



Costa Rica

Coast to Coast Expedition

25 Days

This fantastic 25 day school expedition brings out the best Costa Rica has to offer. In spite of its relatively small size, the country is one of the most vibrant and biologically diverse places in the world. We'll travel the local way, as we uncover a side of Costa Rica that few experience.

Journey through virgin rainforest, get hands on at a biological reserve station, spend a week in a local community in the highlands, take a night hike through the cloud forest, raft through magnificent pristine river canyons and zip line through tree canopies high above the forest floor. This expedition really has it all and is an excellent introduction to travel in Central America.



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Expedition Itinerary

- Days 1 - 2** **Depart the UK, Arrive San Jose** LD
Fly from the UK to San Jose, Costa Rica, where our local staff and vehicle meet us at the airport. We then head straight to our hotel for refreshments and an early night in preparation for tomorrow.
- Days 3 - 5** **Quepos - Ocean Kayaking - Snorkelling - Diving - National Park** BLD
After breakfast, we depart for the dive centre in Quepos on the Pacific Coast, renowned as one of the most beautiful areas in Costa Rica. Set just north of the Manuel Antonio National Park which is famous for its abundant wildlife, insects and birds we spend the next 2.5 days taking part in a discovery dive program at Oceans Unlimited, a five-star International PADI Dive Centre. This program involves watching a film on all elements of diving and discussing important points with a PADI Professional. Under supervision we discover how easy it is to use scuba in a pool and practice some basic skills. When comfortable we move on to do two ocean dives in the Manuel Antonio National Park! The rich sea life here includes snapper, white tip reef sharks, sea turtles, parrot and puffer fish to name but a few. This is a great way to acclimatise to the new environment and it may be that we have time to visit the National Park to view some land based wildlife too.
- Day 6** **Quepos – Esquipulas - Naranjillo - Trek & Mountain Bike** BLD
After an early breakfast, we will start our journey to the Caribbean Coast. Setting off on our bikes climbing into the steep mountains and beautiful valleys of the sparsely populated Pacific Coast. In the small town of Esquipulas we have a rest and snack then prepare our day packs for the next leg of the journey. Trading our wheels for hiking boots, we continue by trekking into the cool mountains of Central Costa Rica. After mountain biking for 25 km and trekking for 14km, you will be pleased to arrive at the overnight camp in the valley of Naranjillo.
- Day 7** **Naranjillo - Santa Maria de Dota - Trek and Mountain Bike** BLD
An early breakfast and our day begins with a trek towards the Continental Divide with the challenging and infamous "Cemetery Hill" - a strenuous 13-kilometre climb. We then head for the pueblo (village) of San Lorenzo switching to mountain bikes along the way. The day finishes in the quaint village of Santa Maria where we refortify with some typical Costa Rican fare and rest up in comfortable local cabins. Today the mountain biking and trekking will be split into an even 13 km each.
- Day 8** **Santa Maria de Dota - Continental Divide – Orosi – Mountain Biking** BLD
Today we tackle the hardest, steepest climb of our adventure. The challenge which awaits us is mountain biking a 14 km up-hill stretch to the Continental Divide, bringing us to an altitude of 2,330 meters - the highest peak of our journey. Following the rule that everything that goes up must come down, the remainder of the day is mountain biking at its best - mostly downhill on dirt roads and single-track trails. We finish the afternoon in the beautiful Orosi Valley where rich pastures and dark green forests of coffee carpet the land. Here we rest for the night in the town of Orosi.
- Days 9 - 15** **Orosi – Turrialba – Project** BLD
Today we will transfer by private bus to the project site in Turrialba, about 1.5 hour's drive away. Here we meet the construction manager, have a brief on what we will be doing for the next six days and set up camp. Living on site, the group should be prepared to get tucked in with cooking, cleaning and washing up for each other to ensure everyone stays well fed and watered.



Day 16	Turrialba - El Nido del Tigre - Mountain Biking & White Water Rafting Time for some more adrenalin filled activities! The white-water rafting on the Pacuare River is unbeatable! Mountain Biking (20km) Whitewater Rafting (10km). After breakfast, we continue biking towards the white-water rafting “put-in” at La Cruz, the gateway to the raging Pacuare River. Here we have lunch and embark on a white-water rafting journey through pristine rainforest spotted with waterfalls. The rapids section of the river is approximately 30 kilometres of Class II-IV rapids (this is split over 2 days, see day 18). By afternoon we arrive at our comfortable riverside camp, El Nido del Tigre. Nestled between the sounds of the rainforest and the hum of the river, take time to explore this lush environment first hand, looking out for toucans overhead or simply relaxing in a hammock to the sounds of the river.	BLD
Day 17	El Nido del Tigre – Jungle Explore Hiking today we spend some quality time at this unique location on the banks of the Pacuare River. This area of rainforest is maintained as much as possible in its natural state. The camp takes its name from the giant patches of ginger plants that carpet the floor of the main area. From the centre of the camp, trails radiate out to secret areas of rainforest, waterfalls and swimming holes. We share this camp in the heart of the rain forest with an abundance of wildlife from Toucans to the tiny Poison Dart Frog. We can chill in the central gazebo on a hammock or enjoy a ‘Herbal Essence’ moment as we shower in water, fed through bamboo and surrounded by jungle.	BLD
Day 18	El Nido del Tigre - Finca Pacuarito - White Water Rafting (III & IV) Today the Pacuare takes us through virgin rainforest, cascading waterfalls and river carved canyons. Manoeuvring our way through the exhilarating rapids we get a grandstand view of intricacies of the rainforest at the river’s edge. Along the way we take time out to do some hiking to some spectacular waterfalls and have lunch on the shore. We take-out the boats in the heart of banana plantation country at Finca Pacuarito, where we rest for the night before an early start in the morning.	BLD
Days 19 - 21	Pacuarito - Pacuare Reserve – Turtle Conservation Project A short ride and we are at the Caribbean coast. We will be staying at the Pacuare Reserve north of Limon, the regional capital. The reserve undertakes work with a number of local fauna, from two and three toed sloths as well as monkeys; even Jaguars have been spotted. But there is only one thing on our mind, Turtles! We are going to spend the next 3 days working with and for the critically endangered Leatherback Sea Turtle! The type of work we will be doing is helping research assistants who lead night patrols on the beach, taking data from the nesting turtles including tagging and relocating the nests if necessary. Daily early morning walks to count the turtle tracks and check status of nests, release hatchlings and conduct post-hatching excavations will take place. It will mean long hours and hard work, but it will be extremely rewarding. There is no guarantee working with nature but the sight of the hatchlings (who may have struggled for three days) emerging from the sand and scampering to the sea will be a wonderful sight especially given their survival rate of only 1 in 1000! We will also get stuck in with an ‘Environment Clean Up’ and help to clear waste from the beaches.	BLD
Days 22 - 24	Cahuita National Park – Sloths Chocolate and Surf! - San Jose Time to enjoy the taste of the Caribbean as we transfer to the small and relaxed town of Cahuita, situated close to the Panama border. The vibe and food here is very much Caribbean but the wildlife remains very Costa Rican! Over the next 2 days we enjoy a Chocolate and Medicinal Plant tour in the Cahuita National Park, with a chance to a visit the Sloth Sanctuary too. We even get a chance to hone our surf skills too and enjoy the beach. Cahuita National Park is a lush wet environment and home to sloths, monkeys, iguanas, snakes, Morphos butterflies and much more!	BLD
Day 25	Return Flight to London Depending on which route we take can have an effect on the days which you arrive and return to the UK. North America will mean a 25-day trip and a south American airline would mean a 26 day expedition.	B

Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. We are far from perfect, but we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Trees for Life

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 4



Fitness is important at this grade, which compares to extended walking in mountainous terrain such as the Lakes or Snowdonia, for up to three to five days in a row. It is likely that significant sections of a trip will involve walking and trekking with some days up to eight hours. Some of the trip could be at altitudes of up to 4,500m, but the itinerary will be designed with appropriate acclimatisation in mind. Be prepared for significant possible variations in temperatures throughout the tour. There is not usually time to 'get fit' on these treks, so a two to four-month fitness improvement programme would ensure you get the most out of the trip.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



Travel Safety & Other Expedition Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to your expedition. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

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