

COSTA RICA

January 17, 2018 - 16 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$6995 double/twin

\$8355 single

tour
25
a more intimate travel experience



> Please add 0.3% GST.

> **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4

> **Experience Points:** Earn 133 points from this tour.

Redeem **133 points** if you book by **October 12**.

Includes

- Coach transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- Flight from Vancouver to San Jose, Costa Rica
- Air taxes, fees and fuel surcharges
- 15 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Coach transportation throughout Costa Rica
- Expert local guides and naturalists
- Doka Coffee Plantation
- Poas Volcano National Park
- La Paz Waterfall Garden
- River cruise through Tortuguero National Park to Aninga Lodge and return
- Wildlife and birdlife watching boat tour along the Tortuguero Canals
- Arenal Volcano National Park
- Arenal Volcano Sky Tram
- Nature walk on Las Coladas trail
- Tabacon Hot Springs
- Rincon de la Vieja National Park
- All-inclusive beachfront resort for 2 days
- Flight from San Jose to Vancouver
- Luggage handling at hotels
- Gratuities to local guides, drivers and naturalists
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- **39 meals:** 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 12 dinners

Kamloops > 250-374-0831
Kelowna > 250-762-3435
www.wellsgraytours.com

Penticton > 250-493-1255
Vernon > 250-545-9197
Toll Free > **800-667-9552**



COSTA RICA

Costa Rica covers a mere 0.03% of the planet's surface, but is home to 5% of all living organisms on earth. Active volcanoes, lush cloud forests, lowland jungles, rolling savannas, and coral beaches create a spectacular setting to experience the country's natural beauty and exotic flora and fauna. Much of this area is preserved by one of the most remarkable park systems in the world, making Costa Rica a model for conservation in harmony with community development and economic growth. During this unique tour, we travel through some of the richest habitats of Costa Rica, from Caribbean lowland rain forests to central volcanic highlands, from a cloud forest interior to coastal resorts.

The tour is accompanied throughout by a Wells Gray tour director. Costa Rican guides and naturalists meet us at various times to conduct in-depth experiences. A variety of hotels are arranged such as the Crowne Plaza in bustling San Jose, remote Aninga Lodge at Tortuguero, the Arenal Kioro with panoramic views of the volcano, and the Blue River spa resort with volcanic mineral mud pools.

One highlight of the tour is our three-night stay at Barcelo Langosta Hotel at Tamarindo Beach on the Pacific Ocean. You will be awed by the natural beauty of this private tropical resort and have plenty of time to relax and soak up the sun. The resort is all-inclusive so meals, drinks and most activities are complimentary.

Come and admire the natural wonders of Costa Rica and get away from a Canadian winter for two relaxing weeks.

Itinerary

Wednesday, January 17: Meals: L

From the Okanagan, Kamloops and Salmon Arm, we drive to Vancouver and stay overnight at the Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver Airport.

Thursday, January 18:

We go downstairs and check in at Air Canada. We change planes in Toronto and arrive in **San Jose** at 9 pm. **Welcome to Costa Rica.** We stay two nights at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Friday, January 19: Meals: B,L,D

Today's tour visits some of the highlights surrounding San Jose. First, we visit **Doka Coffee Plantation** for a delicious breakfast and a coffee tour where we learn the techniques used by the experts to produce one of the best coffees in Costa Rica. The careful process involved in the cultivation, harvesting, and roasting of the Golden Bean is demonstrated, then we savour the delectable end product. We continue to the **Poás Volcano** where we not only admire the impressive main crater with its sulphur fumaroles, but also learn about the different ecosystems in this unique national park. At **La Paz Waterfall Garden**, we visit the spectacular waterfall in the middle of the rainforest, the hummingbird gallery, the bird house, the butterfly garden, and the frog exhibit.

Saturday, January 20: Meals: B,L,D

We stop for breakfast en route to Guápiles. Then we board a river boat which takes us down the winding Tortuguero River through the ecological diversity of **Tortuguero National Park** with lots of

birdlife and wildlife viewing. After a two-hour journey, we arrive at remote **Aninga Lodge**, located in the jungle on one of the Tortuguero waterways, and lunch is waiting. During the afternoon, we boat across the canal to visit the colourful village of Tortuguero. We learn about renowned naturalist Archie Carr, author of the 1956 book *The Windward Road*, who studied sea turtles at Tortuguero and was instrumental in establishing the Caribbean Conservation Corporation.

Sunday, January 21: Meals: B,L,D

We take a boat tour along the **Tortuguero Canals** early this morning when the birdlife and wildlife are most active. It is a unique paradise of magnificent flora and fauna. We return to the lodge for breakfast, then enjoy the hotel grounds and jungle trails at leisure, or simply relax. Later, a nature walk gives a better understanding of rainforests.

Monday, January 22: Meals: B,L,D

We return to Guápiles by boat and vehicle, then continue to La Fortuna de San Carlos, a small town located at the base of **Arenal Volcano**. Standing prominently at 1,636 metres, it was one of the 10 most active volcanoes in the world until 2010 with constant lava flows and eruptions. Today, the volcano is dormant, but its perfect cone shape and superb hot springs make this place a must-visit! Our accommodation for three nights is at Arenal Kioro. This splendid hotel is surrounded by gardens and two streams, and there are panoramic views of the volcano.

Tuesday, January 23:*Meals: B,L,D*

We board the **Arenal Sky Tram** for a slow-paced journey through the rainforest with awesome views of the volcano during the ascent. Each gondola is accompanied by a bilingual guide and it can be stopped anytime for a special picture or if a bird or animal is spotted. At the top, there is an observation deck with a panoramic vista of the Arenal Volcano's southern face, Lake Arenal far below, and the rolling hillsides around it. The afternoon is leisure time at the hotel.

Wednesday, January 24:*Meals: B,D*

The morning is free time, then we drive to the western side of **Arenal Volcano** where most of the activity since 1968 has occurred. There is a choice of walks. The Las Coladas trail traverses the rainforest and crosses over a large lava flow from 1992 where we can observe all the impact of recent eruptions, and the Los Tucanes trail passes through the regrowing forest where we can see more wildlife. There is a shopping opportunity in La Fortuna. Later we visit **Tabacón Hot Springs**, one of the best in the country, where you can relax in the thermal waters.

Thursday, January 25:*Meals: B,L,D*

A three-hour drive this morning takes us from Arenal to **Rincon de la Vieja National Park**. This 35,000 acre park is home to an intriguing combination of volcanic geological wonders and pristine tropical forests that span six life zones. The main attraction is Rincon de la Vieja, a smooth cinder cone volcano which rises to 1,884 metres and comprises nine contiguous craters. Tropical forests, including sections of montane and dwarf cloud forest, span the park's base, providing safe haven for a host of flora and fauna. Mammals include pumas, jaguar, monkeys (howler, spider, and white-faced), kinkajous, sloths, and tapirs. We have a midday arrival at **Blue River Resort** and the afternoon is free time. It is located in a lush rainforest with grand waterfalls, natural mineral hot springs, and sparkling streams. Soak in three hot springs pools and two fresh water pools with a bullet water-slide. Wander the botanical gardens with 700 varieties, fish, turtle and caiman ponds, and hummingbird sanctuary. Indulge in a spa treatment, visit the butterfly gardens, or take a natural mud bath and sauna.

Friday, January 26:*Meals: B,L,D*

The centerpiece of the resort is the thermal springs with hot pools, volcanic mineral mud, and natural

steam rooms. Enjoy the relaxing experience of a volcanic mud treatment at the spa, then soak in the three natural spring-water hot pools: the first is hot, the second is warm, and the third is cold water for an invigorating temperature shock treatment. The facilities are complimentary and professional spa services are charged extra.

Saturday, January 27:*Meals: B,L,D*

We descend from the mountains, driving past huge ranches and lots of cattle, to the Pacific Coast and the **Guanacaste** region. Local delicacies are corn tortillas or horchata beverages. On arrival at Tamarindo Beach, we settle into **Barcelo Langosta Beach Hotel** for three nights. You will be awed by the natural beauty of this private tropical resort, located on a stunning white sand beach. There is plenty of time to relax and soak up the sun. The resort is all-inclusive so meals, drinks and most activities are complimentary, and there is a choice of two restaurants and several bars. Other facilities are pool, Jacuzzi, casino, theatre for stage shows, shops, beauty salon, full-service spa, medical service, and car rental. Daily activities include tennis, table tennis, fitness, aerobics, dance classes, volleyball, football, chess, archery, and darts. The town of Tamarindo is two km away and has plenty of shops and entertainment.

Sunday, January 28:*Meals: B,L,D***Monday, January 29:***Meals: B,L,D*

These two days are free for you to decide what you want to do or simply relax by the pool or the ocean.

Tuesday, January 30:*Meals: B,L,D*

In mid-day, we drive back to San Jose and stay overnight at the Crowne Plaza. Our farewell dinner tonight is a chance to reminisce with fellow travellers about our winter getaway to Costa Rica.

Wednesday, January 31:*Meals: B*

We depart on Air Canada Rouge at 9 am, change planes in Toronto, and arrive in Vancouver at 8 pm. Accommodation is again at the Fairmont YVR.

Thursday, February 1:*Meals: B,L*

We travel home via the Coquihalla.

Tour Notes:

Currency & Expenses: The currency in Costa Rica is the colon; \$1 USD = 413 colons as of April 2017. US dollars are widely accepted and exchanged. Gratuities have been included for all group meals (not for included meals where you eat on your own such as at the all-inclusive resort), and for local guides, naturalists and driver-guides. As this tour has been planned and priced 8 months before departure, it is possible that exchange fluctuations could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease. All meals are included in Costa Rica. At the all-inclusive resort, your drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are included. The \$29 per person departure fee in Costa Rica is included in the airline taxes.

Flight: Current flight schedule is with Air Canada from Vancouver to San Jose, Costa Rica, with a plane change in Toronto. Travel time including the stop is about 12 hours outbound and 13 hours returning. Costa Rica is two hours ahead of British Columbia in winter.

Documentation: A passport is required, valid 6 months after return date. A visa is not required.

Triples are not available on this tour.



Activity: Due to the historic nature of some attractions and the nature walks looking for birds and animals, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk at least a kilometre, plus stand for an extended time on walking tours. There can be long walks in the airports and you are urged to request a cart or wheelchair at check-in if this could be a concern. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, drivers and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.

Beverages: In many countries outside Canada and USA, it is not standard practice to include beverages with tour meals. On this tour, a soft drink or bottled water is included with each meal and other beverages can be purchased. Almost all beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are included at the Barcelo all-inclusive resort.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due October 12, 2017.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after October 12.

Cancellation Policy: Up to September 8, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From September 9 to October 12, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From October 13 to November 14, the cancellation charge is 60% of the tour fare. After November 14, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Tour 25: This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 25 participants or less, a more intimate travel experience.

Photo Credit: Barcelo Langosta Hotel

e-points: This tour earns 133 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until October 12.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924