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How to Make the Most Out of 48 Hours in Costa Rica

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica – April 26, 2016 – With more Americans taking fewer, shorter vacations a year, the Central American nation of Costa Rica – known for its natural wonders, colorful culture and friendly locals – offers travelers an ideal destination for a quick getaway. Roughly the size of West Virginia, visitors can take advantage of the country’s small size to explore numerous opportunities for adventure and relaxation.

Daily direct flights out of major U.S. hubs also provide travelers easy access to experience this unique and exciting destination.

In as little as 48 hours, visitors can experience the cultural richness of the country’s capital, the majestic Arenal Volcano National Park and the colorful town of Sarchí.

Day 1: Welcome to Costa Rica!



2 p.m. – Eat like a local

Upon arriving to Juan Santamaria International Airport, check in at one of the hundreds of hotels offerings available in the capital city of San Jose. The new hop-on and hop-off tours offer visitors the ease and convenience of visiting over 50 attractions, including the Central Market, the National Theater and the Gastronomic Road in Escalante. The service is provided daily from 8:40 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.costaricacitysquaretour.com.

Before exploring the town, those who want to eat like the locals can hop on the tour bus and stop at the Central Market (“Mercado Central”), the oldest and largest market in the city. First opened

in 1880, the Central Market offers more than 200 shops and stalls, as well as “sodas.” Also found throughout the country, sodas are inexpensive family-run restaurants where travelers will find authentic, home-cooked style Costa Rican dishes such as the popular “gallo pinto.”

4 p.m. – Experience the classics

After savoring the authentic cuisine, a visit to the National Theater (“Teatro Nacional”) is a must. As the architectural jewel of Costa Rica, the theater is one of the country’s most popular attractions. Here, guests can enjoy some of the theater’s weekly performances, as well as admire its exquisite interior and ceiling murals. The National Theater is open Tuesday to Sunday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

7 p.m. – After dark

Enjoying the country’s culinary offerings is part of many travelers’ agendas, and downtown San Jose hosts many international options to satisfy even the most demanding palates. Head to the neighborhood of Escalante, the capital’s gastronomic center, which hosts over 30 local and international restaurants and bars that draw locals and visitors alike. Many restaurants offer fusion delicacies by incorporating Costa Rican ingredients harvested from their own gardens.

GAM Cultural provides visitors with a list of the latest events in San Jose, including concerts, art exhibits and workshops. For more information, please visit www.gamcultural.com.

Day 2: Embark on an adventure



7 a.m. – Take the high road

Enjoy the picturesque scenery of Costa Rica’s vast mountains while heading over to Arenal Volcano National Park, which is a three hour drive from San Jose. Named after the country’s most famous volcano, this national park is filled with rivers, thermal hot springs, waterfalls, and of course, wildlife. Arenal is a dream come true for those who enjoy exploring the outdoors. The area offers a wide variety of hotels to spend the night. Arenal Volcano National Park is open every day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the entrance fee is \$10.

11 a.m. – Hike the giant

Start the adventure by visiting the Arenal volcano. The hiking trails around the tall and imposing active volcano offer jaw-dropping views of this giant and its surrounding lush jungle.

3 p.m. – Adrenaline rush

Zip lining, also known as canopy tours, is one of the country’s most popular activities. Visitors will experience intense adrenaline rushes while zipping past the treetops. Zip lining is an unforgettable experience for those wanting to explore the surrounding jungle in a unique way.

5 p.m. – Revitalize

After a very active day of exploration, relax at one of the hot springs surrounding Arenal. Due to the geothermal activity beneath the volcano, the thermal water of these hot springs, along with the surrounding nature, will provide much needed relief to tired muscles after a long day of adventure.

Day 3: End on a bright note



10:30 a.m. – Bring authentic Costa Rica crafts home

On the way back to San Jose, make a last stop at the colorful town of Sarchi. Famous for vibrantly painted oxcarts, Sarchi is the perfect place to purchase handmade souvenirs, such as wall art, furniture, and even a one-of-a-kind, colorful oxcart. The town is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Arenal and only 30 minutes from Juan Santamaria International Airport.

For more information on Costa Rica, visit www.visitcostarica.com.

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About Costa Rica

Costa Rica is located in Central America between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south; it is bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. With an abundance of unique wildlife, landscapes and climates this small country proudly shelters approximately five percent of the known biodiversity in the world. In order to protect and preserve its wealth of natural resources, Costa Rica has become a global leader in sustainable practices with protected areas comprising 26 percent of its land mass. With a peaceful spirit, emphasis on education and an economy based on tourism, technology and exportation, Costa Rica offers one of the highest standards of living in Latin America. Visitors to Costa Rica enjoy a highly organized tourism infrastructure among a tropical paradise of lush rainforests, mystical volcanoes and cloud forests and beaches that meet mountains filled with monkeys and macaws. Offering a broad terrain of activities and accommodations, visitors to Costa Rica will find a range of hotel options ranging from small beachside bed & breakfasts to authentic intimate boutique mountain lodges to major international business hotel brands and everything in between. Costa Rica's accommodations offer something appealing for everyone's desires. The phrase "Pura Vida" can be heard echoing throughout Costa Rica from coast to coast. Used as a greeting or expression

of happiness, the phrase literally translates to “pure life,” however its true meaning is “full of life,” which accurately describes the adventure and wonder that await visitors.

About Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT)

Established in 1955, the Costa Rica Tourism Board spearheads the vital task of regulating and promoting Costa Rica’s extensive of tourism offerings. The ICT and its partners in the private sector work tirelessly to garner recognition, standardize practices, provide insightful research data and foster cultural development for the country’s coast to coast one-of-a-kind tourism products and resources.