Discovering Our Planet Together



Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica

From Secluded Nature Lodges, Search for Endangered Turtles, Tapirs, Sloths & Whales

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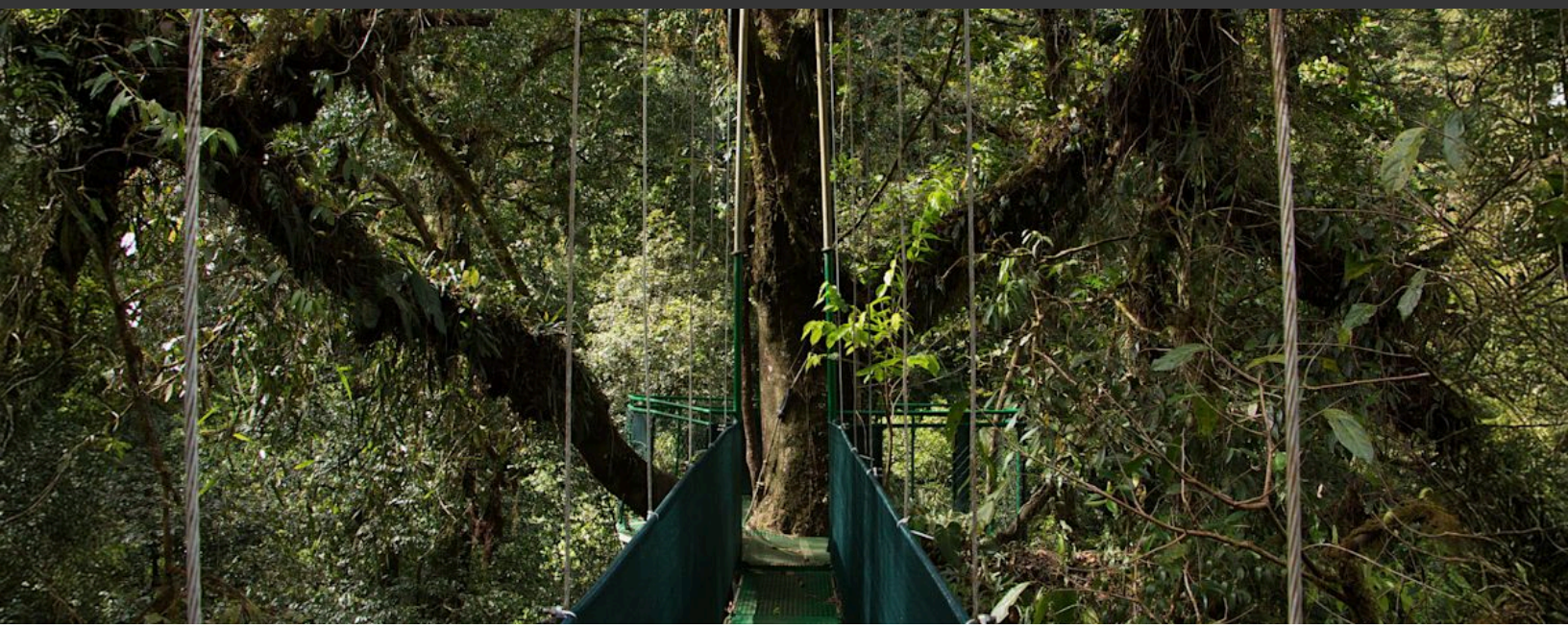

Trip Details:

Days
7 Days / Jun–Nov

Price
From $8495

Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica

From Secluded Nature Lodges, Search for Endangered Turtles, Tapirs, Sloths & Whales

Bounded by jungle-draped volcanoes and the turquoise Pacific Ocean, Costa Rica's Guanacaste province offers a tropical safari full of treasures. On the outer edge of the Nicoya Peninsula, head to the wild beach at night in search of one of nature's most wondrous phenomena, the *arribada* (Spanish for "arrival"), a mass nesting event when thousands of olive ridley sea turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. With luck, we may see hundreds of tiny hatchlings scurry to the sea. Inland, explore private rainforest reserves home to sloths, howler monkeys, rare parrots and more endangered tapirs than anywhere else in Costa Rica. This charming mammal—related to horses and rhinos, even though it looks more like an elephant or a pig—is highly elusive, but our odds to spy them here are high.

Trip Highlights

Look for Nesting Sea Turtles & New Hatchlings

Make multiple visits to a wild beach with strong odds to witness an *arribada*—a wondrous event where sea turtles come ashore en masse to lay their eggs

Search for Rare Tapirs in the Best Place to Find Them

Seek the elusive Baird's tapir where they are most plentiful in Central America, on a private reserve dedicated to their conservation

Scout for Sloths, Dolphins & Whales on Private Wildlife Tours

On forest and beach walks, hanging bridges through the rainforest canopy, and a private boat cruise, look for abundant tropical wildlife

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica Itinerary

From Secluded Nature Lodges, Search for Endangered Turtles, Tapirs, Sloths & Whales

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Liberia / Rio Celeste
Day 2	Bijagua Reserve / Tapir Valley
Day 3	Tapir Valley / Heliconias Hanging Bridges
Day 4	Nosara / Ostional Wildlife Reserve
Day 5	Ostional / Playa Samara
Day 6	Samara Beach
Day 7	Liberia



Day 1

Liberia / Rio Celeste

Arrive in Costa Rica, where rainforest adventures await

- Stay at a remote rainforest ecolodge surrounded by tropical forest
- Join your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner

Arrive at the Liberia airport in northwest Costa Rica and meet your Expedition Leader. This afternoon, transfer to Rio Celeste Hideaway, less than two hours away, where we have an orientation and welcome dinner. Our base for the next three nights, this remote luxury ecolodge lies far from heavily touristed sectors, with proximity to all the wonders of the lush rainforest that surrounds it. The region offers a vivid introduction to Costa Rica's remarkable biodiversity. The tiny country hosts an astounding number of species given its size -- more than half a million different animals and plants, some 6% of the entire planet's biological diversity! A widely accepted theory to explain this unusual density is that species from both North and South America have mixed freely on this narrow chunk of land that lies between two oceans and two continents.

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Day 2

Bijagua Reserve / Tapir Valley

Sloths by day, the search for tapirs by night

- Walk the private Bijagua Reserve looking for wild sloths
- Search the rainforest garden for monkeys, tree frogs and toucans
- Walk Tapir Valley after dark for frogs, kinkajous and elusive tapirs

Our nature adventure begins with a walk through the private Bijagua Reserve in search of wild sloths. With our local guides who are intimately familiar with the sloths and their habitat, look up to spy them snoozing, munching or possibly offering one of their charming smiles. A butterfly garden is also part of the experience. Following lunch featuring homemade local specialties, take a guided tour of Bijagua Rainforest Garden, a mix of secondary forest and cultivated gardens that attracts a wide array of creatures. Search for mammals, including monkeys and sloths, amphibians like the red-eyed tree frog and blue jeans frog, plus a wide variety of birds—toucans and tanagers, honeycreepers, hummingbirds, hawks and more.

This evening, we make our first visit to Tapir Valley, home to Costa Rica's largest population of Baird's tapir, the biggest native land mammal in both Central and South America. After sunset, watch and hear the forest around us transform as nocturnal animals awaken for their nightly activities, including hunting, eating and looking for mates. Walk with our Expedition Leader and local guide through forest, open grasslands, and a wetland where the frog symphony is amazing! Search for amphibians, insects and mammals that are more difficult to spot during the day, including a variety of frogs, sleeping birds, kinkajous and elusive tapirs. Although tapir sightings are rather rare, the species is nocturnal, and it's exciting to find evidence of its presence when we know it is active in the forest.

Day 3

Tapir Valley / Heliconias Hanging Bridges

Dawn in a tapir sanctuary and a walk through the canopy

- Return to the private Tapir Valley Nature Reserve at first light
- Look for some of Costa Rica's best birdlife along the reserve's trails
- Cross suspension bridges for a canopy-level view of sloths and monkeys

Rise early to greet the dawn as we return to Tapir Valley Nature Reserve, spanning more than 220 acres of primary and secondary rainforest on the border of Volcano Tenorio National Park. Well off the standard tourist track, this private sanctuary was established to protect valuable habitat in rural northern Costa Rica for many wild species. Among them is the Baird's tapir, classified as endangered, but sightings in this area are increasing, and local farmers are joining efforts to protect its habitat. Although they may look more like a pig or elephant, tapirs are most closely related to horses and rhinos. Weighing up to 550 pounds with a thick, tough hide, tapirs are generally solitary creatures. Look for their footprints on the network of private hiking trails that lace the reserve, and gain an elevated perspective from several viewing platforms. While tapirs may be top draw, the reserve abounds with other wildlife, including some of the best birdwatching in Costa Rica.

Return to our hotel for a late breakfast followed by free time to explore more of the trails, on your own or with a local guide from the lodge. This afternoon, visit Heliconias Hanging Bridges in the foothills of Tenorio Volcano for an elevated encounter with the rich biodiversity of the tropical rainforest. On a private tour over a system of suspension bridges, get a bird's eye view of the dense forest canopy, learn which creatures inhabit various levels of vegetation, and look for howler monkeys and white-nosed coatis in the branches. We're almost certain to see sloths, as both two-toed and three-toed species are common here. On the forest floor, we might spy a tapir if we're lucky. And from our vantage point high above the ground, the distant views include Lake Nicaragua.

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Day 4

Nosara / Ostional Wildlife Reserve

Reach the Pacific coast during olive ridley nesting season

- Fly by private charter to the Nicoya Peninsula, one of the world's Blue Zones
- Settle into a secluded boutique hotel tucked within the coastal jungle
- Search Playa Ostional after dark for nesting olive ridley turtles

Transfer to a nearby airstrip this morning for our chartered flight to Nosara on the outer edge of the Nicoya Peninsula. The peninsula holds the distinction of being one of the world's rare Blue Zones, a region where residents enjoy an extraordinarily long, healthy lifespan, often 100 years or more, supported by a lifestyle in harmony with nature. Costa Rica's national motto *Pura Vida* may be at the heart of it, and we definitely tap into "pure life" in this uplifting natural setting. We have lunch at a restaurant overlooking the sea, then spend time exploring Playa Pelada, one of the most picturesque beaches in Costa Rica. A crescent of white sand fringes the bright blue bay, and if the tide is out, exposed tide pools may reveal sea life among the rocks.

Just inland from the coast lies our secluded boutique hotel where we spend the next three nights. Tucked within the jungle far from other development, this Michelin Key property manifests the vision of two renowned architects, showcasing design elements that "create a dialogue between structure and nature." Relax this afternoon to restore your energy for our after-dark adventure: a search for endangered sea turtles that come ashore to make their nests in the soft volcanic sand of Playa Ostional. Although we're never guaranteed to see them, our location and timing are excellent to observe an *arribada* (Spanish for "arrival") of thousands of turtles crawling onto the beach to lay their eggs. From June to November, olive ridley turtles return to where they were born to continue the cycle of life. After several years at sea, their instincts guide them to emerge from the water under the cover of night to dig nests and deposit their eggs, before returning to the ocean. During an arribada, they start arriving soon after sunset, and, depending on how many turtles are involved, they may keep coming until dawn the next morning.

Day 5

Ostional / Playa Samara

Hatchlings at dawn and dolphins on the Pacific

- Return before dawn hoping to see olive ridley hatchlings reach the sea
- Cruise the Pacific coast watching for dolphins and migrating humpback whales
- Head back to the beach after dark, watching for nesting turtles

Rising before dawn, we head back to the beach in hopes of seeing baby sea turtles hatching. If we are very fortunate, we may get to watch hundreds of tiny hatchlings scurrying to the water to begin the life cycle anew. This protected beach, one of the best places in the world to view this spectacle, is part of the Ostional National Wildlife Refuge, created in 1984 to protect this globally important nesting site. Turtles deposit 80 to 100 eggs in each nest, and over the course of a five-day arribada, nesting turtles may leave up to 10 million eggs on the beach of Ostional.

Return to our hotel for breakfast, then head off later this morning on a private cruise from Playa Garza in search of dolphins and whales. Spotted and bottlenose dolphins are on view year-round, and we're here in season to seek out humpback whales, too, which migrate to these waters from July to late October. Disembark at Playa Samara and return to our hotel where there's leisure time this afternoon to relax in the pool or enjoy a sauna or treatment at the Vitalis Spa. After dinner at a typical local restaurant, we head back to the beach after dark for another opportunity to look for sea turtles coming ashore. Even though we can never be sure we will see them, our trips are planned strategically around lunar cycles to maximize our chances to witness an arribada, either on Ostional Beach or nearby Punta Islita Beach.

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Day 6

Samara Beach

Mangrove waterways and a farewell to Costa Rica

- Listen for scarlet macaws and toucans in the dawn forest chorus
- Kayak the Ora River through mangrove tunnels for birds and monkeys
- Celebrate your Costa Rica adventure with a farewell dinner

If we haven't seen turtle hatchlings yet, we'll make one more pre-dawn outing, returning to the beach before the sun comes up in hopes of seeing them emerge from the sand. It's also an amazing experience to hear the beauty of tropical birds at daybreak, greeting sunrise in the forest with their exuberant chorus. We may see or listen to the calls of scarlet macaws, keel-billed toucans, motmots, various hummingbirds, tanagers and parrots.

Return to our hotel for breakfast, then head out for a morning kayak excursion through the lush mangrove ecosystem near Samara Beach. Paddling stable kayaks on the Ora River through the lush greenery, we explore hidden mangrove tunnels and look for wildlife like aquatic birds, monkeys and iguanas. Lunch awaits at the hotel, followed by a fascinating naturalist presentation on sea turtles this afternoon. All too soon, it's our last night together in Costa Rica, and we celebrate our many discoveries with a toast to "pura vida" as we gather for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 7

Liberia

Return to Liberia

- Drive to Liberia for homeward flights

After an early breakfast, depart at 8:00 am for Liberia International Airport, about a three-hour drive. For those with onward travels, departing flights should be booked no earlier than 1:30 pm.

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Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica Accommodations

From Secluded Nature Lodges, Search for Endangered Turtles, Tapirs, Sloths & Whales



Rio Celeste Hideaway

Tucked within a private 80-acre rainforest reserve, this luxurious ecolodge features beautifully appointed casitas, lush gardens and exclusive access to the turquoise Rio Celeste.



Esh Hotel

A minimalist jungle retreat where fire, ritual and reflection shape the experience—featuring open-air suites, seasonal cuisine, a three-level pool and a quiet, elemental atmosphere.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/central-america/costa-rica-turtles-tour/accommodations.

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Discover a Secret Side of Costa Rica

Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica

Costa Rica is deservedly popular among travelers drawn to its enticing beaches, tropical rainforests, active volcanoes and conservation ethos. But certain destinations can feel a little crowded. That's why we have designed this unusual trip that gets you far from the standard track, where you'll spend more time with wild creatures than other tourists. See what makes this itinerary so special:

1 **Explore a Far Less Traveled Part of Wild Costa Rica**

In our quest to get our travelers away from overtouristed zones and into more secluded encounters with nature, we have devised an itinerary that highlights corners of Costa Rica that are relatively undiscovered—yet filled with amazing wildlife and diverse natural habitats inviting exploration.

2 **Top Location & Season for Seeing Sea Turtles**

From the beach in Ostional National Wildlife Refuge, we have good odds to witness one of nature's most wondrous phenomena: a sea turtle *arribada* (Spanish for "arrival"), when pelagic marine turtles come ashore by the thousands to dig nests in the sand and lay their eggs. Then, under the cover of night, just before dawn, the tiny, vulnerable hatchlings break forth, scurry over the sand and into the ocean. We've timed our departures to align with this seasonal event, and while it's never guaranteed, our chances are prime.

3 **Your Best Chance to Spot Tapirs in Central America**

A special focus of our trip is Tapir Valley, a largely unknown private nature reserve that holds Costa Rica's largest population of endangered Baird's tapir. While we aren't guaranteed to see these rare and elusive animals, the odds that we may are better here than anywhere else! And we often do.

4 **Private Activities & Experiences Offer Exclusive Access**

Enjoy varied private nature encounters, including a guided tour of a sloth reserve, a botanic garden visit, a boat cruise in search of humpback whales and dolphins, and a guided kayaking excursion through a mangrove ecosystem. These opportunities—for our group alone—are designed to get you close to the wonders of nature in the most meaningful way.

5 **Premier Luxury Lodges Ensure Comfort in Wild Settings**

We're based at two high-end boutique accommodations that immerse you in nature, capitalizing on their remote and secluded locations, yet without compromising on quality, amenities and ambience. Enjoy private casitas with elegant nature-sourced furnishings; fresh, local gourmet meals; on-site spas and wellness facilities; and more aspects that make you feel thoroughly cared for.

6 **A Private Chartered Flight Maximizes Your Time in Nature**

Rather than spend five hours on rough, winding roads to transfer from the interior mountain rainforest to the Pacific Coast, we have chartered a private plane to whisk you there efficiently—meaning you get an extra day to enjoy nature as a result!

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7 **Private Transportation with a Window Seat for All**

Our small group shares a comfortable, air-conditioned mini bus throughout the trip, with room to spread out. We never fill our vehicles to capacity, so you'll have plenty of space for your personal items, and a guaranteed window seat.

8 **A Small Group Capped at Just 10 Travelers**

A small group is essential for the kind of intimate nature experiences this trip offers. With no more than 10 travelers, we can enjoy quiet solitude in the forest, count on a non-intrusive impact in wild destinations, and receive plenty of personal attention from our Expedition Leader.

9 **The World's Finest Naturalist Guides**

Natural Habitat Adventures has a well-deserved global reputation for employing the highest-quality guides in the industry. Our Expedition Leaders are highly trained professional naturalists with years of experience and access to resources from WWF's top scientists. You won't find more knowledgeable—or more personable—guides than those who work with us. Our philosophy is simple: a nature adventure is only as good as the guide who leads it, so we provide the very best! Read our Expedition Leader bios and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

10 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Tropical Safari**

Natural Habitat Adventures is proud to offer our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. Read our important promise for yourself!

11 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

12 **Natural Habitat Adventures Is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!

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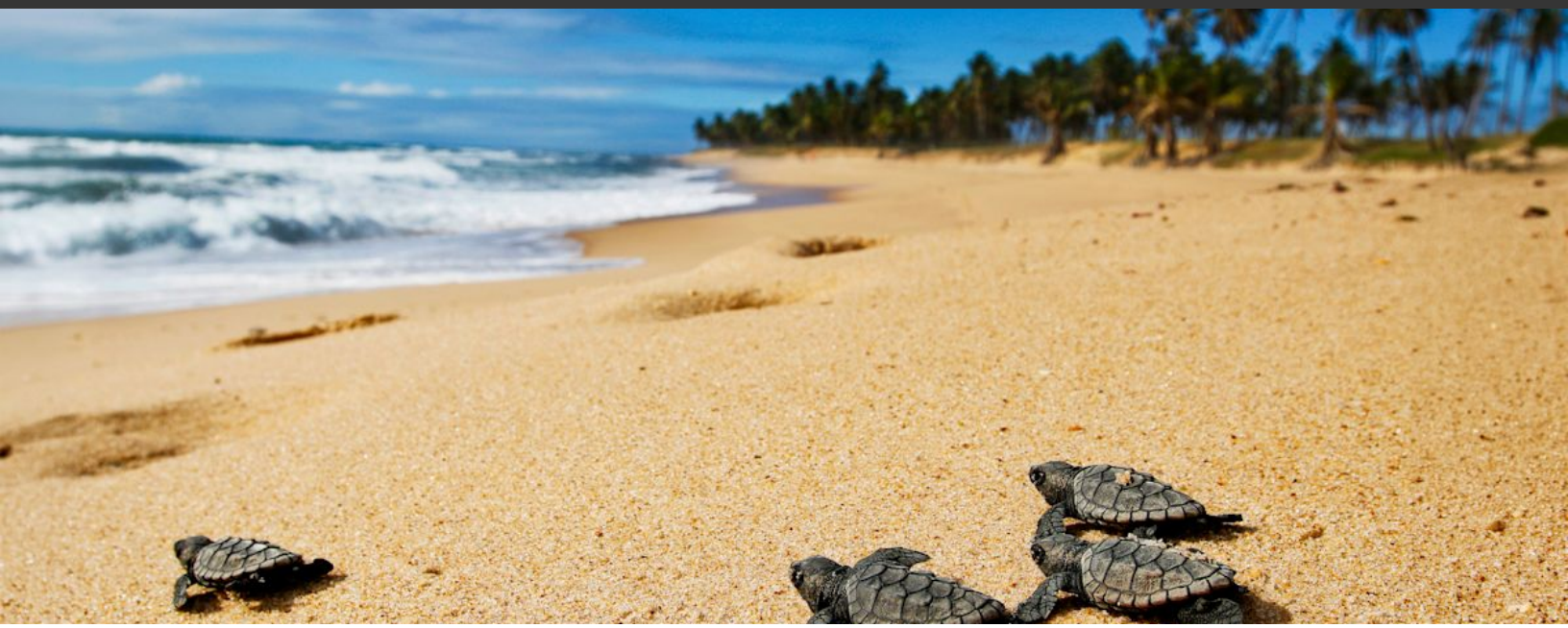

Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $8495

Group Size
Limited to 10 Travelers

Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica Dates, Pricing & Info

From Secluded Nature Lodges, Search for Endangered Turtles, Tapirs, Sloths & Whales

2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jun 22 - Jun 28, 2027	**$8495** +internal air	
Jul 22 - Jul 28, 2027	**$8795** +internal air	
Jul 25 - Jul 31, 2027	**$8495** +internal air	
Aug 20 - Aug 26, 2027	**$8495** +internal air	
Aug 23 - Aug 29, 2027	**$8495** +internal air	
Sep 19 - Sep 25, 2027	**$8795** +internal air	
Sep 22 - Sep 28, 2027	**$8795** +internal air	
Oct 18 - Oct 24, 2027	**$8495** +internal air	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jun 10 - Jun 16, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Jul 10 - Jul 16, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Jul 13 - Jul 19, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Aug 9 - Aug 15, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Aug 12 - Aug 18, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Sep 7 - Sep 13, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Sep 10 - Sep 16, 2028	**$9295** +internal air	
Oct 7 - Oct 13, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Oct 10 - Oct 16, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Nov 5 - Nov 11, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	
Nov 8 - Nov 14, 2028	**$8995** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/central-america/costa-rica-turtles-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Trip price includes: All accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and lodge staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, private transfers throughout the itinerary, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Internal air: One private charter flight from Upala to Punta Islita (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

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Important Information About This Trip

Our trip dates are chosen specifically to place the group in Nosara, near Ostional Beach, at an optimal time to witness an *arribada.* This event—when olive ridley turtles come onto the shore to lay their eggs—happens a few times between June and November along the coast of the Nicoya Peninsula. It usually occurs at night, but it can also happen at dawn, although it's rare. One arribada can last from 1-4 days. During this season, you will likely find at least one turtle every night laying its eggs, if not several or many. A few times during the season—historically at the start of the last quarter moon when the night is darkest before the new moon—an arribada takes place with thousands of turtles coming onto the shore to lay their eggs at the same time. The events usually lasts 2-4 days. Over the years, as climate change accelerates and human impacts on the environment grow, the arribada has become less predictable. However, our trip dates are specifically chosen to be in this prime location close to the appropriate moon cycle to increase our chances of catching the phenomenon.

While the odds of our group being at this location when an arribada occurs are rather random, the chance of seeing at least one turtle laying its eggs is high, given that we are there for three nights. The chance to see baby turtles hatch is also quite high, with two early-morning beach outings. We are also staying in an area where we can access two different beaches (Ostional Beach and Punta Islita Beach) where the arribada occurs, thus increasing our chances. The best time to see hatchlings is usually late August/early September, as arribadas will almost certainly occur in June and July, and hatchlings emerge roughly 40-55 days afterward.

While there is NEVER a guarantee to see turtles laying eggs or baby turtles hatching, we deliberately schedule our trips to maximize our chances of seeing them.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Liberia, Costa Rica. **You must arrive in Liberia by 3 pm on Day 1** in order to make it to the hotel in time for a 6 pm welcome dinner. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

You may depart Liberia any time after 1:30 pm on the final day.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



Sea Turtles & Wildlife of Northern Costa Rica Extensions

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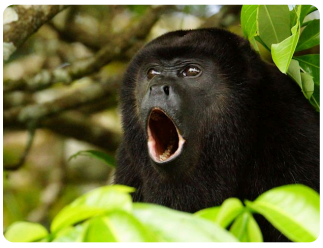

Costa Rica Wilderness Explorer

See another side of Costa Rica on this adventure into rainforests, mist-shrouded mountains and coastlines well off the typical tourist track, and enjoy remote and authentic ecolodges en route.

$8795 (+air)



Natural Jewels of Costa Rica

An all-encompassing nature expedition through the jungle canals of Tortuguero to the misty cloud forests of Monteverde and Corcovado's wild beaches—discover Costa Rica's exceptional biodiversity.

$11495 (+air)



Kingdom of the Monarchs

Each winter, millions of monarch butterflies migrate to the fir forests of Mexico's Central Highlands—walk among them, take amazing photos, and listen to the air hum with the vibration of their wings!

$5495

Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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