

THE COSTA RICA MOUNTAIN & COAST EXPERIENCE

Adventure and Eco-travel for Jewish Young
Professionals the Pura Vida Way!

February 16-24, 2013

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Shabbat with the San Jose Jewish Community (optional)
- ▶ Service project with local indigenous community
- ▶ Visit a Jewish owned ecological farm, home to untouched rainforest and amazing waterfalls
- ▶ Explore Arenal Volcano National Park, including the world famous hot-springs
- ▶ 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 – kosher style!
- ▶ 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 Mountain and Coast Experience for young Jewish professionals next February** offers a diverse adventure that combines the volcanic mountains 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 ,with a visit to the Jewish community; goes on to the famous Arenal volcano and it’s just as famous hot-springs, with a visit to the Finca Luna Nueva eco-farm, surrounded by primary rainforest; continues with a whitewater rafting run and ends on the Caribbean Lowlands, with their tropical beaches, unique flora and fauna, active nightlife, and indigenous culture.



Zipline adventure in the jungle!

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
info@costaribbean.com
US: +1-202-599-0655
www.costaribbean.com

Trip itinerary

Please note that times of activities and locations might change due to unexpected circumstances. For example, local weather and road conditions might result in changes in the itinerary.

Friday, February 15th

The trip officially starts on Saturday, but if you observe Shabbat, or wish do arrive a day earlier and visit San Jose and the Jewish Community, we ask that you plan to arrive San Jose as early as possible today, well before Shabbat comes in.



Shaarei Zion synagogue in San Jose

After landing, you will be taken to our hotel for the next two nights, where you might have time to rest a bit and explore downtown San Jose (depending on when you land), before heading to services and Kabbalat Shabbat at the impressive Modern Orthodox synagogue in San Jose, that is located in a complex that also hosts the [headquarters of the local Jewish community](#) (Mikva, religious school, kosher restaurant).

Please read [this Hadassah article](#) for more info about the Jewish Community in Costa Rica.

After services you will return back to your hotel (walking distance for shomrei Shabbat).

Saturday, February 16th

For those of you that landed on Friday today offers you a few options: If you choose, you can return to the synagogue for morning services, followed by a communal lunch with the congregation. During the afternoon, you will be able to explore San Jose - you will be staying about a mile west of downtown, and it should be a nice Shabbat walk to some of

the main attractions, such as the Plaza De La Cultura, the National Theater and the National Museum.

On the hand, you might wish to head out of town on a short daytrip to the beautiful [Poás Volcano](#), just north of town. The Poas Volcano, a National Park, reaches to the height of 2,300 meters above sea level. It is an active volcano with a beautiful blue crater lake at its summit, located amidst alpine cloud forest.

If you are arriving today, 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 and join the rest of the group in exploring downtown San Jose and for dinner.

This evening, with the entire group present, we will all go out for dinner in downtown San Jose, and check out the Latino vibe of the local nightlife.



Downtown San Jose

[Accommodation: San Jose hotel](#)

Sunday, February 17th

This morning, we will be heading on a guided walking tour of Downtown San Jose, and visit its main attractions, learning along the way about the interesting history, nature and culture of Costa Rica – by a professional guide.

Later, we will visit to **the local [Jewish Community](#)** - including a visit to the impressive synagogue and museum, and an introduction to the history of Jews in Costa Rica.

In the afternoon, we will head out of town through the mountains and the green central plateau to the town of [La Fortuna](#), near the majestic Arenal Volcano. The ride will be about 4 hours long, with a possible stop at a traditional coffee plantation along the way.

When we arrive in La Fortuna, we will check into the [Monte Real](#) hotel, which is in a great location - from your rooms you will be able to observe the magnificent Arenal volcano!



Arenal Volcano

After settling in to our hotel we will head out for dinner in the center of the small town of La Fortuna.

Accommodation: [Hotel Monte Real](#)

Monday, February 18th

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!

Later, after eating lunch in town, we will head out of town to go on the **Arenal Volcano Tour Hike** – we will enjoy the most extraordinary view of the Arenal Volcano on a gentle hike along the base of this marvelous “Mountain of Fire”, climbing close to the crater of the volcano, which has been pretty active since 1968. The Hike begins in one the trails close to the volcano, which will take us through the forest over recent lava flows and the area destroyed in 1968 now in the process of regeneration. We are going to be on this trail for about 2 ½ hours.

After the hike we head to the [Baldi Hot Springs](#) where we will experience one of the world's most amazing offerings. Here we will relax in Mother Nature's enormous hot tub. The hot springs are fed by an underground river heated naturally by the Arenal Volcano to the perfect temperature of 101 degrees. We will spend the later part of the day here, enjoying all that Baldi has to offer – and relaxing. An extensive buffet dinner is also included in the package. We will be picked up and taken back to the hotel in the evening, ending a fun and relaxing day!

Accommodation: [Hotel Monte Real](#)

Tuesday, February 19th

Today we will visit the [Finca Luna Nueva Farm](#) which offers an intimate experience of primary rainforest together with a [certified organic biodynamic farm](#). Here, you will



Tour participants on the Jungle



Baldi Hot Springs, Arenal

experience the Costa Rican rainforest, learn about the farm's sustainable practices - its 240 acres offer many opportunities to view its natural beauty- and just to relax!

Morning: We will take a tour of the [Sacred Seeds Sanctuary](#) at Luna Nueva, a dynamic collection of medicinal plants that protects and celebrates not only biological diversity in Costa Rica and the tropics, but also the diversity of cultural knowledge related to these plants worldwide.

Housing over 275 tropical plants, this collection is a delight for anyone interested in botany, herbal medicine, or indigenous culture.



*Steven Farrell, manager of the farm,
leads the Sacred Seeds tour*

The tour will be followed by some chill time - to relax in the ozonated swimming pool or solar powered hot-tub, to drink an amazing, locally sourced ginger smoothie, or to practice some yoga.

Afternoon: Time to put on your rubber boots, and head on the [Cavalonga Trail hike](#), through amazing primary rainforest. The experienced guide will take you through the trails, which are connect to the 50,000 acre Children's Eternal Rainforest via a biological corridor. On your way, you will see many animals, and learn about the various trees and plants.

We will return to the farm, and learn about what keeps the crops healthy, from the happy water buffalo to the wiggling worms in the compost. We will stroll through the biointensive garden, where we will taste numerous plants and herbs, the same ones served daily in the farm's restaurant.

We will end the day feasting poolside on an amazing [Costa Rica/Asian fusion style dinner](#), all organic and locally produced!

Wednesday, February 20th

Whitewater Rafting Adventure

Pickup: 6:15 am from hotel

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). You will be traveling to the Caribbean Highlands, where the trip begins – the run is 18 miles long, taking 3-1/2 to 5 hours - depending on water level.



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

[A big breakfast and hearty lunch](#) will be served at the company's operation center before the trip and on a river beach, respectively. When we are done, it's time to be drive to Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean Coast.

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.

In Puerto Viejo, you will be staying in a comfortable mid-level hotel, such as the elegant [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: Puerto Viejo

Thursday, February 21st

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](#).

At about 6 pm, it is time to learn to prepare our dinner – Caribbean style: We will take a Caribbean cooking lesson, kosher style – i.e. fish and veggies!

Using fruits and veggies typical to Coastal Talamanca, you’ll learn to cook in the traditional Caribbean way, such as patacones, batidos, or fish in Caribbean sauce, etc.

Our host is Junior Palmar, not only an awesome local guide, but also the son one of Puerto Viejo’s most famous and favorite cooks, miss Lidia. He invites you into his home. Mind now, Juni isn’t a professional culinary instructor but this is real local flavor! Get to know a community’s food and you can learn a lot about their culture. Practice your patois (or your Spanish) and learn some recipes you can take home with you, a taste of the Caribbean.

Special Hints: Bring a pen and note book to jot down recipes. Juni speaks the local dialect of English—a bit different from North American or European English



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: Puerto Viejo

Friday, February 22nd

Morning: we will be participating in a service project with one of the indigenous communities living in the area: this could be helping to build a local school, working in a vegetable garden or tree nursery, or working with the folks from the Ara Project, the Great Green Macaw reintroduction team with the school kids. We are working with the Talamancan Association of Ecotourism and Conservation ([ATEC](#)) on the service project, and will have specifics as we get closer to the date of travel. During our time volunteering, we will learn about the [Indigenous BriBri Tribal Area](#) and the history of the native people of Costa Rica, the medicinal plants they use. We will end the day learning about the history and production of chocolate in the area– including tasting!



Group lunch during August 2010 service project at El Yue Woman's Cooperative

Afternoon: Experience the peace and tranquility of the **magical waterfall at Volio**. Enjoy a refreshing swim, see tropical flora, fauna, and with a little luck see animals such as birds, monkeys, sloth, blue Morpho butterflies...

Time permitting we will enjoy a sunset swim along the magnificent **Punta Uva beach**, thought by many as the most beautiful beach in Costa Rica!

For Shabbat dinner, we will head to the Israeli owned [Pita Bonita](#) restaurant, serving some of the best Hummus outside of the Holy Land!



Saturday, February 23rd

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.



Tour participant with young howler monkey at the Jungle Rescue Center

Some other 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!

Later today it is time to bid farewell to the Caribbean Coast, and head back up to San Jose, where we will spend the night before heading home tomorrow. We will spend the evening in the small town of Alajuela, not far from the international airport.

Sunday, February 24th

Time to say goodbye! Depending on our time of departure, we will be picked up from the hotel and taken to the airport.

*****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

Dates

The February Caribbean Experience trip will take place from Saturday, February 16 to Sunday, February 24, 2013 (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 6 pm on February 16. If you decide to arrive a day earlier, please arrive by 3 pm on Friday so you can prepare for Shabbat. Your flight home can be anytime on Sunday, January 27.

You have an option of arriving on Friday and spending the weekend in San Jose, attending services in the Jewish community - let us know if you are interested in this option!

If you want to arrive a day or two earlier, or choose to leave later, please let us know how we can help you experience more of this magnificent country. We can arrange for a pick-up or drop-off in another part of San Jose at the beginning or end of the trip. Day trips from San Jose include the nearby volcanoes of Poas and Irazu. If you are interested in this option, please let us know!

Accommodations

- In San Jose, you will stay in a comfortable hotel which is walking distance from the Synagogue and a short ride from downtown, such as the [La Sabana](#).
- In Arenal, we will be staying [Monte Real](#) hotel, boasting magnificent views of the volcano and a tropical backyard with resident sloths.
- On the southern Caribbean coast we will be staying in a comfortable mid-level hotel, such as the elegant [Namuwoki](#), 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.



Hotel Monte Real, Arenal

Guides

For your Caribbean Experience we will provide you with an experienced guide that will escort you for the length of your trip. In various activities, we use 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 early bird cost per person is \$1700 for those registering and making a deposit by December 7, 2012. To get this early bird discount, you must use the code MORPHO while registering or making your full payment.

After December 7 the price of the trip will be \$1850.

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 \$200 via the Google Checkout system. After securing your spot, please fill out our [tour registration form](#).

Our trips have a maximum of 18 participants, and a minimum of 8.

Once we reach the minimum needed and call the trip, the \$200 deposit becomes non-refundable - we need to enforce this policy in order to cover loss from last-minute cancellations.

If you cancel your attendance after December 12, 2012, we will reimburse you the sum you paid, with \$200 kept as cancellation fee.

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

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!

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 in the capital San Jose, on the Finca Rio Perla farm, Hotel Monte Real in Arenal, and in a Puerto Viejo hotel. Price is for double occupancy accommodations. Single occupancy rooms are available, based on availability, for an additional fee.**
- **All activities and all meals during our 2 nights at the Finca Rio-Perla eco-farm.**
- **Meals included in trip: 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners!**
- **Jungle Canopy Tour/ Zipline Adventure in Arenal**
- **Entrance to the Baldi hot-springs in Arenal, including a buffet dinner**
- **Stand Up Paddle (SUP) Lessons & Lake Arenal SUP Paddle Boarding Tour!**
- **One day of amazing whitewater rafting on the Pacuare River (including breakfast/lunch)**
- **Gandoca –Manzanillo Wildlife Hike**
- **Visit to the Jaguar Rescue**
- **Caribbean cooking class**
- **BriBri Cacao Tour (history of local indigenous people and organic chocolate making)**
- **Welcome night dinner in San Jose**
- **Dinner at Pita Bonita in Puerto Viejo**

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 in San Jose**
- **Alcoholic beverages**
- **Tips and gratuities**

Our tours are organized by the Costa Rica Caribbean Experience, a destination 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
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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!