



ITINERARY | DAY-BY-DAY

CAREER ENRICHMENT



Education Systems Journey to Costa Rica

8 days / 7 nights

June 9-16, 2024

\$3,499 (Based on double occupancy/land only)

\$999 (single supplement)

Pura Vida! Join us in Costa Rica for an educational adventure. Visit local schools and learn about the education system in Costa Rica. Explore and soak in the delightful hot springs in Arenal. Learn about sustainable farming, organic cooking, and responsible land stewardship through participation in farm and other ecological sites.

Focus on Professional Interaction

- ✓ **Meaningful interaction and collaboration** will immerse you in local life in Costa Rica and allow a chance for participation in education focused visits across a range of schools in Guanacaste and San Jose.
- ✓ We are collaborating with **Creciendo Juntos** who work with 19 communities in Guanacaste to increase access to health, education and training, empowering residents of the region to achieve a sustainable future and better quality of life. **Your participation will directly support their organization through a donation to provide much needed supplies.** You will have a chance to meet with their team plus visit a local school or two, their technical training center, local clinic, and *community home gardens* to get involved in a hands-on project.
- ✓ A meeting with the **Minister of Education** will be requested.

Focus on Community & Culture

- ✓ Take in the beauty and serenity of the country including an exploration of San José city and some of its historical sites including the **National Theater**,
- ✓ Visit **Los Pumas Rescue Center** in the rainforest area of Cañas to visit their wildlife sanctuary and the important work they do to protect the territory from deforestation as well as the many animals in the habitat.
- ✓ Relax in the delightful **hot springs** below Arenal Volcano.
- ✓ Have a fun day exploring an **agroecological farm** in Fortuna including a tour and change to try milking cows by hand. Enjoy farm-fresh products for lunch one afternoon.
- ✓ Meet the **Maleku indigenous people** and learn more about their culture and traditions including learning a traditional dance.

What's Included:

- 3-4* accommodations throughout
- All transportation and activities outlined in the itinerary including meals mentioned
- Local English-speaking guide throughout
- Reusable water bottle
- Group transfers and driver & restaurant tips
- 24/7 customer support during travel

Not Included:

- Personal expenses at the hotels including room and spa services
- Meals not specified
- Tips for national guide, maids and bellboys
- Passport renewal or issuance
- Flights to Costa Rica





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📍 United States

DAY 1– Sunday, June 9, 2024 Fly to Costa Rica

Make your way to Costa Rica today. No activities are planned as most flights arrive late in the day. One group transfer will be provided for those arriving around the same time this evening. *Private transfers are an additional expense.*

Hotel Bougainville is nestled within an award-winning ten-acre tropical botanical garden that attracts many of the birds and butterflies that Costa Rica is famous for. Just 10 minutes from downtown San Jose they are well located for your short visit to this city. They have free Wi-Fi, onsite dining included free buffet breakfast, a gym, solar heated pool, tennis courts and a bar.

Maybe get up early and take a stroll through their gardens prior to breakfast. The garden is behind the tennis courts and the ideal place to see the flora and fauna including the “bobo” bird with its bluish-green body and long tail. They have 600 species of plants including 51 different types of orchids, 17 species of palm, 29 types of lilies, 47 type of cacti and much more.

Dinner is on your own this evening if not provided during your flight.

Overnight: 3* Hotel Bougainvillea (or similar)
Included meals: n/a

📍 San José, Costa Rica

DAY 2 – Monday, June 10 Welcome to Costa Rica!

Note: Breakfast will be served daily during your stay at your various hotels.

After an early breakfast take part in a short **orientation and welcome briefing** on Costa Rica. This briefing covers an introduction to your local guide, some historical background, and current information on Costa Rica’s society and economy.

This morning a meeting will be requested to visit a **local school** or meet with a local educator to talk about the education system in Costa Rica. The primary objective of this journey is to foster educational and cultural learning opportunities for both the traveling educational professional and education professionals in Costa Rica and to develop positive relationships between educators in the United States and Costa Rica.

After a stop for lunch at a local restaurant, you will enjoy a tour of San José. Discover the culture and history of Costa Rica’s capital city with a visit to some of its historic residential areas, such **Barrio Amón** and the local parks surrounding it. Continue past the metropolitan cathedral, local market, and the National Theater, an icon of the San José of the late 19th century. You will visit the **Gold Museum**, where you can see original pre-Columbian gold pieces of art craft and jewelry.

A **welcome dinner** will be provided this evening at a local restaurant.

Return to the hotel and overnight.

Overnight: 3* Hotel Bougainvillea (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner





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📍 Guanacaste, Costa Rica

DAY 3 – Tuesday, June 11 Travel to Guanacaste

This morning the group will depart for Guanacaste. But first make a stop to visit **Palo Verde National Park**. Start with a delicious cup of coffee, fruits, and natural beverages in the middle of the grass plains of Guanacaste. Hacienda El Viejo is surrounded by sugarcane crops and the most important river in the Blue Zone of Costa Rica, Rio Tempisque. Explore the magnificent river which borders the Park. You may see a wide variety of birds and other animals including howler monkeys, white face Capuchins, crocodiles, and other species in their natural habitat.

Next you will learn about **producing high quality Rum** from their purest sugar cane. View the extracting and cooking of the sugar cane juice. Their Rickhouse awaits your taste buds, which age and improve the flavors of Sabandi Rum in its oak barrels.

Enjoy the flavors of an invigorating typical Costa Rican buffet lunch this afternoon.

Upon arrival in **Guanacaste**, you will check into your boutique beachside hotel.

Bahia del Sol is just a few steps from the tranquil waters of Potrero Bay. Guest rooms have AC, minibar, safe, hairdryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi and more. They have onsite dining and a gorgeous pool just steps from the beach.

Dinner is on your own arrangement this evening.

Overnight: 4* Bahia del Sol (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch

📍 Guanacaste, Costa Rica

DAY 4 – Wednesday, June 12 Professional Program and School Visit

Enjoy an early breakfast before heading out for your professional visits today.

Start off the morning with an orientation meeting with **Creciendo Juntos**. Learn about their organization and all the hard work they put into supporting the people in this area. Since 2001, Creciendo Juntos has been working with 19 communities, in Guanacaste that surround Peninsula Papagayo, to increase access to health, education and training, empowering residents of the region to achieve a sustainable future and better quality of life. To date, there have been thousands of participants sponsored courses, workshops and training activities, benefiting children, adolescents, adults, and senior citizens, and broadening the horizon of job opportunities, self-employment, and entrepreneurship for residents in the region.

Later this morning you will visit a **local school** before having lunch with Elsa Bonilla who is Director of Creciendo Juntos at a local restaurant.

This afternoon you will continue your explorations with a site tour to some of their various projects like the **National Technical Training Institute**, which was set up to assist residents of the communities that are beyond high school age and high school students who do not enroll in college. Through a partnership with the National Technical Training Institute (INA) more than 6500 people already had a degree in a technical career and acquired skills, which has allowed them to take advantage of job opportunities offered in the area.

They will organize a walk through the training center, **technology HUB**, and the nearby **clinic**. The three facilities are located within a two-block area.

Dinner will be provided this evening at the hotel.

Overnight: 4* Bahia del Sol (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



📍 Guanacaste, Costa Rica

DAY 5 – Thursday, June 13 Professional Program and Site Visits

We have requested a visit to a second **school** this morning. Since 2001 the non-profits programs have spread to support 21 schools, encompassing about 300 teachers and over 5300 students. The core goal of this non-profit is directed toward (i) providing ongoing teacher training, (ii) improving physical facilities, and (iii) educating students and parents about the need of education. There will be an opportunity to **assist with any project** that they need help with like gardening or just interacting with the children in various art and crafts projects, games, or sports.

We have requested an opportunity to have lunch with local school faculty and students.

This afternoon you will visit their **El Triunfo Community Home Gardens** to get involved with a hands-on project of some sort to learn about their agricultural project. Names one of the top agricultural projects in the country, the award-winning home garden initiative supported in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. An offshoot of need during the pandemic due to great loss of jobs the effort helped support neighbors in need and has over 5,000 linear meters of beds in various communities include this one in Guanacaste.

Dinner is on your own this evening.

Overnight: 4* Bahia del Sol (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch



📍 Arenal, Costa Rica

DAY 6 – Friday, June 14 Transfer to Arenal

Check out and continue your journey to Arenal Lake. On the way stop in Cañas to visit **Los Pumas Rescue Center**. It was created in the early 60's, to work as a wildlife sanctuary and protection territory when the deforestation of Guanacaste was booming. At that time, many wild animals lost their habitat or were captured by the inhabitants of the area to have them as pets in the house or traffic them illegally. Nowadays, the center is not only one of the oldest of its kind on the country, but also a pioneer in wildlife protection in a national scale.



After a local lunch have an excursion to the **Hanging Bridges**, located in a 618-acre reserve of primary forest they are the perfect example of what ecotourism is. Nature lovers all around the world come to visit this unique attraction. It has a 3 km trail through the rainforest that allows you to take in nature's beauty at its most pristine state. With 14 bridges from 5 to 100 meters long, one of them located at a height of 45 meters, you will get a 360° view of the tropical rainforest as you explore with your guide.

Continue on to get settled at the hotel before a visit to the delightful **Ecotermales Hot Springs** this evening. The thermal springs are of a magmatic origin, so have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and muscle relaxing properties due to the high mineral content. Relax in the different thermal pools in this gorgeous natural paradise. They have pools with different temperatures for your choosing.



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Lomas del Volcán is a small hotel located within a 370-acre cattle farm that sits at the foot of the majestic Arenal volcano. It is surrounded by lush tropical rainforests and features 47 comfortable bungalows with two terraces each, offering spectacular views of the Volcano and the primary forest. Guest rooms have a minibar, coffee maker, air conditioning, and safe. The hotel has a restaurant, bar, laundry, swimming pool, hot tub, and room service.

Enjoy dinner onsite this evening before returning to the hotel.

Overnight: 3* Lomas del Volcán (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

📍 **Arenal, Costa Rica**

DAY 7 – Saturday, June 15 Community Immersion

This morning the group will head out for a fun day exploring the area after breakfast.

A quick 10-minute drive away you will arrive at **Campesino Agroecological Farm** in Agua Azul de La Fortuna, owned by a local family.

Enjoy a morning tour after a welcome drink prepared with fresh fruits of the area. Your guide will highlight the main objectives of the farm, which include the promotion of the sustainable use of natural resources and preservation of Costa Rican customs and traditions.

After this traditional Costa Rican families warm welcome, you will get to **try milking cows** by hand. They also have chickens, rabbits, geese, quail and more.

Next, participate in the process of **extracting cane juice** which is combined with a variety of ingredients such as liquor, peppermint, and other organic products obtained from the farm. Enjoy a tasting of artisan liquor and other traditional products obtained through the fermentation process while they share how they show you the distillation process of artisanal liquor in the traditional Costa Rican way.

Later this afternoon, visit a **small archaeological ranch** to see different indigenous tools that are used in the creation of artisanal cocoa. Taste the fruit and the completed chocolate before enjoying a visit to their orchid and the medicinal plant garden.



Share a delicious lunch made with farm-fresh products such as coffee, cheese, tortillas, hash, and more.

End your afternoon learning about the **Maleku indigenous people**. They will teach you about their cultures and traditions and you will have an opportunity to participate in one of their dances. In addition to tours, the Maleku also create indigenous art to sell; carvings, paintings of wooden masks and *jucara* (bowls made from gourds), and musical instruments are their most popular items.

Return to the hotel for some **free time** to relax and enjoy your hotel.

Your farewell dinner this evening will be a lovely chance to chat about your journey and share your favorite memories with your new friends.

Overnight: 3* Lomas del Volcán (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

📍 **Departure**

DAY 8 – Sunday, June 16 Say Farewell to Costa Rica!

Fly back to the U.S. today with arrival the same day. A group transfer to the airport will be provided today.

Included meals: Breakfast



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📍 San Jose Area

Hotel Bougainvillea

Contiguo a la Escuela
Santo Domingo
Costa Rica

Telephone: +506-2244-1414

<https://www.hb.co.cr/>



📍 Guanacaste

Bahia del Sol

Playa Potrero
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Costa Rica

Telephone: + 506-2654-4671

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📍 Arenal

Lomas del Volcán Hotel

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