Wild Costa Rica and Panama

Trip Code: WCP

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	2 LEISURELY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover Tortuguero's incredible tropical wildlife with expert guides
- Explore a unique ecosystem in the cloud forest canopy of Panama's Baru National Park
- Relax on uninhabited idyllic islands scattered off the Pacific Coast
- Visit the famous Panama Canal and watch the locks in operation
- Take a whale-watching cruise and witness turtle-nesting first hand

AT A GLANCE

- 5 days of trekking
- Snorkelling
- Canopy and zipline tours
- Remote island exploration
- Join at San Jose, end Panama City

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Costa Rica and Panama are two diminutive countries that pack a punch when it comes to adventure and unparalleled immersion into wild, untamed jungle; mist-shrouded cloud-forest and untouched coastline. Costa Rica is rightly renowned for its incredible biodiversity; but for many Panama remains an enigma, far off the beaten track. This is a region rich in nature and steeped in a fascinating history of conquistadors, marauding British pirates and the tragic human story behind the construction of the Panama Canal. Our adventure starts in San Jose; walking the trails of some of its premier national parks and reserves including the trails of Tirimbina Biological Reserve, the world-famous turtle-nesting beaches of Tortuguero National Park and the protected coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea. Crossing the land border into Panama, we explore pristine cloud-forests dominated by the towering Volcan Baru from a range of hanging bridges suspended high in the canopy. There is also a zip-line tour which enables us to safely fly across the valleys and tree-tops, affording us a unique perspective of the landscape. We continue to the Chiriqui National Marine Park off the Pacific Coast, and by boat explore remote untouched islands and coral reefs. During the whale-watching season we will head to the area renowned for observing these majestic mammals. Flying internally to Panama City, our action-packed adventure nears it end. Before we leave, however, we will walk the atmospheric streets Casco Viejo and visit the impressive Miraflores Locks on the Panama Canal, where we can observe ships passing through the gigantic locks. We stay in a range of comfortable hotels, chalets and eco-lodges, all picked for their character or convenient location.

Is this holiday for you?

We have designed this itinerary for those wanting an adventure featuring the very best that natural Costa Rica and Panama have to offer. This active holiday is packed with easy walking along trails that discover protected wildlife reserves and unique experiences including plantation tours, island-hopping by boat and exploring the Panama Canal. There are a two opportunities to explore coral reefs by snorkel, so confidence in the water and an ability to swim would be beneficial. None of the walks are more than a few hours in duration, meaning this is a holiday that unfolds at a relaxed and enjoyable pace.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.

Galapagos Islands Cruise

Situated over 600 miles from the mainland of South America, the remote archipelago of the Galapagos Islands needs little introduction. The Galapagos Islands are considered to the crown jewels of the natural world, achieving near mythological status following visits by Charles Darwin. It was on his second visit aboard HMS Beagle in 1835 that Darwin's scientific studies introduced the world to the theory of evolution. The islands teem with life, much of which seem totally unphased and perhaps curious of visitors. Of the thirteen major islands, on five have any form of human habitation. The environmental footprint is kept to an absolute minimum, allowing you, the visitor, a chance to explore the incredible biodiversity of these famous islands untouched by human development. Expect close encounters with blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, albatross, giant tortoises, seals, turtles and dinosaur-like lizards amongst many, many other examples.

7 days from
US$5,105 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed transfers on arrival and departure
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- The internal flight from David to Panama City
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned unless specified as 'optional'

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Tips
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

Transfers from San Jose International Airport to the group hotel are provided for all passengers arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, transfers are provided for all passengers to Panama City Airport.

If you wish to arrive or depart on different days we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also readily available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

Included in your holiday price are all breakfasts, 4 lunches and 4 dinners. On the days where we are in locations with a variety of options, the choice is yours. This means you will pay directly for a total of 10 lunches and 9 dinners. We recommend you budget £8-£20 per meal.

Food & Water

The cuisine in Costa Rica and Panama makes the most of the fresh fruits and vegetables that grow in abundance here. Influences stem from a mix of indigenous, Caribbean and Spanish dishes. Breakfasts will nearly always include delicious local fruits such as pineapple, watermelon and papaya; along with eggs and 'gallo pinto' which is the local dish of black beans and rice. Lunch can often be a sandwich for those on the move, but also meat or seafood dishes served with salad. Tamales are an Aztec dish consisting of little morsels of meat and vegetables wrapped up in a cornmeal dough and steamed in plantain leaves. Carnivores will be delighted to discover chicharrones: crispy, fried pork; very much in the style of pork scratchings! Dinners are usually meat- or fish-based with rice and beans and vegetables. More familiar dishes are available too. Dessert is usually a selection of fruits or a small, sweet pudding known as 'tres leches' (a dessert made of milk prepared three ways). Both Costa Rica and Panama are famed for their coffee, and you can also find refreshment with cane-sugar water or fresh tropical fruit-juice. The craft-ale scene is booming in both countries, and there are many micro-breweries producing some lovely beers, and you can find some exquisite sipping rum too.

Accommodation

We will stay in a range of comfortable tourist class hotels across Costa Rica and Panama, which have been selected for their convenient location and/or charm. In San Jose and Panama City, we will stay in centrally located hotels, whilst in Sarapiqui and Tortuguero the group will stay in rustic eco-lodges that allow us to truly feel immersed in the stunning rainforest. In Puerto Viejo, we stay in bungalows situated close to the beautiful Caribbean beach and the Boquete accommodation will be a collection of chalets, nestled in the cloud forest.

A highlight of the holiday will be our hotel in Boca Chica, which offers stunning views across the Chiriqui Gulf, dotted with mangroves and remote, uninhabited, islands that can be accessed by speedboat.

Accommodation is based on twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Spending Money

Approximately £500 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks, non-included meals and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs and optional activities are additional so you may wish to budget for these.

You can choose to take your money in pounds sterling, dollars or euros. There will be the opportunity to change money into local currency on arrival at the airport and your local leader will advise the best places to change money en-route and at borders. Additionally, you will be able to get currency from bank ATMs in many of the towns that we will visit. Credit cards are useful and it is a good idea to carry one in case of emergency.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We recommend that you decide levels of tipping and give any tips as a group rather than from individual group members.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline. For the internal flight, you are restricted to one piece of checked-in luggage with a limit of 23kg and one piece of carry-on luggage with a limit of 10kg.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the UK Government website.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

You will require an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any US-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is USD$21 and you should apply for it at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/. With the ESTA complete, the majority of British Citizen passport holders can enter the US under the Visa Waiver Programme, VWP. You will be required to have a passport with an integrated chip. Note that if you have travelled to Cuba, Iran, Syria or North Korea since March 2011* you will have to apply for a visa rather than the Visa Waiver Programme (* a full and up to date list of countries can be found on the US government website here.)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

All citizens (except for USA citizens) will require an eTA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD$7 and you should apply for it at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp

Visa Costa Rica

UK passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

Visa Panama

UK passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. You should carry proof of onward or return travel.

Currency

The unit of currency in Panama is the Balboa, however the US dollar is also a legal currency and this is the easiest currency to use.

Climate

Costa Rica and Panama both have a hot and humid climate. The days are warm and generally sunny with temperatures between 20 - 28°C. However, these are tropical countries and it can rain anywhere at anytime. Rainfall is typically tropical in nature, which means heavy downpours for perhaps an hour, giving way to blue skies and sunshine.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Costa Rica Wildlife: A Folding Pocket Guide To Familiar Species - James Kavanagh (2001)

The Path Between The Seas - David McCullough (1999)

Empire Of Blue Water: Captain Morgan's Great Pirate Army... - Stephan Talty (2007)

Hell's Gorge - Matthew Parker (2008)

The Cloud Garden - Tom Hart Dyke and Paul Winder (2004)

Theodore Rex - Edmund Morris (2002)

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Hiking boots
- Sandals (such as waterproof Tevas)
- Rash-vest or T-shirt to wear under a buoyancy aid during snorkelling
- Socks & underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Shorts (useful for boat landings)
- Baselayer shirts
- Shirts / T-shirts / Tops
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Lightweight waterproof over trousers
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 20-30 litres (with rain cover)
- Dry bags
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)

- Water bottles 1 Litre (2 pint) x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Insect repellent (DEET)
- Small travel towel
- Small padlock
- Basic First Aid Kit, including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Trekking poles
- Mosquito net (in most establishments the windows have netting, however it is prudent to bring one as well)
- Travel clothes
- Flipflops for casual wear and evenings
- Swimwear
- Binoculars
- Umbrella & poncho
- Gaiters

- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Snorkel & Mask - these will be provided but you may have your own you wish to use
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from **Cotswold Outdoor** - our ***'Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer'***. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in San Jose, Costa Rica and ending in Panama City, Panama. For clients making their own flight arrangements, San Jose Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers' for further details. This tour finishes in Panama City.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to San Jose. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the morning, arriving the same day (day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart from Panama City usually in the afternoon on the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK the following morning. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

Costa Rica and Panama combine to create a fabulous adventure holiday! Our unique itinerary takes in our favourite easy trails and protected nature reserves. Whether it's wildlife spotting on the turtle-nesting beaches of the Caribbean, traversing through cloudforest treetops on hanging bridges or witnessing one of humankind's most impressive feats of engineering in the Panama Canal; this adventure is packed with unforgettable experiences!

Please Note This document was downloaded on 21/12/2024 and the trip is subject to change