

Communities and Culture

October 16-24, 2010

Costa Rica is a country known for its amazing biodiversity, and the variety of habitat that can be found there. The culture of the people of Costa Rica has been influenced by this diversity of habitat. From communities that live along rivers and near fruit plantations, to communities by the beaches and in the dry forest; this tour will provide you with an insider look at the culture of Costa Rica living.

Day 1 San Jose

Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica where you will be picked up and transferred to your hotel for a welcome and introduction to the trip. Overnight at Hotel Bougainvillea.

Day 2 Quebrada Gonzalez

Make your first stop at the newest addition to the [Costa Rican Bird Route](#), Quebrada Gonzalez.

Quebrada Gonzalez offers access to the impressive Braulio Carrillo National Park, a park that protects 115 acres of highland rainforest and cloud forest. Of the 864 species of birds found in Costa Rica, 550 have been reported at Braulio Carrillo...truly worth the stop! Continue on to El Gavilan Lodge, another Bird Route site, for the evening.

Day 3 Gavilan Lodge

Enjoy the trails and gardens of El Gavilan Lodge before heading to the [Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center](#), a non-profit established in both Costa Rica and the U.S. Take a tour of the center and learn about the programs that they offer for the

community. Afterward, visit a nearby school and get a glimpse of what daily life is like for a student in rural Costa Rica. Grab a bite to eat in Puerto Viejo, and then spend the afternoon birding the Lago Japala Wildlife Refuge, a community operated reserve just minutes away. Return to El Gavilan Lodge for the evening.



Day 4 The Toro River

Travel by river on an amazing boat ride to the remote Costa Rican Bird Route site, Bosque Tropical del Toro (BTT), situated on the banks of the Toro River. Keep your eyes peeled for birds and the occasional crocodile lazing about on the riverbanks! You will eat lunch at BTT and spend the afternoon birding and exploring

the rare Yolillo wetland habitat found at this site. There will also be the opportunity to meet the landowner, Guido Quesada, and learn about the reforestation efforts on his property. Overnight at Bosque Tropical del Toro.

Day 5 Quebrada Grande

Leave early and head to the Quebrada Grande Community Reserve, where you will meet up with the local Women's Association who run the reserve. Have lunch in the community and explore the trails of the rainforest reserve, which features a lookout tower. Some of the emblematic species of the site are the Great Curassow, White-fronted Nunbird, and the Band-tailed Barbthroat. If

you are truly lucky you will even get a look at another known visitor to the site, the endangered Great Green Macaw. Head to Santa Elena for the evening.

Day 6 Santa Elena

Santa Elena is another community-operated reserve overseen by three local organizations: the Farmer's



Association, the Local Development Association and the Women's Association. The site continues to be encroached upon by invading pineapple plantations making the conservation of this island of habitat increasingly important for migrating birds. Spend the day birding on the 173 acre reserve and get to know members of the community. End your day with a home-cooked meal made with fresh farm ingredients. Overnight at homestays in Santa Elena.



Day 7 *Nicoya Peninsula*

Say goodbye to your host families and head to your next adventure on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. Today you will take a ferry ride across the beautiful and scenic Nicoya Gulf. Enjoy the warm air and the acrobatics of the wood storks diving for fish. Once the ferry has docked, journey to the quiet and secluded Curú Wildlife Refuge. Curú connects to the Biological Wildlife Corridor of the Nicoya Peninsula. The refuge encompasses a beach area, mangrove estuaries and rivers. Spend the rest of the day exploring the refuge and enjoying time on this peaceful beach. Spend the night in the rustic cabins near the beach.

Day 8 *Cabo Blanco*

This morning you will have the opportunity to explore the coastline from a different perspective...in a kayak! Bruce Smith of Seascope Kayak Tours will be your guide as you paddle your way along the coast, making a stop at a beach where you can be sure you will not run into any other

tourists! Enjoy lunch on the beach while listening to Bruce tell you about his kayak adventures in both Costa Rica and Canada. In the afternoon, you will leave your kayak and see another wildlife preserve on the Nicoya Peninsula, Cabo Blanco. Cabo Blanco Nature Reserve was the first National Park to be established in Costa Rica, and is home to hundreds of animal and plant species. Have dinner in the nearby town of Montezuma and then return to Curu for the evening.

Day 9 *San Jose*

Arise early to search for some of the 232 bird species that have been counted at Curú. The most common species are motmots, whitefronted amazons, laughing hawks, woodpeckers and herons. After breakfast, return to Paquera to catch the ferry back. Head to San Jose and the Hotel Aeropuerto for dinner and a final discussion on bird species spotted on the trip. Overnight at Hotel Aeropuerto.

Day 10 *Departures*

You will be shuttled to the airport for your flight home.



Photos by Amy Leist and Yehudi Hernandez

Rate: \$1,514, based on double occupancy. Single room supplement is \$120. Price of tour includes breakfast each day, all lodging, ground transportation, guides, entrance fees, activities and a \$50 donation to [Rainforest Biodiversity Group](#). Price of tour does not include airfare, airport tax (\$26), alcoholic beverages, snacks, bottled water, meals besides breakfast, or gratuities.

Register by: July 15, 2010 (50% deposit due at time of registration). To register or for more info, contact Holly Robertson at info@servicebirding.com.