



— Friends of the — **RAINFOREST**™

FotR Community Trip

WHEN: August 10th-17th, 2023

WHERE: *A tropical adventure through the heart of conservation in Costa Rica.*

“The land is one great wild, untidy, luxuriant hothouse made by nature for herself.”

- Charles Darwin

“An enormous wood spread out at our feet that reached down to the ocean: the tree-tops, hung about with lianas, and crowned with great bushes of flowers, spread out like a great carpet, the dark green of which seemed to gleam in contrast to the light. We were all the more impressed by this sight because it was the first time we had come across a mass of tropical vegetation... I can tell that I shall be very happy here and that such impressions will often cheer me in the future.”

- Alexander von Humboldt

In William Wordsworth’s 1798 poem *“The Tables Turned”* he romanticized that much can be learned with a simple walk in the woods, claiming all should just *“let Nature be your teacher”*. Well, we agree, and we have found the perfect tropical classroom straddling the mist-laden continental divide in beautiful Costa Rica; The [Children’s Eternal Rainforest](#). Few earthly habitats have inspired more awe or longer lasting impressions than tropical rainforests. For millennia humans have carved out their existence among the buttresses, lianas, and paddle-shaped leaves of their tropical cradles. Unfortunately for these forests, our societal growth and tools over the past 100 years have been too efficient and our use of rainforests has evolved into over-exploitation. *Come to Costa Rica*. You’ll see everything from the isthmus’ fiery volcanic origin, experience the functions and hidden treasures of distinct forest habitats, and witness the sustainable solutions we’ve rushed in place to save Costa Rica’s extensive protected areas. We will provide you with a unique educational experience providing unforgettable lessons on biodiversity and conservation, and wrap them in the [cultural and historical tapestry](#) of Costa Rica, Monteverde, and [The Children’s Eternal Rainforest \(CER\)](#).

What follows is a more specific outline of your memorable Costa Rican adventure. It is important to frequently refer to this document as it is the schedule from which we will base the timing of our departures for meals, activities etc. Although the sites and most activities are fixed, specific times will most likely change from day to day given the vagaries of travel and tourism. Therefore, it is customary for us to have a brief meeting just before, or just after, meals each day in order to organize the day’s activities, departure times, and specific information regarding what you will or will not need. Additionally, it will be important for everyone to be ready to go at the agreed upon times in order for the trip to run smoothly.

Unless otherwise noted (\$), all items and meals outlined below are included as part of your package.

(Day 1) Thurs. Aug.10th

Today you will arrive just after midday in San Jose (SJO airport), where you will be met by Giuliano, your naturalist guide for the duration of your trip, and Jeff the owner of Natural Solutions. Once accounted for and on the bus, we'll waste no time and get on the road to our first destination, the [Pocosol Station](#) of the CER. Our drive north out of the Central Valley will take us over the Tilaran mountains into the foothills of the Atlantic slope. En route you will appreciate the differences between the vegetation patterns as we rise and fall in altitude. We'll stop for a quick snack/lunch, then continue to La Tigra where we switch to 4x4 pick-up trucks to travel the final 45 minutes to the field station. Soon after checking into our rooms, dinner will probably be ready, and we'll eat together at the dining hall. After dinner Jeff, Maggie, and Giuliano will lead an orientation to the CER and some of the programs we run for the FotR family of supporters. **(Overnight: Pocosol - Lunch, Dinner included)**



(Day 2) Fri. Aug. 11th Dawn will arrive with a symphony of birdsong, and possibly howler monkey calls. Bird -watching from the dining hall terrace allows you to enjoy fresh hot coffee while checking off species. We will have two full days to explore the trails and experience full immersion in the rainforest with all its incredible biodiversity. Along the various trails you will find a towering waterfall, and bubbling mud pots revealing the presence of ongoing geothermal activity in the region. We'll deploy camera traps to discover what walks the trails when we are not out and about. Night hikes will introduce us to a multitude of nocturnal creatures, including a large number of frogs, insects, snakes, and mammals we would never see by day. During the day we typically see agouti, Morpho and many other kinds of butterflies, leafcutter ants, peccary, monkeys, and dozens of bird species (think toucans, parrots, hummingbirds – all the tropical lovelies!). The Children's Eternal Rainforest, at 55,000+ acres, is the heart of rainforest conservation in Costa Rica and the inspiration for all we do. **(Overnight: Pocosol, B, L, D)**

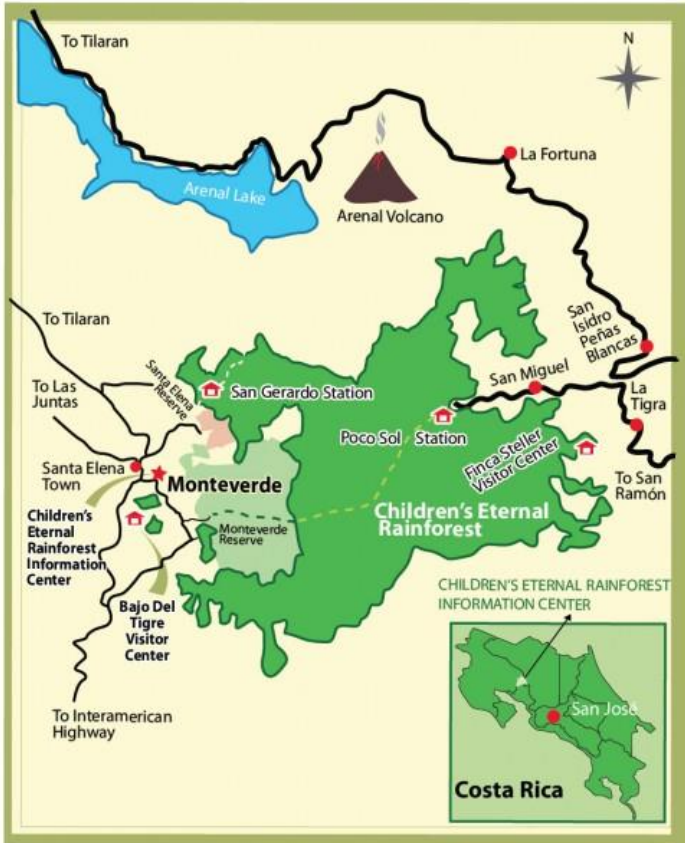


(Day 3) Sat. Aug. 12th

Our second full day at Pocosol is basically designed to do what was left undone from the day before. Both Jeff and Giuliano are available to lead natural history walks, or even natural history 'sits' (!) if you would like to admire what the forest offers from a stationary balcony, terrace, trail, or grassy patch by the lagoon. An additional highlight of this trip will come from the stories shared by its leaders and participants stemming from their decades of tourism, education, and conservation experiences in and around the CER, Monteverde, Costa Rica, and beyond. We will likely make additional time before and after our dinners this week to hear and participate in such conversations.



Left to right: Pocosol Field Station, the lake at Pocosol, and an arboreal rodent (*Nyctomys* sp.) from one of our night hikes!



(Day 4) Sun. Aug. 13th This morning is your last chance to bird watch from the dining porch. After breakfast we will once again climb aboard the 4x4s to head down the mountain road and rejoin our bus. Before heading towards Arenal we'll visit a nearby farm run by the family of one of the CER's guards, [Finca La Esperanza](#) and is home to [a special artisanal jewelry maker](#). They will provide us ample snacks and samples of what they grow (coffee and chocolate are the favorites!). **(Optional Rafting Trip with Jacamar - \$)**. Afterwards, we'll head towards La Fortuna and Arenal volcano). **Time permitting**, we'll give you some time to stroll around this small agricultural community that bet big on tourism after the volcano roared back to life in 1969 and remained active until about 2010. Time permitting, we can hike old [lava fields on Arenal Volcano](#). The transition between forest vegetation and cooled lava is surprisingly abrupt and the view across the lake from the flanks of the volcano is



stunning. It would be a good place for 'lunch' (*we'll probably just carry some sandwiches and fruit given how much La Esperanza feeds us*). The water that constitutes this man-made body of water is significant as it is used to produce nearly 40% (today about 15%) of the country's electricity, irrigate crops in the driest region of the country, and much of its source can be traced back to the CER. Our hope is to give you some down time first at the hotel ([Sueno Dorado](#)), but in the early evening we'll get everyone over to Baldi Thermal Springs for an extra-special soak. While lava may not be pouring out the top of the volcano, it actively heats underground aquifers and rivers. We'll eat dinner first, then give everyone a couple of hours to fully unwind among the many thermal pools. **(Overnight: Sueno Dorado, B, L, D)**

(Day 5) Mon. Aug. 14th After breakfast, our bus will ferry us to, well ... the ferry that will take us across Lake Arenal towards Monteverde. Our 3+ hour trip (straightest route, we promise!) will take us through the countryside and sleepy little communities as we combine aquatic and terrestrial transportation to reach our next destination, Monteverde. The

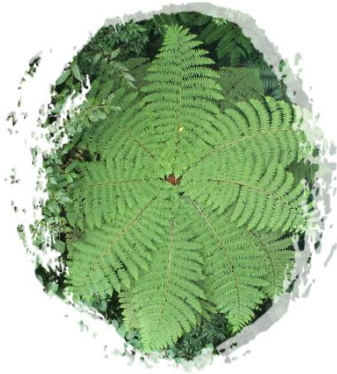


marvelous story of the Children's Eternal Rainforest is only enhanced when one understands the importance of Monteverde's history and its role establishing Costa Rica as a conservation and tourism leader. Fortunately for us, our guide Giuliano Salazar is a long-time resident of Monteverde! Our goal is to be there in time for lunch, a visit to the local 27 hectare section of the CER on the upper reaches of the Pacific slope: [Bajo del Tigre](#) (a unique ecosystem in its own right). Afterwards we'll visit the historic

Monteverde Cheese Factory for, well – the world's best ice cream, and give you some time to explore 'downtown' Monteverde. We suggest grabbing a cup of coffee at one of the local cafes, and a visit to the women's artisan's cooperative CASEM is a must for those looking for locally made mementos and souvenirs. We'll have dinner at a nearby restaurant and we'll spend the night at [Cabinas Capulin](#) (a family-owned local farm since 1954!).

(Overnight: Capulin- B, L, D)

(Day 6) Tues. Aug 15th

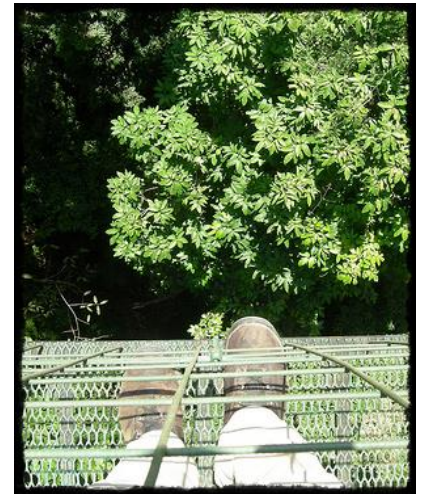


Again, up with the birds. Grab some coffee, bring your binoculars, and go greet the morning from your porch or scenic garden before breakfast. Today is open and flexible for individual or small group exploration of the Monteverde area (**\$**). Giuliano and the local staff will help you plan our visits to the places you want to see most, whether it's the [orchid garden](#), [a cloudforest reserve](#), [zip-lining or hiking through the cloud forest canopy](#), checking out the [Bat Jungle](#), the [Serpentarium](#), or the [Ranario](#). There is more to see than time to do it all (!) but some of you have been here before and know what you missed last time. The rest of you will just have to choose wisely or plan on returning! Since we'll all be out and about, going our own ways, your lunch and dinner today will also be open (**\$**), wherever you choose. That said, Maggie and Giuliano may be able to organize a group seating at one of the many local restaurants. Admission fees (**\$**)

and cab fares (if needed) will also be your own responsibility but none of these activities are very expensive, with zip-lining the highest at \$65 or so and the rest much less. [Some locations offer a combination](#) of activities and may also offer free transportation. Also keep in mind that the bus is available to make a few runs here and there – but cannot act as a continual shuttle. Giuliano is also available if you would like a visit to a natural reserve or trail to be guided by THE local expert.

(Overnight: Capulin, B)

(Day 7) Wed. Aug. 16th Today you will have one final morning in Monteverde, and much like yesterday it is open to do as you see fit (**\$**), however we'll want to be on the road by 9:30-10:00 am as we head towards the Central Pacific coast. One of our favorite activities is to take a leisurely boat tour of the Tarcoles River with [one of the local operators](#) (where we'll also have lunch). The river and mangrove boat tour will give us the opportunity to explore more habitat types and maybe see some new and exciting species like the Scarlet Macaw or American Crocodile. For our final night we'll use the boutique [Studio Hotel](#) which actually doubles as the owner's private art gallery that promotes some of Costa Rica's most well-known artists!



(Overnight: Adventure Inn, B, D)

(Day 8) Thurs. Aug. 17th Sadly, this is the day we say goodbye. After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel we'll hop onto the bus one last time (8:30) for our transfer to the airport (flight at mid-day).

We are sincerely grateful you decided to travel with us to experience first-hand why Costa Rica embodies the global conservation movement and how the beauty and magic of the Children's Eternal Rainforest represents its heart and soul. For over 20 years the [Friends of the Rainforest](#) has helped the Monteverde Conservation League protect this block of rainforest, a fundamental link in Costa Rica's conservation network. By joining us on our trips, your participation helps us ensure that future generations will always have this rainforest to return to and count on to anchor their own conservation programs.

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Costa Rica
Reconnecting people with nature

** Total cost for this trip is managed through the FotR as it will probably include other charges (e.g., airfare which is not included in this package, nor any costs incurred to and from the SJO airport outside the dates of this itinerary). Included in Costa Rican portion of the trip are all items included in the itinerary above unless otherwise noted (**\$**): lodging in double, triple, or quadruple occupancy rooms (Pocosol has 4-6 person rooms with double, and bunk-beds); domestic transportation; meals; educational and cultural activities; the services of tropical ecologists @ Pocosol; use of research equipment; and a bilingual naturalist guide throughout the trip. All travelers should complete the registration information once their deposit has been paid. Registration forms can be collected and organized through FotR. With any trip there will likely be minor, specific modifications of the itinerary as the trip progresses (e.g. timing and order of daily activities, dining locations, departure/arrival times, etc). These modifications are designed to improve the flow and comfort of the tour based on the changing needs of the group, or due to situations that arise beyond our control. Such decisions will be made by the trip leader (e.g., Maggie from FotR) in consultation with the driver and guide. NSCR and FotR strive to provide customers with a high-quality tour at a reasonable cost. Furthermore, all efforts are made to accommodate the safety and comfort of travelers at all time while in Costa Rica. Therefore, the group leader as well as any representative of Natural Solutions Costa Rica S.A., or Friends of the Rainforest, cannot accept responsibility, nor be held accountable or liable for any temporal or material loss, personal injury, or even death, that result from accident, third party actions, inclement weather, natural disasters, poor trail or road conditions, or any greater force or other circumstances beyond their direct control. The travel package rate only covers the items included in the itinerary and for the time stated. Any additional expenses are the responsibility of the traveler. It is the responsibility of each traveler to monitor his or her physical abilities and limits to determine whether or not their participation in particular activities is appropriate. Although the majority of the walking on this tour will be of easy to moderate in difficulty, we may be walking for extended distances or lengths of time and trail conditions may not always be favorable. All travelers should have their own medical or health insurance prior to travel.*

PAYMENT OF THE DEPOSIT OR FULL COST FOR THIS TOUR INDICATES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS.



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