

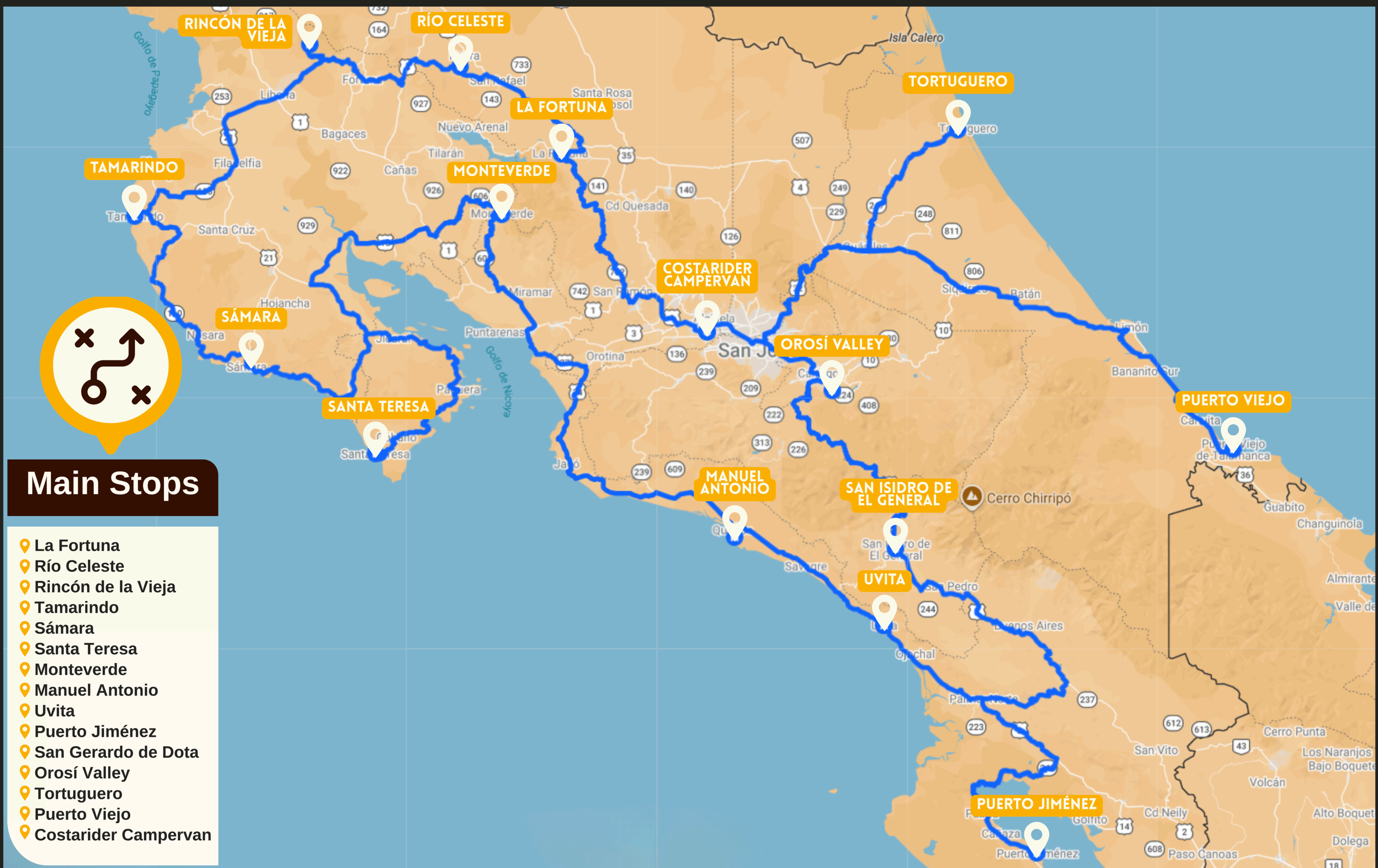
# 30-Day Road Trip Itinerary

COSTA RIDER  
CAMPERVAN



## Across Costa Rica: Mountains, Coasts & Jungle

This 30-day itinerary is designed for travelers who want to explore Costa Rica at a relaxed pace, crossing the country from volcanic highlands to both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. It blends scenic drives, iconic landscapes, and immersive nature experiences, ideal for independent travelers, campervans, and 4x4 adventures.



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 → Rincón de la Vieja

**Driving time: approx. 3–4 hours**

Transition from rainforest to Guanacaste's dry tropical landscapes.

## Things to do:

- Swim at **Llanos de Cortés Waterfall**.
- Drive through **Bagaces countryside**.
- Evening arrival near **Rincón de la Vieja**.



## Where to sleep:

Near Rincón de la vieja area.

We recommend **Hacienda Santa Marta**

# Day 5 – Rincón de la Vieja → Playa Brasilito

**Driving time: approx. 3–4 hours**

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.



## Where to sleep:

Near Playa Brasilito.  
We recommend **Camping Don Julián**.

# Day 6 – Brasilito, Conchal & Tamarindo

**Driving time: approx. 3–4 hours**

A relaxed beach-hopping day in northern Guanacaste.

## Things to do:

- Beach stops at **Playa Conchal** or **Playa Flamingo**.
- Lunch in a small seaside town.
- Sunset walk along **Playa Flamingo**



## Where to sleep:

Same area near **Playa Brasilito**.

# Day 7 – Slow Day in Tamarindo

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:

- Surf lessons with **Witch's Rock Surf Camp**.



## Where to sleep:

Tamarindo area.  
We recommend **Camping La Odisea**.

# Day 8 – Tamarindo → Playa Sámara (Coastal Route)

**Driving time: approx. 3.5–4 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:

- Beach stops along the **Nicoya Peninsula**.
- Afternoon swim in **Playa Sámara**.
- Sunset at the beach.



## Where to sleep:

Near Sámara.  
We recommend **Nieves Surf Camping**

# Day 9 – Slow Day in Sámara

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 Sámara**

# Day 10 – Sámara → 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 11 – 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 12 – 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 13 – 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 14 – Monteverde → Quepos

**Driving time: approx. 4–5 hours**

Descend from the cloud forest toward the Central Pacific, with changing landscapes from mountains to tropical lowlands.

## Things to do:

- Scenic descent with panoramic viewpoints.
- Stop for lunch along the route.
- Afternoon arrival in **Quepos**.



## Where to sleep:

**Quepos** or **Manuel Antonio** area.  
We recommended **Brisas del Río Horseback Adventure**.

# Day 15 – Manuel Antonio National Park

One of Costa Rica's most iconic national parks, combining wildlife-rich trails with beautiful beaches.

## Things to do:

- Early visit to **Manuel Antonio National Park**.
- Wildlife spotting along easy jungle trails.
- Relax at **Playa Manuel Antonio** or **Playa Espadilla Sur**.

## Optional activities:

- Guided wildlife tour with **Manuel Antonio Nature Tours** or **Jade Tours**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near **Quepos**

# Day 16 – Quepos → Uvita (Southern Pacific)

**Driving time: approx. 1.5–2 hours**

Continue south along the Pacific coast toward a less-developed and more wild region.

## 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:

**Uvita** or **Dominical** area. We recommended **Camping Casalta**.

# Day 17 – Uvita → Isla del Caño (Boat Tour)

**Driving time: approx. 5–6 hours**

A marine adventure day.

## Things to do:

- **Snorkeling** or diving at **Isla del Caño**.
- **Marine** wildlife spotting.

## Optional activities:

- Guided wildlife tour with **Costa Rica Dive & Surf**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area in **Uvita**.

# Day 18 – Uvita → Puerto Jiménez / Drake Bay

**Driving time: approx. 4–6 hours**

Today's drive leads deep into Costa Rica's southern zone, entering one of the most biodiverse regions in the country.

## Things to do:

- Scenic coastal and jungle drive.
- Afternoon arrival to the **Osa Peninsula**.
- Short walk around **Puerto Jiménez** or **Drake Bay**.



## Where to sleep:

**Puerto Jiménez** or **Drake Bay** area.  
We recommended **Camping Cacao Beach**.

# Day 19 – Corcovado National Park

Driving time: approx. **1.5–2 hours**

A highlight of the journey and one of the most biologically intense places on Earth.

## Things to do:

- Guided hike inside **Corcovado National Park**.
- **Wildlife spotting** including monkeys, tapirs, and tropical birds.



## Where to sleep:

Same area in the **Osa Peninsula**.

# Day 20 – Osa Peninsula → San Isidro del General

Driving time: approx. **5–6 hours**

Leave the jungle behind and climb into the highlands via **Cerro de la Muerte**.

## Things to do:

- Scenic mountain drive through coffee-growing regions.
- Visit **Los Quetzales National Park**.
- Short cloud forest hikes along rivers and trails.



## Where to sleep:

**San Gerardo de Dota** area.  
We recommended **Hacienda la Lucha**

# Day 21 – Los Quetzales National Park → Orosí Valley

Driving time: approx. **3-4 hours**

Cloud forests and coffee landscapes.

## Things to do:

- Coffee plantations along the way.
- Visit **Orosí Church**.
- Visit **Los Quetzales National Park**.



## Where to sleep:

Orosí Valley area.  
We recommended **Orosí Camping**.

# Day 22 – Irazú Volcano / Turrialba → La Pavona

Driving time: approx. **4-5 hours**

From the high-altitude volcanic landscapes of Irazú Volcano National Park and the Turrialba region, the route descends toward the Caribbean lowlands, where cooler mountain air gives way to warmer temperatures, lush greenery, and river-lined roads near La Pavona.

## Things to do:

- Visit **Irazú Volcano National Park**.
- Drive east toward **La Pavona**.



## Where to sleep:

La Pavona area or lodge parking

# Day 23 – Tortuguero National Park

Spend the day exploring the winding canals and lush rainforest of Tortuguero National Park, where boat rides reveal monkeys, sloths, caimans, and tropical birds, and the slow rhythm of the Caribbean side offers a completely different perspective of Costa Rica.

## Things to do:

- Boat transfer to **Tortuguero**.
- Canal wildlife **tour**.
- Visit **Tortuguero village**.



## Where to sleep:

Tortuguero area (lodge or designated camping)

# Day 24 – Tortuguero National Park

Spend the day exploring the winding canals and lush rainforest of Tortuguero National Park, where boat rides reveal monkeys, sloths, caimans, and tropical birds, and the slow rhythm of the Caribbean side offers a completely different perspective of Costa Rica.

## Things to do:

- Early morning **canal tour**.
- **Wildlife** spotting.
- **Beach walk**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area in Tortuguero.

# Day 25 – Tortuguero → Puerto Viejo (Caribbean Coast)

Driving time: approx. **4-5 hours**

A scenic transition from jungle canals to the relaxed rhythm of Costa Rica's Caribbean coast.

## Things to do:

- **Boat and road transfer** from **Tortuguero** to the **Caribbean coast**.
- Afternoon arrival in **Puerto Viejo** and beach sunset.



## Where to sleep:

Puerto Viejo area.  
We recommended **Jardín Secreto Mezdil**.

# Day 26 – Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge

One of the southern Caribbean's most untouched landscapes, where rainforest meets the ocean.

## Things to do:

- Hike to **Punta Mona**.
- Swim in **secluded beaches**.

## Optional activities:

- **Guided hike** with **Manzanillo Adventures**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near **Puerto Viejo**.

# Day 27 – Jaguar Rescue Center

A meaningful wildlife encounter.

Today offers a more conscious and educational experience, giving you insight into Costa Rica's commitment to wildlife protection.

Visiting the rescue center adds depth to the journey, allowing you to learn about conservation efforts while supporting an important local project.

## Things to do:

- Visit the **Jaguar Rescue Center**.
- Learn about **wildlife rehabilitation, rescue stories, and conservation efforts**.



## Where to sleep:

Same area near **Puerto Viejo**.

# Day 28 – Cahuita National Park & Beaches

A **relaxed Caribbean day**.

This is an easygoing day designed to enjoy the Caribbean coast at a slower pace, combining gentle walks, warm ocean swims, and the charm of a small coastal town. Nature and culture blend seamlessly, making it a perfect balance of exploration and rest.

## Things to do:

- Walk **Cahuita National Park** coastal trail.
- Swim at **Playa Blanca**.
- Explore **Cahuita town**.



## Where to sleep:

**Cahuita** area.

We recommended **Camping Maria**.

# Day 29 – Cahuita → San José

**Driving time: approx. 5-6 hours**

Today marks the final stretch of your journey as you leave the Caribbean coast and head back to the Central Valley. It's a reflective travel day, perfect for enjoying the last scenic drives and easing back into city life after days of nature and coastal exploration.

## Things to do:

- Drive back to **San José**. Cross diverse landscapes as tropical lowlands transition into greener highlands and urban surroundings.
- **Dinner** or **explore** points of interest close to your accommodation.



## Where to sleep:

**San José** area.

We recommended **Finca La Cayetana**.

# Day 30 – San José → Alajuela

**Driving time: approx. 45-60 minutes**

A short final drive marks the end of your Costa Rican road trip, offering a moment to reflect on the landscapes, wildlife, and memories collected along the way. As you arrive in Alajuela, the journey comes full circle, closing an adventure defined by freedom, nature, and unforgettable experiences.

## Things to do:

- Morning drive back to Alajuela.
- Return vehicle and end of journey.

# 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!*