

Wilderness Ride, Costa Rica

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival

Arrive at Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel for overnight.

Check-in to your hotel room. You may meet other guests on the ride this evening, but if not then you will meet them the next morning.

Dinner is to your own account tonight. The hotel has a restaurant, but if you are on a flight arriving very late in the evening you may wish to consider getting something to eat at the airport instead.

Overnight at the Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Hotel, San Jose.

The following is a sample itinerary, which should be used as an example of what might happen during the week.

Day 2 – Briefing & Welcome Ride

The guide will meet you at c. 08:00 for a briefing and then the vehicle transfer will depart from your hotel and transfer you to the Cien Fuegos Eco-Ranch & Stables, located along the Trinidad River in the Dry Central Pacific Region. We recommend you are dressed ready to ride. There are basic bathrooms at Eco-Ranch where you may change, but it will be more convenient for you to arrive there ready to ride.

Please note that you will be asked to pack just a small amount of essential clothing/toiletries into a dry sack for the next two nights (which will be carried on horseback). Your main luggage will be transferred to Finca Galan and will be available from the 4th night onwards.

Set off on a short ride to acquaint yourself with your horse. Try out the local riding style and get used to neck-reining.

Whilst the horses are being transported to the starting point of the ride, visit the local town of Orotina for any last-minute purchases.



Be reunited with the horses at Lagunas (a journey of c. 1 hour) in the Turrubares Mountains lowlands where your tropical adventure begins. Make your way along rural trails adjacent to Carara National Park. You will likely arrive quite late at your overnight lodge, so please do make sure that you have eaten a filling breakfast in the morning.



Riding time: c. 4-5 hours.

Dinner and overnight at Rio Carara Lodge.

Day 3 - Explore Carara National Park

Today, explore on horseback the rainforest adjacent to Carara National Park, which in indigenous Huetar language means "River of lizards".

Carara is a popular destination amongst wildlife enthusiasts and birdwatchers. It was created as a biological reserve in 1978 and considered nowadays to be a biological island because of the dense agriculture and livestock operations around it which go back to the Pre-Columbus era. The 4,700 ha Carara Biological

Reserve occupies a unique position at the transition zone between tropical moist forest and tropical wet forest in the Pacific lowlands. Though most of the vegetation in the reserve remains evergreen and is characteristic of the wet forest life zone, there are a number of species that lose their leaves during the dry season, showing their affinity to the drier climate found north of the reserve.



Ride out in the morning, returning to the lodge for lunch. Then ride out again in the afternoon.

Riding time: c. 3-4 hours.

Dinner and overnight at Rio Carara Lodge.

Day 4 – From Carara to Monte Galán

After breakfast, set off on horseback following the south eastern trail adjacent to Carara National Park.



Head towards the remote village of Sur de Turrubares, a charming rural community tucked in a hidden valley surrounded by an amazing tropical forest and beautiful mountains. This is an area where you can really relax in the natural environment and disconnect yourself from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Perhaps visit the local bar if there is time.



Ride in the direction of Finca Galán, your next destination. There will be a few rivers to cross along the way. Head towards the Turrubares Mountains, with astounding views and a cooler breeze as you climb ever higher (maximum elevation 640 metres). On a clear day the views reach all the way to the Pacific coast.

Your main luggage will be waiting for you upon your arrival.

Riding time: c. 6-7 hours.

Dinner and overnight at Finca Galán.

Day 5 – Riding in the Pontenciana Mountains

After breakfast, set off on a ride into the Pontenciana Mountains, the only high coastal mountain range in Central America.



The terrain can be tricky at times today and so the pace will be steady, but you will be rewarded with spectacular scenery and far-reaching views.

Lunch will be a picnic out on the trail.

Ride through farmland and along mountain trails through pre-montane and oak forests. As you ascend you will notice the forest changing in constitution and characteristics; the lower temperatures encourage the growth of ferns, moss and bromeliads.

Riding time: c. 6 hours.

Dinner and overnight at Finca Galán.



Day 6 - Lanás & Aguas Calientes

Today is a rest day for the horses.

Choose between a guided nature walk (c. 3 hours) to a nearby waterfall; or visit a local farm to learn about how the Costa Ricans make their traditional chesses, you might even get the chance to milk the cows too (c. 3 hours); or spend time in Galan and help to harvest produce from the vegetable garden planted alongside other crops such as yucca, plantains, sweet potatoes and sugar cane.



Later you may be driven to a nearby village where you can swim in the river.

Dinner and overnight at Finca Galán.

Day 7 – from Mountains to Coastal Lowlands

Today, begin to descend the Turrubares Mountains, heading in the direction of the Pacific coast lowlands.

Following rural roads and mountain trails, reach the banks of the Turrubaritos River. Continue riding along the river delta which meanders its way down towards the coast. Today there will be plenty of crossings as

you ride along the course of the river, with lush forest around you.

Riding time: c. 4-5 hours.

Dinner and overnight at Palenque Mata de Platano.



Day 8 – from Lowlands to the Pacific Coast

Today you will ride up through Fila Negra and then down onto the lowlands to end your ride at Playa Hermosa on the Pacific Coast.

After a final ride along the beach say goodbye to your horses and local guide who have helped you along the way.



Riding time: c. 4-5 hours.

Be transferred to San Jose, a journey of c. 2.5 hours.

Dinner is to your own account tonight. Overnight at the Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Hotel in San Jose.

Day 9

This morning is at your leisure and then be transferred to San Jose airport in time for your flight.