Costa Rica Pura Vida Cycling

Trip Code: PVMB

Version:

CYCLE	GUIDED GROUP	4 MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle from the highlands to the coast across the continental divide
- Enjoy a wildlife safari on the San Carlos River and a rainforest canopy hike at La Fortuna
- Cycle the stunning Pacific coast beaches of the Nicoya Peninsula
- Hike on the crater rim of Volcan Poas with its sulphur-rich lakes and fumaroles

AT A GLANCE

- 9 days cycling
- 340 kilometres
- 75% dirt road and forest track
- 25% sealed road
- Max altitude - 2708 metres
- Join at San Jose

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Experience the full range of fascinating flora and fauna of Costa Rica's species-rich cloud and mountain rain forests on this breathtaking 2-week cycling adventure. Sandwiched between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south and with both Caribbean and Pacific coastlines Costa Rica is a natural paradise and an Eldorado for cyclists. The country's sheer diversity ranges from smoking volcanoes to densely forested mountains, from pristine beaches to turquoise rivers, from dark lowland rainforests to dense cloud forests and vast savannahs.

This exciting bike tour completes a loop through the northern half of the country, mostly on dirt roads. From the capital, San Jose, we first visit Poas Volcano and then Rio San Carlos where we have a day's wildlife safari. Cycling on to La Fortuna beside Lake Arenal and in the shadow or Volcan Arenal (1633m), we will enjoy the canopy rainforest Sky Walk and a lava field hike before cycling across the province of Guanacaste to the Pacific coast. From Playa Avellana we cycle on the beach, looking out for nesting turtles, as we head south towards the stunning Nicoya Peninsula with plenty of opportunities to go for a swim. A free day beside the ocean at Playa Organos provides the opportunity to chill before returning to San Jose. Costa Rica's biodiversity is magical - let yourself be woken up early in the morning by the cries of the jungle birds and, after a day of biking, full of discovery, be spoiled in the evening in one of the cozy lodges with lovingly prepared local dishes. Costa Ricans call themselves 'Ticos' and they are happy to show you their country and their laid-back way of life, typified by the national saying - 'Pura Vida'.

The itinerary in 2026 will have some largely cosmetic changes.

Is this holiday for you?

ADVENTURE CYCLING. This tremendous holiday covers around 340 kilometres in 9 days of cycling (38 kms per day) with an average of around 600 metres of ascent each day. (In 2026 the daily distances and ascent figures will be a little lower). The cycling is mostly on dirt roads and forest tracks with some sections of quiet, surfaced rural road. There are also sandy seaside tracks and some sections where it may be possible to cycle on the beach. None of the cycling is particularly technical, but there is a reasonable amount of ascent and descent on several of the days. The support vehicle will shadow the group throughout the trip, although there are some sections where it may not be able to follow directly. Aside from the usual day-ride kit that you would carry on any ride at home, you will not be required to carry any additional equipment - this is adventure mountain biking at its purest. This holiday will provide

a fun challenge for regular weekend bikers with reasonable off-road skills. BIKE HIRE AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- San Jose Airport group transfer on Day 1 and Day 15
- English-speaking local cycling guide
- Support vehicle and driver
- All services and activities mentioned in the itinerary
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Departure Taxes (if applicable)
- Tips for local staff
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Bike hire

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in San Jose.

A single group transfer from / to San Jose Airport is provided. If your flights don't work with the group transfers, independent transfers can be pre-booked through the KE office and taxis are readily available. The journey from airport to hotel takes between 30 and 50 minutes depending on traffic.

Hotel and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 9 lunches and 3 dinners are included in the holiday price. You should budget US$10 - $15 per meal for non-included meals.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as **Water-to-Go**, which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

Costa Rican food is generally flavourful but fairly mild (not too spicy, unless of course you choose to add the local chilli sauce). Breakfasts may include delicious local fruits such as pineapple, watermelon and papaya, as well as bread, eggs and 'gallo pinto' which is the local dish of black beans and rice. Lunch can vary from sandwiches to fish/meat dishes or local tamale (a dish wrapped in banana leaves). Dinners are usually based around beans and rice and will be accompanied by vegetables or fried plantains, with meat or fish. There are western style dishes available too. Dessert is usually a selection of fruits or a small sweet dish such as 'Tres leches' (a dessert made of milk prepared three ways). On the whole the tap water is safe to drink, there are some exceptions to this so please check with your guide on arrival. Fresh fruit drinks are often served with your meals.

Accommodation

We will spend two nights in San Jose in a central 3 star hotel. All other nights are spent in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels and resorts, at one of which (in Sarapique) the accommodation is in comfortable 'tents' on platforms in the forest. Some of the hotels have swimming pools.

Group Leader & Support Staff

An English-speaking local cycling guide will lead the trip. There will also be a support vehicle and driver.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

Spending Money

We estimate that US$400 should be sufficient to cover your spending requirements including those meals which you will pay for directly, plus tips for your guide and driver(s), airport tax (on departure from San Jose - if applicable) and other incidental expenses such as snacks and alcoholic drinks. US dollars can be used directly to purchase most goods and services in Costa Rica. It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Colones) outside the country. Credit and bank cards can be used to withdraw cash at ATMs in San Jose or at the airport. Credit cards can also be used at most restaurants in San Jose, and are particularly useful for more expensive souvenirs.

Your Bike

If you are taking your own bike, we suggest that a 'hardtail' mountain bike with front suspension is appropriate for this holiday. It should have a good range of gears and we recommend you fit fast-rolling all-rounder or semi-slick tyres which work well on the surfaced roads and non-technical trails typically found on our **Adventure Cycling** holidays.

Since you are depending on your bike to transport you throughout your holiday, it's important to ensure it is in good working order. If you are not mechanically minded, get your local bicycle dealer to service it for you.

Please contact us if you are unsure about the suitability of your bike.

Bike Hire

Bike hire is available locally for this holiday. Our local agent has 2018 model Scott Scale 970 29er hardtail mountain bikes. These bikes have Shimano components 2x10 gearing and disc brakes. The cost of hiring this model of bike for the duration of the trip, including insurance against accidental damage is £350. Our agent can also provide new Scott e-bikes. The cost of hiring an e-bike for the duration of the trip, including insurance against accidental damage is £700. Prices subject to change. If you tell us which bike you wish to hire and the size of bike you need we will reserve one for you and add the cost of bike hire to your final invoice. We must stress that your hire contract will be with our local agent and KE cannot be held responsible for any issues arising from your bike hire. Please note that the hire bikes have flat pedals. If you usually ride clipped-in, you will need to take your own SPD (or similar) shoes and pedals. You might also want to take your own saddle, which will go a long way towards making the hire bike feel like your own bike. You will also need to take your own helmet, which must be worn at all times when riding.

Travelling With Your Bike

Airlines require that you pack your bike properly for travel and for this holiday we recommend that you use either soft bike bag or a purpose-made bike box or case. Whether you are using a bag or a case, you will need to partially dismantle your bike to pack it. Please note that bike bags or boxes will be placed in secure storage and will not travel with us during the course of the trip.

Please contact us if you have any questions about travelling with your bike.

Vehicle Support

The group will be accompanied throughout by a support vehicle which will carry the group's baggage and pick up any group members who wish to take a break from cycling at any time. The local cycling leader and the support vehicle driver will watch over the group and will carry mobile phones, allowing you to contact them in the case of a breakdown or other incident. There will be regular stops to allow for regrouping and exchange of clothing and refilling of water bottles. The support vehicle may not be able to follow the group for some short sections.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

If your flights pass through the USA, even if only in transit, you will require either a visa or an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation). Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ESTA under certain conditions*. This must be done online via https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov, no later than 72 hours prior to travel and applies whether entering the country by sea or by air. You will need to have a biometric passport to apply for an ESTA. The fee is currently US$40 *(as of 30/09/25).* Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding.

*If you have visited Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen since 2011 or have dual nationality with any of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. You will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate instead. Additionally, if you have travelled to or have been in Cuba since the 12th of January 2021, you will not be eligible for an ESTA visa waiver and will need to apply for a US visa. You should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need.

When completing the ESTA application form you will be asked to enter your 'Point of Contact' information. This is not required if you are only transiting through the USA.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

UK citizens will require an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD$7 and you should apply for it at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office

Entry requirements can change regularly so please ensure you have the most up to date information before travelling by checking visa entry requirements at the relevant embassy in your country of residence: (US Embassy in London: http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html)

Visa Costa Rica

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The unit of currency in Costa Rica is the Costa Rican colon.

Preparing for your Holiday

Cycling mostly on dirt roads, this trip will provide a reasonable challenge and the better conditioned you are the more you will enjoy it. We suggest that you adopt a sensible weekly exercise regime and include some long cycle rides in hilly country (and on dirt roads and/or forest tracks) to ensure you are physically capable of taking part in this trip. Although cycling is the best activity to prepare you for this holiday, running and swimming are also good for developing aerobic fitness and stamina.

Climate

Costa Rica lies in the tropics and is generally warm and sunny with average daytime temperatures between 25 and 30°C and nighttime temperatures falling to around 20°C. The driest (and hottest) season is from December to April whilst May to November is known as the 'green season' and is a more pleasant time to visit the country. Late afternoon rainfall is a feature of the May to November season, but the cloud build up is usually short-lived and there is also lots of sunshine. At the high points of the trip, on the crater rim of Volcan Poas for example, temperatures might be as low as 15°C.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Costa Rica. Lonely Planet
- Costa Rica. National Geographic Traveller

Maps

Costa Rica 1:300,000. Freytag and Berndt

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through our international partner. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

Equipment Information

Equipment List

For this holiday you will need your usual cycling clothing, including shoes, cycling gloves and helmet (which must be worn at all times when cycling).

Whether you are hiring a bike or taking your own, we recommend that you take the usual day-ride essentials of: mobile phone, multi-tool, mini-pump, tyre levers, spare tubes and puncture repair kit.

Bike Wear

- Cycling helmet
- Cycling shoes
- Daypack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack (e.g. Camelbak)
- Water bottles or bladder - min. 2 litres water capacity
- Water purification tablets
- Padded (baggy) cycling shorts
- Long leg cycling trousers or leg warmers
- Base-layer – short sleeve cycling tops
- Mid-layer - long sleeved cycling tops
- Fleece jacket or jumper
- Lightweight windproof top
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Regular biking gloves
- Long-fingered biking gloved
- Buff
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (inc. total bloc for lips/nose)
- Camera

Other Stuff

- Travel and off-the-bike clothing and footwear
- Wash bag, towel, toiletries, including anti-bacterial handwash
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Swimwear
- Basic First Aid kit and personal medication
- Chamois cream (e.g. Assos/Ozone)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Spares

If you are hiring a bike you do not need to bring any spares. The hire bikes are provided in good condition and a supply of spares is carried. If you are taking your own bike, you should consider taking a minimum of spares, including a couple of spare spokes (for each wheel if they are different), spare brake blocks (or brake disc pads), chain links/chain connector, rear derailleur hanger and any non-standard parts specific to your bike.

Repairs

Whilst not essential, it is a good idea that you familiarise yourself with how to carry out at least some basic repairs to your bike e.g. changing an inner tube and fixing a puncture. Your bike guide will be happy to help with repairs and general maintenance, but being able to carry out a simple repair yourself could save the inconvenience of having to wait for assistance.

Hydration and Energy Snacks

You should take suitable water bottles or a hydration pack and you should also consider taking a small supply of the gels, power bars or sports drink mix that you would normally use on a ride at home.

Please contact us if you have any questions about your equipment.

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in San Jose, Costa Rica. A single transfer is included from / to San jose Airport.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to San Jose, Costa Rica. The flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving the later the same day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK the following morning.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Simply put, we have the best itinerary. Combining the best of vibrant Costa Rica's northern volcanic heartland, from Poas to Arenal, with an extended stay on the country's palm-fringed Pacific coast, this is a fantastically varied holiday which will appeal to keen cyclists and nature enthusiasts alike.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 17/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change