Cornell’s Adult University in Costa Rica

Featuring the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Poás Volcano and Manual Antonio National Park

December 21 — December 30, 2012
ITINERARY

Friday, December 21 – DEPARTURE FROM U.S. to SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA
Depart from the United States for San José, Costa Rica. Transfer to hotel.
Cariari Hotel  Meals aloft

Saturday, December 22 – SAN JOSE
After a morning orientation, you will have a choice of river rafting or a visit to a coffee plantation.

“Design your morning” choose between river rafting or a coffee plantation visit.

➢ River Rafting on the Sarapiqui River

Enjoy a white water rafting trip on the Sarapiqui River. This trip is designed for people of all ages as we paddle together on the wide-open waters of the river through small waves with little maneuvering. As you progress down river the pools become longer where you can rest and observe a number of birds in their tropical habitat. Lunch will be served at the end of trip. Towels, helmets, life jackets, along with professional guides and a safety kayaker are included in this adventure.

➢ Britt Coffee Tour

Located in the fertile highlands of Costa Rica’s central valley, Café Britt has been running plantation tours since 1991. This tour includes visits to both the coffee plantation and roasting plant, where you’ll watch workers and learn the art of professional coffee tasting. At the end of the tour participants will enjoy a buffet lunch.
In the afternoon each group will depart separately on a short city tour of San José.

_Cariari Hotel_  B, L, D

**Sunday, December 23 – SAN JOSE / QUEPOS**

Today we’ll depart toward Quepos and our hotel overlooking **Manuel Antonio National Park**. Along the way, we stop at **Poás Volcano**, one of the few active volcanoes in the continent. We drive to the top where, on a clear day, we will be able to observe the active fumaroles and lake at the bottom of the immense crater, one of the largest in the world. Late afternoon arrival in Quepos where we will spend the next three nights. _Parador Hotel_ B,L,D

_Monday, December 24 – MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK_

Today we will explore **Manuel Antonio National Park** and take walks in the forest as well as along the beaches. The park, located near Quepos on the Pacific Coast, is considered one of the most beautiful and scenic parks in the entire park system. It combines white-sand beaches backed by lush tropical forest with snack-seeking white-faced monkeys, as well as the endangered squirrel monkey, grunting howler monkeys, two-toed sloths, agoutis, and iguanas. We may also spot coatis, armadillos, and parrots. Above all, it is the spectacular jagged coastline, exquisite sheltered tide pools, and beaches that have given this park its popular reputation. The park is further home to abundant marine life including red land crabs and numerous species of fish. _Parador Hotel_ B,L
**Tuesday, December 25 – Damas Island Mangrove**

Today we depart on a boat tour through mangrove canals to **Damas Island**.

- **CHOICE BETWEEN BOAT OR KAYAK FOR A MANGROVE TOUR:**

Choose to explore the Mangrove in a covered ultra-quiet estuary boat or the more adventurous of us may want to experience the estuary and mangroves in an open-seat kayak. Visiting the island and navigating the canals of the reserve will afford great birding opportunities and great vistas. This area is well preserved and the calm waters of the canals allow exploration for wildlife. Traveling with our naturalist guide, we’ll look for caimans, sloths, white-face monkeys and much more! This afternoon enjoy the hotel swimming pool, beach, or the ocean. Our hotel offers an idyllic location near the forested headlands of Manuel Antonio National Park with spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. **Parador Hotel** B,L,D
**Wednesday, December 26 – Quepos / Monteverde**

After breakfast, we will depart the northern part of Costa Rica where Monteverde is located. En route we’ll stop to embark on a jungle cruise by boat up the Tarcoles River to admire the exuberant flora and fauna in the region, and search for the giant crocodiles that live in this river. At the end of the boat tour, lunch will be offered. We’ll continue north to Monteverde and check in at Hotel de Montaña Monteverde. *Hotel de Montaña Monteverde B, L,D*

**Thursday, December 27 – Monteverde**

Early our first morning, we visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, one of the most outstanding wildlife sanctuaries in Central America. In this enchanting forest, winds cause sheets of mist to envelope the reserve in a blanket of moisture. Many of the trees here are shrouded with moss and epiphytes, which give a magical feeling to the forest. This private reserve is home to the Resplendent Quetzal, considered the most spectacular bird of the Americas. Delight in the bromeliads, orchids, and tree ferns of this misty cloud forest alive with over 400 species of birds. After our hike in the Reserve, we stop at the Hummingbird Gallery, where we find several species of
hummingbirds attracted by feeders. In the afternoon we’ll visit a butterfly farm where butterflies can be observed mating, laying eggs or simply fluttering by. *Hotel de Montaña Monteverde* B,L,D

**Friday, December 28 – Monteverde**

Depart the hotel to enjoy a bird’s eye view of the forest canopy from a combination of suspended bridges and platforms that wind their way through primary forest. There is an optional zip line for who want a faster pace encounter with the rainforest canopy.

➤ **CHOICE BETWEEN VISIT TO BAT JUNGLE OR HORSEBACK RIDING**

In the afternoon we’ll have a choice between visiting the *Monteverde Bat Jungle* or taking a *Sunset Horseback Ride*.

Those opting for the Bat Jungle will learn about the diversity of bats, the abundance of bats, where bats roost, what bats eat (including such things as fruit, nectar, insects, frogs, fish, birds, lizards, and mice), bat wings compared with bird wings, echolocation, the fantastic faces of bats, vampire bats, and baby bats. The museum has more than 40 live bats of 7 species in a huge flight space (about 52 square meters) that is designed to look like a tropical cloud forest at night. You can watch bats visit the bat feeders for fruit and nectar all from inside of a Bat Habitat from behind a glass enclosed viewing area. Within the Bat Habitat you will hear the ultrasonic echolocation calls and social calls made by the bats flying within the Bat Jungle, picked up with a special microphone, transformed in a special "Bat Detector", and broadcast through loudspeakers in the bat visitor viewing area.
SUNSET RIDE WITH VIEWS OF THE GULF OF NICOYA

Those equestrians in our group can opt for a sunset ride. The three hour ride is with an experienced Costa Rican cowboy along little used back roads. You will pass by farms of coffee, sugar cane and bananas and have open views of the countryside and the Gulf of Nicoya. The scenery is wonderful and you will see much of the diverse plants of the area and with some luck birds and small animals.

Hotel de Montaña Monteverde  B, L

Saturday, December 29 – Monteverde / San José

Breakfast will be offered at the hotel. This day we will return to San José by the new road. On our return we will stop in Moravia known for its local handicrafts in wood, leather and pottery. Gather tonight for a farewell dinner.  Cariari Hotel  B, L, D

Sunday, December 30 – Monteverde / San José

After breakfast, there is a morning transfer to the international airport for your return flight home.  B
ACCOMMODATIONS

Cariari Hotel- San José

The Doubletree Cariari by Hilton - San José hotel is conveniently located only five minutes from Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO) and is a short drive from downtown San José, the centrally located capital city of beautiful Costa Rica. Built and vigorously maintained this way, our handsomely appointed San Jose, Costa Rica hotel features attractive fabrics, warm woodwork and local works of art. Mountain vistas or tropical pool views.

Parador Hotel

Perched high above the sweeping Central Pacific coastline on twelve acres of tropical rainforest once inhabited by the Quepoa Indians, Hotel Parador is a secluded luxury beach hotel adjacent to the stunning sheltered cove of Playa Biezanz and just minutes from Manuel Antonio National Park, the neighboring fishing village of Quepos, and the local airport. A multiple World Travel Awards recipient, Hotel Parador is distinguished by its commitment to sustainability, world-class amenities, European-inspired ambience and Costa Rican “Pura Vida” hospitality in an unparalleled natural setting teeming with wildlife.
**Hotel de Montaña Monteverde**

The Hotel Montaña de Monteverde is well situated in the Cerro Plano region, which lies between the small town of Santa Elena and the Monteverde Cloud Reserve. This simple but comfortable mountain lodge offers home-cooked meals, trail access and the use of a Jacuzzi and sauna. The lodge is adjacent to some 37 acres of private forest. Trails extend throughout the forest, offering up excellent mountain views and the chance to spot a variety of wildlife. The grounds of the hotel are expansive as well, and have breathtaking views of the Gulf of Nicoya in the distance. The sunsets – during which a fiery red sun sinks into the rolling Pacific Ocean – can be spectacular from here.

![Hotel de Montaña Monteverde](image.png)

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

This exclusive expedition is for the families of alumni and friends of Cornell Adult University. It is especially designed for families with children between the ages of 8 and 17 who are interested in nature and would enjoy exploring and learning about the vegetation and wildlife of some of Costa Rica’s finest national parks and reserves. Naturalist-led walks and creative activities provide an enriching introduction to Costa Rica’s natural history and cultural heritage. It helps to be enthusiastic about outdoor adventure, intellectually curious, and comfortable traveling as part of a group. Typically, the weather is hot and humid in the lowlands (high 80s), and spring-like in the highlands. While at the national parks and reserves, there is a daily program of nature exploration, guided rain forest walks and educational discussions. Travel is by motorcoach and boat with daily walks of up to two miles in length, sometimes over uneven terrain, at a leisurely pace suitable for nature study and field observation. We describe this trip as active to moderately active.