

Costa Rica

A Tapestry of Tropical Birds

March 7 to 22, 2026



Agami Heron

© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Costa Rica, a biodiversity hotspot, is the ultimate destination for **birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts**. With its **lush rainforests, misty cloud forests, and diverse ecosystems**, this tropical paradise offers **unparalleled wildlife experiences**. Explore world-renowned habitats, from the **Savegre River Valley's cloud forests** to the transitional ecosystems of **Carara National Park** and the **research rich La Selva Biological Station**. Journey deep into the **remote waterways of Tortuguero National Park**, where the sounds of the jungle spectacular array of species, including **migratory birds along the Continental Divide**, as well as **monkeys, sloths, crocodiles, peccaries, and agoutis** thriving in their **untouched natural habitats**. Enhance your adventure by **staying in eco-lodges**, thoughtfully designed to blend with the surroundings, while enjoying **Costa Rica's warm hospitality and delicious cuisine**. Whether you're chasing rare bird sightings or simply soaking in the **stunning landscapes**, Costa Rica promises an **unforgettable nature experience** in the heart of **Central America's wildlife-rich jungles**.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Extraordinary Birding & Wildlife Encounters:** Spot the **Resplendent Quetzal** in the misty cloud forests of **Savegre**, marvel at **toucans and trogons** flitting through lowland rainforests, and watch **Scarlet Macaws** soar over coastal mangroves. Alongside breathtaking birds, encounter monkeys, sloths, crocodiles, and peccaries, each adding to the richness of your wildlife experience.
- **Diverse & Immersive Ecosystem Exploration:** From **tropical dry forests** to **wetland estuaries**, each habitat offers a distinct window into the region's incredible biodiversity. Traverse varied landscapes that support an astonishing range of **flora and fauna**, ensuring every step of your journey is filled with discovery.
- **Exclusive Insight at La Selva Biological Station:** Tour one of the **world's premier tropical research centers**, where expert guides reveal the secrets of its **rich birdlife, mammal species, and unique plant**

ecosystems. Gain a deeper understanding of **conservation efforts** and **ecological research** that protect this **remarkable wilderness.**

- **Scenic Travel by Land & Water:** Cruise through **Tortuguero’s jungle waterways**, hike beneath the towering **Arenal Volcano**, and travel by boat, bus, and foot for an intimate look at the country’s landscapes. Each mode of exploration offers a fresh perspective on the intricate connections between **Costa Rica’s ecosystems.**

LEADER: Paco Madrigal.

DAYS: 16, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$6,300 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Lodging ranges from rustic to modern, all with private baths. While most lodges do not have air conditioning, some may have fans.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Mar 7	Travel to San José, Costa Rica. Arrive in Costa Rica and meet your leader to enjoy a group welcome dinner.	Hotel Bougainvillea, San José	D
Mar 8–9	Cloud Forest Birding in Savegre. Explore the cloud forests of the Savegre River Valley in search of the Resplendent Quetzal.	Savegre Lodge, Savegre River Valley	B, L, D
Mar 10–11	Rainforests & Mangroves of Carara. Discover the rainforests of Carara National Park and enjoy a boat tour through the Tárcoles River mangroves.	Macaw Lodge, Carara National Park	B, L, D
Mar 12–13	Tropical Dry Forest & Wetlands. Experience the tropical dry forests, estuaries, and wetlands of the Guanacaste Peninsula.	La Ensenada Lodge, Abangaritos	B, L, D
Mar 14–15	Volcán Arenal & Scenic Trails. Explore the lush forests surrounding Volcán Arenal and enjoy scenic walks in Arenal National Park.	Arenal Observatory Lodge, Arenal National Park	B, L, D
Mar 16–18	Lowland Rainforest & La Selva. Discover the Caribbean lowland rainforests along the Sarapiquí River, with visits to Braulio Carrillo National Park and La Selva Biological Station.	Selva Verde Lodge, Chilamate	B, L, D
Mar 19–20	Tortuguero’s Rainforest Waterways. Travel by boat to Tortuguero National Park to explore its remote rainforest waterways.	Laguna Lodge, Tortuguero National Park	B, L, D
Mar 21	Return to San José & Farewell Dinner. Travel back to the capital for a final group dinner.	Hotel Bougainvillea, San José	B, L, D
Mar 22	Depart Home.		B

LEADER

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. One leader will provide a range of expertise for your trip.



Paco Madrigal

Paco has over 20 years of experience guiding wildlife, natural history, and birding tours throughout his native Costa Rica. He grew up in Sarapiquí near the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) Station surrounded by his family's passion for the diverse local plants and animals. He was part of the very first World Wildlife Fund (WWF) intensive Naturalist training program and worked at La Selva Biological Station before following his dream of starting his own tour company. His deep knowledge and charming personality make him one of our best leaders.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Mar 7 ~ Travel to San José, Costa Rica

Begin your adventure in **San José, Costa Rica**, where our local agent will greet you and provide a seamless transfer to your hotel. If you choose to arrive early, we can arrange custom airport transfers and extra nights to fit your travel plans. In the evening, meet Paco, your **expert naturalist guide**, and gather with fellow travelers for a welcome dinner, setting the stage for an **unforgettable wildlife expedition**.

Mar 8–9 ~ Into the Cloud Forest: Birding in the Savegre River Valley

Venture into the **Talamanca Mountains**, where the **misty cloud forests of the Savegre River Valley** provide a sanctuary for diverse birdlife. One of the biggest highlights is spotting the **Resplendent Quetzal**, its emerald-green and crimson plumage flashing through the trees.

Stay at the **Savegre Hotel**, home to a 400-hectare private reserve teeming with **Violet Sabrewings**, **Fiery-throated Hummingbirds**, and **Black-faced Solitaires**. Wander through flower-filled gardens, hike along the scenic **Savegre River**, and immerse yourself in the enchanting calls of **Costa Rica's cloud forest birds**.



Resplendent Quetzal

Mar 10–11 ~ Birding & Wildlife in Carara National Park & Tárcoles River

Explore **Carara National Park**, a unique transition zone between humid tropical forests and drier **Pacific lowlands**, creating a hotspot for **extraordinary biodiversity**. Walk through the **lush jungle**, where **Tiger-herons**, **trogons**, **Royal Flycatchers**, and **Rufous-tailed Jacamars** thrive. Watch for **Orange-collared Manakins**, performing their **intricate courtship dance** on the forest floor.

A two-hour **boat safari** along the **Tárcoles River** takes you into the mangroves, where **Scarlet Macaws** soar overhead, and **American crocodiles** bask along the riverbanks. Keep an eye out for **herons, egrets, and ospreys** hunting in the shallows, offering **incredible birdwatching and photography opportunities**.

Mar 12–13 ~ Exploring Guanacaste’s Dry Forests & La Ensenada Wildlife Refuge

Travel to the sun-drenched **Guanacaste Peninsula**, a region of rolling grasslands, mangroves, and dry forests supporting a fascinating variety of wildlife. Stay at a family-run ranch within **La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge**, where **howler monkeys** greet the morning with their echoing calls.

Explore the refuge’s rich habitats, searching for **Pacific Screech-owls, white-headed capuchins, northern tamanduas, and white-nosed coatis**. Walk coastal trails where white-tailed deer graze and, as the sun sets, spot **Ferruginous Pygmy-owls and Bat Falcons** perched in the trees.



Howler Monkey
© Marc Lombardi

Mar 14–15 ~ Arenal Volcano & Rainforest Birding

Journey to **Volcán Arenal**, one of **Costa Rica’s most iconic active volcanoes**, surrounded by lush rainforest. Stay at the Arenal Observatory Lodge, where **panoramic views of the volcano** are paired with incredible birdwatching opportunities. Relax on the lodge’s deck, watching **tanagers, hummingbirds, and warblers** visit nearby feeders. Explore **rainforest trails**, where **howler monkeys swing through the canopy** and **colorful toucans** call from the treetops. For an evening adventure, join an **optional owling excursion**, searching for **Mottled, Black-and-white, and Striped Owls** in the moonlit jungle.

Mar 16–18 ~ Sarapiquí & La Selva Biological Station – A Haven for Wildlife

Descend the Caribbean slope to **Selva Verde Lodge**, a 500-acre private reserve bordering **Braulio Carrillo National Park**. This region is home to the endangered **Great Green Macaw**, which depends on the almendron tree (*Dipteryx panamensis*) for survival. Explore riparian forests along the **Sarapiquí River**, where vibrant **poison dart frogs**, millipedes, and an **array of bird species thrive**. Enjoy morning coffee at the fruit feeding station, **where a spectacle of bird activity unfolds**.



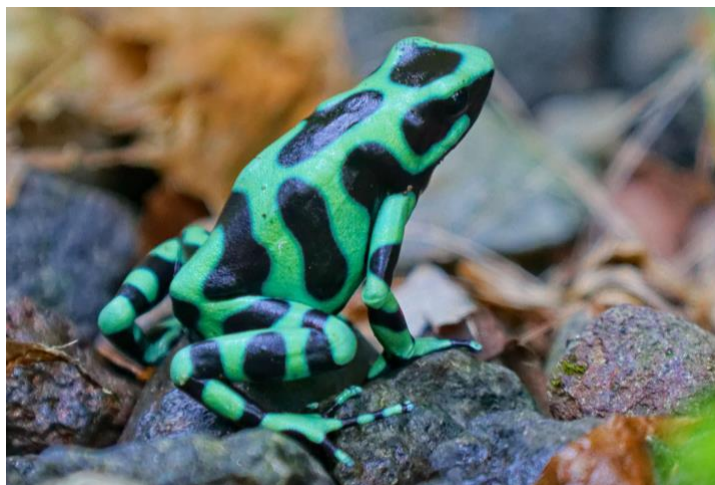
Black-and-White Warbler
© Marc Lombardi

Visit **La Selva Biological Station**, a **world-renowned research hub** known for its staggering biodiversity, including **420 bird species, 500 butterfly species, 120 mammal species, and 55 snake species**. With Paco’s intimate knowledge of the area, you’ll have a rare opportunity to spot **Costa Rica’s three tinamou species**,

along with **woodpeckers, aracaris, trogons, caciques, Purple-throated Fruitcrows, and Snowy Cotingas**. Keep watch for peccaries, agoutis, coatis, sloths, and several monkey species that frequent the reserve.

Mar 19–20 ~ Tortuguero National Park – Wildlife Along the Waterways

Travel by **boat to Tortuguero National Park**, navigating through **scenic jungle waterways** before arriving at your **eco-lodge** just outside the park. Tortuguero is home to **320 bird species**, including **Bare-throated Tiger-Herons, Agami Herons, White-fronted Nunbirds**, and all **six kingfisher species** found in the Americas. Glide along winding canals, spotting **caimans, iguanas, poison dart frogs, freshwater turtles, and three species of monkeys**. Other highlights include **Slaty-tailed Trogons, Montezuma’s Oropendolas, and American Pygmy Kingfishers**.



Green-black Poison Dart Frog
© Marc Lombardi

If time allows, visit the **Caribbean Conservation Center** to learn about the **region’s nesting sea turtles**, including recent **leatherback turtle activity**.

Mar 21 ~ Return to San José & Farewell Dinner

Depart **Tortuguero National Park by boat**, keeping an eye out for **three-toed sloths** lounging in the trees. Travel back to San José via Braulio Carrillo National Park, passing through **stunning tropical landscapes**. In the evening, enjoy a **special farewell dinner**, celebrating an unforgettable **wildlife and birding expedition** through **Costa Rica’s most diverse ecosystems**.

Mar 22 ~ Depart for home

Say goodbye to Costa Rica as you transfer to the airport for your departing flight. Take with you cherished memories of **misty cloud forests, vibrant birdlife, and incredible wildlife encounters**, all set against the breathtaking natural beauty of **one of the world’s most biodiverse countries**.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$6,300
Single Supplement	\$1,380

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	September 28, 2025	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Accommodations for the nights of March 7 through March 21.
- Meals from dinner on March 7 through breakfast on March 22.
- Gratuities for group meals.
- Water throughout the trip.
- Transfers on March 7 and March 22 between the San José Airport and Hotel Bougainvillea.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Divergent airport transfers (arranged by us) and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$25 to \$40 per participant per day for your leader and driver (about \$350 to \$560 total per participant).
- [Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance.](#)
- Items of a personal nature, such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

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Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Temperatures vary greatly – the Pacific coast is often hot while the cloud forests can be cool. Although December through May is the dry season, expect rain anytime. The average temperatures in March range from 63°F (17°C) at night to 95°F (35°C) during the day, depending on the location within the country.

Fitness Level

You will view most wildlife by walking along trails or from small boats. Walks are generally a few hours and include flat trails, uneven terrain, and hills. Paco will offer optional night walks when he thinks it will enhance your overall wildlife experience; these walks are weather and moon dependent. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

Lodging ranges from rustic to modern, all with private baths. While most lodges do not have air conditioning, some have fans. Almost all lodges have open-air dining and common areas. If you are concerned about the standard of accommodations being below your expectations, please ask us before booking.

Transportation

You will travel by air-conditioned mini-bus and occasionally by boat.

Motion Sickness

Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! Even those who have experienced motion sickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to motion sickness from winding, bumpy roads and small boat rides or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding motion sickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our [Coping with Seasickness](#) webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in San José, Costa Rica (SJO) by 4:00pm on March 7.
- Depart from San José, Costa Rica (SJO) after 6:00am on March 22.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation in [Costa Rica](#).**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are [Carbon Neutral](#).**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

Together, we can continue exploring and cherishing this planet while working toward its long-term protection. Thank you for being part of this important journey with us.