

7-Day Costa Rica Adventure Itinerary: Arenal, Monteverde & Manuel Antonio

Costa Rica packs volcanoes, cloud forest, and jungle-backed beaches into a country you can drive across in a day — this loop hits the three spots almost everyone puts on their list, without trying to cram in more than makes sense for a week.

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

December – April
dry season

FROM

\$1,650 USD / person
for 2 people

Day 1

Arrive in San José, Transfer to La Fortuna

Land in San José and head straight for the volcano. It's a scenic three-hour drive north to La Fortuna, the small town at the base of Arenal — plan to arrive with enough daylight left for a soak.

Private Transfer — San José Airport (SJO) to La Fortuna

~3 hours · Estimated \$130–160 USD one-way per vehicle (shared shuttle from ~\$50/person)

A private transfer is the easy option straight off a flight; budget travelers can book a shared shuttle instead for a lower price and a couple of extra stops along the way.

Interbus (shared shuttle) interbusonline.com · WhatsApp +506 6050 6500

Overnight — Arenal Manoa Hot Springs Resort

From \$150–190 USD / night, for 2 people

A mid-range volcano-view hotel with its own hot spring pools on site — handy on the first night when you don't want to go looking for one.

Arenal Manoa arenalmanoa.com · +506 2479 1111

Day 2

Arenal Volcano

A full day around the volcano — rainforest in the morning, hot springs in the evening.

Mistico Arenal Hanging Bridges

~2–3 hours · \$39 USD / person (admission)

A 3km, self-guided trail across six suspension bridges through the rainforest canopy, with a good shot at spotting sloths, toucans, and monkeys. Go early to beat the heat and the tour buses.

Mistico Park misticopark.com · +506 2479 8282

Evening Hot Springs Soak

From \$60 USD / person (day-pass style venues)

Several resorts around La Fortuna sell day passes to their hot spring pools without requiring a room booking — a good way to close out a hiking day. Ask your hotel front desk for the current day-pass options nearby.

Dinner in La Fortuna

Est. \$20–35 USD / person

On your own — La Fortuna's small downtown has plenty of solid options, from casual sodas to sit-down spots on the main strip.

Overnight — Arenal Manoa Hot Springs Resort

From \$150–190 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night at the same hotel — no need to pack up.

Arenal Manoa arenalmanoa.com · +506 2479 1111

Day 3

La Fortuna to Monteverde

The road between La Fortuna and Monteverde winds around Lake Arenal with volcano views most of the way — give yourself the full afternoon for it.

Shared Shuttle — La Fortuna to Monteverde

~3 hours · Estimated \$30–45 USD / person

Shared shuttles run this route multiple times a day and are the standard way to make the trip — private transfer is available too, at a higher price, if you'd rather not share.

Interbus interbusonline.com · WhatsApp +506 6050 6500

Overnight — Hotel Belmar

From \$220–280 USD / night, for 2 people

A well-regarded boutique eco-hotel above Monteverde with cloud forest and valley views — a step up from the last two nights, and worth it for the setting.

Hotel Belmar hotelbelmar.net · +506 2645 5201

Day 4

Monteverde Cloud Forest

Guided Cloud Forest Walk

~2.5 hours · From \$45–60 USD / person, guide included

A naturalist guide spots far more than you will on your own — quetzals, sloths, and the reserve's famous strangler figs. Bring a light rain layer; the cloud forest is misty even in dry season.

Overnight — Hotel Belmar

From \$220–280 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night at the same hotel.

Hotel Belmar hotelbelmar.net · +506 2645 5201

Day 5

Monteverde to Manuel Antonio

The longest travel day of the trip — you're trading cloud forest for the Pacific coast, so budget most of the day for the drive and arrive ready to do nothing but hear the ocean.

Shared Shuttle — Monteverde to Manuel Antonio

~4 hours · Estimated \$50–70 USD / person

Book the morning departure if you can — it leaves you enough of the afternoon to settle in and get to the beach before sunset.

Interbus interbusonline.com · WhatsApp +506 6050 6500

Overnight — Hotel Costa Verde

From \$180–240 USD / night, for 2 people

Rainforest-and-ocean-view rooms a short walk from Manuel Antonio National Park's entrance — monkeys and toucans show up in the trees on property fairly often.

Hotel Costa Verde Toll-free (US/CA) 1-866-854-7958 costaverde.com · +506 2777 0584

Day 6

Manuel Antonio National Park & Beach

The park in the morning while the animals are active, the beach for the rest of the day.

Guided Manuel Antonio National Park Tour

~3 hours · \$65 USD / person, includes park entrance

A local guide with a spotting scope will find far more sloths and monkeys than you'd spot walking in alone, and can time your visit around the park's entry windows. Afterward, the park's beaches are open for swimming for the rest of the day.

National Park Manuel Antonio Tours nationalparkmanuelantonio.com · Info@nationalparkmanuelantonio.com

Dinner in Manuel Antonio

Est. \$25–45 USD / person

On your own — the strip between the park and Quepos has a wide range of restaurants, many with sunset ocean views.

Overnight — Hotel Costa Verde

From \$180–240 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night at the same hotel.

Hotel Costa Verde costaverde.com · +506 2777 0584

Day 7

Depart from San José

Last stretch of the loop — back over to San José for your flight home.

Private Transfer — Manuel Antonio to San José Airport (SJO)

~3.5 hours · Estimated \$150–180 USD one-way per vehicle (shared shuttle from ~\$60/person)

Build in buffer time before an international flight — coastal traffic near San José can add 30–45 minutes on a bad day.

Interbus interbusonline.com · WhatsApp +506 6050 6500

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