ITINERARY

From cloud forests and wetlands to coastal mangroves and pristine beaches, discover Costa Rica's incredible biodiversity—and the conservation efforts that are helping to preserve it. On an expedition to wildlife refuges and national parks across northern Costa Rica, venture into the rainforests that blanket Arenal Volcano and go birding in the marshes of Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge. Visit a working coffee and cacao farm, follow naturalists on hikes through habitats teeming with wildlife, and meet scientists at three different research stations for an inside look at critical conservation efforts.

DAY 1: SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Arrive at Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO) in San José, Costa Rica's capital city, and transfer to our hotel upon arrival. After time to enjoy a swim or wander through the hotel's tropical gardens and coffee plantation, meet for a welcome reception and dinner.

Meals Included: Dinner

DAY 2: SARAPIQUÍ /ARENAL VOLCANO

Travel north into the lowland tropical forests of Sarapiquí to La Selva Biological Station & Reserve, home to 470 recorded bird species, 125 mammal species, and so much more. On a naturalist-led hike, look for colorful poison dart frogs and unusual plant species, learn about long-term research projects, and discover the important role of the reserve in creating a protected biological corridor. This afternoon, drive to our lodgings at the base of Arenal Volcano. Enjoy a talk by our expert before dinner at the hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: CAÑO NEGRO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Set out on a full-day excursion to one of the world's great wetlands, Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge. Stretching along the border with Nicaragua, the reserve is a birder's paradise, attracting hundreds of species of migratory birds to its shallow lagoons. Navigate the waterways in a covered boat, watching for all manner of wildlife, from roseate spoonbills to caimans, monkeys, and sloths. Return to Arenal this afternoon.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: ARENAL VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK

Spend the morning exploring Arenal Volcano National Park, where lush rainforests flank the conical peak of the most active volcano in Central America. On a naturalist-led hike, learn about the geothermal forces that kept this volcano simmering until 2011, and discover the park's diverse flora and fauna. Take advantage of a free afternoon to visit the nearby hot springs or relax at the hotel pool, enjoying views of

the stunning symmetrical peak of Arenal. Before dinner, try your hand at stirring up a guaro sour, a cocktail made with a Costa Rican sugarcane spirit.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: ARENAL VOLCANO / MONTEVERDE

Begin the day with a private boat ride across beautiful Lake Arenal. Continue by road to Don Juan Tours, a family-run coffee farm, where we'll take a tour of their coffee, cacao, and sugarcane plantation. Enjoy a tasting of the fruits and their finished products and discover their different uses in medicine and cuisine. Then journey to the cloud forest-covered mountains of Monteverde.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: MONTEVERDE

Awaken early for a specially arranged excursion to the Monteverde Institute. Enjoy a picnic breakfast during a talk about the important fieldwork being done at the Monteverde Institute and its long relationship with National Geographic. Then split into groups to join researchers in the field. You'll have the chance to tend native plants at the nursery or pitch in with reforestation efforts and participate in bird mist netting and tagging. Sit down to a well-earned lunch at a local restaurant. Then hike trails through the cloud forest and cross hanging bridges to get a close up view of the canopy.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: SANTA ROSA NATIONAL PARK/GUANACASTE

Head for the coastal province of Guanacaste this morning and set out on a guided visit to Santa Rosa National Park, one of the oldest national parks in Costa Rica. Here, tropical dry forest reaches all the way to the beach, harboring a wealth of wildlife. On a drive through the park, watch for some of the resident creatures, as well as 500-year-old trees and stunning scenery. Get a closer look on a guided walk along a forest trail. End your day with a presentation at the hotel by experts in the subject of sea turtle conservation, where they will provide general information about Las Baulas National Park and their challenges and efforts, including citizen science, environmental education, and communication to support the community of Playa Grande and the national park. One main topic that will be shared is the Marine Litter Lab, which we will visit the next day and be able to tie the information obtained with the field work.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: LAS BAULAS NATIONAL MARINE PARK/TAMARINDO WILDLIFE REFUGE

Las Baulas National Marine Park stretches along the Tamarindo Bay, protecting mangroves, beaches, and waters where sea turtles come to nest each year. Board small boats to explore the mangroves of the adjacent Tamarindo Wildlife Refuge this morning, on the lookout for crocodiles, white-faced capuchin monkeys, and many bird species. After lunch, take part in a brief presentation and a visit to a sea turtle nursery for some field work, consisting of a swift beach clean-up and then an analysis of the interaction with wildlife. Then meet with representatives from the scientific organizations Sostenibilidad en Grande (Sustainability at Large), and FUNDECODES (Foundation for Balance Between Conservation and Sustainable Development). Tonight, toast your Costa Rica wildlife adventure at a farewell dinner.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9: GUANACASTE/HOME

After breakfast, transfer to the Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport (LIR) in Guanacaste to catch your flight home.

Meals Included: Breakfast