



Activated Life Experiences

Costa Rica / Panama Caribbean Volun-tour Package 5 Day/ 4 Night Trek

Day 1



As you begin your first day, you meet your driver and your friendly, bi-lingual guide and head to your first adventure, river rafting on the famous Pacuare River. This trip gives you the ultimate blend of wilderness exposure and invigorating excitement. The Pacuare River is world famous for its pristine beauty. A true river gorge, it is flanked by steep, green walls. Waterfalls cascade into the river from both sides as colorful, tropical birds fly right over your head. Amazing views of this virgin Tropical Rainforest appear before your eyes as you descend this true exploratory land.

The white water is equally exciting; the amount of rapids covered on this outstanding descent makes it one of the most memorable river trips you will ever experience. This is Costa Rica's premier river trip.

We arrive first in Siquirres at our Exploration Center for breakfast. Then after fueling up, we head to the river where we will gear you up with a life jacket, helmet and paddle and then brief you with a full safety orientation. Finally, it is time to take off down the rapids!

The first 4 miles consist of fun class II-III rapids which is a perfect time to test your new river skills and gain confidence in your team. Here you can find pockets of secondary growth forest that is extremely beautiful. After about 40 minutes we will enter the famous Pacuare River Gorge, which is made up of five miles of some of the best white water Costa Rica has to offer. The rapids here are Terciopelo Snake, Double Drop, Upper and Lower Huacas, and Pinball to name a few. You will also see the Huacas waterfall, a 150-ft dramatic drop into the river.

After a delicious and well-deserved lunch on the beach, the river opens up to a 5-mile stretch on the Valle del Pacuare, where the river has a different character. It is wide open, which gives you the opportunity to rest a bit and take the opportunity to do some wildlife spotting. The main rapids here are Cimarrones, The Play Hole, El Indio and Magnetic Rock. The forest remains just as lush, and the rapids just as fun.



We finish back in Siquirres again, where you can take a shower, change and enjoy the gardens and terrace while having refreshments and reflecting with your new friends about the great adventure you just shared. Then we load up again on the bus and head to Puerto Viejo, just a short, 2-hour drive away.

Accommodations in Puerto Viejo



Arrive in Puerto Viejo at Banana Azul Guest House, www.bananaazul.com (or comparable lodging, depending on availability) where you will be staying for the night right on the beach.

Banana Azul, which was recently recommended in *Conde Nast Traveler* magazine is an all-wood hotel that has 12 beautiful guest rooms, all with private bath and free wireless internet. Enjoy the beach and hopefully catch the sunset and relax while your dinner is being prepared. Tonight you'll feast together as a group in the Banana Azul Restaurant.



Day 2

Enjoy your included tropical breakfast and take your choice of optional activities for the day:

- **Relax!** - Take the day to yourself, enjoy town, do some shopping and enjoy the beach.
- **Surfing Lessons:** It doesn't matter if you don't know the first thing about surfing. Our local, experienced instructors will teach you some basic techniques and you'll be having a great time while learning. The Caribbean is one of the most fascinating and challenging seas in the world, which is why people from all around the world come to Puerto Viejo -- just to get the chance to experiencing a dance with the waves. You'll be in the water for about 2 hours. So you'll be pretty worn out by the end of your lessons!
- **Kayak Tour:** If the idea of kayaking through tropical Costa Rica excites you, this is the perfect tour for you. You'll have the opportunity to be in direct contact with nature while taking part in a peaceful river trip. You'll see iguanas, different kinds of sloth, many birds, turtles and other incredible wildlife. The river you'll be navigating is located in Punta Uva, one of the most spectacular beaches on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. The entire tour takes about 3 hours, including some time to relax on the beach after the tour is finished. Or at the end you may feel brave enough to do a little kayaking in the ocean before heading back.



- **Canopy (Zip-Line) Tour:** This fantastic Caribbean Canopy Tour begins when we head up to the mountains of Carbon where the Canopy tour is located, 30 minutes away from Puerto Viejo. When we get there we will start a hike into the jungle where our naturalist guide is going to explain to us about the animals we are going to see, as well as about how the indigenous use some of the plants we can find in the jungle. At the end of the walk we arrive at the first platform where the real adventure begins! Our Canopy is comprised of 8 aerial platforms and 1200 meters of cable. At the end of the aerial tour you'll have the choice of getting to the ground by rappelling or by zipping down with the last cable, which lands you directly on the trail where we'll walk back to our transportation. This tour lasts approximately 4 hours.



- **Indigenous Chocolate Tour:** Petronila is an indigenous woman who makes organic chocolate based on her family's indigenous traditions. She is quite a charismatic and animated woman who will tell you funny and interesting stories as she shows you how she makes her chocolate by hand. This is truly a unique experience! Try free samples of over 10 flavors of chocolate and, of course, you'll have an opportunity to buy some chocolate at the end of the tour.



Enjoy dinner in town on your own or together as a group at one of our several amazing restaurants.

Day 3

Depart for Bocas del Toro, Panama

Today we're headed for another fantastic adventure. All the way to Panama! Actually, it's not that far away. Our driver will pick us up at the hotel and bring us about 90 minutes away to the border of Panama where we'll process through customs. Then we'll continue on to the town of Almirante where we board a water taxi, which will take us to the main island of Bocas del Toro, "Colon."



Bocas del Toro is a terribly relaxing place, and at the same time it exudes a funky, romantic charm that has something untamed about it. The place is filled with colorful characters. And it's just gorgeous! It has an abundance of emerald islands, pristine beaches, turquoise waters, dense forests, barely explored mountains and rivers, extensive coral gardens, spooky mangrove channels, and exotic wildlife.



Four species of endangered sea turtles still visit the waters of Bocas. They come ashore by the hundreds during nesting season to lay their eggs on the north side of the islands and some stretches of the mainland coast. Little Swan's Cay, really just a rock in the ocean, is the only Panamanian nesting site of the beautiful red-billed tropicbird. It's just one of the more than 350 species of birds attracted to the region. Sloth, caimans, dolphins, neon-colored frogs, and, of course, lots of small tropical fish are easy to spot in the archipelago. No wonder a dozen countries have shot their versions of the Survivor TV series here!

We plan not only to visit this gorgeous and unique destination, but also to contribute a bit while we're there by helping out at a local retirement home during our stay there.

Once we arrive, we'll be unloading at our hotel, the Don Chico, conveniently located pretty much in the center of town. We'll be staying here for the next two nights.

But don't get too comfortable. Now we head out for an afternoon boat tour of snorkeling and then a bit of relaxing on Red Frog Beach!



Tonight dinner is on your own. Enjoy any one of the many seafood or typical Panamanian restaurants lining the principal street. You'll find live music playing in many restaurants.

Accommodations in Bocas del Toro



Don Chico~ Bocas Del Toro

Day 4

Today we're going to do some volunteering at Bocas del Toro's only senior residential center, San Vicente de Paul, or as it's affectionately known around town, "El Asilo" or "The Asylum." It's actually not just the only retirement home in the archipelago, but also the only one in the entire province.

The home was established in 1964 when a tornado destroyed many homes in the Bocas area and displaced a significant number of elderly Bocatorenos. There were many such residents - whom had flocked to the area from the Antilles, Jamaica and other eastern Caribbean islands to work for the local banana



companies. They worked without the benefits of health insurance or social security and when they became too old or ill for further employment, they were left to fend for themselves. The most urgent were those without established family, provisions, clothing, food and shelter. The Ladies of the Charity of San Vincent de Paul, a local charity organization, recognized this hardship in the community and helped to arrange for the construction of a small wooden building to house these displaced citizens.



The home is partly funded by residents' families who can afford to pay for some of the costs. Most residents don't have family, money or anyplace else to go. On many occasions, the employees have continued working without pay for months, without money for food, or Pampers for those who are incontinent.

Fortunately, the Bocas community has pulled together during these difficult times with a core group of dedicated volunteers, ensuring the elderly members of the community are being taken care of. Local merchants, church volunteers, visiting volunteers such as yourselves, silent donors, monthly and annual donors, enthusiastic volunteers, commercial volunteers, and local business donations have been responsible for keeping the home afloat.





During our visit, we'll be spending our time playing games with the residents, helping with simple chores, reading to residents whose vision is failing, and perhaps bringing useful donations for them, such as simple staples of rice and beans or laundry detergent. More than you can probably imagine, just our time today with our new friends will be greatly appreciated and remembered for a long time to come.

We'll only spend about four hours at the Home today and then the afternoon is yours to take some optional tours (to be announced).

Tonight we'll all dine together in a nearby restaurant on the water.

Day 5

Today after a hearty breakfast, we begin our trek back to San Jose. First by water taxi, then we're met again by our driver, process back through customs into Costa Rica and continue on back to San Jose. We'll stop on the way for a nice lunch. Altogether the journey will take us approximately seven hours.

Package Pricing

\$700 - 760/person

(Based on family size of four)