

ROAD TRIP · COSTA RICA

Guanacaste and Nicoya beaches

12 days · Rincón de la Vieja — Sámara

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Guanacaste and Nicoya beaches

A volcano to begin with, then three beaches along the Nicoya coast: Tamarindo, Nosara and Sámara. Sun, surf and turtles.

Length	12 days, 11 nights
Distance	340 km, 5 driving days
Behind the wheel	8 h 10 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Liberia (LIR), Liberia (LIR) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Rincón de la Vieja	Days 1–2	**6**
Tamarindo	Days 3–5	**8**
Nosara	Days 6–8	**10**
Sámara	Days 9–11	**12**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Rincón de la Vieja	40	1 h	
2		Rincón de la Vieja			
3		Tamarindo	100	2 h 30 min	
4		Tamarindo			
5		Tamarindo			
6		Nosara	70	1 h 40 min	
7		Nosara			
8		Nosara			
9		Sámara	30	40 min	
10		Sámara			
11		Sámara			
12		Flight home from LIR	100	2 h 20 min	

340 km · 8 h 10 min behind the wheel · on average 70 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: Natural Earth (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at Liberia (LIR), drive to Rincón de la Vieja · About 40 km, 1 h
Day 3	Rincón de la Vieja, drive to Tamarindo · About 100 km, 2 h 30 min
Day 6	Tamarindo, drive to Nosara · About 70 km, 1 h 40 min
Day 9	Nosara, drive to Sámara · About 30 km, 40 min
Day 12	Sámara to Liberia airport (LIR), fly home to Amsterdam · About 100 km, 2 h 20 min

Well prepared

Passport and entry

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 180 days. Your passport must be valid for the whole trip on arrival, and you show a return ticket at immigration. There is no ESTA or form beforehand; the departure tax is included in your air fare.
nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/costa-rica

Driving licence and 4x4

Your Dutch or Belgian driving licence is valid for 90 days. For Monteverde, Santa Teresa, Drake Bay and the Nicoya coast road you want a 4x4: dirt roads, potholes and in the green season rivers to drive through. The compulsory liability insurance (SLI/TPL) is always bought from the rental company, even if your credit card gives cover.

On the road

Count on 40 to 50 km an hour on average: mountain roads, lorries and villages. Don't drive after dark; it is dark by six, all year round. Waze knows every road and warns of closures. Never leave anything visible in the car, not even for a moment.

Money

The currency is the colón, but almost everywhere takes dollars and credit cards. Bring a few small dollar notes for tips and parking. Restaurants add 10% service to the bill; an extra tip for a good nature guide (about $10 a person) is customary.

When to go

The dry season runs from December to April: sunny on the Pacific side and in Guanacaste. May to November is the green season, with sunny mornings and afternoon showers, quieter and cheaper; September and October are the wettest months, except on the Caribbean coast, where they are the driest.

Parks and entry fees

The national parks cost foreigners about $12 to $18 a person a day. For Manuel Antonio, Poás, Irazú and Corcovado you buy your ticket online beforehand from SINAC; Manuel Antonio is closed on Mondays.
serviciosenlinea.sinac.go.cr

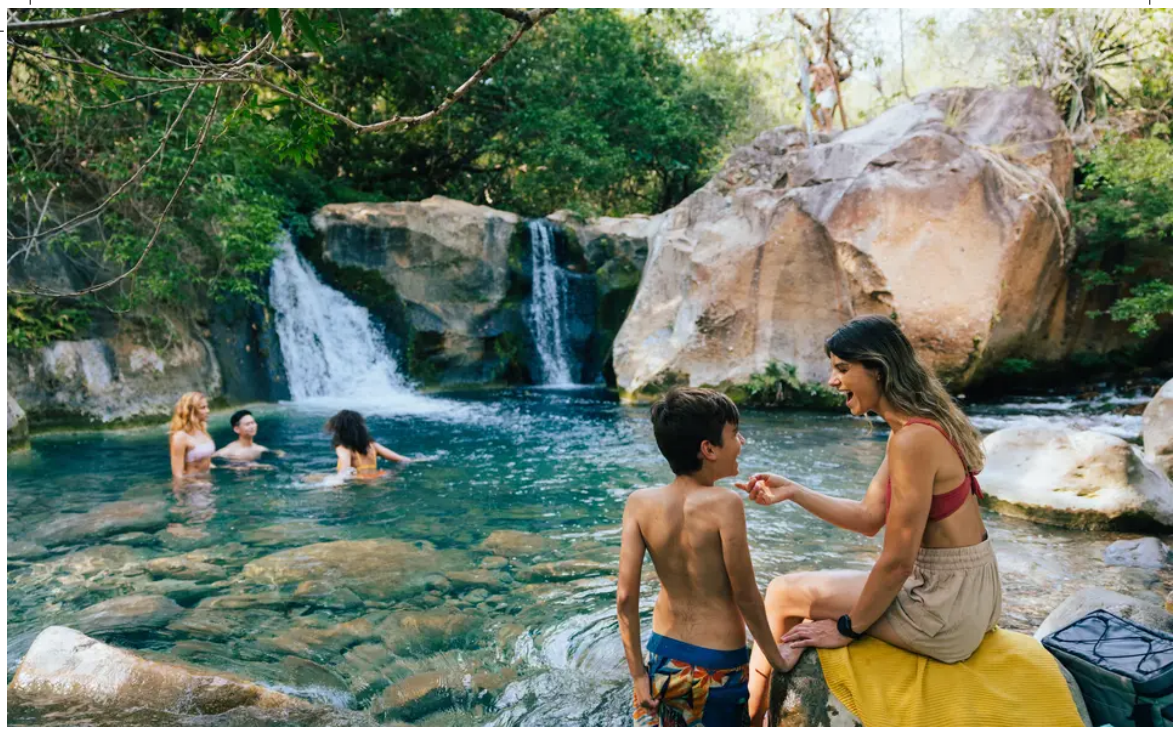
Health

No vaccinations are required when you come from Europe. Protect yourself against mosquitoes (dengue), especially on the Caribbean coast. Tap water is drinkable in most places; ask in remote areas.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] Driving licence and credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels, park tickets
- [ ] Rain jacket or poncho, even in the dry season
- [ ] Walking shoes that may get wet
- [ ] Insect repellent with DEET
- [ ] Reef-safe sunscreen
- [ ] Binoculars for birds and sloths
- [ ] A jumper for Monteverde and the volcanoes
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (120 volts)

DON'T FORGET



DAYS 1–2

Rincón de la Vieja Guanacaste

The mud pots and fumaroles of Rincón de la Vieja

Land at Liberia (LIR), drive to Rincón de la Vieja: about 40 km, 1 h

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Las Pailas in the national park
- Oropéndola waterfall
- Hot springs and mud baths

With an extra night

With an extra night: tubing on the Río Negro, or on horseback through the dry forest.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Hot springs and mud bath — roughly €50 a person
- ☐ Zipline and river tubing — roughly €90 a person
- ☐ Horse ride through the dry forest — roughly €60 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

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DAYS 3–5

Tamarindo Guanacaste

Surfing and sunset at Playa Tamarindo

Rincón de la Vieja, drive to Tamarindo: about 100 km, 2 h 30 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- Playa Tamarindo
- Playa Grande and the leatherbacks
- Playa Conchal

With an extra night

With an extra night: a sunset sail, or snorkelling at Playa Conchal.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Tamarindo surf lesson — roughly €60 a person
- ☐ Sunset catamaran sail — roughly €90 a person
- ☐ Estuary kayak tour — roughly €50 a person

HOTEL

- ☐ Tamarindo Bay Hotel & Apartments- Self Check In, Adults Only · 3★ — roughly €570
  100 metros sur del Banco Nacional
- ☐ Baliyana Lodge · 3★
  San Antonio del Cruz
- ☐ Epic Tamarindo Boutique Hotel · 3★
  Calle Tamarindo, 1
- ☐ Casa Leona · 3★
  100 Meters Sur 75 Este del
- ☐ Casa Mapache Pool and Breakfast Available near Tamarindo Beach · 3★
  La Garita Nueva

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DAYS 6–8

Nosara Guanacaste

Yoga at sunrise, surfing at sunset

Tamarindo, drive to Nosara: about 70 km, 1 h 40 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- Playa Guiones
- The turtles of Ostional
- The Nosara biological reserve

With an extra night

With an extra night: a day of yoga, or the Ostional arribada at night when the moon is right.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Playa Guiones surf lesson — roughly €60 a person
- [ ] Yoga class — roughly €20 a person
- [ ] Ostional turtles with a guide — roughly €40 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Casas Sol y Mar · 3★
  506 tennis center, la esperanza
- [ ] Costa Rica Yoga Spa · 3★
  300 metros sur del Rio Montaña
- [ ] Bodhi Tree Yoga Resort · 3★
  Bodhi Street
- [ ] Congo · 3★
  Del Cruce Hacia Playa Pelada 800 mt Este
- [ ] La Laguna · 3★
  Nicoya

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DAYS 9–11

Sámara Guanacaste

A quiet bay with a reef offshore

Nosara, drive to Sámara: about 30 km, 40 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- Playa Sámara
- Playa Carrillo and its palms
- Isla Chora by kayak

SÁMARA · DAYS 9–11

With an extra night

With an extra night: kayak to Isla Chora, or snorkel at Playa Carrillo.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Isla Chora kayak and snorkel — roughly €60 a person
- ☐ Sámara surf lesson — roughly €50 a person

HOTEL

- ☐ Hacienda Barrigona · 3★
  Barco Quebrado
- ☐ Hotel Samara Paraiso · 3★
  300mts Oeste y 150 mts Sur
- ☐ Good Life Lodge · 3★
  500 meter west Banco Nacional
- ☐ Hotel Casa Buenavista - Adults only · 3★
  350 metros de la playa, playa carrillo
- ☐ Villasjungle 1 · 3★
  En frente de la Entrada del pueblo Buenavista SAMARA

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What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
2	Rincón de la Vieja	€120	–	€70	**€190**
3	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
4	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
5	Tamarindo	€140	–	€70	**€210**
6	Nosara	€170	–	€70	**€240**
7	Nosara	€170	–	€70	**€240**
8	Nosara	€170	–	€70	**€240**
9	Sámara	€120	–	€70	**€190**
10	Sámara	€120	–	€70	**€190**
11	Sámara	€120	–	€70	**€190**
12	Flight home from LIR	–	–	€70	**€70**

Flights	€1,800
Hotels	€1,530
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€780
Total	**€4,110**
	€2,060 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

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About this booklet

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PHOTOS

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Rincón de la Vieja	nature/family-friends-base-of-waterfall-las-chorreras-hacienda-guachipelin.jpg · Press photo
Tamarindo	Costa Rica Langosta Beach near Tamarindo 0208.jpg · ImagePerson, CC0
Nosara	Tropical bird on a branch (Unsplash).jpg · Alyssa Crouse alyssacrouse, CC0
Sámara	, .jpg · ViktoriusMagnus, CC0

MAP AND TYPE

Map: US Census Bureau (public domain), roads © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL). Type: Playfair Display and Inter (SIL Open Font License).

THE ROUTE

Rincón de la Vieja (2) · Tamarindo (3) · Nosara (3) · Sámara (3)

A volcano to begin with, then three beaches along the Nicoya coast: Tamarindo, Nosara and Sámara. Sun, surf and turtles.

12 days · 11 nights · 340 km

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