

Costa Rica Culture & Nature 8 days / 7 nights

San José – Volcano Irazú, Cartago & Orosi Valley – Tirimbina Reserve/Chocolate Tour in Sarapiquí – Volcano Arenal & Hot Springs Baldi – Agro cultural Tour & School visit – Indigenous Reserve Maleku – La Paz Waterfall Gardens – San José

Day 01: Welcome to Costa Rica!

Upon arrival you will be picked up by your English-speaking tour guide and taken to your hotel the Best Western Irazu.

ON Best Western Irazu (No Meals)

Day 02: Volcano Irazú, Cartago & Orosi Valley

This full day tour starts with an early morning ride ascending to the Irazú Volcano Summit, the highest Volcano in Costa Rica. There you will visit the main crater of the massif. On a very clear day – if you are lucky enough - it is possible to see both the Caribbean and the Pacific coast. After the visit of the volcano you will make a stop in Cartago, the former capital of Costa Rica and visit the Basilica “Virgen de Los Angeles - Mother of Costa Rica” and the ruins of the old parish. Afterwards the tour continues with a ride through the Orosi Valley famous for its rich soil, abundant plant life and coffee plantations. There you will enjoy a delicious lunch before returning to San José.

ON Best Western Irazu (Breakfast, Lunch)

Day 03: Tirimbina Reserve & Chocolate Tour

Today you drive through the Braulio Carillo National Park to La Virgen de Sarapiquí where the Tirimbina Reserve is located. There a chocolate tour awaits you. The tour will be led by a trained guide across the suspension bridge and a sector of the Tirimbina forest to a former cacao-growing plot. During the hike, the natural and cultural history of the cacao tree will be explained. On arrival at the plot, the artisanal process by which cacao fruit is transformed into chocolate will be demonstrated (harvest, fermentation, drying, etc.), while the story of pre- and post-colonial chocolate is told. At the site, one may taste different kinds of chocolate, which are prepared on the spot in the traditional way. By showing this processing of cacao to chocolate, the tour aids in the conservation of one of the native plants, the cultivation of which is one of the most friendly to the environment.

ON Best Western Irazu (Breakfast, Lunch)

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Day 04: Volcano Arenal & Hot Springs

After breakfast you leave the capital San José and drive to the mighty Volcano Arenal, located in the north of Costa Rica. Volcano Arenal is one of the most visited places in the country because of its natural beauty.

In the afternoon you will have time to relax in the Baldi Hot Springs. This place counts with a large number of pools with different temperatures offering an excellent view of the Volcano. After your relaxing afternoon at the hot springs you will enjoy a delicious dinner before driving back to San José.

ON Arenal Volcano Inn (Breakfast, Dinner)

Day 05: Agriculture Tour & School Visit

Today you will join a agriculture tour starting the morning milking a cow and learning about the process to make cheese at Don Carlos' dairy farm. Later on the bus you will take an interesting trip around one of the most important agriculture areas in the country and the guide will be explaining all about the products and the way they are harvested (tapioca, plantains, pineapple, papaya, etc). You will definitely learn a lot of new words in Spanish and have plenty of time to practise them. Finally when arriving at Santa Lucias school, the students and the teacher will have prepared for you a great and fun "Tico Fiesta" with some typical dances and choreographies that show the culture of Costa Rica; At the end of the tour enjoy a traditional Costa Rican lunch that the students' mothers will cook for you!

ON Arenal Volcano Inn (Breakfast, Lunch)

Day 06: Indigenous Reserve Maleku

Today you will get the chance to have a close encounter with the indigenous culture of Costa Rica. You will drive for about one hour to get to the Indigenous reservation set by the government, in this reservation we find three Maleku communities known as El Sol, Margarita and Tonjibe. You will visit Tonjibe community where you will meet a local family, which as the rest of families had to adapt themselves to a new life style to survive and keep their traditions and culture intact ; but even so they are working on to preserve the most of their traditions such as their language, dances, diet, dressing, and the use of natural medicines.

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During the visit you will visit their traditional houses, join a walk through their graveyards to know how they used to bury their family members in the past; enjoy a walk through a botanical garden where they harvest plants for their traditional medicine and finally they will delight you with a performance of typical dances before enjoying lunch.

ON Arenal Volcano Inn (Breakfast, Lunch)

Day 07: La Paz Waterfall Gardens – San José

After breakfast you will drive to the La Paz Waterfall Gardens, one of the most beautiful destinations in the area. It is a private nature reserve with a beautiful orchid garden and one of the largest butterfly gardens in Central America. Furthermore, a Hummingbird garden, wild cats, reptiles, monkeys and lots of tropical birds are waiting to be discovered. You can also take a walk on a trail leading to a spectacular waterfall in the middle of the rainforest. Taking pictures a must! After an exhilarating mountain hike to enjoy the gorgeous scenery you will drive on to San Jose. Check in at your hotel and overnight stay.

ON Best Western Irazú (Breakfast, Lunch)

Day 08: Goodbye and Hasta pronto!

A private airport shuttle will take you according to your departure to the international airport of San José. There we say goodbye and hope to see you soon again in Costa Rica! END OF OUR SERVICES.

(Breakfast)

**KEEPSAKE VIDEO: Available of your tour
Cameras, USB, memory cards provided
PLEASE ASK FOR DETAILS!!**

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