



Costa Rica Summer 2024

Focus: Tropical Ecology and Conservation

Length of Travel: 9 Days

Travel Dates: May 27 - June 4, 2024

Monday, May 27 -

- Arrive in San, Jose, Costa Rica.
- **Orientation:** Our adventure begins with a safety briefing as we get acclimated to our environment, including the potential for a walking tour of the city.

Tuesday, May 28 -

- **Early Morning Travel to Turrialba to Rafting Starting Point:** Turrialba is the starting point of the best possible rafting experience in Costa Rica. We will be rafting on Pacuare River, which has been included amongst the top 10 rivers with the best sceneries in the world.
- Students will be following the professional guide's instructions and paddle down rapids classes 2 & 3.
- The group will spend the night in a Lodge with a view of the river surrounded by nature and animals. Here, students may observe monkeys, toucans and tree frogs, among other important species making up the biodiversity of the country.

Wednesday, May 29 -

- **Second Rafting Day on Pacuare River:** We will go down river for about 4 hours from the highlands to the ocean level, including a rapid class 4 stretch, where the guide and instructors will discuss the importance of the network of various ecosystems and species interactions in Costa Rica. We will then travel to Cahuita from the Rafting Point End.

Thursday, May 30 -

- **Cahuita National Park:** We will visit the National Park where we can spot monkeys, sloths, raccoons and more. We will also have some beach time to make preliminary observations and collect data on coastal and marine species as well as habitats on the Caribbean/Gulf coast.
- **Bribri Indigenous Community:** We will continue the day by visiting an indigenous community living inland. We will learn about their day-to-day culture and how they utilize the land for medicinal purposes.
- **Waterfall Swimming:** Our day will end at a waterfall approximately 45 meters high where we can bathe in the waters of the Talamanca Mountain Range.
- **Night Leatherback Turtle Project:** Students will hear from Turtle Rescue Cahuita where they will explain the work they do for conservation of marine sea turtles, and show students nesting sites along with how they document and patrol. Students will assist with a patrol as well.

Friday, May 31 -

- **Morning Snorkeling and Data Collection:** The most popular feature of Cahuita National Park is its spectacular 600-acre coral reef. Although the reef has shrunk in recent years, it remains one of Costa Rica's most popular marine attractions. This activity will be led by a guide as snorkeling without a guide within the boundaries of the park is strictly prohibited. Students will also be collecting data on invertebrate, fish and habitat associations. We will have discussions about the data collection along the drive to Sarapiquí.
- **Drive to Tirimbina Biological Station in Sarapiquí:** approximately 4 hours

Saturday, June 1 -

- **Tirimbina Forest Observation:** We will start the day with an early morning examination of the environmental gradient from the coast to the forest. We will observe the high biodiversity and discuss common conservation challenges that the area faces. Throughout the day we will do a tour of the Biological Station and investigate the Hanging Bridges and lush Tropical Rainforest. There will be opportunities for discussions on forest ecosystem characteristics and biodiversity.
- **Night Bat Mist-Netting:** Upon nightfall, we will have the opportunity to study some of the 113 species of bats that exist in Costa Rica, of which some are facing danger of extinction.

Sunday, June 2 -

- **Travel to Tenorio Volcano:** After enjoying the Tropical Rainforest, we will journey on to our next adventure at the base of Tenorio Volcano, which is still active. We will sleep in a hotel located only a few minutes away from the National Park.
- **Rio Celeste:** Here we will visit a waterfall of turquoise color, which is formed by the union of two rivers having different pH. This is what makes the river particles larger in size, which in turn, forms the aluminosilicates reflecting the turquoise color.

Monday, June 3 -

- **Travel to Culebra Bay:** approximately 2 hours
- **Culebra Bay:** This day will be our last outing and day of collection. There will be an afternoon snorkeling and data collection on coastal ecosystems on the Pacific side. After this, students will be discussing the culminating findings from data collected throughout the trip and debrief.

Tuesday, June 4 -

- We will depart from Liberia and Return to US