

Costa Rica

From Rainforest Canopy to Tropical Shores

March 4 to 19, 2028



Scarlett Macaws

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Discover the wild heart of Costa Rica's wildlife on this 16-day expedition through its incredible ecosystems, including cloud forests, rainforests, mangroves, and tropical lowlands. Each day brings a new adventure: pre-dawn hikes to track howler monkeys at first light, river safaris where caimans glide beneath your boat, and night walks alive with the calls of frogs. You'll encounter Resplendent Quetzals, toucans, and many other bird species. Guided by an expert naturalist, you'll explore ecological jewels like Tortuguero, Carara, La Selva, and the Savegre River Valley, gaining rare, behind-the-scenes access to cutting-edge wildlife research and grassroots conservation efforts. You'll also look for more iconic bird species, including the endangered Great Green Macaw. Stay in thoughtfully designed eco-lodges surrounded by nature, soak in breathtaking landscapes, and experience the extraordinary biodiversity of Costa Rica up close. This immersive journey offers unforgettable wildlife encounters, hands-on experiences, and a deep connection to one of the world's most remarkable ecosystems.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Spectacular Birding and Wildlife Encounters:** Track the elusive Resplendent Quetzal in the misty cloud forests of Savegre, glimpse colorful toucans and trogons in lowland rainforests, and admire Scarlet Macaws soaring above coastal mangroves. Alongside vibrant birdlife, watch for howler monkeys, sloths, crocodiles, and peccaries, making every outing a dynamic wildlife experience.
- **Immersive Exploration of Diverse Ecosystems:** Journey across tropical dry forests, mountain highlands, wetlands, and mangrove estuaries—each offering a distinct ecological lens.

- **Behind-the-Scenes at La Selva Biological Station:** Delve into one of the world's top research sites for tropical ecology. Expert naturalists provide exclusive insight into bird behavior, mammal tracking, and plant biodiversity, giving context to Costa Rica's leading role in global conservation science.
- **Scenic Journeys by Land and Water:** Navigate the jungle canals of Tortuguero, hike the trails beneath Arenal Volcano, and explore by boat, bus, and foot for close encounters with nature.

LEADER: Paco Madrigal.

DAYS: 16, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$7,800 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Mar 4	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 5–6	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 7–8	Rainforests & Mangroves of Carara. Discover the rainforests of Carara National Park and enjoy a boat tour through the Tárcoles River mangroves.	Hotel Punta Leona, Tárcoles	B, L, D
Mar 9–10	Tropical Dry Forest & Wetlands. Experience the tropical dry forests, estuaries, and wetlands of the Guanacaste Peninsula.	Lodge in Abangaritos	B, L, D
Mar 11–12	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 13–15	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 16–17	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 18	Return to San José & Farewell Dinner. Travel back to the capital for a final group dinner.	Hotel Bougainvillea, San José	B, L, D
Mar 19	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 4 ~ Travel to San José, Costa Rica

Arrive in vibrant San José, where our local representative will greet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel. If you're arriving early, we can arrange custom airport pickups or additional nights to suit your schedule. This evening, connect with your fellow travelers over a welcome dinner and meet Paco, your expert naturalist guide, who will introduce the adventure ahead and the incredible wildlife you'll encounter.

Mar 5–6 ~ Cloud Forest Birding in the Savegre River Valley

Venture into the misty Talamancan Mountains to explore the cloud forests of the Savegre River Valley, a sanctuary for Costa Rica's most iconic bird species. Keep your eyes peeled for the dazzling Resplendent Quetzal among the canopy. Your stay at the Savegre Hotel immerses you in a 400-hectare private reserve alive with Violet Sabrewings, Fiery-throated Hummingbirds, and Black-faced Solitaires. Hike along lush trails, wander through gardens, and let the symphony of the cloud forest welcome you to Costa Rica's avian wonders.

Mar 7–8 ~ Carara National Park & Tárcoles River Wildlife Excursion



Resplendent Quetzal



Boat-billed Heron

Explore Carara National Park, where humid rainforest meets the drier Pacific lowlands—a hotspot for biodiversity. Walk jungle trails to spot Tiger-herons, trogons, Royal Flycatchers, and Rufous-tailed Jacamars, and watch Orange-collared Manakins perform their energetic courtship displays. Later, enjoy a two-hour boat safari along the Tárcoles River, gliding through mangroves as Scarlet Macaws soar overhead and American crocodiles bask along the banks. Keep an eye out for herons, egrets, and ospreys. This is a paradise for wildlife photography and birdwatching.

Mar 9–10 ~ Guanacaste’s Dry Forests & La Ensenada Wildlife Refuge

Journey to the sun-drenched Guanacaste Peninsula, a mosaic of grasslands, mangroves, and dry forests teeming with wildlife. Stay at a charming ranch within La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge, where the morning chorus of howler monkeys sets the tone for the day. Explore diverse habitats in search of Pacific Screech-owls, white-headed capuchins, northern tamanduas, and playful, white-nosed coatis. Wander coastal trails where white-tailed deer graze, and as evening falls, look for Ferruginous Pygmy-owls and Bat Falcons perched among the trees.



White-headed Capuchin

Mar 11–12 ~ Arenal Volcano & Rainforest Birding

Travel to Arenal Volcano, one of Costa Rica’s most iconic active volcanoes, surrounded by lush rainforest. Stay at the Arenal Observatory Lodge, where panoramic views and abundant bird activity await. Watch tanagers, hummingbirds, and warblers at the feeders, or hike rainforest trails to encounter howler monkeys and vibrant toucans. For an evening adventure, join an optional owling excursion to search for Mottled, Black-and-white, and Striped Owls in the moonlit jungle.



Howler Monkey

Mar 13–15 ~ Sarapiquí & La Selva Biological Station

Descend to the Caribbean slope and arrive at Selva Verde Lodge, a 500-acre reserve bordering Braulio Carrillo National Park. This area is home to the endangered Great Green Macaw, reliant on the rare almendron tree. Explore riparian forests along the Sarapiquí River, home to poison dart frogs, vibrant insects, and a rich variety of birds. Visit the world-famous La Selva Biological Station, renowned for its biodiversity: 420 bird species, 500 butterflies, 120 mammals, and 55 snakes. With Paco’s guidance, spot Costa Rica’s three tinamou species, woodpeckers, Purple-throated Fruitcrows, Snowy Cotingas, and more. Watch for peccaries, coatis, sloths, and monkeys throughout the reserve.

Mar 16–17 ~ Tortuguero National Park

Embark on a boat journey through the scenic waterways of Tortuguero National Park, arriving at your eco-lodge nestled near the park. Home to over 320 bird species, Tortuguero offers sightings of Bare-throated Tiger-Herons, Agami Herons, White-fronted Nunbirds, and all six species of kingfishers in the Americas. Glide through winding canals to spot caimans, iguanas, poison dart frogs, freshwater turtles, and monkeys. Visit the Caribbean Conservation Center if time permits to learn about nesting sea turtles, including the leatherback.

Mar 18 ~ Return to San José & Farewell Dinner

Depart Tortuguero by boat, keeping an eye out for three-toed sloths lounging in the trees, and travel back to San José through Braulio Carrillo National Park. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner celebrating your unforgettable wildlife and birding adventure across Costa Rica's diverse ecosystems.

Mar 19 ~ Depart for home

Say goodbye to Costa Rica and transfer to the airport for your flight home, taking with you memories of misty cloud forests, vibrant birdlife, and extraordinary wildlife encounters across one of the world's most biodiverse countries.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$7,800
Single Supplement	\$1,950

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

If you are traveling solo, we'll do our best to match you with a roommate. If a match isn't available, a single supplement will apply. Single rooms are available for an additional cost and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	September 26, 2027	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 4 through March 18.
- Meals from dinner on March 4 through breakfast on March 19.
- Gratuities for group meals.
- Water throughout the trip.
- Transfers between Juan Santamaría International Airport and Hotel Bougainvillea are included on both your arrival and departure days.
- 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 and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities for the tour leader, driver, and hotel staff.
- Optional [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](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Travelers on this trip will experience a variety of Costa Rica's microclimates. In the Talamanca Mountains and cloud forests of the Savegre River Valley, mornings are often misty and cool, with temperatures in the mid-60s to mid-70s Fahrenheit (15–24°C), and light rain showers are common. As you move to the Pacific lowlands and Guanacaste's dry forests, the climate becomes warmer and sunnier, with daytime temperatures in the 80s Fahrenheit (27–32°C) and lower humidity. Along the Caribbean slope, including Sarapiquí and Tortuguero, the rainforest is humid and lush, with occasional tropical showers and temperatures ranging from the mid-70s to mid-80s Fahrenheit (24–30°C).

Fitness Level

This trip is designed for travelers with a moderate level of fitness. Most days involve 2–4 hours of walking or hiking on uneven rainforest, cloud forest, and coastal trails, sometimes with steep or muddy sections. Boat excursions and lodge-based wildlife watching are mostly low-impact, but some optional activities—like longer

hikes, owling excursions, or extended birding treks—may require additional stamina. Guests should be comfortable navigating stairs, trails, and occasional wet or slippery conditions. While no technical skills are required, a sense of adventure, a love of the outdoors, and the ability to walk at a steady pace will ensure you get the most out of Costa Rica's diverse landscapes and abundant wildlife. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

Accommodations on this trip range from rustic to more modern, with all rooms featuring private baths. Most properties **do not have air conditioning**, though some provide fans, and many are surrounded by lush gardens or forested grounds, offering an immersive natural setting. Almost all lodges have open-air dining and communal areas where guests can relax, enjoy wildlife sightings, and connect with fellow travelers. While some lodges are more remote, they provide comfortable amenities and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Please note that facilities may vary from one property to another, including Wi-Fi availability, electricity, and accessibility. If you have specific expectations regarding lodging standards, or if certain amenities are essential to your comfort, please contact us before booking to ensure the accommodations meet your needs.

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. We strongly recommend purchasing flight cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Flights you book

- Arrive in San José, Costa Rica (SJO) by 4:00pm on March 4.
- Depart from San José, Costa Rica (SJO) after 6:00am on March 19.

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.