

# Costa Rica: Short Trip—Two Great Lodges! With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

Mar. 28 – Apr. 4,  
2021

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## Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Costa Rica Nature Tour  
w/ Jon Atwood  
\$2890, from San José, Costa Rica  
Airport is Juan Santamaria Airport (SJO)

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ Relax at the beautiful Hotel Bougainvillea upon your arrival; bird their 10-acre award winning botanical garden
- ✓ Seek out lowland rainforest specialties at La Selva Biological Station, recognized internationally as one of the most productive tropical forest research stations in the world
- ✓ Relax on a Sarapiquí River boat trip as you search for Amazon Kingfisher, Green Ibis, and Bare-throated Tiger-Heron
- ✓ Travel through small picturesque towns on the day between lodges, enjoy seeing farms and rural areas
- ✓ Stay in cool, lush cloud forest of the mountains at Savegre Lodge and Spa where a dozen species of hummingbirds and many highland bird specialties await such as Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher and Resplendent Quetzal



Few places rival Costa Rica's ecological diversity. Over a quarter of the country is a national park, wildlife refuge, biological reserve, or protected area. And for good reason: Costa Rica boasts 850 bird species, 208 mammal species, 50,000 insect species, and 2,000 orchids.

This trip combines time at two of our favorite locations, offering you a wonderful immersion in tropical nature. One is a lowland site Our lowland site tops the charts for biodiversity; the other a mountain setting with forest trails and feeders that attract White-throated Mountain-gem, Silver-throated Tanager, Flame-colored Tanager, and more! The valley is also home to a healthy population of Resplendent Quetzal, arguably the most beautiful bird in the Americas.

We know these two locations well, we know you will enjoy the lodge's hospitality, and both provide wonderful photo opportunities as well as birding. This is a great, short getaway at the end of winter – this year timed for Easter break.

## Itinerary

### Sun., Mar. 28 Arrival in San José | Hotel Bougainvillea

Bienvenido a Costa Rica! Plan to arrive today in San José by 5:00 PM so you can join our welcome dinner and orientation. You are met at the airport for a transfer to our hotel in the hills of the historic suburb of Heredia. The Bougainvillea hotel is a family-owned and operated hotel with a welcoming atmosphere; fresh-cut flowers from the 10-acre garden, and original paintings and sculptures by leading local artists adorn the interior. Massive beamed ceilings, wood paneling, and a fireplace all contribute to the warm feeling of a country inn. And, there are always great birds to greet you as you stroll trails through the garden.

Tonight, we gather to enjoy a welcome dinner and the chance to meet your guides and travel companions.  
*Accommodations at the Hotel Bougainvillea (D)*





## Mon., Mar. 29 San José | Waterfall, Hummingbirds, & Dart Frogs

We depart early this morning so we can make several birding stops along the way to our lodge on Costa Rica's Caribbean side. Our drive is very scenic, with a stop at the stunning the Mirador La Cascada at Cinchona; close to the viewpoint, a local coffee shop has hummingbird feeders set up with star-attractions being possible sightings of Green Thorntail and White-bellied Mountain-gem. In 2009, an earthquake heavily damaged this area treasured by birders for so long. It has made a comeback with great close viewing of up to ten species of hummingbirds, possible Northern Emerald-Toucanet, and Prong-billed and Red-headed Barbets! Colorful tanagers include Scarlet-rumped, Silver-throated and Crimson-collared. Comical Montezuma Oropendola may greet us here, or farther along our route today.

After lunch, we reach our lodge in the afternoon. Settle into your cabanas, each with a private porch, and enjoy some birding on the grounds ahead of dinner. Birds on the grounds may include Yellow-throated and Keel-billed Toucan, White-crowned and Red-lored Parrot, and Golden-hooded and Red-throated Ant-Tanager. The food is excellent and varied.

*Accommodations at La Quinta Sarapiquí Lodge (B,L,D)*

## Tues., Mar. 30 La Selva Biological Station

The La Selva Biological Station is one of the premier tropical research stations in the world. Trails wind between laboratories and researchers' residences, and then fan out to primary and secondary forests where nature abounds. Lowland rainforest is particularly diverse here, as the property is located near the confluence of two major rivers—the Rio Puerto Viejo and the Sarapiquí. The reserve is nearly 4,000 acres and connects to a forest corridor that ascends up through nearby Braulio Carrillo National Park, providing links to middle and higher elevations.

La Selva comprises 1,600 hectares (3,900 acres) of tropical wet forests and disturbed lands. Four major tropical life zones define the contiguous corridor now protecting a large portion of Costa Rica's biodiversity. Recorded here are more than half of Costa Rica's almost 900 species of birds, 1850 species of vascular plants, and a rich array of mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians. Each year, La Selva's Christmas Bird Count is among the highest in numbers.



On trails near the Sarapiquí River we hope to see the beautiful Agami Heron and perhaps an elusive Sungrebe. Some of the other elusive species we may find include Great Curassow, Great Tinamou, Great Potoo, and possibly Snowy Cotinga. We should see Crimson-collared and Golden-hooded Tanager, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmot, Black-cheeked Woodpecker and Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, beautiful Black-throated Trogon, and high on thermals above, King Vulture. Pied Puffbird and Rufous-tailed Jacamar are sit-and-wait predators that dart from perches to capture large insects. Orange-billed Sparrow are crisply plumaged denizens of the forest floor.

Butterfly enthusiasts, prepare to be amazed at all the species, including several large electric-blue Morphos. Central American Agouti and White-nosed Coati are mammals we often find, and maybe even Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth.

In the late afternoon, we venture out to explore the area for some further birding – perhaps to a local orchid garden and a nearby site where it is possible to see Great Green Macaw flying to roost as the grand finale to a lovely day in Costa Rica.

*Accommodations at La Quinta Sarapiquí Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Wed., Mar. 31 Sarapiquí River Boat Tour**

With the company of our local guide and boat captain, we enjoy a water safari outing on the Sarapiquí River. Our waterfront view gives us a great chance to find Green Iguana and Mantled Howler-Monkey. Along the river we may find a good variety of herons and ibis, including Bare-throated Tiger-Heron Green Ibis. Osprey are here—their chirping sounds may remind you of home. On sandbars we search for Southern Lapwing, perhaps a Spotted Sandpiper, and various kingfishers. Wintering Northern Waterthrush bob as they feed under shaded vegetation.

We return for lunch at the lodge. After lunch, we enjoy a siesta, then join our guides for a drive over to a birding spot or two in the surrounding areas. Wet fields near Sarapiquí often hold a variety of open country birds that are very active in the late afternoon with species such as Roadside and Gray Hawk, Northern Jacana and Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat and Thick-billed Seed-Finch all possible.

We enjoy one last evening to sit out in the warm tropical air listening to night sounds and seeing stars so bright away from any populated areas. Tomorrow it's off the mountains; our guide provides an overview of the days ahead.

*Accommodations at La Quinta Sarapiquí Lodge (B,L,D)*





### **Thurs., Apr. 1   Savegre Valley | Montane Cloud Forests**

After breakfast we depart for Cerro de la Muerte (Mountain of Death), part of the Talamanca Mountains. These 11,000-foot peaks were named for the early explorers who, traveling on foot or by mule, risked dying of hunger, exposure, or storms.

As we reach the often cloud-enshrouded summit, we stop at the family-run cloud-forest reserve, Paralso de Quetzales. Here we walk lush forest trails in search of Costa Rica's most famous and elegant bird, the Resplendent Quetzal. Walking the cloud forest trails, we often find a host of other species as well. We then descend into the stunning valley of the Savegre River, a true realm of the Resplendent Quetzal.

Our lodge is situated at a cool 7000 feet above sea level in an isolated and idyllic valley near the town of San Gerardo de Dota. As we descend into the valley, we find a mix of pristine forest, hillside farms, and fantastic views. We stop for photographs and to see what's in bloom along the way.

Over forty years ago, Sr. Ephraim Chacon and his brother opened a road and began a dairy farm and apple orchard in this remote Talamanca Mountain valley. Today several lodges settle naturally into the landscape here, a prime destination for birders. After settling into our accommodations, we walk one of the lodge's nature trails, learning about the flora and fauna of the tropical cloud forest. With luck, we spot an American Dipper feeding in the rushing trout stream! Enjoy a lovely meal tonight at the lodge's restaurant.

*Accommodations at Savegre Lodge and Spa (B,L,D)*

### **Fri., Apr. 2 and Sat., Apr. 3   Two Full Days at the Savegre Valley | Montane Cloud Forests**

This remote valley is a delight and we have two full days to explore it. We walk the gentle mountain road where we get an excellent view of beautiful Talamanca Range cloud forests and their fantastic residents, like Flame-throated Warbler, Flame-colored Tanager, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher, Black Guan, and Northern Emerald-Toucanet. Throughout the valley, various trails lead to waterfalls, secluded canyons, and mountain vistas; several options are available to us. Neighboring properties have also set up wonderful hummingbird and tanager feeders and we'll be sure to check these out as well.

Resplendent Quetzal are found in this valley year-round, and we often spot them near a favorite fruiting tree where several males may congregate in the early morning. With the assistance of a local guide, we search for cloud forest birds such as Spotted Wood-Quail, Northern Emerald-Toucanet, Sulphur-winged Parakeet, Ruddy Treerunner, Golden-browed Chlorophonia, Yellow-thighed Brushfinch, Collared Redstart, and Spangle-cheeked Tanager.

Montane oak forest dominates the area, including magnificent oaks like Wild Brazilleto, Winter's Bark Tree, and Cipresillo. We take a stab at identifying them and then simply admire the hundreds of species of bromeliads, lichens, mosses, ferns, and the multitude of orchids and colorful flowers. Locals raise fruit on the hillsides and farm trout in small ponds.

In the evening on Friday, we gather ahead of dinner to recount the day and tally up our species. Enjoy a beer or some wine, or the local hot chocolate—yum! On Saturday we drive back to San Jose to position you for flights out the next day and to enjoy a final evening together in a most comfortable place.

*Accommodations at Savegre Lodge and Spa April 2 and Doubletree Cariari, San Jose April 3 (B,L,D)*

## Sun., Apr. 4 Departures

Enjoy a lovely Easter Sunday morning breakfast if you can make a later flight, the grounds of this hotel are lovely as well. You can catch your flights back home at a time convenient for you today. The hotel has a convenient shuttle so your time is flexible, but note in your planning you should be at the airport almost three hours ahead of your flight. (B)

## Guide Jon Atwood



Jon Atwood directed the Bird Conservation program for Mass Audubon. He has been a practicing ornithologist and conservation biologist for over 30 years, specializing in integrating behavioral studies of rare and endangered bird species with habitat conservation planning. After completing his Master's and Doctoral degrees in Southern California, where he studied Santa Cruz Island Scrub-Jay behavior, Least Tern breeding biology, and the taxonomy of gnatcatchers living in the deserts of North America, he moved to the East coast in 1986. While working at Manomet Bird Observatory he collaborated in the analysis of the first 30 years of Manomet's landbird banding effort, spearheaded federal protection of the California Gnatcatcher under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, led a long-term study of factors affecting Least Tern colony site selection, and contributed to early studies of Bicknell's Thrush in New England.

Jon has led field trips in Mexico (Yucatan and Baja California), Costa Rica, Belize, Ecuador (Galapagos and Amazonia), Peru (Amazonia), Kenya, Botswana, Southern California, Southeastern Arizona, Montana, and Maine.



## Cost of the Journey

### Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Please note, starting in January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your airline flight's carbon offset.

### Photo Credits

Golden-hooded Tanager, Peg Abbott (PA); Broad-winged Hawk, PA; Slaty-tailed Trogon, PA; Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Sandy Sorkin (SS); Violet Sabrewing, SS; Broad-billed Motmot, Carla Bregman; Mantled Howler-Monkey, Carlos Sanchez (CS); Three-toed Sloth, CS; Scarlet-rumped Tanager, Andrew Steinmann (AS); Silver-throated Tanager, SS; Emerald Toucanet, SS; Prong-billed Barbet, CS; Black-throated Trogon, James Smith (JS); Great Curassow, SS; Crimson-colored Tanager, PA; Collared Redstart, SS.

### Travel Information

Plan to arrive in San José on Sunday, March 28, ideally between 2:00 and 5:00 PM if you wish to join the welcome dinner. If you arrive later, we can arrange the airport pickup and a snack for you at the hotel, or you may eat on the plane. You may want to arrive a day or two early (at your own cost) to take in the sights of the city. We suggest you plan departures 12:00 PM onward on Sunday, April 4, though earlier or later flights can be accommodated.

### Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is \$2890 DBL / \$3395 SGL, from San José, Costa Rica. This cost includes all accommodations, meals as specified in the itinerary, professional guide services, other park and program entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

Tour cost does not include: round-trip transportation from your home city to San José, optional activities, or items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone charges, maid gratuities, or beverages from the bar.

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