



Coates Wildlife Tours
Specialist in Nature Tours since

Trip Dossier

17-Day Costa Rica Wildlife Safari



Accommodated Small Group Tour - Max 12 passengers

San Jose - San Jose, 27 Oct - 12 Nov 2025

Itinerary Highlights:

- Small Group with only a maximum of 12 guests and lead by expert local naturalist leaders.
- Carara Biological Reserve and a boat trip on the Tárcoles River and observe one of the largest populations of American Crocodiles on the continent
- Boat cruise through the mangroves at the La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge
- Cerro de la Muerte mountain. This magnificent mountain is part of the Cordillera de Talamanca range, which extends from eastern Costa Rica to western Panama, and is home to many endemic plants and animals.
- Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge is 25,100 acres and is part of the Arenal Huetar Norte Conservation Area. The refuge includes wetlands that host record numbers of migratory waterfowl. While here you will enjoy two wetland cruises where you will have the opportunity to see sloths, crocodiles, basilisks and many species of water bird.
- Savegre River is known as Central America's cleanest river. Lush rainforest, waterfalls and canyons surround this stretch of coastal whitewater. Many tropical birds call the rainforest home, including egrets, osprey, toucans, parrots, kingfishers and cormorants.

Costa Rica's name comes from the Spanish word, meaning 'rich coast,' as early European explorers believed the mountains of Costa Rica were filled with gold. Although they were wrong about the gold, Costa Rica is the 'rich coast' regarding flora, fauna and biodiversity. It may be a small country, but it is enormous in terms of nature, natural history, and environmental investment. A true paradise for lovers of the natural world! It has extraordinary biodiversity, with over 500,000 species, so it is little wonder that it is known as the birthplace of ecotourism.

The Safari visits the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge. It is 25,100 acres and is part of the Arenal Huetar Norte Conservation Area. The refuge includes wetlands that host record numbers of migratory waterfowl. The area's forests, grasslands and marshes are home to various endangered species.

Visit Cerro de la Muerte mountain, which is part of the Cordillera de Talamanca range and extends from eastern Costa Rica to western Panama. It is home to many endemic plants and animals.

Next, discover Savegre River, which is Central America's cleanest river. Lush rainforest, waterfalls and canyons surround this stretch of coastal whitewater. Many tropical birds call the rainforest home, including egrets, osprey, toucans, parrots, kingfishers and cormorants.

Given the vastly different geography in Costa Rica, from coastal mangroves to forests in the clouds, the wide variety of plants and animals you will see in one day is jaw-dropping in this compact country. Its varied ecosystems are bursting with life!



Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in San Jose

On arrival at San Jose airport, your group will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Accommodation: Bougainvillea Hotel, Standard Mountain View Room D

Day 2 San Jose

Today's main objective is to give you time to rest and recover from your flights to Costa Rica. You will have a whole day of free time; however, there are many optional activities throughout the day should you feel up to them. The hotel's lush gardens are perfect for a walk to admire many of the birds commonly found in the Central Valley, and our local guide will lead an early morning and an afternoon walk. Alternatively, you can travel to San Jose to explore the city.

Accommodation: Bougainvillea Hotel, Standard Mountain View Room BD

Day 3 San Jose – Central Pacific Coast

After breakfast this morning, you will depart towards the Central Pacific Coast. The day's highlight will be a boat trip on the Tárcoles River.

The Estero de Guacalillo (Guacalillo Estuary) and the Tárcoles River allow visitors to observe one of the continent's largest populations of American Crocodiles. Discover the mangrove swamp area with high biodiversity, amongst which you will find many aquatic birds and the red macaw. The boats will take you on the journey of a lifetime into an impressive ecosystem composed of four different mangle species, each representing a critical ecological habitat for the region's other bird species and fauna. After the boat tour, we will arrive at Cerro Lodge, our home for the next two nights. Located on the Central Pacific coast, only one hour from San Jose, Cerro Lodge is situated in farmland and provides an important refuge for local wildlife, including the scarlet macaws.

Accommodation: Cerro Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 4 Carara Biological Reserve

This morning, we will visit the Carara Biological Reserve. This 4700-hectare reserve is at the mouth of the Tárcoles River. The reserve is surrounded by agricultural land and provides an oasis for wildlife from the surrounding area. You will be able to spot the brilliantly patterned scarlet macaw. Other birds to watch include guans, trogons, toucans, mot-mots and many other forest species. Monkeys, squirrels, sloths and agoutis are among the more common mammals.

After Lunch, we will visit the Pacific Rain Forest Aerial Tram. Created to raise the world's consciousness of the importance of tropical rainforests, the Pacific Rain Forest Aerial Tram allows guests to discover the hidden secrets and hanging gardens of the Transitional Tropical Rainforest from an awe-inspiring perspective. The Pacific Rain Forest Aerial Tram is an eco-tourism project with 222 acres (90 hectares) of rainforest, showcasing small waterfalls and scenic views of the Pacific Coast. Our Rain Forest Aerial Tram - Pacific flies through a transitional area between the scarce tropical dry forest and the tropical rainforest. This junction between the two ecosystems is packed with exotic wildlife and bright tropical vegetation.

Accommodation: Cerro Lodge, Standard Room BD

Day 5 Punta Leona - La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge

Before breakfast, you can join our local guide on a guided walk of the grounds. Early morning is a great time to see birds waking up for the day and nocturnal mammals heading home after a long night of foraging.

After breakfast, you will continue to the east coast, following the Pan-American Highway on the road to Punta Morales, Coyolitos and Abangaritos, where we will arrive at the La Ensenada Lodge after stopping for lunch on route.

La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge is 1000 acres, located on the Pacific coast in the province of Puntarenas, on the Gulf of Nicoya. It is an ideal place for birdwatchers and nature lovers. The most important aspects of this ranch are its cattle, horses and the production of salt and fruit. The Gulf of Nicoya, the mangroves and the salina offer those who love birds and photography many different species and a variety of birds such as pelicans, herons, parrots, Montezuma oropendola, bellbird, white iris, great egret, etc.

After lunch, the group will have free time to enjoy the pool, walk, or sit in their hammock and enjoy the views over the gulf. Later in the afternoon, there is an optional walk to the salt pans on the property. These salt pans provide excellent habitats for shore birds, and the trees around them provide habitat to a whole other range of birds, as well as Howler Monkeys and Iguanas.

Accommodation: La Ensenada Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 6 La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge

Today, you will rise early for a boat tour of the Gulf before breakfast. This boat tour is an excellent opportunity to see new mangrove wildlife, but you will also have the chance to see coastal birds, including Magnificent Frigate-birds and Royal Terns. After Lunch, there is also the opportunity to join our local guide on a walk through the sounds of the lodge, looking for birds, mammals and reptiles.

Accommodation: La Ensenada Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 7 La Ensenada - La Anita Rainforest

Today, you will again be able to undertake a nature walk on the grounds before breakfast. After breakfast, you will be transferred to the northern mountains and volcanic area of Guanacaste province, where you will be staying at the La Anita Rainforest Lodge. The lodge is surrounded by lush vegetation in a flat area between three volcanoes, the Miravalles, Rincon de La Vieja and Santa María. In the heart of this remarkable rainforest at La Anita, locals have grown and harvested macadamia nuts, the heart of palm, taro, cardamom, organic tropical fruits and vegetables, and medicinal herbs, together with thousands of tropical flowers. Now, La Anita grows cacao (chocolate) and is the only place in the world where cacao is grown, processed and sold as chocolate. La Anita is part of La Colonia Libertad town, where 55 families work in agriculture to support themselves. La Anita is also committed to working harmoniously with the environment and the local community.

Accommodation: La Anita Rainforest Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 8 La Anita Rainforest

Today, before breakfast, you can undertake a nature walk around the property with our local guide. After breakfast, the group will be treated to a chocolate tour! From growing right through fermenting, drying, roasting, grinding and finally combining with other ingredients to make the chocolate, this tour shows it all, not to mention free samples! After lunch, there is an optional walk from the local village to investigate how the landscape has changed from the coastal plain. Now, we are in the foothills; you can relax in the porch hammock and watch the sunset over the volcanoes.

Accommodation: La Anita Rainforest Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 9 La Anita Rainforest Lodge - Caño Negro

Before breakfast today, the group will be able to undertake another guided walk of the grounds before the group departs and heads to the northern plains, bound for the Caño Negro area.

Caño Negro is mainly formed by the Caño Negro Lagoon and the Rio Frio. It is one of the country's most important biological areas and one of the world's four most important wetland areas.

The Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge was declared a wildlife area of international importance in 1991. This ecological treasure is the natural habitat of more than 350 bird species and the Emerald Basilisk, iguanas, River Turtles, caimans and jaguars.

After we arrive for lunch, you will have free time to enjoy the lodge's facilities. The local village is just outside the front gate of the lodge and is easy to explore on foot.

Accommodation: Caño Negro Natural Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 10 Caño Negro Wetland Tour

This morning, you will enjoy a downstream boat tour through the channels that make up this beautiful area. The scenery is very impressive, as are the flora and fauna. The channel systems are also excellent. This refuge is home to more than 350 bird species, such as the Jabiru, Roseate Spoonbill, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Wood Stork, Tricolored Heron, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, White Ibis, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Sungrebe and the Black-bellied Whistling Duck. After lunch, you will take another boat tour upstream to coincide with sunset. The waterway changes significantly as you move upstream, opening up into extensive flood plains, allowing us to see new wildlife.

Accommodation: Caño Negro Natural Lodge, Standard Room BLD

Day 11 Caño Negro - Sarapiquí

Today, we'll continue to the Caribbean lowlands. You will find several protected areas in Sarapiquí: Braulio Carrillo National Park, La Selva Biological Station and the Sarapiquí Protected Area. Visiting these areas will show you different types of tropical rainforests. The group will arrive at Selva Verde for lunch, after which you will have free time to enjoy or join our local guide for a guided walk of the grounds.

After dark, discover the wonders of the forest when most species are active with a guided night walk at Tirimbina Reserve. During the two-hour walk, a naturalist guide will tell you about the natural history of the various nocturnal species of the tropical rainforest. The guide will focus on nocturnal species such as: insects, frogs and nocturnal mammals amongst others, giving you a different perspective of the rainforest.

Accommodation: Selva Verde Hotel, River View Room BLD

Day 12 Sarapiquí - Turrialba

Today, the group will be transferred to the Central Valley east lowlands, where you'll notice a significant change in weather and bird species within a short distance. Rancho Naturalista offers stunning views of Volcano Turrialba and Volcano Irazu. After arriving for a delicious home-cooked meal, you will be free to explore the hotel grounds, enjoy a trail walk or watch the world go by from the lodge balcony. Rancho Naturalista is famous for many hummingbirds visiting it, including the rare Snow Cap.

Accommodation: Rancho Naturalista, Standard Room BLD

Day 13 Turrialba

Today, the group will be able to enjoy the facilities of Rancho Naturalista. You will be free to enjoy the walks through the onsite rainforest or sit on the lodge's balcony and enjoy the birds. A variety of Mammals, including Armadillos and Coatis, are known to visit the lodge throughout the day.

Accommodation: Rancho Naturalista, Standard Room BLD

Tour Costs

Cost:	AUD\$10,165.00 Per Person Twin Share AUD \$1,565.00 Single Supplement
Departs:	San Jose - Costa Rica 27 Oct 2025
Finishes:	San Jose - Costa Rica 12 Nov 2025

Note: Prices have been based on all known costs and current rates of exchange. Any significant changes beyond our control will be passed on to passengers.

Tour Payments

Deposit:	At the time of booking, AUD\$1,200.00 per person
Final Payment:	On or before 13 Aug 2025

Note: The deposit is non-refundable, and the final payment is non-refundable if cancelled after 10 August 2024.

Travel insurance covering all payments is **VERY** strongly recommended. Prices are based on all known costs and current rates of exchange. Any significant changes beyond our control will be passed on to passengers.

Included

- Fully escorted tour
- Meals as per itinerary (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)
- Hotel transfer on arrival. (Only for guests arriving on Day 1)
- 17 days of naturalist guide
- 17 days of private transportation (Coaster Bus)
- Tipping of our Naturalist Guide and Driver only
- Carara National Park
- Tarcoles River Boat safari tour
- Caño Negro boat tours
- Pacific Rain Forest Aerial Tram fees
- La Anita Chocolate Tour
- Entrance fees and Night walk to La Tirimbina
- Savegre Waterfall Hike

Not Included

- International airfares and accompanying airport and airline taxes
- Any meals not included in the itinerary
- Any required visas
- Personal travel insurance
- All other personal expenses, such as laundry and drinks with meals
- Any pre and post tour accommodation.
- Any transit accommodation between Australia and Costa Rica
- Alcoholic or carbonated drinks.
- Tipping off waitstaff, bellboys and housekeeping
- Costa Rica Departure Tax. (Many airlines include this in the price off their tickets.) Please check this with your travel agent when booking your flights.

Tour Information

Coates Tour Escort: TBA - The Coates escort will accompany a group with eight or more passengers. The local naturalist guide will lead the tour for groups with fewer than eight passengers.

Wildlife Specialist: Local Naturalist Guide

Accommodation:

Twin-share rooms with ensuite in hotels and motels.

Bougainvillea Hotel or similar:

The Bougainvillea Hotel offers contrasting brick textures, adobe-like surfaces, mixed hardwoods and artfully chosen changes in dimensions and wall angles. Quality modern paintings, pre-Columbian objects subtly displayed in niches on walls, and a romantic fireplace give the hotel the cosy feel of a country inn.

The gardens are an inspirational paradise where you can relax and discover the beauty of many Costa Rican plants and birds. With its 8 acres of carefully tended tropical grounds, the Hotel Bougainvillea features over 50 species of bromeliads, Costa Rican native trees, numerous orchid species, and herb and cacti gardens. Radiant hummingbirds also live within the grounds.

Hotel facilities: Tourist information centre, Souvenir shop, Restaurant and Bar, Swimming pool, tennis court, sauna and fitness centre, Laundry & Wireless Internet. All rooms offer a Safety box, Cable TV, Radio alarm clock, Coffee maker, Fan, Hair dryer and Wireless Internet.



Cerro Lodge or similar:

Cerro Lodge is an environmentally friendly project on a Tarcoles (central Pacific) farm just 10 minutes from Carara National Park. It is in the middle of one of the most important refuges for the Scarlet Macaw; you can often see these spectacular red, blue, and yellow parrots as they fly through the valley at Cerro Lodge. Trees, palms, gardens, panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, mangrove forests, and Carara National Park surround all this. One of the principal goals of Cerro Lodge is to operate as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. They are always looking for ways to reduce impact, reuse water for irrigation, organic compost garbage, and have worms that make organic fertiliser from cow manure. They also hope to assemble a bio-digester and would like to produce their own electricity.



La Ensenada Lodge or similar:

La Ensenada National Wildlife Refuge has 1000 acres. It is an ideal place for naturalists, bird watchers and nature lovers. The most important activities of this ranch are cattle and horses and the production of salt and fruit.

The Lodge offers accommodations in rustic villas facing the Nicoya Gulf with two beds, a bathroom, a closet, and a spacious terrace, from which you can enjoy an unforgettable sunset while relaxing in a hammock. The Gulf of Nicoya, the mangroves and the salina offer those who love birds and photography many different species and a variety of birds such as pelicans, herons, parrots, Montezuma oropendola, bellbird, white iris, great egret, etc.



La Anita Rainforest Ranch or similar:

La Anita Rainforest Ranch offers a spacious terrace, the 'rainforest deck', walking trails in the forest and the ranch, places designed for bird watching and other wildlife, internet access and a restaurant offering meals prepared with fresh ingredients from local farms.

One of La Anita's highlights is their food. It is delicious and 100% natural, with a high nutritional value. The ingredients are harvested in their orchard or from local farmers. The meals are served on the main deck, surrounded by forest and have the best views of the Rincon de la Vieja and Santa María Volcanoes.



Cano Negro Natural Lodge or similar:

The lodge is located in the northern zone of Costa Rica, close to the small village of Los Chiles. It is surrounded by exuberant tropical vegetation and has direct access to the pristine canals of the Refuge Natural Lodge Caño Negro. Its restaurant is named after one of the most exotic birds, the Jabiru, and has a capacity for about 100 persons. The menu includes typical dishes as well as international ones. The hotel tries to use local products such as pineapple and vanilla, which are always part of the menu. The Bar offers a great variety of cocktails and drinks for the guests.

Hotel facilities: WiFi is at the bar and lobby area. Swimming pool. Forty-two deluxe rooms, each with elegant furniture, equipped with two full-size beds, a terrace, a phone, Air Conditioning, a Security box and a complete bathroom with hot water.

With a focus on growth and natural development, Cano Negro Lodge has created jobs for locals, giving them new opportunities and allowing them to learn new skills. These wonderful people now make up the entire staff in the Cano Negro Lodge, where they offer customised service that makes you feel at home.



Selva Verde or similar:

Selva Verde is more than a lodge and more than a rainforest reserve. It is your gateway into a magical world of towering Almendro trees, Mantled Howler Monkeys, and Keel Billed Toucans. Immerse yourself in tropical nature as you hike through the deep green forest or reflect quietly in a comfortable hammock. Discover something new as you encounter Selva Verde's fantastic wildlife and vibrant people. Rekindle your sense of wonder and experience the out-of-the-ordinary.

Located just 2 hours from San Jose, Selva Verde provides easy access to the wonders of the rainforest. For over 30 years, they have been a haven for nature enthusiasts worldwide. Explore Selva Verde's 500 acres of vibrant tropical nature in the heart of Costa Rica's Sarapiquí Canton.

As one of Costa Rica's legendary eco-lodges, they are committed to a sustainable future for Selva Verde and the people and wildlife that call the Sarapiquí home. They proudly carry and support Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism. They actively work with conservation partners, including the Sarapiquí.

Conservation Learning Centre, to promote conservation and environmental education throughout the local community. Learn more about their efforts when you visit Selva Verde!

Hotel facilities: Restaurant, bar, swimming pool, gift shop, laundry services and computer. Rooms have Wifi and Air conditioning.



Rancho Naturalista or similar:

This comfortable lodge is also famous for its welcoming hospitality, stunning volcano views and excellent food, well prepared and made with the best fresh local ingredients. The weather is almost perfect year-round, not too hot or cold.

While enjoying your coffee or tea on the balcony, you will be amazed at the variety of tropical birds. Over 450 bird species have been recorded in the area. Groups of Gary-Headed Chachalacas, Collared Aracaris, Passerine's Tanagers, and the impressive Montezuma Oropendolas will all provide quite a show. Other likely possibilities include Blue-crowned Motmot, Lineated and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, Golden-hooded and White-lined Tanagers, and Scarlet-rumped Cacique.

Hummingbird feeders only a few feet away usually buzz with Green Thorntails, White-necked Jacobins, Green-crowned Brilliants, Green-breasted Mangos, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds.

Provisions are also made for non-birding guests who will find Rancho Naturalista a relaxing retreat.



Trogon Lodge or similar:

Located at San Gerardo de Dota, Savegre gets you to the heart of the cloud forest. An amazingly stunning habitat for many bird and flora species, this region is most well known for being the primary habitat for the famous resplendent Quetzal. The unequalled beauty of the highland scenery provides a unique opportunity to experience the sounds and secrets of the tropical cloud forest. San Gerardo de Dota is within the most significant extension of the country's protected areas, comprising 13 different areas with a total of 95,000 hectares. It is highly recommended to nature lovers. Trogon Lodge is 105 hectares, located at an altitude of 2200 metres. Boasting 54 rooms with private facilities, all rooms either have a view of the Savegre River or cloud forest. Enjoy the combination of local and international cuisine at the El Quetzal restaurant. The hotel also offers a conference room for about 20 people with wireless internet service, a souvenir shop, a bar by the riverbank, and hiking trails.



El Rodeo Hotel or similar:

El Rodeo is a Costa Rican country inn located only 10 minutes away from the Juan Santamaria International Airport, and in the heart of the latest, bustling business and commercial district, Santa Ana / San Antonio de Belen, and only 15 minutes away from downtown San Jose.

It is a charming and cozy hotel characterised for its exceptional service and well-known thanks to its restaurant, one of the best in the capital city.

Their facilities are in tropical gardens with views of the spectacular Poas and Barva volcanoes.

All rooms have cable TV, air conditioning, telephone, alarm clock, hair dryer, coffee maker and safe deposit box. A full Costa Rican-style breakfast buffet is served daily at the hotel's terrace from 6:30 AM. El Rodeo Steak House serves some of the best cuts of export-quality beef accompanied by local dishes and garnish (room service available). Other facilities and services include a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, free wireless internet connection, laundry service and tennis court.



Meals:

Meals, as indicated on the itinerary, are included. Special dietary requirements can usually be catered for. Please advise us of any special requirements at the time of booking. A surcharge may apply.

Trek Grading:

We undertake only light/medium bushwalking on most days. The walks are generally on well-formed tracks or roads. As Costa Rica is a mountainous country, some walks will be up/down inclines and may include a few steps. Walks are generally done at your own pace and are optional. For maximum enjoyment, you should be able to walk for at least an hour.

Weather:

Costa Rica is a tropical country situated between 8 and 11 degrees above the equator. It has only two seasons: dry and green! The dry season is generally between late December and April, and the green or wet season lasts for the rest of the year but still offers an average of about 5 hours of daily sunshine. The Caribbean coast doesn't have this extended dry weather and stays green all year round.

The humidity tends to be a bit oppressive at times. However, as the tour moves to higher elevations for the last few days of the tour, nights can get very chilly. Rain is a risk as we will still be in the green season.

Clothing:

A suggested list of items to bring on the tour will be included with our pre-departure information sent to you on full payment of tour costs. However, comfortable casual clothing is recommended. Light shirts and T-shirts during the day and warmer jumpers and jackets will be needed for the evenings. Sturdy and comfortable walking shoes or boots are essential. A good rain jacket or umbrella is also a must-bring as rain is always risky.

Getting to Costa Rica:

Getting to Costa Rica from Australia can be challenging. Generally, the best way to fly to San Jose is via the USA however, you can travel from Europe or Canada. We recommend breaking up your journey with an overnight stopover on the way. Also, please note that the included hotel transfer on arrival is only available if you arrive on day 1 of the tour. However, a transfer can be arranged at an extra cost if you want to arrive early.

For detailed **Terms and Conditions**, please visit the FAQ page on our website.



To make a booking or further information please contact

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