

**VOLCANOES, WATERFALLS
& RAFTING**

WEEKEND OVERVIEW

If you're looking to explore Costa Rica before heading off to volunteer with sea turtles on a remote tropical island, then look no further! This four day three night trip will allow you to see some of Costa Rica's main attractions, including volcanoes, waterfalls, cloud forests, wildlife & birds, as well as go white water rafting! You will get to enjoy two full day guided tours and also have some free time to relax in the capital San Jose.

As part of one of the guided tours we will travel to the Central Valley region where Poas Volcano National Park is located. Poas Volcano is the largest active crater in the world and is a powerful symbol of the geothermal forces that formed Costa Rica many years ago. Everyone will get to admire the breath taking and gigantic crater that is active with sulphur fumaroles and if lucky, get to witness one of the geysers erupt – sending steam and water up to 250 metres in the air!

We will hike through the trails that lead you through one of the mysterious and famous cloud forests, with hummingbirds and quetzal flying around you. On top of this, we will continue along the mountainous route to one of the major attractions of the zone, La Paz Waterfalls & Gardens. Everyone will trek through the spectacular trails that lead to the viewpoints of the beautiful waterfalls and also enjoy the gardens.

The second guided tour will be a full day on the rapids, white water rafting down the Pacuare River! The 18-mile adventure filled run has 52 different rapids, with few rivers in the world offering so many! The river is not overly challenging and is perfect for beginners and seasoned rafters - fun is guaranteed!

The river is split into different sections that have a mixture of class II-III rapids that are known to be

some of the best in Costa Rica! Along the route you will be surrounded by beautiful lush green landscapes, pass by Huacas Waterfall (a 150 foot dramatic drop into the river) pass through a narrow gorge and also enjoy some wildlife along the river's edge.

You will have your evenings free to enjoy everything the capital San Jose has to offer! With many restaurants, bars and even downtown all within walking distance, there is plenty to choose and do.

You will head off on the guided tours with our local team's partner company and be accompanied by an experienced and English speaking guide. Depending on how large the group size is, you may join with other tourists to ensure there is a good social element.

Each weekend trip starts on a Friday morning and finishes on Monday – just in time to start our volunteer placement. The trip costs just **£365 per person.**

The following are included within this fee:

- Airport pickup
- All transport
- Accommodation (Friday-Sunday)
- Breakfast & Lunch
- Entrance fees

START DATES

The Volcanoes, Waterfalls and Rafting weekend trip will start every Friday from the beginning of March to the end of September – in line with the sea turtle season.

Due to the remoteness of the sea turtle programme, you will only be able sign up for this weekend trip for when you first arrive into Costa Rica – not for any dates while you are actually volunteering.



We can add additional weekend trips if there is enough interest from volunteers. There is a minimum of 2 participants.

BOOKING YOUR PLACE

You can simply add this weekend trip when applying for any of our programmes in Costa Rica under 'Optional Extras'.

If you have already signed up for one of our volunteer programmes in Costa Rica and would like to add this weekend trip, you can simply request this within your My Trip account.

Places on our weekend trips are non-refundable and non-transferable between volunteers.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL AND SAN JOSE

The local team will be waiting within the arrivals hall for when you land into Costa Rica. You will make the short journey to the hostel located in Barrio Escalante and have the rest of the day / evening at your own leisure.

As you will be staying within one of the most popular neighbourhoods in San Jose, everything you need is within walking distance!

There are over 80 restaurants, bars and coffee shops on your doorstep and you can easily walk into downtown San Jose. There are also lots of museums and galleries to explore as well as pretty streets and gardens to get lost in.

DAY 2 – POAS VOLCANO, COFFEE FARM AND LA PAZ WATERFALLS

You will be picked up from the hostel around 6am and head north to the Central Valley region. On the journey of ascent to the Poas Volcano National Park (at 2,708 metres in altitude!), we will make a

stop to enjoy an exquisite typical breakfast in the famous Doka Coffee State. You will be surrounded by coffee plantations and producing facilities where you can see the whole coffee process.

When we arrive at Poas Volcano you will get to admire the breath taking and gigantic crater and if lucky, get to witness one of the geysers erupt – sending steam and water up to 250 metres in the air!

Paos Volcano is the largest active crater in the world and is a powerful symbol of the geothermal forces that formed Costa Rica many years ago.

We will hike some of the trails that lead you through one of the mysterious and famous cloud forests, admiring the unique ecosystems and hopefully some hummingbirds and quetzal flying around you.

Afterwards we will continue along the mountainous route to one of the major attractions of the zone, La Paz Waterfalls & Gardens. Everyone will trek through the spectacular trails that lead to the viewpoints of the beautiful waterfalls and also enjoy the gardens – butterfly farm, aviary, hummingbird, canaries garden, felines and serpentarium.

Here we will enjoy a varied and delicious open buffet lunch in the restaurant park to regain some energy, before slowly making our way back to San Jose.

You will be dropped back off at the hostel for around 5pm, where you will have the evening to do as you please – whether that is some more exploring of the capital or simply enjoying your surroundings at the hostel.



DAY 3 – WHITE WATER RAFTING

It's another early start with tour guide picking you up around 6am.

Upon arrival to the Pacuare river you will be provided with everything you need, including a life jacket, helmet and paddle before. Everyone will then be fully briefed with a full safety orientation talk before boarding the raft!

The 18-mile adventure filled run has 52 different rapids, with few rivers in the world offering so many! The river is not overly challenging and is perfect for beginners and seasoned rafters - fun is guaranteed!

The first 4 miles consist of fun class II-III rapids is the perfect time to test your new river skills and gain confidence in your team. Here you can find pockets of secondary growth forest that is extremely beautiful.

After about 40 minutes we will enter the famous Pacuare River Gorge, which is 5 miles of some of the best white water Costa Rica has to offer. The rapids here are "Terciopelo snake", "Double drop", "Upper and Lower Huacas", "Pin ball" to name a few.

You will also see the Huacas waterfall, a 150 foot dramatic drop into the river.

After the gorge the river opens up to a 5 mile stretch on the Valle del Pacuare, where the river has a different character. It is wide open, which gives you the opportunity to rest a bit and take the opportunity to do some wildlife spotting. The main rapids here are "Cimarrones", "The Play Hole", "El Indio" and "Magnetic Rock". The forest remains just as lush, and the rapids just as fun.

After an adventurous day, you will be dropped back at the hostel for around 5:30pm. As before,

the rest of the day is free for you to enjoy. Other volunteers will be arriving throughout the day and checking into the hostel before heading to the volunteer project tomorrow – so plenty of new faces to say hello to and get to know!

DAY 4 – TRAVELLING TO THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

After breakfast you will make your way to the volunteer programme along with all of the other volunteers. You will find further details about this journey and for your time volunteering in Costa Rica within the volunteer handbook once you have signed up.

ACCOMMODATION

Over the course of the weekend you will be staying at The Hotel Finca Escalante, in the centre of San Jose.

The hostel is located in Barrio Escalante, which is one of the most popular neighbourhoods in the capital. You will have over 80 restaurants, bars and coffee shops on your doorstep and you can easily walk into downtown San Jose.

The property used to be the home of ex-president Rafael Angel Guardia and is now the home away from home for travellers from around the world.

You will be staying in a single sex dorm, with each sleeping between 4 and 8 people. You will have the option (subject to availability) to upgrade to a private double room when you first arrive for an additional cost.

You will have all of the amenities you need such as western toilets, hot water and Wi-Fi – although this may be intermittent.



You will need to pay for the accommodation on Sunday night, please budget around £12 (\$15).

MEALS

You will be provided with meals as outlined below. The majority of meals will be typical Costa Rican cuisine, which is similar to that in the UK.

Any meals not listed below and drinks or snacks will be at your own expense.

Day one – No meals included

Day two – Breakfast, lunch included

Day three – Breakfast and lunch included

Day four – Breakfast included

TRANSPORT

You will be met at the airport by a member of our local team, who will transport you the short distance to the hostel where you will be staying.

All transport as part of the guided tours is included within the weekend fee and will be by private car or bus.

Please note, the guided tours may not run in the order provided. From time to time you may need to do them the other way around. In extreme circumstances, one of the guided tours may need to change to another popular tour depending on the number of total participants.

