



# Sea Turtle Conservancy's Eco-Volunteer Sea Turtle Conservation & Research Project in Costa Rica

## ITINERARY

Day 1	San José
Day 2-7	Tortuguero
Day 8	San José
Day 9	Departure

**Trip Description:** One of the features that make Costa Rica unique is its rare and abundant wildlife. On this trip, Eco-Volunteers not only have a chance to view protected and threatened animals but to actually help the creatures survive in the wild. Take part in turtle conservation and research currently underway to protect endangered sea turtles. By living and working next to the turtle's nesting habitat, you will gain a deep appreciation of these amazing creatures.

### Day 1 San José

Upon arrival at the Juan Santamaría International Airport, you will take the shuttle for your transfer to your hotel in San José. The vibrant capital city of San José located in Costa Rica's Central Valley has daily temperatures that rarely dip below 68°F or rise above 78°F. Following check-in, you will have the remainder of the day at leisure to explore (depending on flight arrival time). Sights of interest within the city include the National Museum of Costa Rica and the Jade Museum, both of which display pre-Columbian artifacts; the Gold Museum features over 20,000 troy ounces of golden artifacts; the National Gallery of Contemporary Art; and the city large central park, Parque Nacional. **Overnight in San José.**

### Day 2 Tortuguero

This morning, enjoy breakfast while traveling by bus and boat to Tortuguero National Park, located on the northern Caribbean coast. Tortuguero consists of a series of natural interconnecting canals, and provides a unique opportunity to observe wildlife by boat. Along the inland waterways, you may sight spider monkeys, crocodiles, three-toed sloth, wading birds, manatees, and caiman. From March through May, Tortuguero is the nesting site for the largest sea turtle in the world, the critically endangered leatherback. From July through September, Tortuguero is the most important nesting site in the Western Caribbean for the endangered green sea turtle. Following arrival at the accommodations of your choice, you will meet with a STC research biologist for an orientation and slide presentation on the turtle research program as preparation for your first evening of turtle monitoring. Then join a research team to look for, and work with, sea turtles. **Overnight in Tortuguero. (B,L,D)**

### Days 3-7 Tortuguero

Over the next 5 days, relax, enjoy a tour of the waterways of Tortuguero National Park and visits to the village of Tortuguero. Evenings are reserved for turtle research. Nightly research takes place during the leatherback program from 9 pm – 2 am; and during the green turtle program there are two shifts, 8 pm – 12 am and 12 am – 4 am. If you are participating in a 2 week (16 day) or 3 week (23-day) program, you will stay in Tortuguero accordingly.

**Overnight in Tortuguero. (B,L,D)**

### **Day 8 San José**

Today you will be transferred to the Tortuguero airstrip for your flight to San José. (Your Nature Air flight leaves early in the morning) *Please note that you are allowed a maximum of 25 pounds of luggage per person (including carry-ons). Any additional baggage is charged to the passenger by weight and is subject to weight requirements and space availability aboard the aircraft.* Upon arrival at the National Airport in San José, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Following check in, you will have the remainder of the day at leisure. **Overnight in San José. (B)**

### **Day 9 Departure**

Today you will take the hotel's shuttle to the airport for your international departure flight. **(B)**

**Meals Included: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner**

### **Health Considerations**

Phobias to snakes and insects may pose a problem, although encounters with snakes are unlikely. If you are allergic to insect bites, bees or wasps please come prepared with appropriate medication or epi-kit. To avoid dehydration and other heat related you must bring a water bottle in order to stay hydrated during field activities. Diabetics without previous experience of how physical exertion in a hot climate may affect their insulin levels are advised to speak with a doctor. The minimum age for participants is 18 years old without a parent or legal guardian and 16 years old with a parent or legal guardian.

This program is physically demanding. Eco-Volunteers are required to walk at least 5 or 7 miles of beach each night for 4 or 5 hours. You must have good night vision, you will be walking without a flashlight at night during the patrols. You should be able to carry about a 5 lb pack (backpacks are used to carry the team's field equipment) while walking on sand. Walking on uneven sand is difficult and not recommended for people with heart conditions, prosthetic limbs, or limited mobility. Phobias about being in the dark may pose a problem. Minor injuries or scrapes due to falls or tripping over obstacles on the beach can occur during nighttime work. Please also be aware that there is a good chance of getting sand thrown on you, with the possibility of getting it in your eyes, by a turtle's flippers.