibians are declining and disappearing at an alarming rate. We need to act fast to ensure their future survival. This exhibit and research facility acts as a sanctuary for many endangered frog species and we hope that our studies will lead to insights regarding a proper amphibian conservation. We are also committed to disseminating information regarding amphibian concerns and sharing with the visitors the beauty of this natural world. The Frog Pond donates part of each ticket purchase to the Costa Rica Conservation Foundation. These funds are used for the habitat protection.

Your visit helps us to accomplish this goal.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 4 MONTEVERDE - EL TRAPICHE - ARENAL (2 NIGHTS)

This morning we depart Monteverde and travel around Lake Arenal to our hotel in Arenal. En route we will stop for a tour of the **El Trapiche Sugar Cane Plantation**. The El Trapiche Tour is located 4km northwest from Santa Elena Center in Monteverde, Puntarenas. This tourist center offers its visitors a guided tour, whose duration is approximately 2 hour 15 minutes and includes: a walk through a small forest where occasionally wildlife can be seen, as well as the opportunity to visit the on site establishments. During this guided tour the visitors will learn about the natural history, the sugar cane process and the coffee process. Within our locale, the visitors will also be able to see a banana plantation, a fish spawning facility as well as other farming crops (plantains, orange, macadamia and more). During the course of the tour the entire coffee plants and process is demonstrated; the drying grinding, peeling and roasting. At the end of coffee machines, the visitors are invited to take a ride in a real oxen pulled cart (if they so desire; if not, they can walk) to the Trapiche, worked by the same oxen. There they will be able to witness how sugar cane juice is processed. This process begins with grinding sugar cane and then cooking the sugar cane juice until get brown sugar. In this tour the visitors will be able to taste the sugar cane and all the sugar products also at the end they can taste a delicious cup of coffee from the farm. During this presentation we will also explain other typical Costa Rican traditions, for example: wood stove, marimba, el pilón, etc. as well as a demonstration of how liquor is extracted from sugar cane (distilled with pure water). This project originated with the idea to teach those who come to visit our country, some examples of Costa Rican traditions, as well as re-ignite interest for Costa Ricans in their beautiful culture in efforts to maintain our values.

Late this afternoon we will visit the **Eco-Termales Hot Springs** and have the opportunity to submerge ourselves in the natural medicinal waters. The springs include several pools with varying water temperatures in a natural setting.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 5 BOAT TRIP TO THE CAÑO NEGRO WILDLIFE REFUGE

This morning we travel to Los Chiles, near the Nicaraguan border, where we will enjoy a **Boat Tour of the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge** (lunch included). We will board a riverboat (with shading) and make our way along the river to view wildlife in one of Costa Rica's most spectacular wildlife refuges. During our tour we are likely to view long nosed bats, caiman, turtles, basiliscus lizards, herons, storks, Anhinga, as well as howler and white-faced capuchin monkeys. This afternoon we will return to Arenal, stopping en route to view the Iguana Tree. This evening we will travel around Arenal Volcano to a viewing spot where, if we are lucky, we will witness Arenal Volcano hiss and spray lava.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 6 ARENAL - PINEAPPLE PLANTATION TOUR – PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUÍ (1 NIGHT)

We depart Arenal and travel to Sarapiquí. During this morning we will participate to a **Pineapple Plantation Tour**. The main object of the farm is the cultivation of pineapple in harmony with nature. More than 60 % of our pineapple farm is in its natural state, in tropical forests and jungle with abundant flora y fauna. The farm produces certified organic golden pineapple on a large scale. We have more than 25 hectares of reforested land, with two rivers crossing the property. Combining this with the history and morphology of pineapple; direct contact with an operating pineapple farm; visit to the packing plant; a trip through the plantation in the comfort of a unique trailer and lots of freshly cut pineapple and pineapple juice make this a tour you will remember. We are located in the Virgen de Sarapiquí, 3 km west of the town of Llano Grande. We also have an open air restaurant open every day with local and international dishes.

Late this afternoon we will enjoy **Costa Rican Cooking Classes**, where we will learn how to make a traditional meal and then enjoy our creation. This class will offer you the opportunity to learn how to make traditional Costa Rican dishes. The classes are led by a local community member, and everyone participates in the cooking process. You will learn about the history, botanical names, and cultivation of each fresh ingredient. The menu consists of *guacamole* (a dip made with avocados), *batidos* (milkshakes), *empanadas* (turnovers), *tortillas* (flat bread), and *patacones* (fried green plantains). Enjoy trying all of your culinary creations at the end of the class!!

This evening we will embark on a guided **Bat Tour**. Bats represent 50% (110 species) of Costa Rica's mammals, and this tour will dispel many myths you may have heard about these wonderful mammals and provide a wonderful education on the world of the bats. We begin our adventure by watching a multimedia presentation on the history of bats, their classification system, diversity, adaptations, reproduction methods, and threats. Next, a trained guide will lead us on a safe tour where we will have an opportunity to touch, feed and release safely captured bats. We will also take a short, guided walk to see the mist nets used to gently catch the bats. They are kept in captivity for less than 2 hours and the professional methods used assure the wellbeing of the animals.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 7 PUERTO VIEJO DE SARAPIQUÍ - LA PAZ FALLS – POÁS VOLCANO - SAN JOSÉ (1 NIGHT)

Our morning begins with a visit to **La Paz Waterfall Gardens**, where we will begin in the huge Butterfly Garden that features a variety of species and an excellent learning center. Next we will explore the hummingbird and orchid gardens, before taking a leisurely hike on a series of trails through primary and secondary forest alongside the La Paz River. There are several opportunities to stop and lookout over a series of powerful waterfalls, including the namesake La Paz Fall.

We will then continue to the **Poás Volcano National Park**. Poás is an andesitic-basaltic stratovolcano 2,708 m high. It is impressively beautiful and is one of the three volcanoes on the continent that are accessible along a paved road the almost reaches the crater edge. Subconical in shape, the upper part has three caldera depressions. The main crater is an enormous hollow almost 2 km in diameter and 300 m deep. At the bottom of this crater there is a thermomineral lagoon some 350 m across. When it occasionally dries out, the sulphur emissions become more intense and produce acid rain that damages the vegetation and the fields on its sides. To the north of the active crater there is the von Frantzius cone, the oldest eruption point, which is today inactive, on the peak of the massif. To the southwest, there is another cone called Botos, which is currently occupied by a very beautiful cold water lagoon some 400 m across. The volcano experiences plumiforme cyclical eruptions similar to those of a geyser, which consist of columns of muddy water together with steam that rise from a few meters to several kilometers. These eruptions have made Poás famous as the biggest geyser in the world.

We continue to our San José area hotel. As a wonderful conclusion to our tour we will attend a Tiquicia Dinner and Show that includes a show of native Costa Rican folklore dances and a buffet of local cuisine.

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 8 DEPARTURE FROM SAN JOSÉ

Our rewarding tour will come to an end as our private guide accompanies us to the SJO airport for the return flight home.

Meals: breakfast

PRICE BREAKDOWN
Valid until December 31st 2011
Rates are in US\$ per person in twin or in double room

Paying people	Vehicle	Rate
40-50	Bus 50 or 52 seats	865
36-39	Mid-size bus 40 seats	865
30-35	Mid-size bus 40 seats	890
24-29	Mid-size bus 34 seats	920
20-23	Small bus 26 seats	920
18-19	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	920
16-17	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	935
14-15	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	965
12-13	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	995
10-11	Coaster 20 or 22 seats	1045

Triple reduction: 45
 Single supplement: 245

Following services are included in the rates above:

- 🌐 Accommodation in tourist or superior tourist class hotels with private facilities guaranteed in each room
- 🌐 Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- 🌐 Admission fees to the tourist attractions **bold and underlined** indicated in the itinerary
- 🌐 PRIVATE English speaking guide 24/7 throughout the itinerary
- 🌐 PRIVATE transportation with air conditioning for the arrival transfer SJO airport – hotel
- 🌐 PRIVATE transportation with air conditioning for the departure transfer hotel – SJO airport
- 🌐 PRIVATE transportation with air conditioning from the second day to the day before the flight departure
- 🌐 One envelope per room containing following information kit:
 - ✓ Welcome letter
 - ✓ Detailed day-by-day itinerary
 - ✓ Brochures of the hotels, local operators and ICT (Costa Rican Tourism Board)
 - ✓ Stecmatours contacts phone numbers
 - ✓ Emergency phone numbers
 - ✓ Costa Rica map
 - ✓ Sheet for the evaluation of the booked services

Important notes:

- 🌐 We have quoted standard room in all hotels
- 🌐 The private English speaking guide will be lodged at the same group's hotels
- 🌐 Twin room: one bed per person guaranteed

Thanks!

STECMATOURS

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