

Wildlife Beach Nicaragua and Costa Rica



colonial Granada – Ometepe Island – Pacific beaches – Rincon de la Vieja - Arenal volcano – Bosque de Paz cloudforest – Manuel Antonio National Park – charming hotels – tailor made to suit you

Combine the authenticity of Nicaragua with the comforts of Costa Rica.

Experience a heady combination of volcanoes, islands, culture and wildlife.

Enjoy the warm hospitality of Nicaragua's people.

Travel through Costa Rica's uniquely diverse habitats at your own pace.

Relax at comfortable yet characterful hotels at the end of each day.

This is a Pura *handpicked* holiday with an activity rating of *low* and a comfort rating *first*.



Steam rising from the crater of Arenal volcano.



"Spend as much time out there as you can - there is so much to see!" Ross P

Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | Managua | **arrive in Nicaragua**

Meet your guide at the airport for the short transfer to your hotel in Managua's centre.

Managua is a modern city with some lovely restaurants and good nightlife but not too much in the way of cultural distractions. Relax this evening.

Day 02 | Granada | **travel and relax**

After breakfast you are collected for the one-hour drive down to the continent's oldest European city, Granada.

The town is hub of tourism in the country so has more evidence of foreign investment and residents.

Nevertheless it is very attractive and enjoyable.



Market day in Granada.

After the lean years of the 1980s large parts of town were fairly dilapidated.

Over the past decade or so a good deal of money has been invested to restore the colonial centre of town to its former glory.

Stroll the narrow streets this afternoon. (b)

Day 03 | Granada | **explore the town**

Spend today relaxing and exploring Granada with your private English-speaking guide.

The balance of the day is yours to relax and enjoy at your own pace.

Stroll through the cobbled streets lined by colonial houses with the crumbling yet still beautiful facades.

Hear the fascinating history of Granada including the story of when pirates razed the city.

In the late afternoon take a boat tour across the lake to Las Isletas de Granada.

By timing your tour just before sunset you have the best chance of seeing a variety of birds including osprey and heron flying home to roost. (b)

Day 04 | Granada | **visit markets and villages**

Today is spent visiting the area around Granada.

Visit the cloudforest reserve on the upper slopes of the Mombacho volcano, which dominates the skyline of Granada.

Questions? Ready to book? Call us on **01273 676 712**

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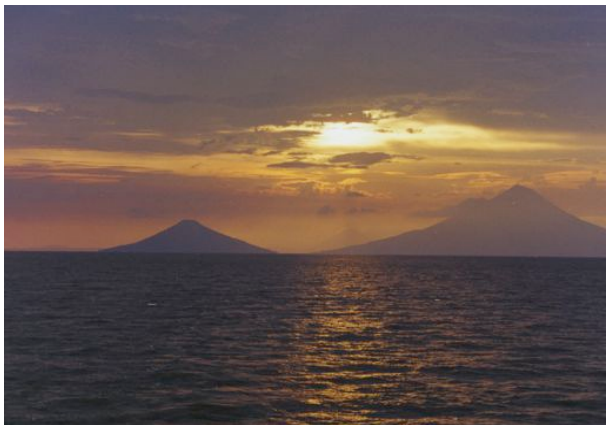
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Looking out onto the pretty cobble streets in Granada



A boat moored in Las Isletas de Granada



The distinctive profile of Ometepe Island.



The bay at San Juan del Sur.

Mombacho is home to three species of monkeys, 168 of birds, 30 of reptiles and 60 mammals.

There is an area of fumaroles in an open, grassy part of the volcano. From here you have incredible views of Granada and the Isletas.

Follow a trail of roughly 1.5km around the crater.

Today is also a chance for you to meet indigenous craftspeople in the town of Masaya, which is famous for its restored 19th century artisan market.

What is really worthwhile seeing is the hammock making for which the town's residents are best known. Also good are leather, wood and fabric products. (b)

Day 05 | Ometepe Island | lake crossing

This morning travel to the shores of Lake Nicaragua for a ferry ride across to Ometepe.

The island is an extraordinary sight as it is entirely formed by two volcanoes – one dormant (Maderas, 1,400m), one active (Concepcion, 1,600m).

The views are beautiful as the twin cones grow ever larger until you disembark near Concepcion.

The island is home to the Nahuatl people and has a long and fairly mysterious history – the isolated east coast is home to caves full of paintings and petroglyphs.

Drive around the island through small villages and banana plantations to your simple but comfortable lodge, where you stay for two nights.

Set in a remote spot on the hillside, there are stunning views of the lake and Concepcion Volcano from each cabin. (b)

Day 06 | Ometepe Island | explore the island

Today is at leisure but there are lots of activities on offer. In particular, you might like to walk up either Maderas or Concepcion volcanoes. The hike to the crater of Maderas is a long, hard uphill route which is usually muddy.

The views from the top make the exertion well worthwhile however. As long as you are a fit walker, you should try this hike.

Alternatively you could walk through the forest to San Ramon waterfall on the slopes of the Maderas volcano.

The waterfall is over 100m high and drops down into a clear pool. Remember your swimming costume so you can cool off with a dip after your walk.

Here you have the chance to see wildlife such as monkeys, trogons and blue morpho butterflies. (b)

Day 07 | Pacific coast | relax at the beach

After breakfast, catch the morning ferry off Ometepe and head south (two and a half hours) to the village of San Juan on the Pacific Coast.

Stay in a charming hotel near the beach for two nights of relaxation before the next stage of your adventure in Costa Rica. (b)

Day 08 | Pacific Coast | relax at the beach

Spend today relaxing by the beach or at the pool at your hotel. The beaches on this part of Nicaragua coast are the finest on Central America's Pacific Coast. (b)



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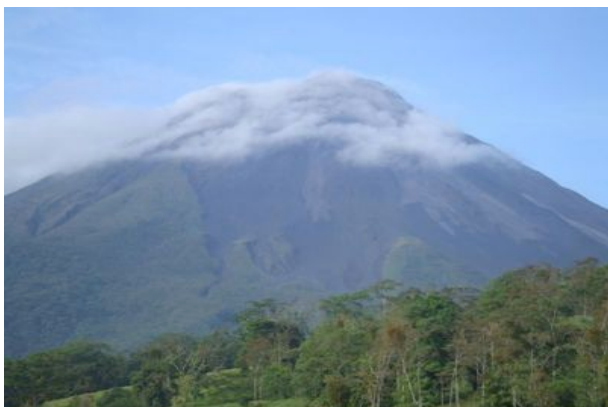
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A cowboy shows off his skills at Rincon de la Vieja



The hot springs at Arenal



Day 09 | Rincon | **travel to Costa Rica**

This morning you are collected and driven south to Peñas Blancas, the border with Costa Rica.

The scene here is chaotic with long lines of people, cars and trucks waiting to cross the border.

Fixers are on hand to speed up your movement through the line and across into Costa Rica, in return for a tip!

The crossing should take around an hour. If you have a calm and flexible attitude then you will enjoy a real cultural spectacle.

Once in Costa Rica, pick up your 4x4 hire car from the offices here at the border. You will have the chance to go through your intended route with the guide before you set off driving independently.

Drive to the tropical dry forests of Rincon de la Vieja. The journey should take around two hours. (b)

Day 10 | Rincon | **explore the national park**

If you are up early enough you can wander down to the farm to see the cows being milked. Return to have breakfast in the lodge's open-air restaurant.

Set off this morning to explore Rincon de la Vieja National Park.

Visit the park's bubbling mud pots, sulphurous vents and babbling clear water streams.

Return to your lodge to relax by the pool. (b)

Day 11 | Arenal | **drive to Arenal Volcano**

After breakfast bid goodbye to the ranch and set off south to Liberia, then around Lake Tilaran to Arenal.

As you travel you will notice the scenery changing from the parched landscapes of the tropical dry forest to the lush green of the central region.

As you approach the village of La Fortuna you will catch your first glimpse of Arenal Volcano towering above.

Stay at a comfortable hotel with an excellent view of the volcano. (b)

Day 12 | Arenal | **relax in hot springs**

Wake up early for the best chance to see the top of the volcano before clouds obscure the top.

You are in an absolutely stunning setting, and even if the volcano is hidden from sight there are attractive, open-air hot springs where you can relax within earshot of the rumbling giant.

Active excursions are on offer, one of the best being the Hanging Bridges – a series of interconnecting pathways and suspended bridges through the forest canopy with stunning views onto the valley below. (b)

Day 13 | Arenal | **explore the area**

Your hotel offers a very comprehensive and reasonable range of excursions in the area.

The Cerro Chato hike is worth considering as would be the canoe trip either on Lake Arenal (actually a reservoir) or on the wildlife rich Peñas Blancas River. (b)

Day 14 | Bosque de Paz | **to the cloudforest**

Head south this morning to the cloudforest of the Bosque de Paz region.



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Mist rising from the Bosque de Paz cloudforest



Look out for humming birds at Bosque de Paz, which are common.



The beach at Manuel Antonio

This is a quiet haven, with tumbling mountain streams and secluded forest paths.

Stay for two nights at a charming lodge set in its own reserve. (b,l,d)

Day 15 | Bosque de Paz | explore cloudforest

Today is free to explore the fascinating flora and fauna of the cloudforest.

The lodge has a system of seven well-maintained forest trails of varying length and difficulty. The owners are on hand to suggest the most suitable routes.

The cloudforest canopy is extremely rich with humming birds, colourful butterflies, exotic frogs and orchids.

In the afternoon you could choose to simply relax and enjoy the lodge's pretty garden, which has been hung with nectar feeders to attract hummingbirds.

Bold coatimundi can often be seen taking a turn about the lawn. (b,l,d)

Day 16 | Manuel Antonio | travel to the beach

Travel south this morning to the Central Pacific coast for some relaxing beach time.

Manuel Antonio is one of the most scenically beautiful areas in Costa Rica, with lush forests opening out onto pristine white sand beaches.

Your base for the next three nights is a charming hotel set among the trees overlooking the bay. (b)

Day 17 | Manuel Antonio | explore and relax

Wake up to the sound of the howler monkey's distinctive call and waves lapping on the nearby shore.

Today you could visit Manuel Antonio National Park, where you are likely to see sloth, capuchin or spider monkey and toucans.

After walking up the winding path through the forest you are rewarded with a breathtaking view over the trees and out to sea.

Relax on the beach this afternoon. (b)

Day 18 | Manuel Antonio | relax

A free day today to revisit the National Park, enjoy the facilities at your hotel or relax on the white sands with the sounds of the jungle behind you. (b)

Day 19 | San José | crocodiles and macaws

After a leisurely start you travel back to San José via the Tarcolés Bridge.

Here in the afternoon it is possible to see pairs of Scarlet Macaw flying home to roost in the nests in the mangroves.

Continue driving to your hotel overlooking the Central Valley where you spend your final night. (b)

Day 20 | flight | fly home

Drive to the airport today in time to drop off your hire car and check-in for your chosen international flight home. (b)

International flights are quoted separately for this trip.



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Holiday Information

Pura Handpicked

This holiday is delivered by our partners on the ground in Costa Rica and Nicaragua but is tailor made by Pura and therefore unique to us.

We have designed it to showcase what we believe to be the highlights of both Nicaragua and Costa Rica, including our favourite pick of the popular destinations along with some lesser-known hidden gems.

We deliver this holiday using our carefully selected local suppliers. Like us they are passionate about the places we visit and about helping you experience a real slice of life in both countries.

We have chosen the hotels and lodges very carefully. They best reflect the places you are visiting whilst still being clean, comfortable and well-run.

How active?

A combination of walking, culture and wildlife – the pace is really up to you.

You can choose from a variety of excursions from the very active (surfing, horse riding, mountain biking, hiking) to the less active – wildlife walks and of course just relaxing on a beach.

How comfortable?

This holiday is tailor made to suit you so we can select the hotels and lodges to fit your needs and budget.

This proposed itinerary has been based on staying in a series of small, friendly 3* properties that have been chosen for their excellent service and charming style.

Sample hotels:

Granada, Hotel Darío

Ometepe, Totoco Ecolodge

San Juan, Posada Azul

Rincon de la Vieja, Canon de la Vieja

Arenal, Arenal Observatory Lodge

Bosque de Paz Lodge

Manuel Antonio, Villas Liria

How independent?

In Nicaragua you have private tours with a local English-speaking guide in Granada and at Masaya.

Private transfers throughout in Nicaragua.

In Costa Rica it is a self-guided itinerary with a 4x4 car provided.

We can also offer this holiday with private transfers in Costa Rica if you prefer not to drive yourself.

How responsible?

Together with our partners on the ground we support a series of projects that aim to preserve the cultural integrity of native communities and minimize the impact of tourism on fragile local ecosystems.

Your holiday with us will directly benefit these causes:

- *The Neotropica Foundation* works with communities and schools to improve environmental education.
- The *Caribbean Conservation Corporation* works to protect sea turtles and their habitat.
- The *Panamor Foundation* protects the social interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged Costa Ricans.

When should I go?

This holiday can be run year round although September and October are the rainiest months.

These are tropical countries so, with the exception of the cloudforest, temperatures range from 25°C - 35°C all year round.

There are two seasons: rainy and dry.

The rainy season is from mid-May through November when most days begin sunny on the Pacific with rains of short duration coming in the afternoon and night.

Rains usually last only a couple of hours and do not cause any problems for visitors.

The exception to this is September and October when rains, particularly further south into Costa Rica, are pretty much constant.

Other than these two months the rainy season is a nice time to travel as places are less crowded. The wildlife is there no matter what time of year you visit.

The dry season runs from December to mid-May.

During this period you can expect hot, clear and sunny days. In fact, it can get very hot in Nicaragua and northern Costa Rica (up to 40c).

The cloudforest is at altitude, so can feel cold and damp throughout the year, especially at night.

How do I book?

As a tailor made holiday we need to check availability and prices before taking your booking. If you would like us to prepare you a detailed proposal then simply email info@pura-aventura.com or call 01273 676 712 with your preferred dates plus any other changes you would like us to make.

Once you have the proposal and decide you would like to go ahead then please call in with the following:

- Full names, address, contact telephone numbers & email, deposit of 15%

Deposits can be paid by card, cheque or bank transfer, whichever suits you best (the balance of your holiday is due 60 days prior to travel).

Prices & Departures

2012	Year round £1,980pp
Flights	Transatlantic flights are quoted separately. You can book these direct or through us. Other than at peak times, expect to pay between £600 and £800 per person.
Prices include	Accommodation in 3* hotels & lodges (twin/double) as per itinerary; private transfers throughout Nicaragua; excursions as listed; car hire in 4x4 vehicle in Costa Rica (unlimited mileage); meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary; and local information.
Not included	International flights; activities other than those described; personal expenses; tips.

Prices are per person, based on two sharing a double/twin room.
WBNC12



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