

A close-up photograph of a brown sloth hanging from a green tree branch. The sloth's long, shaggy fur is a mix of light and dark brown. Its large, dark eyes are looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus green forest.

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS

Costa Rica

Arenal Volcano & the Osa Peninsula



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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

TRAVEL + LEISURE

Wild Nature Meets Tropical Luxury

You expect paradise to be beautiful. But who knew it was so much fun? Costa Rica blends adventure and nature like nowhere else. A quarter of the country is a protected paradise for everything from anteaters to orchids. The best part is how easy and exciting it is. You don't just look at the cloud forest canopy, you stroll through it on suspended bridges or glide through on a zipline. You can spot whales, explore the Osa Peninsula – named by National Geographic as "the most biologically intense place on Earth", or participate in a baby sea turtle release. You'll explore with expert naturalists, meet the native ticos, and learn about local life, including visiting a village school. Your trip features nights at the foot of Arenal Volcano and on the pristine Osa Peninsula, and all activities are included. Because Costa Rica is temperate and close to the U.S., you can join us in almost any season—and it's a great spur-of-the-moment getaway.



DAY 1 »

San José – Gateway to Costa Rica’s Pura Vida

- Arrive in San José and enjoy time at leisure
- Choose to relax at your hotel or explore the city's historic heart on your own

Your Costa Rican wildlife adventure begins in San José, where elegant 19th-century architecture, leafy parks, and everyday tico life offer a warm first taste of the country's famed pura vida spirit. After arriving—generally in the afternoon or evening—you have the rest of your day at leisure to unwind from your travels.

Many guests like to settle into the hotel, strolling through the gardens, taking a dip in the pool, and enjoying a relaxed dinner and a good night's sleep before the week's guided explorations begin. Some prefer to wander the compact historic center, pausing in tree-shaded plazas, peeking into the grand National Theater from the outside, or browsing local shops and markets at your own pace. This unstructured first day is yours to enjoy as you wish, knowing that tomorrow morning you'll meet your Classic Journeys tour leader, an expert naturalist guide, and start your adventure through Costa Rica's volcanoes, rainforests, and wildlife-rich landscapes.

OVERNIGHT: SAN JOSE

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 2 »

San José / Arenal

- Discover the entire coffee journey from expert growers, learning to plant, harvest, and roast beans.
- Marvel at cascading waterfalls and vibrant butterflies during a guided tropical forest walk.

Your Costa Rican adventure begins in San José with a sensory awakening. Sip an exquisite cup of coffee and allow the rich aroma to hint at the volcanic soil that nourishes these world-renowned beans. Your first walk of the trip takes you through lush coffee plantations, where you'll meander between rows of coffee shrubs, their glossy leaves rustling in the gentle breeze. The walk follows gentle slopes that offer panoramic views of the Central Valley and leads to a visit with the coffee maker who shows you every step from the raw coffee "cherries" right through drying, roasting and, of course, tasting their brew. It's a great chance to learn about this distinctive (and delicious) agricultural tradition.

After, head into the tropical forest with your naturalist guide for a colorful nature walk. Marvel as five waterfalls leapfrog down a scenic tropical canyon. And make your way up the path with viewing platforms so close to the action you can feel the spray on your skin and see rainbows dancing in the mist. At a nearby butterfly observatory, a loop trail takes you through a kaleidoscope of fluttering wings. The air hums with the buzz of hummingbirds, their iridescent feathers flashing as they dart from flower to flower. Hold out your hand and feel the gentle tickle of a butterfly's delicate feet or the whisper-soft breeze from a hummingbird's wings.

Later in the day, arrive at your boutique hotel at the foot of Arenal Volcano. A near-perfect cone, the volcano has been dormant for many years now. Enjoy the scenic setting and one of the happiest side effects of volcanic activity: the hot springs that bubble to the surface all over this region. As evening falls, dine on local delicacies under a canopy of stars as the volcano looms in the background as a silent sentinel.

MEALS: L, D

OVERNIGHT: ARENAL

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 3 »

Arenal Volcano

- Traverse hanging bridges or soar by zipline for an exhilarating canopy-level rainforest wildlife spotting experience.
- Hike across volcanic lava fields and lush vegetation while learning about nature's resilience.

Wake to the chorus of tropical birds. You have two exhilarating options to explore the forest canopy this morning. For the most immersive experience, join your naturalist guide on a walk along hanging bridges. These suspended walkways offer an intimate look at life in the canopy. Feel the bridges sway gently as you move, and pause to observe orchids clinging to branches, bromeliads forming miniature ecosystems, and even sloths slowly making their way through the foliage. For the adrenaline seekers, strap into a zipline and soar through the treetops, feeling the rush of wind and catching glimpses of the colorful birds and curious monkeys.

In the afternoon, your feet are back on terra firma as you explore the lower slopes of Arenal Volcano. This hike takes you across otherworldly lava fields, where you'll feel the crunch of cooled lava beneath your boots. The contrasts are striking - barren lava flows give way to lush vegetation, showcasing nature's resilience. Your guide will help you spot pioneer species taking root in the volcanic soil, telling a story of rebirth and renewal.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: ARENAL

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 4 »

Arenal / Osa Peninsula

- Participate in traditional games or English lessons with children at a local village school.
- Walk rainforest trails on the Osa Peninsula, spotting toucans, monkeys, and lush tropical flora.

Start your day with a heartwarming visit to a local village school. A short, easy walk through the community offers glimpses into daily tico life. At the school, you'll be greeted by the excited chatter of children and their teachers. They'll welcome you to join in a traditional game or to help with an English lesson. This immersive experience is at the heart of regenerative travel at Classic Journeys as we help sustain the cultures and ways of life of the people we visit on tour.

As you fly from La Fortuna to Puerto Jimenez, you'll witness a dramatic change in landscape. The conical shape of Arenal Volcano gives way to lush, unbroken expanses of rainforest. The Osa Peninsula appears as a verdant jewel set against the blue Pacific Ocean. National Geographic called it "the most biologically intense place on Earth", and you'll start to see that firsthand on a walk this afternoon. The terrain is relatively flat with some gentle inclines, featuring well-maintained trails through lowland tropical rainforest. You'll immediately notice the increase in humidity and the rich, earthy scent of leaves on the forest floor. Listen for the raucous calls of Fiery-billed Aracari Toucans and the howls of howler monkeys. You might spot sloths in the trees or catch glimpses of white-faced capuchin monkeys swinging through the canopy.

Arenal to Osa Flight = Maximized Wildlife Spotting

When flying from Arenal to the Osa Peninsula, your guides transform the flight into a true flightseeing adventure. As you soar above Costa Rica's ever-changing landscapes, they'll point out the volcanic slopes, winding rivers, and the lush rainforest canopy below - sometimes even spotting wildlife from the air. Beyond the breathtaking views, your one-hour flight replaces what would otherwise be an exhausting eight-hour day of driving, maximizing your time for exploration and discovery on the ground.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: OSA PENINSULA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 5 »

Osa Peninsula / Golfo Dulce

- Embark on a wildlife boat excursion in Golfo Dulce to spot whales and dolphins, and snorkel with sea turtles.
- Visit a family-run agroecological farm and discover the chocolate-making process from bean to bar.

A short walk through the rainforest leads to the dock where our boat captain joins your naturalist guide to lead you on an exciting wildlife-watching excursion in the Golfo Dulce. This pristine gulf is known as the only place in the world where the northern and southern humpback whales come seasonally to deliver their babies (with peak season July to December), as well as for its year-round residents that include three different species of dolphins, sea turtles, iguanas, and a variety of marine birds. The viewing is amazing from the boat, and even more immersive if you opt to use the snorkeling gear we provide you to join the marine life underwater.

Returning to land, a short drive leads to a family-run agroecological farm, owned by friends of ours. This immersive experience offers a perfect blend of nature, culture, and culinary exploration. Join your hosts on a stroll through lush organic orchards filled with tropical fruits, and to discover the rich history of medicinal plants on the Osa Peninsula. Then get a firsthand look (and tasting) at the fascinating process of chocolate-making from bean to bar. Back at your boutique resort, you have time to swim, relax, or explore more on your own in the late afternoon.

MEALS: B

OVERNIGHT: OSA PENINSULA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 6 »

Osa Peninsula / Río Nuevo Nature Reserve

- Explore pristine primary rainforest in Río Nuevo Nature Reserve, spotting colorful birds and monkeys.
- Choose to relax at your resort or join a guided walk to observe elusive sloths in the wild.

Today, embark on an exhilarating morning adventure on a guided nature walk into the Osa Peninsula's lush wilderness. The Río Nuevo Nature Reserve offers a kaleidoscope of colors, smells, sights, and sounds. You'll spot vibrant Scarlet Macaws that are iconic to the region, Red-throated Caracaras, and Orange-collared Manakins. Your footpaths wind through a pristine primary rainforest, where you'll find yourself surrounded by ancient trees and diverse plant species that have thrived without any human interference. This untouched ecosystem boasts remarkably old trees, where natural ecological processes have flourished for centuries, creating a vibrant and well-preserved environment teeming with life. The animal viewing is fantastic too, including all four Costa Rican primate species - squirrel monkeys, spider monkeys, white-faced capuchins, and howler monkeys. Your walk culminates with a refreshing dip in the crystal-clear waters of the river, providing a perfect respite after your exploration.

This afternoon offers a unique choice: act like a sloth or join your guide in search of sloths! If you choose to act like one, relax poolside at your boutique resort; maybe even opting for a spa treatment or yoga class. If you prefer to go in search of sloths, join your guide on a walk to get face-to-face with Costa Rica's most beloved and elusive mammal. In a lush 30-acre sanctuary owned by a local family who are our friends, you'll find pristine forests that support sloths in their natural habitat. As you meander along well-maintained trails, your expert guide will share fascinating insights about these slow-moving, fuzzy creatures and their crucial role in the ecosystem. Keep your eyes peeled for both two-toed and three-toed sloths as they languidly navigate the treetops or curl up for a nap.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: OSA PENINSULA

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 7 »

Osa Peninsula / San Jose

- Become part of a conservation team by helping release baby sea turtle hatchlings into the ocean.
- Join a morning birdwatching walk to spot Scarlet Macaws, Resplendent Quetzals, and Magpie-Jays.

On your final morning, sleep in or enjoy one of two memorable experiences, depending on the conditions. If the sand temperatures are optimal for turtle hatchlings, you can opt to participate in a heartwarming and conservation-focused activity—helping with the release of baby sea turtle hatchlings. With guidance from our naturalists, learn about the efforts to protect these endangered creatures and play a part in their journey to the sea.

Even if the baby turtles are not hatching, morning is a time of rebirth for the vibrant bird species that inhabit the area. Join your guide for a walk in search of stunning birds such as Scarlet Macaws, known for their brilliant plumage, the elusive Resplendent Quetzal, and the striking White-throated Magpie-Jay. The soft morning light enhances visibility, allowing you to really appreciate the vivid colors of the birds, and it's a perfect time to observe them feeding and singing.

Later, transfer to the Puerto Jimenez airport for your flight back to San José, where your Costa Rican adventure comes to an end, leaving you with unforgettable memories of this tropical paradise.

Osa to San José Flight = Maximized Wildlife Spotting

When flying from the Osa Peninsula back to San José, your guides turn the journey into a flightseeing adventure. As you ascend, take in sweeping views of untouched rainforest, winding rivers, and the dramatic Pacific coastline—including the iconic whale's tail formation at Uvita, visible from above. This one-hour flight replaces what would otherwise be a six-hour drive, letting you savor Costa Rica's wild beauty while maximizing your comfort and time.

MEALS: B

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

Tour Hotels



Costa Rica Marriott Hotel Hacienda Belen

Voted one of Central America's best hotels by Condé Nast, this grand colonial hacienda is set on a 30-acre coffee plantation in San José. Its unique architecture and elegant furnishes complement amenities that include a lovely pool and spa.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



Tabacón Thermal Resort & Spa

This multi-award winning 5-star luxury resort is located at the base of Arenal Volcano. The property boasts its own thermal springs, heated by the volcano. Rooms are beautifully appointed with handicrafts and furnishings made by Costa Rican artisans.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



Botánika Osa Peninsula

Botanika Osa Peninsula is a luxurious escape in one of the world's most biodiverse regions. Enjoy upscale accommodations, gourmet farm-to-table cuisine, ocean views & access to immersive nature experiences while being surrounded by pristine rainforests.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

Curated Walks

CONNECT. ON FOOT. AT EYE LEVEL.

Join us to walk the most cinematic footpaths in a region. With thoughtfully curated walks that are about so much more than just counting miles. Yes, it's likely that your Fitbit or Apple watch will buzz when you hit your step count. But you probably won't notice because your soul will be buzzing from the connections you make with the people and place. Each day, we'll offer you one or two walks. Each walk is generally between an hour or two in duration. And our support vehicles are often nearby and add to your flexibility. Choose one or both to curate the right amount of walking for you each day. It's why Forbes magazine calls our tours their 'Luxury Walking Favorite'.

CURATE YOUR OWN MILEAGE OPTIONS EACH DAY

	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Day 1	*	*	*
Day 2	2	3.5	4.5
Day 3	2	5.5	8.5
Day 4	1	2	2.5
Day 5	0.5	2	2
Day 6	1.5	5	7
Day 7	0.5	4	4.5

*No scheduled walks

ROUTE NOTES

The terrain on this trip includes a mix of well-maintained mountain, countryside and coastal trails of compressed dirt and stone, and even crushed lava rock on the volcanic paths. The footpaths, through rainforest and cloud forest, as well as on and around Arenal Volcano, offer a selection of level, rolling and hilly terrain; with some elevation gain and loss.

THE ART OF THE UNPLANNED:

CRAFTING UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

We've carefully crafted each day's walking adventures with our expert local guides. Your daily itinerary serves as a well-thought-out plan, and we empower our tour leaders to adapt to unexpected opportunities or challenges. Whether it's an impromptu local invitation or a weather-related change, we're adept at making adjustments. So, while your experience may closely follow the itinerary, it might also include some variations. In essence, we invite you to "expect the unexpected" – knowing that our promise is to provide you the most genuine and authentic walking tours in the world.

Arrival & Departure

→ MEET YOUR GUIDE

LOCATION: Lobby of Costa Rica Marriott
Hacienda Belen
CITY: San Jose, Costa Rica
TIME: 9:00 AM ON DAY 2

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

LOCATION: San Jose Airport
CITY: San Jose, Costa Rica
TIME: 12:00 PM

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ▶ **CURATED WALKS THAT LEAD TO 'ONLY WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS' EXPERIENCES**
 - Immerse and connect you across cultures as you explore on foot
- ▶ **EXCEPTIONAL LOCAL GUIDES**
 - Bring authentic experiences to life
- ▶ **ENCHANTING ACCOMMODATIONS**
 - Where luxury and local mean you feel at home
- ▶ **EAT LIKE (& WITH) THE LOCALS**
 - Local flavors and time to savor the moments together
- ▶ **SMALL GROUPS, GUARANTEED**
 - Mean deeper, richer experiences while making friends along the way
- ▶ **REGENERATIVE TRAVEL**
 - We take strides to preserve cultures, traditions, and nature

What's Included

- Accommodations for 6 nights
- Breakfasts, 3 lunches & 3 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- ▶ **PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS**
One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.
- ▶ **INVISIBLE CHECK-IN**
When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately.

Enhancing Your Journey

We're constantly seeking ways to improve your experience. Count on us to update you with any significant changes before departure. Minor adjustments may be communicated by your guides during the trip to ensure you have the best possible journey.