

Grand American Adventures

USA, CANADA,
ALASKA AND
LATIN AMERICA

www.trekamerica.com

Surf n'Volcano



Tour Overview

This unique tour of Costa Rica puts you right in the heart of the exquisite beauty of Costa Rica's famous parks. Zip-line in the cloud forest of Monteverde; listen to the rumble of Arenal Volcano; walk to the perfect crater of the surreal Rincón de la Vieja National Park, and enjoy the beautiful beaches of Sámara.

Starting with an easy walk at Universidad de la Paz' nature reserve, we continue towards Puriscal for a truly unique experience, a Survivor Adventure course through the jungle. Swing like Tarzan across the river to get the adrenalin flowing as your group competes for victory! There will also be time for an optional visit to Turu Ba Ri Adventure Park, whose jungle canopy tours will make you say "Pura Vida!"

Next up, Monteverde. Home to incredible biodiversity (and some fun nightlife), there will be plenty of time to explore the famous cloud forest. For some extra adrenaline, try the zip-line tour among the cloud-drenched canopies and across open ravines!

From the forest to one of the most active volcanoes in the hemisphere, Arenal Volcano will blow you away. You can hike or horseback ride to hidden waterfalls before relaxing in the natural hot springs later in the evening! Be sure to watch the night skies for the volcano's natural pyrotechnics!

From Arenal, we travel to the undiscovered Parque Nacional Rincón de la Vieja. Here we will explore the park with a guided full-day trek through the enchanting lowland forest and up to the barren lunar landscape... culminating with an incredible view at the rim of a smoking cauldron. It is a challenging hike, but well worth the effort!

Heading south, we arrive at the beautiful Pacific Ocean and Sámara beach. In Sámara, the soft sound of gentle waves is a perennial backdrop to your adventure. The perfect place to relax and enjoy Costa Rica's beautiful coastline: snorkel, kayak, swim or try a surf lesson in the warm Pacific Ocean before finishing this journey in San José.

Tour Itinerary

- 1 San José >> Puriscal
- 2 Monteverde (HP)
- 3 Monteverde (HP)
- 4 Arenal
- 5 Arenal
- 6 Rincón de la Vieja
- 7 Rincón de la Vieja
- 8 Sámara (HP)
- 9 Sámara (HP)
- 10 Sámara >> San José

HP = Hotel night included in the price

Tour Essentials

Duration:	10 days
When to go:	Year Round
Accommodation:	5 camping nights 4 hotel nights
Meals:	Included when camping Other meals paid locally
Start/Finish:	Tour starts at 07.30 and finishes approx 17.00 in the lobby of our San José area hotel

Is This Tour For Me?

Beautiful Pacific beaches, pristine cloud forest, active volcanoes and rugged landscapes await you on this 11 day adventure. With half of the trip camping, you will enjoy Costa Rica's nature to the fullest!

Included Highlights

- ✓ 'Survivor' Adventure Course
- ✓ Natural volcanic hot springs
- ✓ Guided full-day hike in Rincon de la Vieja
- ✓ Scenic walks and hikes in Arenal and Monteverde
- ✓ Wildlife viewing
- ✓ All hotel breakfasts and meals whilst camping
- ✓ Professional bilingual tour leader, camp fees/equipment & transportation



Surf n'Volcano Tour Information

DAILY ITINERARY

Day: 1 Puriscal (camping)

Leaving the capital of San José we will warm up with an easy walk through the Peace University's Natural Reserve. We then continue on to the Puriscal area to experience their "survivor adventure course". There will be a selection of challenges for the team and you can even test your courage on a Tarzan-style swing.

Days: 2 /3 Monteverde (hotel)

In the morning, there will be an optional visit to the Turu Ba Ri eco-adventure park. Try an exhilarating canopy tour or even a hike through the thick forest. Onto Monteverde via paved and dirt roads, it will be a bumpy ride, but well worth it! There will be ample time to explore the famous cloud forest, home to many species of insects, amphibians & mammals that live in the trees. For a real adventure and some serious adrenaline, try the zip-line tour among the cloud drenched canopies and across open ravines!

Days: 4/5 Arenal National Park Area (camping)

Continue your adventure to Arenal Volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in the hemisphere. You can hike, mountain bike or visit one of the various hot springs that adorn the area.

Days: 6/7 Rincón de la Vieja (camping)

From Arenal, we travel northwest to the dynamic Rincón de la Vieja National Park with its boiling mud and clouds of sulphurous vapours emanating from beneath the exotic foliage on the forest floor. Here we have a full day guided trek to explore enchanting lowland forest and barren lunar landscape that marks the rim of the smoking cauldron.

Days: 8/10 Sámara & San José (hotel)

What better way to finish our journey through Costa Rica than at beautiful Sámara beach. In Sámara, the soft sound of gentle waves is a perennial backdrop to your adventure. It is a perfect place to relax and enjoy Costa Rica's beautiful coastline. Horse ride, snorkel, sea kayak, learn to surf or swim in the warm, clear Pacific Ocean before returning to San José.

Tour ends at 18:00 hrs in San José on day 10.

CORCOVADO JUNGLE LODGE PACKAGE

Want even more adventure? Visit our jungle lodge in Corcovado National Park after your tour. 3 day/2 night package available from US \$749 includes: internal flights (San José-Palmar Sur), round trip land transfers Palmar Sur-Corcovado National Park, 2 night's accommodation with full board at our comfortable jungle lodge, full day tour to Corcovado National Park and to the Sierpe River Mangroves. Ask your Grand American Adventures reservations agent for more information.

TORTUGUERO JUNGLE LODGE PACKAGE

Want even more adventure? Visit our jungle lodge in Tortuguero National Park after your tour. 3 day/2 night package available from US \$359 includes: round trip land and boat transfers San José to Tortuguero National Park, 2 night's accommodation with full board at our comfortable jungle lodge, boat and hiking tours of Tortuguero National Park and rainforest. Ask your Grand American Adventures reservations agent for more information.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE HOTELS

Our arrival and departure hotels are conveniently located and serve as your tour's start and end points. Rooms are comfortable and spacious, with two double beds and en-suite facilities. They make good bases for sightseeing and offer an opportunity to informally meet with your fellow trekkers.

The tour begins at 07:30hrs in the hotel lobby, where you will meet your group and tour guide. You should have packed your bags and eaten breakfast so that you are fresh and ready to start the journey.

The tour ends between 17:00-18:00hrs on the final day. Please do not reserve flights until at least 21:00hrs or the following day.

If you would like to reserve additional nights in our hotel before or after the holiday, or if you would prefer to have your own room throughout, please contact our sales team for additional information and associated costs.

USEFUL PHRASES IN SPANISH

Phrases

- Hello - Hola
- Goodbye - Adiós
- How are things? - Qué tal?
- Please - Por favor
- Thank you - Gracias
- Yes - Sí
- No - No
- Excuse me/sorry -
Con permiso
- How much is it? -
Cuánto cuesta?
- Too expensive -
Es demasiado caro

Spanish Numbers

- 1 - uno
- 2 - dos
- 3 - tres
- 4 - cuatro
- 5 - cinco
- 6 - seis
- 7 - siete
- 8 - ocho
- 9 - nueve
- 10 - diez
- 20 - veinte
- 30 - treinta
- 100 - cien
- 1000 - mil



Surf n'Volcano Tour Information

CAMPING ACCOMMODATION

Camping allows us to stay in the heart of the most breathtaking natural scenery, away from fast food outlets and the encroaching development; and Grand American Adventures' experienced tour leaders and top quality equipment will surely enhance your experience.

Your comfort is important to us and we know that starts with using high quality camping gear. We only use top of the range, spacious two-person tents and thick (air/foam-filled) sleeping pads to ensure your evenings are comfortable and restful. Your guides help prepare delicious meals (using state of the art camping stoves). All you need to bring is a sleeping bag and a sense of adventure and you will be sure to enjoy the trip of a lifetime!

Nearly all of our local campgrounds provide modern conveniences and amenities such as hot/warm showers (paid locally approx \$2) and flush toilets; whilst others may have swimming pools, shops and launderettes nearby. On special occasions, our groups may utilize rustic, wilderness sites in order to fully appreciate more remote areas' natural surroundings. That said, waking up at camp to the smell of fresh brewed coffee provides a truly intimate natural experience and one that eludes conventional tourists.

A sleeping bag is required for this tour. We recommend you take at least a 3-season sleeping bag (0°C).

FOOD & DRINK

Grand American Adventures include all meals while camping (alcohol/drinks purchased locally) and you will be sure to enjoy regular international dinner parties on the road. Our professional guides are great in the kitchen and they will assist the group in preparing delicious, healthy meals for you to enjoy, so you can take that path less travelled... with a full stomach.

We prepare plenty of good fresh food on our camping trips and anticipate hearty eaters. Breakfasts often include fresh fruits and cereal, toast, juice, coffee or tea. Fried bacon or eggs may also be available on more leisurely mornings. Lunches are typically picnic style and consist of a selection of delicatessen meats, cheeses and salads. Dinners are filling and main dishes include pastas, grilled meats/chicken/fish, as well as regional specialties such as fajitas or BBQ's and are accompanied with cooked vegetables or fresh salads.

Meals consist of a variety of balanced dishes and, aiming for universal appeal, we avoid highly spiced foods. Vegetarians are certainly welcome and are always accommodated. Please let us know of any dietary concerns at the time of booking.

On occasion, meals are taken in local restaurants where passengers pay individually for food and drinks en route. Average breakfasts cost from \$4-\$8, lunches from \$5-10 and dinners from \$8-\$15; this does not include alcoholic beverages. Wine costs approximately \$3 per glass and beer \$2 per bottle. Please be aware that a tip of approximately 15-20% is added to group meals in restaurants in Central/South America and applicable taxes will also be added to all listed menu prices.

GROUP PARTICIPATION

An essential part of a Grand American Adventures camping holiday is helping out around the campsite. Our tents are easy to set up and with guidance from your tour leader, everyone will assist with the setting up and packing of the campsite. As a team, it only takes approximately 20 minutes before setting up your "home with a view" in the great outdoors!

Your tour leaders will organize daily activities and guided hikes, as well as coordinate and assist the group when shopping for food, preparing the daily meals and washing up.

As this is a participatory trip, group members will assist with the preparation of meals and with the washing. That said, often the best meals on the road are created when individuals offer to cook up one of their specialties from home!

GROUPS

Average is 12 passengers.

Passengers come from a range of countries worldwide (average of 4 nationalities per group) and many will be solo travellers. You will find you have many things in common with your fellow trekkers, including a passion for adventure and a strong interest in exploring the national parks of Central/South America.

Grand American Adventures tours are designed for adults over 18 years old. While most passengers are aged 25-55, every year we get many people both above and below this age range. All travellers over the age of 55 will be requested to complete a self-declaration of fitness.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES/SPENDING MONEY

There are many opportunities for optional activities during the holiday. Your tour guide will organize these on your behalf and you will pay locally in cash. Featured activities and approximate prices are listed below:

★ Mountain biking	\$ 10/hr
★ Horseback riding	\$ 50-75
★ Surf lessons	\$ 35
★ Snorkeling Tour	\$ 35-60
★ Kayaking	\$ 40-60
★ Canopy Tour Monteverde	\$ 60
★ Selvatura Hanging Bridges	\$ 45

Local Currency

The local currency is the Costa Rican colón. As in most countries in Latin America, the economy is based on the US dollar, so you should take US dollars (not sterling), which can be changed with ease in any major town or tourist centre. There are approximately 920 colones to one British pound and 564 colones to one US dollar (as at December 2009).

ATM/Cash points are widely available in all major cities. Please ensure that your credit or debit cards have international access and a PIN number to access your funds. (You should also bring USD travellers cheques as a back-up.)

We recommend you take at least US \$35 dollars per day to cover local expenses, but it's better to bring more than you need rather than run short on tour. Your spending money needs to cover optional activities, film, souvenirs and snacks along the way. Please note - Dollar bills should be in good condition, without blemishes/rips, or they may not be accepted.

Additionally, tipping is a way of life in Central/South America and, whilst not compulsory, it is expected. We recommend a tip of approximately US \$2-3 per day to be given in cash to your tour leader at the end of your holiday.



Surf n'Volcano Tour Information

TRANSPORTATION

Grand American Adventures uses private transportation for the majority of this tour. The vehicles that we use have comfortable seating, have air-conditioning/heating, tinted windows and a stereo (often iPod compatible). Our vehicles also have a custom store space for all luggage and equipment, as well as excellent suspension so we can travel off the beaten track, where the crowds in public coaches cannot go!

INSURANCE

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance, and helicopter rescue service). Our insurance policy is designed specifically to cover the potential risks on our holidays - particularly the many optional activities offered.

If you do not take our policy, you must ensure that the policy you do take offers an equivalent level of protection. Any claims concerning matters for which you are insured must be directed to your insurers.

PASSPORT AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

This tour visits Costa Rica and Panama and it is your responsibility to obtain the proper passport and visa(s). More details are provided in our Trek Tips pre-departure information at <http://www.trekamerica.com/trektips.html>

You are required to show your passport at immigration. At other times documents, plane tickets, and other valuables may be stored in the hotel safe or in your luggage. Carry a photocopy of the photograph and personal information page of your passport.

Be cautious with your belongings; pickpockets are common in the more congested urban areas, especially in markets. Use a money belt or neck pouch. Bring along a photocopy of important documents, cheques and other valuables in case you lose anything and need to make an insurance claim. You may consider emailing yourself any relevant information as a backup to what you are carrying on your person.

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you encounter any problems while in Costa Rica before the tour, please feel free to contact our local representative. Any queries generated at home should be directed to either our USA or UK sales offices. Those numbers are below in the footer of this page.

Apartado 10674
1000 San José, Costa Rica
Tel: (+506) 2257 0202 (9-5pm)
(+506) 8871 0202, 8362 7777 (emergency mobile/out of hours)
Fax: (+506) 2258 0101

Our office staff speak English and Spanish and are here to assist you with your inquiries. If you miss a flight, are going to be late for the morning departure or are having other difficulties, give our office a call.

COMMUNICATIONS

While much of this trek will lead you to far-off places beyond the main tourist routes, communications to the outside world will be possible via telephone or internet. But it should be realized that this may not be possible on all days on tour and some flexibility needs to be understood.

In case of emergency, speak with your tour leader at once to allow him or her time to deal with the situation.

HOW TO BOOK YOUR TOUR

Contact Grand American Adventures by telephone, email or via our website to check availability on the tour you want to join. We can normally hold you a seat on 'option' for up to 3 days to allow you time to finalise your flight arrangements and send us your booking form with a deposit payment.

If you are ready to book and pay your deposit, we have a secure, online booking facility where you can pay in most major currencies with a credit or debit card. Check availability early to avoid disappointment.

Check Availability at:

<http://www.trekamerica.com/grandamericanadventures.html>

ALTERNATIVE TOURS

If you would prefer to join a different Grand American Adventures tour, we have several other camping tours and a variety of lodging, walking and specialty tours as well as family adventures for you to choose from. Click on the link below for more information.

<http://www.trekamerica.com/grandamericanadventures.html>

CLOTHING/BAGGAGE

- Comfortable walking shoes and sport sandals.
- For your comfort we recommend you travel as light as possible; many airlines impose a maximum weight limit of 20kg. We suggest one main piece (a soft bag or rucksack, not a hard suitcase) and a daypack (25-30 litres that is large enough to carry what you need for the day including camera, water, etc.)

We also recommend the following:

- Several changes of underwear and T-shirts
- 2-3 hiking shorts, 1 long hiking pants
- Swim suit
- Wide-brim sun hat or baseball cap
- Windproof/rain jacket
- Long sleeve light shirt
- Towel
- Sunscreen, sun-blocking lip cream & sunglasses
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Spare plastic bags for organizing laundry, film, etc.
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle
- Flashlight
- Personal First Aid Kit - our trek staff carry a medical kit. In addition, we request that you carry certain basic supplies with you. An analgesic (aspirin or Tylenol), Peptobismol (liquid or tablets), mild laxative, Nasal decongestant, Chlortrimeton (for allergies), Throat lozenges, Moleskin, Triple antibiotic cream (eg. Neosporin), Band aids (plasters) and an elastic (Ace) bandage.



Surf n'Volcano Tour Information

INOCULATIONS/HEALTH

Currently, no vaccinations are required in order to enter Costa Rica or Panamá. However, the following are recommended:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Malaria

For detailed information and advice concerning vaccinations go to: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk <<http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/>>

Vaccination requirements change periodically so we advise that you check with your nearest specialist travel clinic 4-6 weeks before departure to get up-to-date information.

We also recommend:

- That you know your blood type (or group)
- That you communicate any pre-existing health conditions to both your travel agent and Grand American Adventures tour leader.

ADVENTURE TRAVEL

All details are provided in good faith. Due to the nature of travel, this information can change and should therefore be taken as an indication only and not as a contractual obligation on the part of Grand American Adventures. If you have any questions, please contact us.

CLIMATE

Keep in mind that our dress code tends to be informal. Tourists enjoy Costa Rica all year long, and the dry season is from November to April. However, many people enjoy the beauty of the Green Season between May and October when there is more rain because there are also less tourists in the country and there is often a better chance to see more wildlife.

The average temperature is 21 degrees Centigrade (70 degrees Fahrenheit) in the highlands and 28 degrees Centigrade (82 degrees Fahrenheit) in the lowlands along the coast. The weather is temperate throughout the year; Costa Rica is said to have an eternal spring. Even in the rainy season the mornings are dry and sunny.

Approximate year-round temperatures are listed below.

Average High / Low Temperatures in Celcius (°C)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
San José	24/14	26/14	26/15	24/17	27/17	26/17	25/17	26/16	26/16	26/16	25/16	24/14

Celsius / Fahrenheit Conversions: -10°C = 14°F 0°C = 32°F 10°C = 50°F 20°C = 68°F 30°C = 86°F 40°C = 104°F

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

These are just a few books enjoyed by our knowledgeable staff and should help you to flesh out your imaginations with lots of worthwhile information. Their bibliographies will lead you further in your reading if you wish. There is a vast amount of material out there, so have fun in your search for the books that will help bring your trip (and mind) to life.

History:

- Tjabel Daling, **Costa Rica in Focus: A guide to the People, Politics and Culture**. An insight into the social and cultural undertones one may not have the time to discern while traveling in Costa Rica for a brief time.
- Marc Edelman and Joanne Kenen, **The Costa Rica Reader**. This book is a collection of chronologically-arranged essays by local histories about aspects of Costa Rican life.
- A. H. Carr, **The Filibuster**. This is a biography of William Walker, an American filibuster who invaded Nicaragua and captured the city of Granada before being defeated and shot by a firing squad in the 19th century.

Memoirs and Travel Logs:

- Jon Marañón, **The Gringo's Hawk**. The author has spent 30 years in the rainforests of Costa Rica documenting the challenges and triumphs of his attempts to make an environmentally-conscious sustainable living in this paradise.

Nature:

- Les Beletsky, **Costa Rica: Eco-traveller's Wildlife Guide**. A comprehensive wildlife and natural history guidebook with photos and drawings.

Fiction:

- Barbara Ras, **Costa Rica: A Traveller's Literary Companion**. This anthology brings together 26 mostly modern stories by Costa Rican writers, a wonderful introduction to the character of the people, culture and land.

