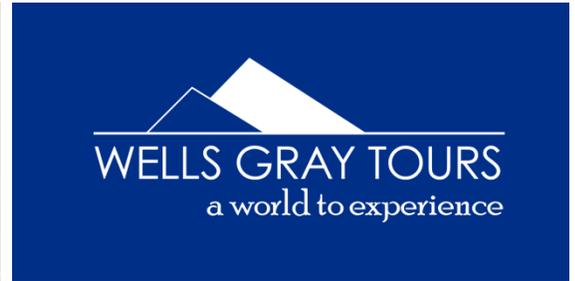




Toucans



Group Photo at the Sky Tram 2019

COSTA RICA

January 15, 2021 – 15 Days

Costa Rica covers only 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. 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. One highlight of the tour is our three-night stay at the Diria Hotel at beautiful Tamarindo Beach.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR
25

33 Meals Included:

13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 11 dinners

Fares:

\$7,730 pp double, \$9,530 pp single
Please add 0.2% GST

Early Bookers:

\$200 discount on first 8 seats; \$100 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 158 points on this tour

Redeem 158 points if you book by September 17



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, January 15

We fly on WestJet from Vancouver to Toronto and stay overnight at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Terminal 3.

Accommodation: Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Terminal 3

Day 2: Saturday, January 16

We go downstairs and check in at WestJet for the ongoing flight to San Jose, arriving early afternoon. Welcome to **Costa Rica**. We stay two nights at Crowne Plaza Hotel. A get-acquainted dinner is an opportunity to meet your fellow travellers.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hotel

Day 3: Sunday, January 17

Today's tour visits some of the highlights surrounding **San Jose**. First, we visit Doka Coffee Plantation for 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. (Note: Poás has been erupting periodically since spring 2017 but the park reopened in Sept 2018 and could be closed if bigger eruptions occur in 2021.) 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hotel

Day 4: Monday, January 18

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 **Pachira 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Pachira Lodge

Day 5: Tuesday, January 19

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Pachira Lodge

Day 6: Wednesday, January 20

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, a splendid hotel surrounded by gardens and two streams with panoramic views of the volcano.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Arenal Kioro

Day 7: Thursday, January 21

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. There is a shopping opportunity in La Fortuna. The afternoon is leisure time at the hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Arenal Kioro

Day 8: Friday, January 22

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 the impact of recent eruptions is visible. The Los Tucanes trail passes through the regrowing forest where we can see more wildlife. The afternoon is free time. Later we visit **Tabacón Hot Springs**, one of the best in the country, where you can relax in the thermal waters.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Arenal Kioro

Day 9: Saturday, January 23

This morning's drive goes 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 **Borinquen Mountain 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 the hot springs pools and fresh water pool, or wander the botanical gardens.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Borinquen Mountain Resort

Day 10: Sunday, January 24

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 natural spring-water hot pools. The facilities are complimentary and professional spa services are charged extra. For an extra fee, you can ride the zipline with 18 platforms and 12 cables.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Borinquen Mountain Resort

Day 11: Monday, January 25

We descend from the mountains, driving past huge ranches and lots of cattle to reach the Pacific Coast and the **Guanacaste** region. Local delicacies are corn tortillas or horchata beverages. On arrival at Tamarindo Beach, we settle into the oceanfront **Tamarindo Diria 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. Breakfasts are included and there is a choice of four restaurants and a buffet for other meals. Other facilities are three pools, a whirlpool, free wi-fi, and a small casino. The town of Tamarindo is a

kilometre away and has plenty of shops and entertainment.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Tamarindo Diria Hotel

Day 12: Tuesday, January 26

Today is free for you to decide what you want to do or simply relax by the pools or the ocean, soaking up the warmth of Costa Rica.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Tamarindo Diria Hotel

Day 13: Wednesday, January 27

Today is free for you to decide what you want to do or simply relax by the pools or the ocean, soaking up the warmth of Costa Rica.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Tamarindo Diria Hotel

Day 14: Thursday, January 28

In mid-day, we drive to **Liberia** and stay overnight at the Hilton Garden Inn. Our farewell

dinner is a chance to reminisce with fellow travellers about our winter getaway to Costa Rica.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hilton Garden Inn

Day 15: Friday, January 29

We fly on WestJet to Calgary, then continue to Vancouver.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Flight from Kelowna to San Jose, Costa Rica
- Current air taxes, fees and fuel surcharges
- 14 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 Pachira 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
- Flight from Liberia, Costa Rica, to Kelowna
- Costa Rica departure tax
- Luggage handling at hotels
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase
- Gratuities to local guides, drivers and naturalists
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- 33 meals: 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 11 dinners

TOUR NOTES

Currency & Expenses The currency in Costa Rica is the colon; \$1 Canadian = 408 colons as of April 2020. US dollars are widely accepted and exchanged. Gratuities have been included for all group meals and for local guides, naturalists, and driver-guides. As this tour has been planned and priced 10 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 except 2 lunches and 2 dinners at the Diria Resort. See also the note about beverages.

Departure Tax Costa Rica charges a departure tax of US\$46 per person at the Liberia airport. This is now included in the tour fare.

Flight Current flight schedule is with WestJet from Kelowna to San Jose, Costa Rica, with a hotel overnight in Toronto. Return is from Liberia via Calgary to Kelowna, all on the same day. Costa Rica is two hours ahead of British Columbia in winter.

Documentation A passport is required, valid for one month after return date. A visa is not required.

Triples are not available on this tour.

Accommodation Even though Costa Rica has a busy tourism industry, it is still a Third World country and accommodation outside the cities may not be up to the standards of Canadian and American hotels. We generally select the best available lodging in each location, but please do not expect to stay in 4- and 5-star hotels.

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.

TOUR 25 **Tour 25:** This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

 **Activity Level 2:** 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. This tour is not appropriate for people who require the use of a walker. 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. The coaches and vessels cannot carry a scooter. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. 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. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be asked to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due September 17, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy Up to August 17, 2020, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From August 18 to September 17, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From September 18 to October 14, the cancellation charge is 30% of the tour fare. From October 15 to November 13, the cancellation charge is 70% of the tour fare. After November 13, 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.

Home pickups: are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of \$40 per person round trip. Please request no later than at final payment.

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Experience Points: This tour earns 158 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 September 17.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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