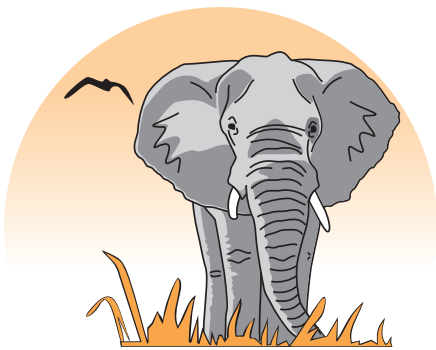


COSTA RICA



**INCREDIBLE
JOURNEYS**
TRAVEL INC.

COSTA RICA

Itinerary

Day 01 *April 02*

The group will depart Calgary on American Airlines. The flight goes via Dallas where they connect to San Jose, Costa Rica. The roughly 3 ½ hour flight gets you into San Jose mid evening. Upon arrival the group will be met and transferred to the hotel.

Day 02 *April 03*

After breakfast the group will gather together and go through an introduction to Costa Rican biodiversity with a visit to the Inbio Conservation System and Nature Interpretation Park.

That afternoon you will be given an orientation presentation on the conservation work you will be doing and the sustainable tourist practices the country has undertaken. This will be led by a local Costa Rican biologist who will also be your guide for the trip.

Day 03 *April 04*

Today you depart San Jose and travel to Poas Volcano National Park, one of the oldest and most famous parks in the country.

Later that day you will be treated to a National Team level soccer match. This promises to be a colourful and exciting event as you join the locals in cheering on their favourite teams.

Day 04 *April 05*

Today you travel to the south Caribbean side of Costa Rica and the Gandoca Refuge. Gandoca Beach is a black sand beach extending 5.5 miles from Monkey point to the Sixaola River which forms the border with Panama. The beach is a high energy beach with a medium to steep slope. Due to longshore currents, storm waves and high spring tides, the berm is poorly developed and the shape of the beach is constantly changing throughout the season. The beach is also partly covered by assorted debris, especially logs washed down the Sixaola River and rubbish from the banana plantations in the area.

Gandoca Beach serves as a nesting site for four species of Sea Turtle. Until around 1980 the Sea Turtle nesting population at Gandoca remained largely unknown. Turtle eggs were harvested by the small local population at levels that were probably sustainable. However, with the re-emergence of the Banana Companies and the improved road system in the area poaching became a serious threat to the Sea Turtles. When the sea turtle program first arrived at Gandoca beach in 1984, the poaching rate was estimated to be 100% of all nests laid per season, providing the turtles with no chance at all for reproduction. Locals from Talamanca would remove all the eggs from the beach and kill nesting females, utilizing turtle products for local consumption and sale on the black market.

The sea turtle program helped to establish the Gandoca/Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge in 1985 and since that time has been running the Sea Turtle Conservation Project. The aim was to conserve the nesting colonies through a collaborative process that would also contribute to an improvement in the quality of human life in Gandoca. In the early years Project staff patrolled the beach with the assistance of the Wildlife Authorities and the Gandoca community, keeping poachers away from the nesting turtles.

Poaching is now well under control and with the aid of volunteers such as yourselves considerable progress has been made in the conservation of the various species.

Days 05 to 07 *April 06 - 08*

Your next 3 days are involved will involve cleaning the beach of debris and building nesting areas along with tagging the mother turtles and collection of eggs for hatching.

Day 08 *April 09*

Time for a break from work. After breakfast you will travel over to the La Diosa Hotel. After checking in you will have a tour around Cahuita National Park and their turtle and coral reef protection project (this is part of the same conservation organization you have been working with in Gandoca). Afterwards you get to enjoy an afternoon on the beach for a little R & R.

Day 09 *April 10*

You depart the Caribbean today for a different ecological experience. You head to the La Tirimbina Rain Forest Reserve where on arrival you will check in at the lodge and immediately head off on a guided walk of the forest and also visit a nearby environmental NGO.

Day 10 *April 11*

Today you begin work side by side with students from the local high school in the reserve on a reforestation project. This will be a unique opportunity in that not only will you be assisting on reclaiming land for the cloud forest but also interacting with your Costa Rican peers and seeing how environmental education is a part of their every day lives

Time permitting you get a break at the end of the day to take a leisurely raft on the nearby Sarapiquí River. This float will allow a great opportunity to cool down after the high humidity in the forest.

Day 11 *April 12*

Today will be a unique educational day as you visit the University Earth. There you will be involved in a discussion on Neutral Carbon issues plus visit their dairy farm and biodigester. Late that afternoon you will get some time to relax at the pool.

Day 12 *April 13*

This morning you will visit a nearby banana plantation and packing plant. Then in the afternoon it is back to tree planting with the University's reforestation project.

Day 13 *April 14*

The morning is free to say goodbye to the friends you made at the schools and then you head back to San Jose for your last night in Costa Rica. There will be some time along the way for some last minute souvenir shopping before enjoying your farewell dinner.

Day 14 *April 15*

It will be an early departure to the International Airport at San Jose for the American Airlines flight to Dallas where again you connect onwards to Calgary.

Includes :

- Airfare from Calgary including all taxes
- All accommodation and meals
- All activities, park fees as described
- Conservation work and project costs as described
- Costa Rica Guide / Biologist throughout the trip
- All local transportation
- Unlimited medical insurance
- Departure tax

Does not include:

- Cancellation insurance (optional cost at \$118.00)
- Items of a personal nature

