

# The Costa Rica Caribbean Experience

Adventure and Eco-travel: the Pura  
Vida Way!

March 10-18, 2012

- ▶ Tropical beaches on the Caribbean
- ▶ White water rafting in jungle (Pacuare River - Class III-IV Rapids)
- ▶ 'Fly' over the rainforest on Zipline Jungle Tour
- ▶ Culturally and ecologically friendly rainforest guided treks.
- ▶ Two nights on an ecological farm, home to untouched rainforest and amazing waterfalls
- ▶ Milk cows, collect eggs, and fish Tilapia for dinner
- ▶ Horseback Riding!
- ▶ Explore Tortuguero National Park, its natural canals and its wildlife of birds, crocodiles, monkeys and more - with an optional turtle nesting tour!
- ▶ Feel the Earthy vibe of Puerto Viejo, a happening Caribbean haven.
- ▶ Local guides and tours ensure that the indigenous communities benefit from tourism revenues and protect the environment.
- ▶ Caribbean cooking class!
- ▶ Most of the meals included in price



EVERYTHING to the left is included in our trip. These adventures are paid for already – including a swim in the pool above – just imagine that!

You may, but you do not need to spend another dollar on an adventure – it's all priced into our packaged tour.

The 8-night **Costa Rica Caribbean Experience** offers a diverse adventure that combines the Caribbean Highlands of Costa Rica – with its breathtaking tropical beaches. It begins by sampling some of the color that San Jose, the nation’s vibrant capital has to offer; continues with a whitewater rafting run down to the Caribbean Lowlands, with their tropical beaches, unique flora and fauna, active nightlife, and indigenous culture; continues with a visit to Tortuguero National Park, with its majestic jungle canals and the late-night ritual of endangered turtle nesting on its beach; and it ends in the highlands, with their lush mountainous rainforest, waterfalls, freshwater pools and serenity - spending the time based at a cool eco-farm on the slopes of Volcan Turrialba.



*Chilling in the natural pools of Finca Rio-Perla  
(pic by [Matt Miller](#))*

This complete tour package provides a diverse and exciting adventure-experience brimming with activities (including chill time), all in a short but long week, and all in the beautiful and peaceful paradise called Costa Rica. It offers a mosaic for all your senses, focusing on the contrast between the highlands and the lowlands-coast. So come and spend an amazing week in the Costa Rican Caribbean!

We take the environment seriously, and plan our trips in accordance with the guidelines of eco-tourism: minimizing environmental damage through low impact travel, supporting local environmental projects and indigenous communities, and learning about the culture and natural environment of the places visited.

As we say in Costa Rica, Pura Vida!

The Costa Rica Caribbean Experience

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# Trip itinerary

## Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>:

Welcome to Costa Rica!

You will be greeted at the San Jose Jaun Santamaria International Airport (SJO) and brought back to the hotel, where you will be able to rest up from your trip before exploring downtown San Jose and going out for dinner – while getting to meet your group-mates!

It is Saturday night, and if you are up to it, you can check out the Latino vibe of the local nightlife.

Accommodation: San Jose hotel



*The National Theater in downtown San Jose!*

## Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>:

Today we will be picked up early in the morning to go on a day long [whitewater rafting adventure](#) down the Pacuare River, known as one of the top five rafting rivers in the world for its scenery and rapids (Class III-IV). We will be traveling to the Caribbean Highlands, where the trip begins – the run is 32 km long, taking 3-1/2 to 5 hours - depending on water level.

A big breakfast and hearty lunch will be served at the company's operation center before and after the trip. When we are done, it's time to be drive to Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean Coast.



*Tour participants rafting on the Pacuare River – what an experience!*

**Puerto Viejo** is one of the most happening places in Costa Rica - a place where surfers, travelers, backpackers and the counter-culture crowd blend with the local Latino, Afro-Caribbean and Bribri indigenous cultures, with its pristine coastline acting as a backdrop. Find more information about the town here: [www.puertoviejoweb.com](http://www.puertoviejoweb.com).

In Puerto Viejo, you will be staying in a comfortable mid-level hotel, such as the elegant [Banana Azul](#), or the [Shawandha](#).

After checking in to our hotel, we will be heading out to eat dinner at one of the many fine restaurants Puerto Viejo has to offer. Later, we can enjoy live Reggae music with mojitos, daiquiris or fresh Pina Colada!

Accommodation: Banana Azul or Shawandha

## Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup>:

Good morning!

In the open time this morning there will be some options suggested, but really, it is up to you to decide. Rent bicycles and tour the beaches, take a surfing lesson, go to the local butterfly or botanical gardens, visit a local jungle animal rescue center, or just spend the morning on the beach.

Cruiser bikes are one of the best ways to get around the Caribbean (Highly recommended)! Cruise down the road from Puerto Viejo towards Manzanillo, checking out the different beaches and towns along the way. Starting at \$4 a day, there are many bike rental shops around town.

Head south to visit the highly recommended [Jaguar Rescue Center](#), a unique [animal rescue center](#), where you will learn about (and hold!) some of the amazing animals (including monkeys) that call this area home. Tours of the center start only at 9:30 and at 11:30 am – (the later tour will conflict with the zipline adventure).



*Tour participant with young  
howler monkey at the Jungle  
Rescue Center*

### Some other morning options:

- Botanical Gardens: A short walk from the center of Puerto Viejo to the black beach.
- Surfing Lessons on the coast that is an international Mecca for surfers!

We will be meeting back at the hotel in the early afternoon, and take a short ride up the mountains to the [Indigenous BriBri Tribal Area](#). There we will learn about the history of the native peoples of Costa Rica, medicinal plants used by the BriBri, as well as the history and production of chocolate. Yes, some of the best organic chocolate one can ever taste will be sampled!



*Traditional chocolate making at the BriBri reservation*

Upon our return to Puerto Viejo, we will enjoy a late afternoon/sunset swim along the magnificent **Punta Uva beach** south of town- thought by many as the most beautiful beach in Costa Rica!

### After our swim it is time to learn to prepare our dinner – Caribbean style!

**We will take a Caribbean cooking lesson** Using fruits and veggies typical to Coastal Talamanca, you'll learn to cook in the traditional Caribbean way, such as patacones, batidos, fish or chicken in Caribbean sauce, etc. This is also an opportunity to spend some time with one of the matriarchs from the local community. Here the Afro-Caribbean folks speak what some call "Patios" some call a local dialect of English. After this we will all sit down to eat a unique and memorable dinner!



*Punta Uva Beach*

At night we are free to explore the town— all while taking in the special and laid back ambiance of Puerto Viejo. Later, we may hit one of the bars, clubs, or live music venues that dot the town...

Accommodation: [Banana Azul](#) or [Shawandha](#)

## Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>:

The early wake up this morning will take us on a half day hike in the amazing [Gandoca Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge](#) – one of the best trips for wildlife viewing in all of Costa Rica. The hike will take us on some of the Refuge’s inner trails, or to explore the bluffs and tiny hidden beaches along the coast. It will include a walk through the primary rainforest to encounter many of its colorful inhabitants and exquisite bird watching with the local naturalist, Tino. This tour is provided by [ATEC](#), a local nonprofit that helps promote culturally and ecologically sound tourism and small-scale, locally owned and responsible businesses in the area.



*Hiking the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge*

After the walk we can lunch at [Maxi’s Restaurant](#), considered by many to be the best seafood restaurant in the Caribbean (with many veggie friendly options!). Fresh food is served here Caribbean style with a modern twist.

After lunch, we will stay to enjoy the breathtaking and tranquil beaches of Manzanillo (to soothe our bodies from all that hiking!), and stay there until the sunset.

For those interested, snorkeling is available in some of the best tropical reefs Costa Rica has to offer – with the local [Aquamor Marine Adventure Center](#).

After sunset we will return to Puerto Viejo for our last night out in this vibrant village!

Accommodation: Banana Azul or Shawandha

## Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>:

**Zip Line Adventure:** This morning we will head out on an amazing [Jungle Canopy Tour](#), where we will literally fly through the forest by zipline - a really memorable experience!

After lunch we will say farewell to Puerto Viejo and take a ride up the coast to the port of Limon, where we



*Tour participants on the Jungle Canopy Tour*

take a boat ride up the inner coastal canal, bringing us to the tiny island village of Tortuguero. In Tortuguero we will check into to the [Evergreen Lodge](#) , with its comfortable rooms surrounded by lush vegetation- and enjoy a welcome cocktail!

This evening you will have free time to chill in the hotel, and enjoy the jungle sounds or a swim in the pool – as well as a buffet dinner provided by the hotel.

Accommodation: Evergreen lodge



*The Evergreen Lodge, Tortuguero*

*The Tortuguero National Park is one of the most varied parks in Costa Rica. It boasts high rainforests, marshy lands, long stretches of beach, and wide open canals perfect for crocodile spotting. It is also one of the most important breeding grounds for the Green Sea Turtle. The wildlife here is rich and diverse with unusually large populations of monkeys, birds, and fish.*

*The beaches around Tortuguero are key nesting sites for many of the world's most endangered species of sea turtles. The small village, which can be reached only by boat or airplane, is sustained in large part by eco-tourism.*

## Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>:

**Today starts early - 5:30am!**

This is a day of jungle exploration in the Tortuguero National Park!

**Early Morning Boat Tour:** In the early hours of the morning you will be woken up by a loud noise. What you will hear is not a trumpet or a big bell, but a natural alarm called the Howler Monkey! Drink some coffee and get ready for a very early boat ride. This is the best time to



*Tortuguero national park*

find wildlife along the majestic canals while admiring the beauty that is the Tortuguero National Park . Among the common species of fauna to be found are the howler, white-faced Capuchon and Spider monkeys; crocodiles; iguanas; and the blue heron, aningas, kingfishers and other type of birds. If we look closely, we may see a manatee or the Gaspar fish (considered a living fossil).

**Mid-morning walk:** A breakfast buffet will be served upon our return. We will briefly rest before heading up Tortuguero Hill on a guided walk.

***Tortuguero Hill** is the highest point on the Caribbean side of the country (approximately 119 meters). It is located 10 minutes from the main village just outside a small community called San Francisco. On a clear day a view of Tortuguero and the surrounding areas captures you.*

**Tortuguero village:** Once again a meal (lunch) and a period of repose will be awaiting us on the return from our walk. In the afternoon, we will visit the local village. There is no guided activity here, only a chance to interact, shop, and experience this secluded Tico community. During this time you can also head to the beach and enjoy the Caribbean sands. It is an unguarded beach with strong waves, so swimming is not recommended.

**Relax in the lodge:** For the third time today, a meal and relaxation await our return at the lodge. Tonight we can take advantage of all amenities of the resort.

**Late night (option):** Tonight you will have the option of taking a night tour, to see the female green or Leatherback turtles, which come during this season to lay their eggs on the picturesque coast. This tour is not included in the package, and will cost extra (about \$20 pp). As this is early in the season, the tour will depend on turtle sightings.

Accommodation: [Evergreen lodge](#)

## **Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>:**

This morning, after breakfast, we will take a boat ride through the landscape the National Park to the village of Pavao, where our driver will take us up into the Caribbean Highlands, passing through the scenery of banana plantations on the way.

For our final weekend we will head to the countryside paradise on the slopes of the Turrialba volcano - Finca Rio Perla (Farm of the Pearl River) - a sprawling 240 acres, including many acres of untouched rainforest. This is where we will spend the weekend, and our last two nights in Costa Rica. Our welcome to the farm will begin with a check-in and some refreshments, followed by a short orientation walk, where we will get to meet our hosting Tico family, Efrain & Vivian.



# Finca Rio Perla

High on the Caribbean Highlands of Costa Rica, with elevations ranging from about 1,000 to 2,250 feet (350 to 750 meters), this beautiful eco-farm is blessed with moderate temperatures, great breezes, amazing views, and a relative lack of insects (like mosquitoes).

This farm is a special place. It is home to untouched rainforest on the slopes of Volcan Turrialba, breathtaking waterfalls, refreshing natural pools and streams, and a view that goes on for miles and miles, out to the Caribbean coast. These protected rainforest land on the farm's property are accessible to visitors to enjoy during their stay. Horses, a macadamia grove, and hammocks are available to further enhance this natural experience.

Finca Rio Perla is also a working farm, where guests can experience the authentic Costa Rican

countryside. A herd of dairy of cows, sheep, free-range hens, tilapia fishponds, organic vegetable gardens, and a grand macadamia plantation each provide ingredients that go straight to the kitchen. Guests can put food on their plates by collecting eggs, milking cows, gardening, nut picking, and fishing. Guests can also help churn cheese and ice cream from the fresh milk.

The farm offers traditional Tico (Costa Rican) food that is primarily vegetarian. Dairy, eggs and fish are harvested onsite and become additional meal ingredients. The kitchen makes all attempts to use farm-grown, locally produced, and/or organic products.

A variety of rooms for overnight lodging are available. They are rustic but comfortable.



*Roey, a tour participant, and Vivian, the farm manager, show off some of the bounty of the organic garden on Finca Rio-Perla: eggs, lettuce and yucca!*



*Delicious veggie breakfast on Finca Rio Perla  
(pic by [Matt Miller](#))*

The stay at Finca Rio Perla is hosted by Efrain, Vivian, and Manuel, a Tico family, who have created a unique opportunity to explore, experience, and connect with the authentic Costa Rica. This is also a great opportunity to learn and/or practice Spanish and a great opportunity to learn Tico cooking.

Finca Rio Perla is accessible and connected, yet remote and independent. It is located about 60 miles (100 km) east of San Jose and about 40 miles (60km) west of Limon. The farm is connected to the municipal water supplier, electrical grid, and telephone and internet systems.

The farm's working philosophy is based on both traditional practices and new technologies to maintain and nurture the environment. The farm is striving toward organic and natural production and processing practices; using new technologies. It calls its balanced and eclectic approach to sustainable living: *Agro-Eco Pragmatism*.

The farm itself is owned by Dr. Paul Siegel, who has been a Rural Development Consultant with the World Bank for more than 20 years working in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Europe. He was also a professor in the USA (University of Tennessee) and Israel (Tel-Hai College in the Upper Galilee, and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies at Kibbutz Ketura). **Paul's vision for the farm is one of creating a thriving ecological community that will abide to sustainable guidelines.**

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*Chilling on the deck of the main house (Posada) of Finca Rio-Perla*

Our orientation tour will be followed by a fresh home-cooked veggie lunch, after which it is time to **saddle up!** From the stables you will leave on a horseback ride towards the upper area of the farm. You will leave the horses near the macadamia processing shed, take a tour of the macadamia plantation, taste some fresh sugarcane, and hike down to the big waterfall (over 100 ft!). For nearly two hours you will take a swim in the cool water at the fall base and enjoy the rainforest around you. you can climb a small waterfall and go swimming right under the big one - an amazing experience! On the way back you will seek out some pipa's (water filled coconuts) to open for a refreshing drink.



*Horseback riding on Finca Rio Perla*



*Planting a tree on the farm*

**In the afternoon we will have time to do as many of the following as each of us chooses:**

Tilapia fishing in the farm's fishponds (which will be used for dinner); exploring the farm grounds on your own; stroll to the nearby small waterfalls; play Frisbee; pass a soccer ball, or feel the serenity while lounging on the hammocks.

After our long day, we will sit down for a festive meal – a traditional Tico vegetarian dinner, including the tilapia we fished today. Dinner will be followed by a free evening to read, drink, play games and fall asleep to the sounds of the jungle around us.

Accommodation: Finca Rio Perla

## **Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>**

Good morning Finca Rio Perla!

Feel free **to wake up early and to milk the dairy cows** – we will use the milk to make cheese later!

Optional farm activities for today:

- ✚ **Plant trees** to help reforest the area and offset travel associated carbon emissions
- ✚ Sow the seeds and cultivate the land at the farm's **organic vegetable and herb garden**,
- ✚ **Collect fresh eggs** from the hen coop,
- ✚ Using machetes, clear brush and pick nuts at the **macadamia grove**.
- ✚ **Tico style cheese/ice cream making workshop with Vivian**

Sometime in the afternoon we will go on a hike to the small waterfalls near the main house, and if there is interest we could walk back up and explore the larger, more remote waterfalls.

After dinner, we can get into the mood by watching a rainforest themed film or go into town to enjoy a local Tico bar!

Accommodation: Finca Rio Perla

## Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>

Time to say goodbye! We will leave Finca Rio Perla by 7:30 am, in time to make our flights back home.

**\*\*\*Please note that the time and location of an activity might change due to unexpected circumstances, such as inclement weather and hazardous road conditions.**

## Practical Details

### Dates

The Caribbean Experience trip will take place from Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (8 nights in total). We will be meeting at and leaving the San Jose (the capital) international airport (SJO). We ask that you plan to be on a flight that will land in San Jose by 4 pm on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Your flight home should be no earlier than noon on Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

If you want to arrive a day or many early, or choose to leave later, please let us know how we can help you experience more of this magnificent country. Day trips from San Jose include the nearby volcanoes of Poas and Irazu. If you are interested in this option, please let us know!



*A view of Volcan Turrialba from Finca Rio Perla*

### Accommodations

For our time on the farm, guests will stay in rustic but comfortable rooms, uniquely decorated with interesting artwork, local woodworking, and furniture. Wide windows offer a spectacular scenic view and cool clean air mountain air, accompanied by soothing sounds of nearby streams, howler monkeys and birds!

Rooms on the farm sleep 2-3 people, with shared bathrooms and showers.

In San Jose, you will stay in a comfortable hotel in the downtown area, such as the [Costa Rica Guesthouse](#).

For our time in Turtuguero, we will be staying in the tranquil [Evergreen Lodge](#), set in the rainforest right outside the National Park.

On the southern Caribbean coast we will be staying in a comfortable mid-level hotel, such as the elegant [Banana Azul](#), or the [Shawandha](#). We will be pairing up to share the rooms, though you might choose to be in a single room for an extra fee (if you are interested in this option, please let us know).



*Banana Azul Hotel, Puerto Viejo*



*Bunk room on Finca Rio-Perla*

## Guides

The Caribbean Experience tour will be escorted by an experienced guide that will be with you for the length of your trip, sharing his or her unique perspective of the country.

In various activities, such as the jungle hike in Manzanillo or the Tortuguero hikes, we are using the best local specialty guides with years of expertise in introducing tourists to the natural beauty of Costa Rica. We work mostly with local guides as well as with tourism non-profit organizations such as [ATEC](#), which make sure that the local indigenous communities benefit from tourism revenues while protecting the environment and the traditional way of life.

## Transportation

We provide all transfers during the week using an air conditioned van or minibus, driven by a bilingual driver / guide.

## Insurance

We advise you purchase travelers insurance before leaving – following is a suggested link that allows you to compare between different options and [purchase the insurance online](#). This should not cost more than \$20.

Prior to departure, we required a signed waiver for your trip and your stay on the farm will be (you will have to fill similar waivers in other adventure activities we will be doing throughout the trip).

## What to bring?

Before departing, you will receive a comprehensive list of suggested things to bring on the Caribbean Experience.

## Cost of trip

The cost per person is \$1450 per person.

## Great! How do I sign up?

To reserve your spot on the trip, follow [the link to our website](#) to make your secure deposit of \$150 via the Google Checkout system. After securing your spot, please fill out our [tour registration form](#).

The trip will leave with a minimum of 8 participants and a maximum of 16. If this number is not reached by February 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will cancel and postpone the trip, and you will be fully reimbursed.

If you cancel your attendance after February 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will reimburse you the sum of \$1300, with \$150 kept as cancellation fee.

Once we reach the minimum of 8 participants, we will notify you so that you can go ahead and purchase your flight.

Note: If you have a discount code, you will be asked to provide it before submitting a payment via Google Checkout.

For general questions about the trip, please write us at [info@costaribbean.com](mailto:info@costaribbean.com)

Please feel free to forward this info to any friends of yours that might be interested in joining us for this week - ask us about an additional discount for groups of two or more that register together!

**This is not a budget tour, but a memorable adventure that  
will fit your budget!**

## **The cost includes:**

- **Transportation and transfers to and from all locations in Costa Rica by a bilingual guide/driver.**
- **Full accompaniment by a Costa Rica Caribbean Experience staff person.**
- **8 nights of accommodations on the Finca Rio Perla farm, San Jose, the Evergreen Lodge in Tortuguero, and in a hotel in Puerto Viejo.** Price is for accommodations of 2 per room. Single occupancy rooms are available for an additional nightly fee.
- **All activities and all meals during our 2 nights at the Finca Rio-Perla eco-farm.**
- **Meals included in trip: 8 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 6 dinners**
- **One day of amazing whitewater rafting on the Pacuare River (including breakfast/lunch)**
- **Gandoca –Manzanillo Wildlife Hike**
- **Caribbean cooking class**
- **BriBri Cacao Tour (history of local indigenous people and organic chocolate making)**
- **Canal Tour, nature hike and tour of village in Tortuguero, all meals in Tortuguero Evergreen Lodge**
- **Welcome night dinner in San Jose**

\* Please note that if you do not wish to partake in the rafting, canopy tour, and zipline, you may opt out and we will reduce the cost of your trip accordingly.

## **The cost does not include:**

- **Airfare**
- **Costa Rica departure tax of \$28**
- **Traveler insurance (we will be able to arrange this for you if needed)**
- **Some meals on the Caribbean coast and San Jose**
- **Optional late night turtle nesting tour in Tortuguero**

- **Alcoholic beverages**
- **Tips and gratuities**

Our tours are organized by the Costa Rica Caribbean Experience, a division of Greener Travel Company, LLC. The company was founded by Ami Greener, an experienced and enthusiastic environmentalist that has been captivated by the unique beauty of Costa Rica. By forming personal relationships with local providers in Costa Rica (hotel owners, activity outfitters and the staff of Finca Rio-Perla, the amazing farm that we visit), we are able to offer a tailored experience to both individuals and couples traveling alone and looking to explore the area, as well as group tours which a member of our staff or local Costa Rican associates will guide.

**For further information and questions, please contact us at:**

The Costa Rica Caribbean Experience

[info@costaribbean.com](mailto:info@costaribbean.com)

US: +1-646-469-9743

[www.costaribbean.com](http://www.costaribbean.com)

Though the dates for this trip are set, if you want to join and cannot take the whole week off from work, we could accommodate you for part of the trip, and price it differently as well. If you cannot make it on these dates, but would like to plan a visit alone, with a small group of friends or a romantic getaway with a significant other - we can help you plan that trip as well with some of these amazing adventures - we regularly send couples, families and small groups of friends on a tailored Caribbean Experience!