

# 15-Day Road Trip Itinerary

Option A

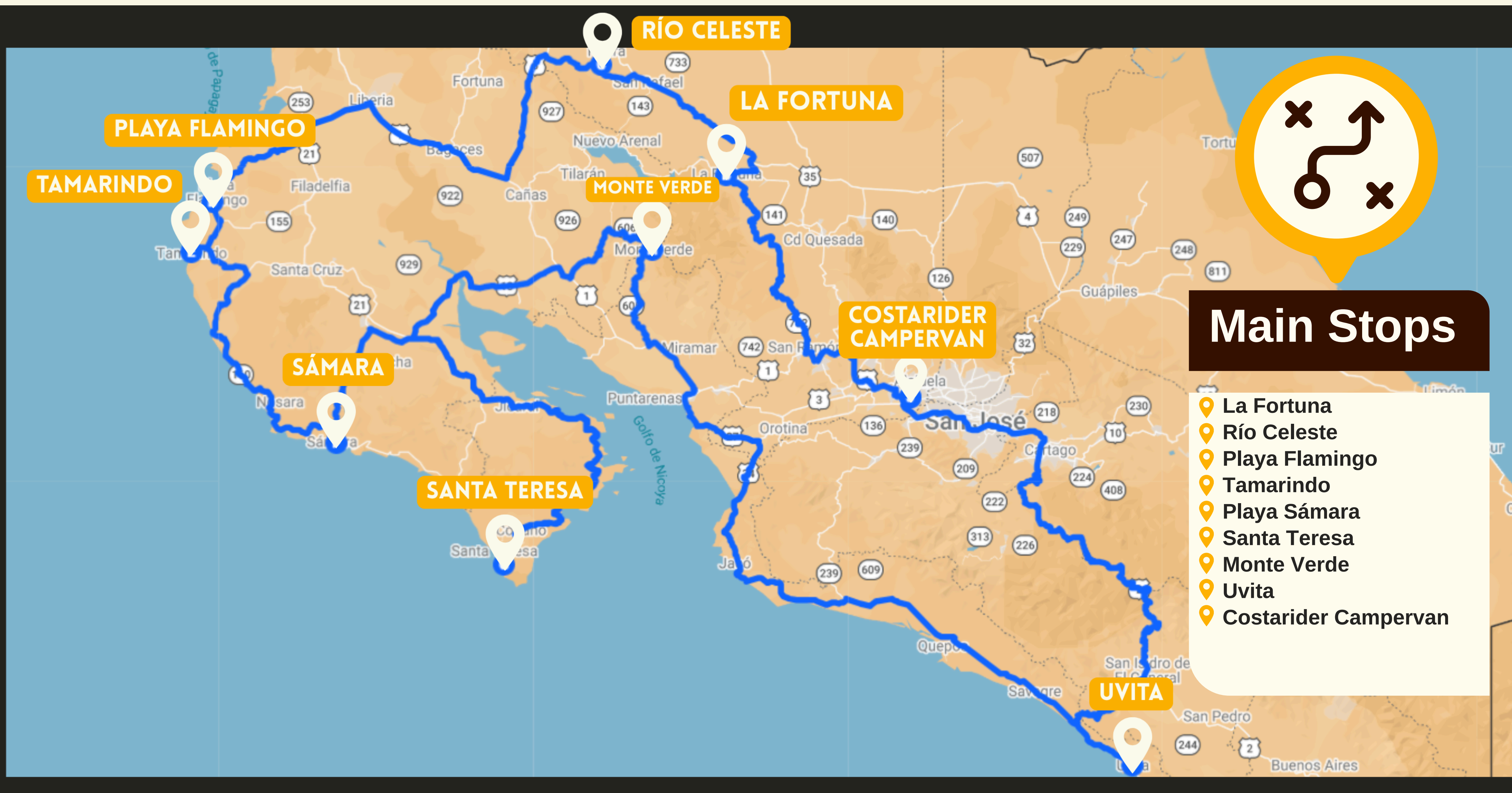
COSTA RIDER  
CAMPERVAN



## Volcanoes, Wild Beaches, Cloud Forests & the Southern Pacific

This 15-day itinerary is designed for travelers who want to see Costa Rica in depth, combining iconic highlights with remote areas, slower beach towns, and dramatic changes in landscape.

This route feels like a true expedition: from volcanoes and turquoise rivers to surf towns, cloud forests, and the wild southern Pacific coast. Ideal for campervan or 4x4 travelers who enjoy freedom, variety, and immersive experiences.



Scroll down and explore what this itinerary has in store for you.

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# Day 1 – Alajuela → Arenal Volcano Area

**Driving time: approx. 3–3.5 hours**

Begin your journey by heading north toward the Arenal region. Today is about settling into the road trip rhythm and enjoying the lush scenery of Costa Rica's northern lowlands.

## Things to do:

- Scenic drive through **farmlands** and **small towns**.
- Grocery stop in **La Fortuna**.
- Afternoon viewpoints around **El Castillo** or a short nature walk.



## Where to sleep:

Camper-friendly campsite near La Fortuna or Arenal. We recommend **Camping y Mirador El Castillo**.

# Day 2 – Arenal Volcano & Thermal Experience

A day focused on contrasts: volcanic landscapes in the morning and deep relaxation in the afternoon.

## Things to do:

- Walk lava trails at the **1968 Trail** or **Arenal Volcano National Park**.
- Visit **La Fortuna Waterfall** or the local swimming spot **El Salto**.
- Evening soak in **natural hot springs**.

## Optional activities:

- Thermal baths at **EcoTermales** or **Baldi Hot Springs**.
- Ziplining with **Sky Adventures**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near Arenal / La Fortuna

# Day 3 – Arenal → Lake Arenal → Río Celeste

**Driving time: approx. 4–5 hours**

Leave Arenal and drive around Lake Arenal, one of the most scenic routes in the country. Continue north toward Tenorio Volcano National Park, home of Costa Rica's famous blue river.

## Things to do:

- Scenic viewpoints around **Lake Arenal**.
- Hike to **Río Celeste Waterfall** in Tenorio Volcano National Park.
- Explore the “**Teñideros**” where the river turns blue.



## Where to sleep:

Near Río Celeste / Bijagua area.

We recommend **Adventure Camping La Bijagua**

# Day 4 – Río Celeste → Llanos de Cortés → Playa Brasilito

**Driving time: approx. 4–5 hours**

Today you transition from rainforest to dry tropical forest as you head toward Guanacaste's coastline, with refreshing waterfall stops along the way.

## Things to do:

- Morning nature walk near **Río Celeste**.
- Swim at **Llanos de Cortés Waterfall** (Bagaces).
- Sunset arrival at **Playa Brasilito**.



## Where to sleep:

Near Brasilito or Flamingo area. We recommend **Camping La Odisea**.

# Day 5 – Northern Guanacaste Beaches

A full day dedicated to exploring some of Guanacaste's most unique beaches, each with a different vibe.

## Things to do:

- Morning at **Playa Brasilito**.
- Walk or swim at **Playa Conchal**, known for its shell sand.
- Afternoon in **Tamarindo** for surf, cafés, and beach life.

## Optional activities:

- Surf lessons with **Witch's Rock Surf Camp** or **Tamarindo Surf School**
- Catamaran tours with **Panache Sailing** or **Marlin del Rey**



## Where to sleep:

Near Playa Brasilito.  
We recommend **Camping La Odisea**.

# Day 6 – Coastal Drive to Playa Sámará

**Driving time: approx. 3–4 hours**

Follow the Nicoya Peninsula coastline south, discovering beaches that feel increasingly remote and local.

## Things to do:

- Beach stops at **Playa Avellanas** or **Playa San Juanillo**.
- Lunch in a small seaside town.
- Sunset walk along **Playa Sámará**.



## Where to sleep:

Near **Playa Sámará**.  
We recommend **Camping Aloha**.

# Day 7 – Slow Day in Sámará

A pause in the journey to enjoy calm waters, relaxed town life, and ocean activities.

## Things to do:

- **Swimming** and **beach time** (ideal for all levels).
- **Kayak** or **snorkel** in the bay.
- **Explore** cafés and local restaurants.

## Optional activities:

- **Kayak tours** with **Octopus Tours** or **Samara Kayak & SUP**.
- **Yoga session** at **Locanda Yoga** or **Samara Yoga**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near **Playa Sámará**

# Day 8 – Sámará → Santa Teresa / Mal País

**Driving time: approx. 5–6 hours**

A true adventure day. Cross the Nicoya Peninsula inland, passing rural towns and less-traveled roads before reaching the Pacific surf coast.

## Things to do:

- Scenic drive through **Nicoya** and **rural Guanacaste**.
- Stops at small local sodas.
- Sunset arrival at **Santa Teresa** or **Mal País**.



## Where to sleep:

**Santa Teresa** or **Mal País** area. We recommended: **Rancho Victoria Coyote Guanacaste**

# Day 9 – Santa Teresa / Mal País

A full day to enjoy one of Costa Rica's most iconic surf and bohemian destinations.

## Things to do:

- Surf or beach time at **Playa Santa Teresa** or **Playa Carmen**.
- Visit **Cabuya Island Cemetery** (low tide access).
- Sunset at **Playa Mal País**.

## Optional activities:

- **Surf lessons** with local surf schools
- **Yoga** or **wellness** classes in Santa Teresa



## Where to sleep:

Same area in **Santa Teresa / Mal País**

# Day 10 – Santa Teresa → Monteverde

**Driving time: approx. 4–5 hours**

Leave the coast and climb into the mountains toward the cloud forest. Expect cooler temperatures and winding roads.

## Things to do:

- Scenic **mountain drive**.
- Afternoon walk in **Monteverde town**.
- Sunset viewpoints over the **Gulf of Nicoya**.



## Where to sleep:

**Monteverde** or **Santa Elena** area. We recommend **Camping Turín**

# Day 11 – Monteverde Cloud Forest Experience

A day immersed in misty forests, wildlife, and cooler mountain air.

## Things to do:

- Visit **Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve** or **Santa Elena Reserve**.
- Hanging bridges at **Sky Walk Monteverde**.
- **Night walk** to spot nocturnal wildlife.

## Optional activities:

- Ziplining with **Selvatura** or **Sky Adventures Monteverde**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near Monteverde

# Day 12 – Monteverde (Full Nature & Adventure Day)

A full day to explore Monteverde at a relaxed pace, allowing time to enjoy its cloud forests, wildlife, and unique mountain atmosphere.

## Things to do:

- Visit **Curi Cancha Reserve** for wildlife and birdwatching.
- Hike **El Tigre Waterfalls** (forest trails, bridges, waterfalls).
- **Afternoon walk** and **coffee break** in **Santa Elena town**.



## Where to sleep:

**Monteverde** or **Santa Elena** area.  
We recommended **Camping Turín**

# Day 13 – Monteverde

## → Uvita

**Driving time: approx. 5.5–6.5 hours**

Leave the cool cloud forest behind and descend toward the lush landscapes of Costa Rica's southern Pacific coast.

A long but scenic drive with dramatic changes in scenery.

### Things to do:

- Early departure from **Monteverde**.
- **Scenic mountain** and **coastal views** along the way.
- Lunch stop near **Dominical** or **Playa Dominicalito**.



### Where to sleep:

**Uvita** or **Dominical** area.

We recommended **Camping Casalta**

# Day 14 – Uvita (Waterfalls & Wild Beaches)

**Driving time: approx. 1.5–2 hours**

A slower day to enjoy the wild, less-developed southern Pacific, known for its waterfalls, long beaches, and strong connection to nature.

### Things to do:

- Visit **Nauyaca Waterfalls** or **Catarata Uvita**.
- Explore **Marino Ballena National Park** and its famous whale-tail sandbar.
- Sunset at **Playa Uvita**, **Playa Hermosa** (Uvita), or **Playa Arco**.



### Where to sleep:

Same area near Uvita.

# Day 15 – Uvita → Alajuela

**Driving time: approx. 5–6 hours**

After breakfast, begin the return journey to the Central Valley, concluding an unforgettable Costa Rica road trip.

**Things to do:**

- Scenic drive back to **Alajuela**.
- Return vehicle and end of trip.

## Good to Know

This itinerary is designed for **campervan or 4x4 travel**, offering flexibility, comfort, and access to a wide variety of landscapes and locations across Costa Rica.

- **Road Conditions**

Some roads, especially near beaches and waterfalls, may be unpaved. A 4x4 vehicle is recommended for added comfort and confidence.

- **Driving Times**

Driving times are approximate and may vary depending on weather conditions, road conditions, traffic, and stops along the route.

- **Flexible Activities**

All activities mentioned are suggestions and can be adapted based on travel pace, personal interests, and local conditions during the trip.

**Pura vida**  
*and happy road trip!*