COSTA RICA: MARINE CONSERVATION & SEA TURTLE EXPEDITION

14 & 21 DAY PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Caribbean & Pacific coasts and enjoy ample beach time
- Support a sustainable sea turtle hatchery
- Go boating through bioluminescence
- Zipline through the forest
- Live in multiple beach communities and work with organizations protecting sea turtle populations
- Experience the thrill of white water rafting in the central valley of Costa Rica
- Discover the iconic Osa Peninsula (21-day program only)

ACTIVITY LEVEL

- Medium

2027 PROGRAM DATES

14-Day:

- June 13 - June 26
- July 30 - July 13

21-Day:

- July 18 - August 07

GET IN TOUCH!

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The beaches of Costa Rica, from the Caribbean coast to the Pacific coast, are yours to explore this summer. Discover what you can do for the future of the planet as you learn about sea turtle conservation and ocean stewardship.

OVERVIEW

Experience Costa Rica's stunning beaches and protected natural areas as you travel coast to coast. Based on your program length (14 or 21 days), two or three small coastal communities will become your home away from home. As you travel from the Caribbean to the Pacific, you'll contribute to conservation projects that address climate change and support environmental stewardship.

On the Caribbean side, spend a week in a rural, remote community learning about sea turtle conservation and sustainable living. Then head west to the Nicoya Peninsula, continuing your environmental and wildlife service projects along the Pacific.

During the 21-day program, your third week takes you deeper into the southern Pacific, all the way to the Osa Peninsula, where you'll discover what it means to be an ocean and environmental steward. Home to 2.5% of the world's biodiversity, the Osa Peninsula offers an incredible opportunity to learn about this ecological hotspot and its complex ecosystems.

Throughout your journey, you'll explore the impacts of climate change on oceans, habitats and communities, all while experiencing nearly every epic Costa Rican adventure you can imagine!

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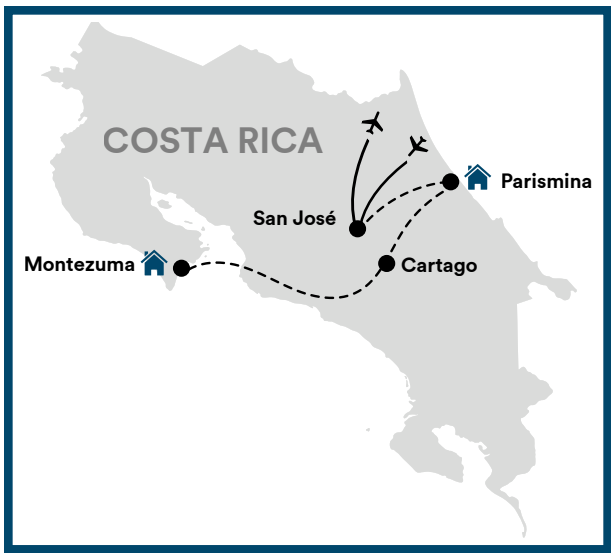




ITINERARY

Actual schedule of activities will vary by program session. The information detailed here is typical for what you can expect to experience; however, service work and activities vary depending upon the needs of our local community partners, various celebrations and customs, as well as the weather and specific needs of the student group.

14 Day Itinerary Map for Costa Rica



DAY 1: WELCOME TO COSTA RICA!

Fly into San José (SJO) where staff will be waiting to greet you with open arms. Meet up with your fellow travelers and get acquainted with your new travel cohort. We will stay one night near San José to recover from travel and use the time to get to know other students and staff, as well as our new country and culture for the next two to three weeks.

DAY 2: ORIENTATION & TRAVEL TO THE CARIBBEAN

Wake up to the sounds of the native birds around our Home Base, then get ready for a welcome orientation to go over group objectives, service expectations and helpful hints to help get accustomed to the culture. Break into Mentor groups and get to know each other better with icebreakers and group activities before having your first traditional Tico lunch.

Then time to depart on our two-hour journey to the Caribbean coast where we will switch from bus to boat to get to our remote Home Base, an ecolodge surrounded by an organic farm, built by one of our long-time program partners.

DAYS 3-4: SERVICE, NIGHT PATROLS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

During the day, you'll engage in a variety of activities. Take a tour through the surroundings of the Home Base and learn about the local fauna and flora. You'll even get to try fresh coconuts right off the palm trees. If lucky, you might get to spot howler monkeys and sloths! Enjoy a private boat tour that travels through the river canals surrounding the Home Base. Take part in beach clean-ups or other environmental service projects to support the work of a local organization.

During a night patrol, we will split into small groups with our partner sea turtle organization leaders and begin to walk the beach, being careful not to









DAYS 3-4: SERVICE, NIGHT PATROLS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES - CONTINUED

disturb nesting turtles. In the event of encountering a turtle, guard the surroundings and collect eggs for safekeeping at the hatchery, where they'll undergo their natural development cycle. Expect a late night, ending close to midnight!

The town of Parismina is just a short truck ride away from our Home Base through the jungle next to the beach. Local members of the community will guide you on a walking tour through this unique and peaceful place, where only about 500 people live. Engage in some sports games with local children, participate in a cooking class, dance lessons and explore a local artisan fair. When in town, learn more from local experts about how sea turtles nest and the protection efforts taking place by a local nonprofit.

Please note: Sea turtle nesting on the beaches of Costa Rica is a natural phenomenon that occurs annually throughout the spring and summer months. While every opportunity is given to maximize the chances for GLA students to witness this phenomenon in person, we unfortunately cannot control or predict the exact time a turtle will emerge to nest or baby turtles will be ready to be released into the ocean and therefore we cannot guarantee that students on any specific session will see a turtle in person. However, the service work students do on this program has a direct and lasting impact on local sea turtle conservation efforts.

DAYS 5-6: TRAVEL TO CARTAGO

Wrap up the final projects in Parismina and say farewell to the first home community that has welcomed us in our adventure. After lunch, hop back on the boat to get back to the mainland, and head to the city of Cartago in the Central Valley.

Spending time in Cartago will be a great opportunity to learn about a different ecosystem and appreciate the biodiversity of Costa Rica. You'll have a full day of adventure white water rafting and exploring the town center of Cartago, which was the original capital of the country.

DAY 7: JOURNEY TO OUR NEXT BEACHSIDE COMMUNITY

Experience the back roads of Costa Rica as you wind your way down the Pacific coast. Take a ferry ride where you can potentially spot dolphins and enjoy the water by boat. By afternoon, you will arrive at the next Home Base situated on the beautiful Pacific Ocean. Spend the evening reflecting on the program journey thus far, as well as what you look forward to learning and experiencing in the coming days.

DAYS 8-9: SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION SERVICE

It's time for more communty service! Meet with organization leaders to learn about how you'll be helping with community projects. The work will be physical and include constructing turtle hatcheries on the beach, measuring and marking patrol routes of sea turtle nesting locations, as well as planting and reforestation in the area. You will also do night patrols to protect turtle eggs and other work to support the sea turtles and their habitat. Break up into teams for the projects and also use the time to practice communicating in Spanish with local counterparts.

Enjoy adventure time here in the afternoons: hike to the town's famous waterfall, and enjoy souvenir shopping and a local beach visit. In the evenings, reflect with your fellow GLA students and Mentors on the impact of service, your leadership journey and our cross-cultural experiences.









DAY 10: ULTIMATE ADVENTURE DAY

Get ready for a day full of adventure, nature and unforgettable experiences! Start the morning soaring through the treetops on an exciting zipline adventure. With breathtaking views of Costa Rica's lush tropical landscape, you'll glide from platform to platform while experiencing the rainforest from a whole new perspective.

After lunch, the group will travel to Curú Wildlife Refuge, where you'll explore the area's natural beauty on a guided trail experience. As evening approaches, enjoy dinner at Curú before heading out for a truly magical experience: bioluminescence boating! Boat through the water after dark and witness the incredible natural phenomenon of bioluminescence, as tiny marine organisms illuminate the water with every movement. It's a rare opportunity to connect with nature and experience one of Costa Rica's most fascinating natural wonders!

DAYS 11-12: CONSERVATION WORK & BEACH TIME!

Roll up your sleeves and work alongside local conservation partners on hands-on sea turtle protection projects! You'll help build and maintain turtle hatcheries, mark nesting areas, monitor sea turtle tracks, clean beaches and plant native trees to restore coastal habitats. Depending on the nesting season, you may also join nighttime beach patrols to monitor nesting turtles and help protect their nesting areas and possibly their eggs. Work in small teams, learn from local experts, and practice your Spanish with community members along the way.

In the afternoons, enjoy some well-deserved beach time! Swim, relax along the coastline, explore nearby natural attractions and experience the local coastal culture. In the evenings, gather with your fellow GLA students and Mentors to reflect on your service, share experiences, and connect your contributions to your leadership journey and environmental responsibility.

DAY 13: BEACH TIME & FAREWELL 14-DAY / TRANSFER TO THE OSA 21-DAY

For those on the 14-day program, enjoy a final morning at the beach, soaking up the sun and making the most of your last moments on the coast. After some time to relax, pack your bags and travel back to the airport hotel in San José, where you'll settle in for your final night. In the evening, gather with your fellow GLA students and Mentors for a farewell dinner and a chance to reflect on your experiences, accomplishments, and memories from the past two weeks.

For those on the 21-day program, continue your journey south toward Puerto Jiménez, stopping at the famous Crocodile Bridge along the way to stretch your legs and take in the sights. Once you arrive, check in to your Home Base for the final week and join a mini orientation of Puerto Jiménez to explore the town, get acquainted with your new surroundings, and prepare for the adventures and experiences awaiting you in the Osa Peninsula.

DAY 14: DEPARTURE DAY 14-DAY / NEW CONSERVATION WORK 21-DAY

14-Day Students: Departure day! Say your goodbyes, share final memories with your fellow GLA students and Mentors, and head to the airport for your journey home.

21-Day Students: Start the day with an introduction to your new sea turtle conservation partner organization. Learn about their mission, the challenges









DAY 14: DEPARTURE DAY 14-DAY / NEW CONSERVATION WORK 21-DAY - CONTINUED

facing sea turtles in this unique region of Costa Rica, and how you'll contribute to their conservation efforts during your final week. Afterward, enjoy a beachfront breakfast before spending the afternoon exploring downtown Puerto Jiménez. Get acquainted with this small town in the Osa Peninsula, discover the local culture, and settle into your new surroundings. You'll also take part in leadership activities designed to help you build connections with your group, strengthen teamwork, and prepare for the meaningful experiences ahead.

21 Day Itinerary Map for Costa Rica



DAY 15: CONSERVATION IN THE OSA PENINSULA

Start your day early with a morning of community service alongside local partners, supporting ongoing conservation and community initiatives. Afterward, enjoy a well-deserved breakfast together on the beach before gathering for lunch and a special guest presentation from BioSur's Insectopia. Discover the fascinating world of insects, their role in local ecosystems, and the importance of protecting biodiversity.

In the evening, share dinner with your fellow GLA students and Mentors before joining group games and Mentor Group activities. Connect, share experiences, and reflect on the day's adventures together.

DAY 16: YOGA & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Start your day with an early morning of community service alongside local partners, supporting ongoing conservation and community initiatives. Afterward, enjoy breakfast together on the beach before continuing with lunch and an afternoon of service followed by a yoga class at Nereus. Take this opportunity to recharge, stretch, and reconnect after a morning of hands-on work.

DAY 17: SNORKELING ADVENTURE

Fuel up with breakfast before setting off on a morning snorkeling adventure from Puerto Jiménez! Dive into the crystal-clear waters of the Osa Peninsula and discover an incredible underwater world filled with colorful fish, vibrant marine life, and thriving ocean ecosystems. Keep your eyes open for exciting marine encounters as you explore one of Costa Rica's most biodiverse regions. After your ocean adventure, return to the hotel for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to relax, recharge, or explore at your own pace.









DAY 18: FINAL COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY

Start with a final morning of hands-on community service, continuing your work alongside local partners and contributing to conservation efforts in the Osa Peninsula. After wrapping up, head to the beach for breakfast and a chance to enjoy the coastal surroundings one more time. Later, gather for lunch and a guest speaker session to deepen your understanding of the region's environmental challenges and conservation work. Depending on the schedule, you may also enjoy a final yoga session at Nereus to recharge and reflect.

As your time in the Osa Peninsula comes to an end, begin packing and preparing for the journey ahead.

DAY 19: GOODBYE TO THE OSA PENINSULA

Say goodbye to the Osa Peninsula and beginning your journey back home, near San José. Along the way, stop for lunch at Canto de Ballenas before continuing to your hotel for the final stop of the program. After checking in and settling into your rooms, take some time to unwind after the journey.

DAY 20: LAST FULL DAY AT POAS VOLCANO

Start the last fulll day in Costa Rica visiting the impressive Poás Volcano, one of Costa Rica's most iconic natural landmarks. Take in the spectacular volcanic landscape and enjoy a final opportunity to experience the country's incredible natural beauty. Afterward, stop for lunch before visiting a local central market in Alajuela or Heredia. Browse local shops, pick up souvenirs, and enjoy some free time exploring the town.

In the evening, come together for your final program activities, including group evaluations and closing reflections. Look back on the adventures, friendships, challenges, and personal growth that have shaped your journey. Celebrate your accomplishments, share what you'll take home from this experience, and enjoy a final opportunity to connect with your fellow GLA students and Mentors before packing up for departure day.

DAY 21: DEPARTURES FOR 21-DAY

After breakfast and final goodbyes, head to the airport where GLA staff will check students in for their journey home. ¡Adiós!, or better yet, ¡Hasta luego!

NOTICE ON PROGRAM UPDATES

While this program is being planned for this season, some activities or details may change between now and the program start date. Please note that references from past participants and previously published information may not accurately reflect every aspect of this program. Refer to the sample itinerary above or to the GLA website for the most up-to-date version of program activities, and please note that further updates may be made between now and the program start date.

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

14 Day:

- **Tuition:** $5,499
- **Service Hours:** 35
- **Ages:** 14 - 18
- **Student-to-Staff Ratio:** 6-to-1
- **Accommodations:** Multiple
- **Arrival and Departure Airport:**
  - San Jose (SJO)

21 Day:

- **Tuition:** $6,899
- **Service Hours:** 50
- **Ages:** 14 - 18
- **Student-to-Staff Ratio:** 6-to-1
- **Accommodations:** Multiple
- **Arrival and Departure Airport:**
  - San Jose (SJO)

GLA HOME BASE

You will have multiple Home Bases on this program, each a unique lodging experience as you travel along Costa Rica's shorelines. Each Home Base is an ecolodge or hotel located in coastal communities, and you'll make several visits to the ocean during your time on-program. The Home Bases themselves are comfortable, with basic amenities and western-style bathrooms. Students will share rooms with roommates, and have shared bathrooms with showers.

Please note: Home Base 1 is a very remote site with limited internet and cell service. Get excited to truly disconnect from technology and connect with your peers and the local environment.

GLA HOME BASE OVERVIEW

- Pool
  - GLA Home Base 1: Parismina - No
  - GLA Home Base 2: Cartago - No
  - GLA Home Base 3: Montezuma - No
  - GLA Home Base 4: Puerto Jimenez (21 Day Program Only) - Yes
- Air conditioning
  - GLA Home Base 1: Parismina - No
  - GLA Home Base 2: Cartago - No
  - GLA Home Base 3: Montezuma - Yes
  - GLA Home Base 4: Puerto Jimenez (21 Day Program Only) - Yes
- Remote
  - GLA Home Base 1: Parismina - Yes
  - GLA Home Base 2: Cartago - No
  - GLA Home Base 3: Montezuma - Yes
  - GLA Home Base 4: Puerto Jimenez (21 Day Program Only) - Yes

FOOD

Costa Rica is known for its simple diet of rice, beans and a side of meat. The food at Home Base will reflect the traditional dietary staples of the people in Costa Rica. It will be simple, but fresh and healthy and include delicious, locally-grown fruits.

CLIMATE

June, July, and August in Costa Rica are during its rainy season, with hot, sunny days and afternoon showers common across most regions. Daytime temperatures average 75-90°F (24-32°C), with milder temperatures in the Central Valley, and higher temperatures on the coasts.

LEADERSHIP

Global Leadership Adventures started as an educational institute, so we continue to think and act like educators—not tour operators—as we deliver life-changing programs. We intentionally weave a leadership curriculum into the daily experience on our programs. Through group discussion, meaningful service, workshops, speakers and excursions, staff guide students to reflect on program events through the lens of leadership, and celebrate outstanding examples of leaders they encounter in the local community. Lending this context to the experience creates opportunities for students to dig deep into their vision, purpose and knowledge of themselves and the world.

ABOUT GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES

Global Leadership Adventures was founded in 2003 by Fred Swaniker, a native of Ghana, TED Fellow and educational entrepreneur whose work has been praised by Barack Obama. Born as a global extension of the revolutionary African Leadership Academy, Global Leadership Adventures now operates programs centered around leadership, sustainable community service projects, and meaningful travel across Africa, Asia, Europe or the Americas. Through life-changing adventures, we strive to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it.

GLA HAS BEEN FEATURED IN:

The New York Times
USA TODAY
NBC NEWS
The Boston Globe
seventeen

OUR EXPECTATIONS

BE PRESENT | Our mission at GLA is "to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it." To that end, we expect GLA students to maintain high standards of personal behavior and to be open-minded. The environment may be different, sometimes shockingly so. GLA will challenge students as they are expected to work hard and be present physically and mentally for all activities. We also ask students to take a step back from regular use of technology - particularly their smartphones - so as to maximize their engagement with the program and their fellow participants. Students may get hot, dirty and bug-bitten along the way, but their experience can transform their perspective. The goal is for each student to return home having had a life-changing experience.

NO TOLERANCE | GLA has a no-tolerance policy towards drugs, alcohol, tobacco and disruptive behavior. Those who violate or are suspected of violating this policy will be immediately dismissed from the program at the sole discretion of GLA staff.

COMMUNITY-LED EXPERIENCES | GLA makes every effort to offer thoughtfully crafted programs for teens and young adults. Detailed planning and exhaustive communications with partners are indispensable parts of our program development process. However, occasionally service and activities are adjusted from session to session, due to weather, changing needs of our local community partners and/or various cultural celebrations and customs. We expect participants to be open-minded and flexible, willing to embrace the experience when plans change. GLA makes every effort to communicate adjustments to students and families with advance notice. We expect you to be open-minded and flexible.

MENTORSHIP | GLA is not a therapy program. Our staff are highly skilled, professional, caring and fun, but they are not licensed therapists. GLA programs can be physically and emotionally demanding, and applicants should be in good physical and mental health.

ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

At Global Leadership Adventures, we welcome age-eligible teens who are excited about the opportunity to travel to apply for our programs. To ensure a safe and meaningful experience for everyone in the group, we follow essential eligibility criteria. While out intent is not to be exclusionary, it's important to note that GLA programs are not therapeutic programs and are not able to support struggling teens seeking behavior or mental health outcomes.

Applications are carefully considered and screened to align with these criteria. It is not uncommon for GLA to require supporting documentation or information in the application screening process to confirm eligibility or suitability for program participation. Failure to disclose full medical history may also result in the application not being accepted, additional fees, and/or removal from the program. Please discuss with our team for any further clarification or concerns and visit **https://www.experiencegla.com/policies/essential-eligibility-criteria/** to view the full essential eligibility criteria list.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

CONTACT US | Want to learn more about Global Leadership Adventures and our available programs? Our Admissions Team has expertise and insights into our slate of program offerings, and we're happy to answer any questions you might have. We have collectively visited or staffed many of our GLA programs around the world, and we have advice to share on everything from getting your travel documents together to what a typical day on a program is like. Call us at 1-858-771-0645 any time during office hours for assistance.

ENROLL NOW | We encourage you to enroll on your 1st choice program as early as you can! In fact, our most popular programs fill up early every year, and many students end up putting off the quick and easy application process only to end up on the waiting list. The best way to ensure that you save your spot is to place your deposit and apply early. You can easily enroll online at **www.experiencegla.com/enroll.**