



*Costa Rica – Nicaragua :  
forest, volcanoes and colonial cities -  
Active Adventures for Families*

14 days / 13 Nights - (Réf # LBi-050)

Walk through the jungle, along craters full of azure waters or across the beaches of your dreams, vaulting from tree to tree, navigating through crocodile-filled rivers and swimming in delicious waters- all this will make your Costa Rican journey a great adventure, punctuated by the flight of toucans and parrots.



*Highlights*



- Relax in sauna and thermal waters in the middle of jungle
- Horse ride between geysers & volcanic mud pots
- Discover sea turtles reproduction in their environment
- Zip-line above Concepción volcano
- Swim into Apoyo crater lagoon clear waters

### ***D1: Objective Costa Rica***

Stage: Paris - Alajuela / Costa Rica

From France on a regular Paris / San Jose flight (starting from own province - on request and subject to availability). Reception at Alajuela airport and transfer to our nearby hotel (10 min). Light dinner in a restaurant in the town and briefing on the trip.

*Note: Night: in hotel Transfer: 0h00 , Walking: 0 Km, ... meals not included – flight unaccompanied*

### ***D2: Volcanoes: sound and light***

Stage: Crater of Poas Volcano - La Fortuna (one hour ride) / Costa Rica

Morning departure by minibus to attack the Poás Volcano (1 hour drive). Cross coffee plantations. Enter the national park to visit the crater and its turquoise sulphurous lagoon (weather permitting). With luck, we will see an explosion of fumaroles, sulfur and steam reminiscent of a geyser. We then reach an altitude of 2.700m on a short path (1h 45 minutes' walk for children) through a cloud forest and dwarf rainforest on the mountainside. The end of the walk is far from dull- the thick Brocéliande forest is brightened by flowers and hummingbirds! Lunch on the flanks of the volcano in front of the vast Central Valley, and then we hit the road. Finally, to get rid of jet lag, we stop along the way in a centre of steaming natural thermal waters, right in the middle of the jungle, for a few hours: sauna and baths at different temperatures (massages are sometimes a possible option). We arrive for dinner at La Fortuna, at the foot of the cone of Arenal Volcano.

*Note: Night: in rustic bungalows , Transfer: , Walking: about 1h – dinner not include*

### ***D3: Like at the zoo, but for real!***

Stage: Arenal Volcano National Park / Costa Rica.

During breakfast, watch birds of various species in the colorful tropical rainforest. After visiting the wonderful tropical garden of our hostess, to discover the treasures of typically Costa Rican essential plants, medicinal, ornamental or nutritional, we go on to explore the surrounding forest, along a path ripe for observation (1h30 to 2h30) through vivariums (terrariums) of insects, snakes, spiders, coloured (poisonous!) frogs that all dot our path. Finally, we visit a butterfly farm, and if we have time we move a little further, we can also see a small farm of tepezcuintles (a kind of big forest guinea pig). In the afternoon, we go around the volcano to enter the national park of the famous Arenal Volcano where we reach a lava flow from 1992 (3hrs walk on the same level, across various biotopes). At night, depending on the activity of the volcano, watch the lava from the volcano, then choose a position that is most suitable, according to the direction of the flow of lava.

*Note: Night: in rustic bungalows, Transfer: , Walking: 3h of easy walking*

### ***D4: Suspension bridge in the forest and tropical river walk***

Stage: Suspension bridges - Lake Arenal – tropical river Palo Verde National Park / Costa Rica



Walk in the rainforest along a trail, crossing numerous suspension bridges for a better view of the vegetation. Then tour around Lake Arenal to reach the sunny side of the Guanacaste mountain range (travel time: about 80 km, 2h in minibus). After lunch, we reach the coastal plain to visit, by boat, crocodiles, iguanas, American storks, kingfishers, Amazonian pink spoonbills, white ibis and other amazing inhabitants of a tropical river located in the heart of the most important, largest dry forest reserves and wetlands of Costa Rica. Late arrival on the flanks of a new volcano, Rincon de la Vieja!

*Note: Night: stay in a lodge on a farm , Transfer: , Walking:*

### **D5: The entrails of the Earth**

Stage: West Side of the Rincon de la Vieja volcano (6 hours walking), geysers and fumaroles other hot water springs / Costa Rica.

Ride for the day in the Volcano's National Park. On foot, on horseback or, for those who want it , part on horseback and part on foot (although horseriding is optional for adults, it is recommended for children if they are too tired to walk when accompanied by an adult). Possibility of meeting some monkeys, agoutis and 'morphing' butterflies ...

We start with a 2 hour walk (3km) through a forest of 'strangler figs' to discover fumaroles, geysers, volcanic mud pots and hot springs. Then, if the ground is dry enough, we leave, with our horses, to cross the park along the western flank of the volcano (13 km). On the other hand, if the trail is wet (it very quickly becomes impractical if this is the case) we return to the south of the volcano for a walk along another path, always with horses (12 km round trip). In both cases, we reach the middle of the park where a small river flows to a sunny spa and hot and cold baths, in the middle of nature. If the children are tired of walking, another hot thermal river is just a few minutes' walk, and this will replace the last hike. Picnic. Return and settle into a converted eco farm at sunset.

*Note: Night: , Transfer: , Walking:*

### **D6: In the wake of Nemo**

Stage: Pacific Ocean: coral reefs and colourful fish / Costa Rica

Goodbye to our hosts. We then drive to the Pacific Ocean where we embark on a boat trip with a local snorkelling instructor who offers us all the necessary equipment (fins, mask, snorkel and life jacket) in order to observe a multitude of multicoloured fish. (Snorkelling is subject to climate conditions and water temperature). Picnic in a creek with a possible swim (but this is not supervised) and return to the port to enter the mangrove of a small estuary which is teeming with life (on foot or by boat, depending on the tide)! Aperitif in the village and a fish supper in the home of a fisherwoman!

*Note: Night: , in the hotel Transfer: , Walking: ...Dinner in the village*

### **J7: Fishermen!**

Stage: Border - fishing villages on the shores of the Pacific Ocean: El Ostional / Nicaragua

Morning departure to Nicaragua, 64 km. Border crossing, which may delay us 1-3 hours depending on the crowd, before continuing by taxi to the Pacific coast. Stop at picturesque fishing village, San Juan Del Sur. Stroll through the streets before heading back to a second fishing village, Ostional. We will reach our goal by taking a local community bus, to immerse ourselves a little in local life. Arrive before nightfall, greeted by Daniel for a fish supper and our accommodation in a rural cottage.

*Note: Night: Transfer: , Walking:*





## 8: The turtles are coming!

Stage: Pacific Rim - Beach and Sea Turtles - The FLOR Wildlife Refuge / Nicaragua

Free morning in the village. Lunch at Daniel's before sailing so that we can reach a coast which lies just beyond some rocks which are impassable on foot. We land on a small, deserted beach for a hike along the coast. We continue our course past beaches and jagged rocks, watching the teeming life of the seaside. Throughout this short trek from creek to creek (a 3 hour ride), it is possible to locate: waders, buzzards, vultures or green parrots up above the coast, and over the waves, we see the ballet of seabirds - each fishing according to his own particular technique, pelicans, schooners, frigates and osprey. On arrival, swim on the turtles' beach in a nature reserve (Wildlife Refuge Reserve de la Flor). Free time swimming is possible, but not supervised. By paying entrance fees to the park (\$ 11), we contribute to the protection of three species of endangered giant tortoise. Meeting with the park rangers. Visit the protected beach, in season, to discover the amazing way these sea turtles reproduce. It is in the course of the night, from mid-July to mid-January, that we can witness this amazing spectacle. Dinner with park rangers until it is time for the turtles to arrive... Return by van, for a second night in the cottage.

*Note: Night: Transfer: , Walking:*

## J9: On the back of a docile Nica « nag »

Stage: Ometepe, the sacred volcanic island in lake Cocibolca / Nicaragua

- Normal program: Return from Chacocente: Horseriding and walk through the forest. (Parents walking with children hold the horses by the bridle). We return to the fishing village through the forest this time.

- Exceptional programme : Back from Ostional: A new local bus to San Juan Del Sur (1h30).

Transfer by minibus to the port of Rivas and San Jorge. Boat trip to Ometepe. The island is made up of two perfectly-shaped conical volcanoes, that emerged one day from Great Lake Nicaragua. We visit the (active) Concepción volcano in a vehicle, to gain access to the best beach on the island. After lunch, walk in the forest (1.5 km), across ancient lava flows, in an attempt to observe monkeys (we will probably be surprised by the fleeting appearance of some morphos – large, neon-blue butterflies found in Amazonian forests, and to hear the cries of howler monkeys or Urracas, (beautiful, jet-coloured and flashy). Then we walk again (2km) to get to a place where you can swim in a landscaped jungle (a small local tavern whose ponds are fed by a large, crystalline mineral spring, emerging at the foot of the volcano). Walk back to the hotel after a swim at dusk (2km)

*Note: Night: in a little hotel beside the sea,, Transfer: , Walk: 1½ à 3 heures*

## D10: Chasing butterflies and once again on horseback!

Stage: The flanks of Maderas Volcano- A pre-Columbian site, a village, an organic coffee cooperative / Nicaragua

A Day's walk, in stages: This day is scheduled to be on horseback for children under 12 years old. Depending on the availability of additional horsepower, the other participants may also rent a horse if they pay for it themselves. We begin a morning walk (2h), which leads us to a farm owned by a cooperative of about 30 families. After tasting organic coffee produced on site, we make a tour of the old hacienda and the plantation, accompanied by an agricultural worker from the cooperative. We then



participate in harvesting coffee beans, when possible depending on the season (October to January: sorting, drying, roasting), in order to understand better the whole process involved in making this fragrant nectar. Before a traditional lunch in the hacienda, we visit an important pre-Columbian petroglyphs site, composed of rocks with hundreds of enigmatic engravings. After lunch, we take a local bus and have several options. We can go down the road to find the horses and visit a horticultural farm and its orchard, where we learn to recognize citrus, cinnamon, passion fruit etc.. We also find new pre-Columbian ruins. Then we take up the reins again, to ride with the horses back to the hotel along the beach until sunset. Or we can go after dinner to the beach front of the hotel for a little free time, or resume the path to the delicious "Ojo de Agua" (the tavern the night before).

*Note: Night: in hotel, second night in Ometepe, Transfer: , Walking: 4h on foot*

### ***D11: In the fresh air of the Concepción Volcano and the fumes of the Masaya Volcano!***

Stage: « Canopy tour » in Concepción - Colonial City of Granada / Nicaragua

Morning transfer to the foot of the volcano Concepción for a canopy tour (zip line course from tree to tree): a breath of fresh air, literally flying from cable wire to cable wire, above the lake and under the gaze of the Concepción volcano between trees which are hundreds of years old (the remains of a majestic, semi-humid rainforest which once covered the island). Then, cross to the mainland to find our minibus once again. Finally, we take to the road and arrive in the city of Granada, in the heart of 500 years of history. Settle in to a small, charming hotel. Lunch in the pedestrianised street. In the afternoon, we head towards the (active) Masaya Volcano National Park for the night tour

(\$ 10 pp entry): visit the volcanology and natural history centre, then a pre-Columbian human sacrifice site that runs the rim of the crater, throwing out tons of gas per day, before going on foot to explore a tunnel formed by an ancient lava flow; return to the crater at night under the stars, to watch the lava glowing, which you can find, as you might guess, at the bottom of this large crater! Return and have dinner in Granada.

*Note: Night: in the hotel, Transfer: , Walking:*

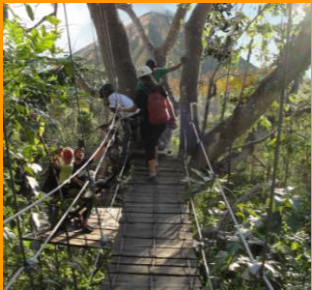
### ***D12: Spicy fruit cocktail***

Stage: Granada, capital of the Spanish colony / Nicaragua

Colonial capital and transit port, Granada is a lively city. Although it has become quite touristy, it retains all the tranquility of a country town, with its unique colonial airs and graces, whilst the big lake lends it a slight seaside charm.

The early morning will be devoted to a walk in the city, starting with a visit to the fruit and spice market and to some craftsmen's stalls – a carpenter, a shoemaker and a manufacturer of havana cigars. From the top of a tower, we discover the roofs of huge colonial mansions with their patios, and then we climb further up the cathedral tower to capture the beauty of the city from a different angle, before boarding one of the old-fashioned horse-drawn carriages to make a tour of the city, the cemetery, the old railway station, then through the streets which have the most beautiful colonial architecture, and ending our trip at the restaurant.

By mid afternoon, we go back to the shore of the lake, for a kayak ride on the lake amongst the famous « Isletas» (an archipelago of 300 islands, forming a kind of labyrinth of jungle and water, a paradise for both aquatic and terrestrial birds), making the most of the magical light which marks the end of the day on the archipelago.



*Note: Night: second night in the hotel in Granada , Transfer: , Walking: 3h visiting the town on foot.*

### ***D13: Spicy fruit cocktail***

Stage: Laguna de Apoyo crater and evening show at the market in Masaya / Nicaragua  
Transfer (25 minutes) to Catarina. Walk along a ridge around the Apoyo crater before setting off to visit this village of horticulturalists with its pottery workshop. We can lunch high up in a beauty spot, looking at the view before reaching the lagoon in the crater once again. In the late afternoon, after a swim in the clear waters of the crater (this huge natural swimming pool which we find at our disposal, has a constant and ideal temperature), we visit the Masaya craft market for potential souvenir shopping. Evening folk dancing show and free dinner on site. Late return to Granada.

*Note: Night: third night in the hotel , Transfer: , Walking: 1h or 3h walk*

### ***D14 and D15: We have walked on volcanoes***

Stages: Departure to France (via Managua or San Jose)

Depending on the route taken: Breakfast then transfer to Managua from Granada, and departure from Managua by plane (arrive in France on "Day 15" of the program); or return by international coach from Granada to San José, Costa Rica (about 9 hours travel, by luxury coach: TV and reclining seats) to fly the next day from San Jose to France (arriving in France on "Day 16").

*Note: Night: in flight or in hotel according to the flight plan (via Managua or San José respectively) , Transfer: , Walking: Meals not included – Travel by bus (if applicable) unaccompanied – Flight unaccompanied.*

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INCLUDED: Bilingual guide, Tours, Transport, Accommodation and Food, all included apart from the first meal, all the drinks, tips, and airport tax.

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Minimum: 4 people

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Rate per person **US\$** 1923

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Children under 12 years old -20% discount

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