

2012-2013 STUDENT ADVENTURE IN COSTA RICA
7D/6N ITINERARY: TURRIALBA & LIMON PROVINCE

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Travel beyond the usual tourist areas to explore the historic and cultural eastern regions of Costa Rica. As pioneers in Sustainable Tourism, Costa Rica Tours, Ltd. has developed authentic cultural activities that are not possible on other tours.

DAY	ACTIVITIES
<p>Day 1 (D)</p>	<p>Your travel adventure begins with your arrival in San Jose, in the center of Costa Rica. A private A/C motor coach will transfer you to Guayabo Lodge in the mountain town of Santa Cruz de Turrialba, about 90 minutes east of San Jose. On your transfer, your guide will give an overview of Costa Rica, its government, education and daily life.</p> <p>On the way, you will have a chance to view the urban area of San Jose and the city of Cartago, the first capital of Costa Rica. You will stop to view the Basilica de Los Angeles, dedicated to the patron saint of Costa Rica.</p> <p>Dinner and Orientation Session at Guayabo Lodge. Overnight at Guayabo Lodge</p>
<p>Day 2 (B,L,D)</p>	<div data-bbox="272 1350 630 1627" data-label="Image"> An aerial photograph of the Guayabo National Monument, showing ancient stone ruins and mounds surrounded by dense green rainforest. </div> <p><u>Guayabo National Monument: Rainforest & Archaeological Ruins</u></p> <p>In the morning, you have a moderate hike in the rainforest at Guayabo National Monument, the most important archaeological site of Costa Rica, dating back over 3000 years. You will feel like “Indiana Jones” discovering the ancient ruins of this lost civilization in the rainforest.</p> <p>Guayabo National Monument hides many mysteries that are being discovered little by little. Some of the structures you can see include entryways (stone roads), mounds and dwelling foundations, tombs, aqueducts and petroglyphs. Your naturalist guide will also explain various features of the rainforest.</p>



Community Service Project

In the afternoon, you will visit the elementary school of Santa Cruz to performed a **community service project**.

Joint school projects are a good opportunity to interact with the teachers and students and practice the Spanish language. In March 2010, students of Countryside Montessori High

School painted a mural in one of the classrooms (see photo).

Everyone will enjoy a mid-afternoon snack and the local students will present **folk dances** of Costa Rica for your group.

After dinner at Guayabo Lodge you will have a presentation by a resident biologist of **CATIE** (Center for Research and Higher Education on Tropical Agriculture) about your activities there the next day.

Overnight at Guayabo Lodge

Day 3 (B,L,D)

CATIE: (Center for Research and Education on Tropical Agriculture)

CATIE was founded in the 1940's with financial and technical assistance of the U.S. government during the Roosevelt Administration, and continued to receive financial assistance over the next 60 years. Its mission has been to improve the economic and health conditions of Latin America and the Caribbean through improved agriculture. They have a strong track record of corporate social responsibility and a clear commitment to rural families who live in member countries.

CATIE is considered the leading hemispheric research and higher education institution in the fields of agriculture, agro forestry and natural resource management. At its headquarters in Turrialba, they offer joint doctoral degrees and have cooperative agreements with some of the best universities in the world. CATIE graduates are in leadership positions in national and international institutions. In research, they work side-by-side with prestigious institutes in locations throughout the world.

Bird Monitoring Project

Your first activity in the morning will be to participate in CATIE's unique **Bird Monitoring Project** in this best birding venue in the region. The data collected by the BMP will be critical to understanding changes in bird populations over the long-term. Similarly, it will also be useful in understanding differences in bird communities with respect to different land uses and in assessing their importance in the conservation of species associated with different kinds of tree cover.

Mist nets are used to capture birds in six zones of different land use on the CATIE property. In this hands-on activity, students will record data on the weight, fat content, wing length, molt patterns, and possibly age, sex, and reproductive condition of the captured birds.



Catie Garden

Next, you will visit the **CATIE Garden** to see their world-renowned tropical fruit trees and useful plants. This biologist-led tour will provide the students with background knowledge which will enrich the remainder of their activities in Costa Rica.

Tortilla Lesson



In the late morning, you will transfer to Sitios Angustura, a rustic restaurant near CATIE. There you will work alongside the rural women in the restaurant's kitchen as they give a hands-on **demonstration in making tortillas** for your typical lunch.

Community Service: CATIE Reforestation Project

You will return to CATIE to contribute **community service** by participating in the "*Revive a Rainforest Project*" in partnership with the National Resources Defense Council of the U.S. Students will plant trees to create a bio-corridor that will connect two large biosphere reserves. The corridor will allow wildlife to roam freely amidst the rivers and streams, and the new forest should attract some of the country's most endearing and endangered species, including spider monkeys and blue and gold macaws.



The forest will also serve as a demonstration project for farmers to learn the basics of tree planting, so they can plant even more trees on their own land to conserve soil from erosion. And, as the forest grows, the trees will serve another important purpose -- "vacuuming" harmful carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it away.

Before leaving CATIE, you will return to view the mist nets with a CATIE biologist to collect some of the several species of bats present in the area. This opportunity to see these remarkable creatures up close, and it often is a highlight of the day.

Dinner at Guayabo Lodge.

Costa Rican Chocolate Lesson

After dinner, you will have a hands-on demonstration to learn **how chocolate is made** from the seeds of the cacao fruit, and will have a delicious dessert evening snack.

Day 4 (B,L,D)

Veragua Rainforest Park

After breakfast you will depart for the **Veragua Rainforest Research and Adventure Park** near the city of Limon on the Caribbean Coast. On the way you will stop in the town of Siquirres to have lunch and to shop at a **local grocery store** for typical snacks and coffee to bring home as gifts.

Veragua Rainforest Research and Adventure Park (www.veraugarainforest.com) has world-class facilities, astonishing natural beauty, and a commitment to conservation and scientific research. It provides a complete, exciting and educational Costa Rican rainforest experience. The park is located on a 1300-hectar (approximately 4000 acre) private reserve surrounded completely by the rainforest.

After settling into your student dorms you will be introduced to the naturalist guide and the biologist who will work with you during your stay. Your afternoon activities will include:

- The set-up of butterfly and beetle traps which you will examine on the next day.
- A tram ride through the rainforest canopy
- A walk along the Trail of the Giants (trees) through the primary rainforest to Puma Waterfall

After dinner, your naturalist guide and a researcher will lead a **night hike in the rainforest** especially arranged for our student tours. You will look for owls and other nocturnal animals. Afterwards, you will view the many species of insects on a night screen.

Overnight at Veragua Rainforest Center in student housing.



Day 5 (B,L,D)



After breakfast you will spend the morning at Veragua Rainforest Center in a variety of activities:

Canopy / zipline Tour

The first is an exciting **Canopy Tour** (a unique Costa Rican invention). This is a sport adventure, not a nature tour. Veragua Rainforest, in alliance with [The Original Canopy Tour®](#), offers visitors the opportunity to take this journey and appreciate the views of La Amistad International Park and Chirripó Reserve in a unique and unforgettable fashion. On this tour, you cross the canopy of the rainforest on ziplines to 9 platforms at approximately 150 feet above the forest floor.

You will also tour:

- the largest indoor nocturnal frog exhibit in the world
- a butterfly garden
- a reptile vivarium
- a hummingbird garden
- Rainforest Research Station



You will examine the **butterfly traps** you set the previous day to identify the insects collected and to release the butterflies.

After dinner your guides will lead you on an **evening frog hike** looking for some of Costa Rica's colorful species.

Overnight at Veragua Rainforest Center in student housing.

Day 6 (B,L,D)

Traditional Farm



After breakfast, you have a tour of a **Traditional Farm** on a 40-hectar macadamia plantation in Siquirres. The main tour will begin in the macadamia nursery. Here staff will explain how macadamia, as well as sugarcane and ornamental plants are grown using sustainable agricultural practices. Afterwards, you will visit the macadamia processing plant where you'll be able to see the steps taken after the nuts arrive at the plant. You will have a chance to ride in and even drive a traditional Costa Rican ox cart.

You will see their authentic and fully operational 150-year-old sugar cane press (*trapiche*), an important artifact in Costa Rican culture. You will be able to see and participate in the processing which begins with the extraction of the juice from the sugar cane to make the popular *Tapas de Dulce*, used for traditional beverages and candy.

Also, you will visit a small coffee plantation where staff will explain some important facts about coffee and how it is grown. The farm is run as a sustainable farm to the extent possible, and everything is used (even the bad nuts) to create bio-diesel fuel for all the vehicles on the farm. You will have a typical Costa Rican lunch at the farm.



Heliconias del Caribe

Next, you will transfer to the town of Guapiles where you will visit **Heliconias del Caribe**, a family-owned and managed company dedicated to growing and exporting exquisite tropical flowers and plants since 1990. The farm has a production area of 74 acres that produces a total of 150 varieties of flowers. This geographical region boasts the ideal climate for year-round cultivation of high quality tropical floral products.

During your walk through the plantation you will see the entire process, which starts with soil preparation and finishes with the cutting and transporting of the flowers to the packing plant. Inside the packing plant you can see every step - from when the flowers arrive from the fields all the way through to the packing process for shipment to many garden shops in the United States and neighboring countries.



They have developed their farm in an environmental-friendly manner, Seventy percent of the land is in production, and is extensively covered by shade trees to provide habitat for the local fauna, mainly birds and small animals.

Crafts Shopping

On your transfer to San Jose, you will stop in the **crafts town of Moravia** (east of San Jose) where you can buy reasonably priced gifts of leather, ceramics, wood, and metal, and the painted ox carts of all sizes that are the symbol of Costa Rica.

Dinner & overnight at Las Orquideas Hotel in Alajuela.

Day 7 (B)	In the morning, you may can enjoy a dip in the hotel pool or walk the trails on the grounds before your private transfer by motor coach to the San Jose Airport.
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LAND TOUR COST

\$1895.00 per passenger

INCLUDED: All 17 meals, 6 nights accommodations, airport and ground transportation, group travel insurance, airport departure tax, gratuities (housekeeping, porters, CR guide & driver and local guides), one FREE faculty land package with a minimum of 12 paying passengers.

Non-included Expenses: International airfare and community service donation (\$20 + school supplies)

NOTE: We can arrange group air at an additional cost for the land + air package.

The tour may also be enriched with a choice of optional one day extensions.

Additional Cost per optional extension day: Approximately \$200 per person per day depending upon activities selected, the size of your group, and your selected dates for travel.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION DAYS

I. **Caribbean Coast** (Between Days 5 and 6 above, moving departure to Day 8)



At 7:30am, you will transfer to the Caribbean Coast. Your first activity will be a tour of **Aviarios del Caribe**, the only sloth refuge and rehabilitation center in the world.

In addition to the research they conduct into this little-understood creature, Aviarios del Caribe has the long-term goal of rehabilitating as many sloths as possible. You will see the sloth babies being raised and prepared for rehabilitation into the wild. Their 20-minute video explains the evolution of the sloth and its distinct species. There are about 40 sloths on the refuge grounds, including the world-famous "Buttercup" (photo above) who arrived as the first sloth orphan when only three months old in 1992.



You will also take a **guided canoe trip** on the Estrella River. The lagoons are a haven for monkeys, sloths, caimans, river otters, river turtles, as well as more than 300 bird species.



Afterwards, you will continue south along the coast to Cahuita. You will have a guided tour of **Cahuita National Park** where you may spot monkeys and other wildlife in the middle of the abundant and colorful flora. The rest of the afternoon, you can enjoy the white sand beach and the calm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Dinner and overnight at a local hotel.

2. **San Jose Area** (Replaces Day 7 with departure on Day 8)

Poas Volcano Tour and **San Jose Museums** or **Tropical Bird Rehabilitation Center**

Select from among a variety of activities in the San Jose Area:



+ **Poas Volcano Tour** - You will walk to its rim and look into the 1.5 km wide steaming crater, the largest in the world. Afterwards, you will learn about the volcano at the on-site museum.

+ **San Jose City Tour** with Museums (National Museum or National Theater and Gold Museum or Jade Museum, featuring the best collections of Pre-Colombian artifacts in Central America.



+ **Zoo Ave**

Rehabilitation Center for tropical birds.

They are considered to have the most successful rescue and rehabilitation project for birds, reptiles, and mammals in Costa Rica. Zoo Ave is one of only two zoos in the world to display resplendent quetzals, considered the most beautiful bird in the world. www.zooave.org

ABOUT COSTA RICA TOURS, LTD.

COSTA RICA TOURS, LTD., founded in 1998, specializes exclusively in Costa Rica and Panama. More than just vacation trips, our tours are "educational adventures" enjoyed by passengers of all ages. Costa Rica Tours, Ltd. annually schedules 8 open-enrollment group tours in Costa Rica and in Panama, and also customizes private tours throughout the year for self-formed-groups on our clients' preferred dates.

The company was created to contribute to the continued development of Costa Rica in which owner Sandra Feldman has participated for over 40 years. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer for two years in Costa Rica in the 1960's, and continued her involvement as an educator and specialist in organizational and community development throughout Latin America (and Asia) from 1968-1997. She has extensive knowledge of all regions of Costa Rica and Panama, and is involved in the design of all open-enrollment and customized group tours. She is able to create innovative and unique tours because of her long-term collaboration with individuals and organizations in both countries. Costa Rica Tours, Ltd. is recognized as a pioneer in Sustainable Tourism in the lesser-traveled regions of the country.

In May 2007, the Charlotte, NC local chapter of the National Association for Women Business Owners (NAWBO) awarded Sandra the 2007 Business Owner of The Year. *The Charlotte Observer* on August 17, 2011 had a feature article about Costa Rica Tours, Ltd. and Sandra Feldman. You can view it at:

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/08/17/2523545/shes-got-costa-rica-on-her-mind.html#storylink=misearch>

We have customized tours for family and friendship groups, non-profit organizations, schools and universities, including The Charlotte World Affairs Council, WTVI Educational Television, Charlotte Country Day School, Countryside Montessori High School, Kent State University (3 tours), Iowa State University, The Art Institutes of Dallas and The Art Institute of Houston.

Over the past 12 years, Costa Rica Tours, Ltd. has grown with the collaboration of four CRT Associates (in Atlanta, Charlotte, Houston and Iowa/Panama) who collaborate in the design, marketing and escorting of our annual group and private tours. Our office staff includes a Tour Designer, a Financial & Technical Specialist, and a Marketing & Data Management assistant.