

Costa Rica Photo Tour and Workshop

November 8th-15th 2024

I'm very excited to announce the latest photo tour to Costa Rica. I based it on my recent trip in April, where I had an amazing experience, met the nicest people, and came back with many pictures worthy of printing and hanging on the wall. I've added a few experiences I learned about while there, so I feel it's an improved trip!

The tour begins the morning of November 8th, when we meet up in San Jose, and will end after dinner on the 14th. Please let me know if you'll be arriving earlier or staying longer, to coordinate accordingly. Also, if you'll be flying into Liberia, we could arrange for meeting up at our first destination in Sarapiquí.

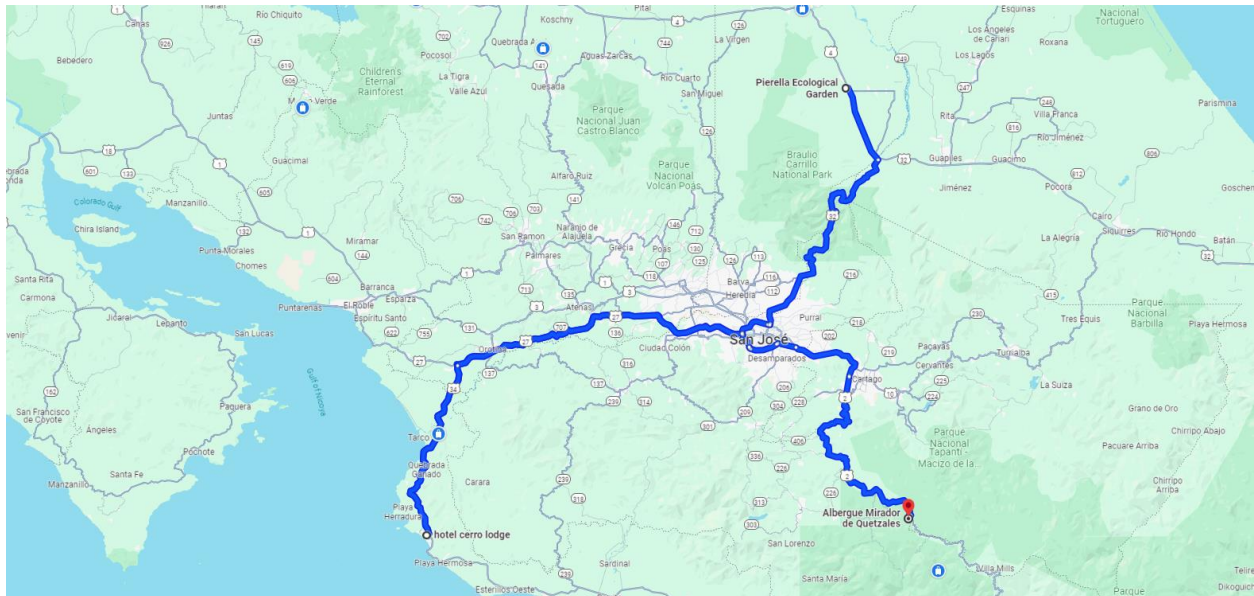
Photography Instruction

My goal is to have everyone come home with images they are proud to share and some good enough for printing and hanging on the wall or selling. Everyone will have a different level of photography experience, and some may not want any help, while others will need a lot. Because of this, there will not be a formal "classroom setting". Instead, I will work closely with anyone that wants my help 1-2-1 or in small groups. I'll also be checking in with everyone during the day to see how you're doing and answer questions or make suggestions. The first morning I will do a group overview of things worth knowing during the trip to prompt questions and make some recommendations on settings and techniques that will be helpful. After that we'll have optional group Q&A sessions during our drives and in between scheduled activities. I will also do an optional tutorial on post-processing using Lightroom Classic. The information can be transferrable to other software, so it'll be helpful for everyone.

I encourage every participant to:

- Know your gear. If you're not familiar with it, it will take longer to apply the techniques you'll learn and could be frustrating and cost you picture opportunities. Know how to change your basic settings, where exposure compensation is, how to change metering modes, etc.
- Practice the basics: Get familiar with adjusting exposure (shutter speed, F-stop, and ISO) for different conditions.
- If you're unsure of your skills/knowledge, please contact me so I can make recommendations or work with you before the trip.
- Share your images during the trip. We can all learn from each other, so whether you have a bad image and want to know why; or took one you're proud of and want high fives, don't be shy. I'm aiming to have a show and tell/Q&A every day.
- On post-processing day, I'd like to use participant's images, not just my own. If you have and you wish looked better, share it and let's see what can be done with it together.

Itinerary



Here is what you can look forward to during our Costa Rica tour. I'm listing activities instead of a schedule, since things may change slightly depending on traffic, arrivals, or other factors.

Friday November 8th, Saturday the 9th and the morning of the 10th.

Meet up at the Luisiana hotel in Santa Ana, near SJO, for introductions and a discussion and tips on how to photograph wildlife in Costa Rica. Our private shuttle will take us to Sarapiquí in the northern region of the rain forest. This is about a 2-hour drive, give or take, depending on traffic. The van is comfortable, has large windows and AC.

In Sarapiquí, we'll be staying at Pierella Eco Gardens for two nights <https://pierella.com/index.php/tours/>. This is an immersive experience where our cabins are surrounded by 8.5 acres of forest and wildlife. We'll enjoy family style meals, a tour of the premises with a guide knowledgeable on endemic birds, amphibians, bugs, and other wildlife. We'll also have an opportunity to do a night tour. Pierella Eco Gardens is a butterfly farm, where they raise a variety of butterflies like the blue morpho, owl, sara longwing and about 30 others. They share butterflies with research centers and zoos all over the world. They are also home to over 30 species of birds, dart frogs, iguanas, basilisks, white Honduran bats, and other critters. There are two room options in Pierella: Rustic and Modern. The rustic rooms are great if you enjoy the feeling of being outdoors. They have a cabin feel, with a private bathroom; the walls have open areas covered with mosquito netting and there is no AC. The modern rooms are a new addition, based on requests from photographers wanting more privacy and concerned about their gear. These are large rooms with AC and have no windows.

While in Sarapiquí, we'll have a 2.5 hr. afternoon birding tour at the Timbirina research station. Timbirina is situated in the rainforest and is surrounded by lush vegetation, diverse wildlife, and the beautiful Timbirina River. Timbirina is committed to promoting sustainable tourism practices and

environmental conservation through various eco-friendly features and programs. The hanging bridges offer a unique opportunity to experience the rainforest from a different perspective. As you walk across the bridges, you'll be surrounded by the vibrant greens of the rainforest, and you'll be able to see wildlife that you wouldn't be able to spot from the ground. The bridges are suspended high up in the canopy, giving you a bird's-eye view of the rainforest below. You'll feel like you're walking on air as you cross each bridge, taking in the stunning views and listening to the sounds of the forest. The hanging bridges also offer an opportunity to get close to the rainforest's inhabitants. You might spot monkeys swinging through the trees, colorful birds perched on branches, or even a sloth snoozing high up in the canopy. For more information visit <https://www.tirimbina.org/>.

We'll also be visiting the Biological Station La Selva for 2 hr. early AM bird tour. Another spectacular forest with hanging bridges, La Selva has been a pioneer site in education, research, conservation and citizen science in Costa Rica since 1953 and was one of the first private protected areas in the country. The station is located just 20 minutes away from our lodge and comprises of 1,600 hectares (3,953 acres) of old growth and new growth tropical wet forest. Species diversity is spectacular, including more than 2,080 varieties of plants, 420 species of trees, 467 species of birds (representing more than 50% of the species in the country), and approximately 700 species of ants. More information here <https://tropicalstudies.org/portfolio/la-selva-research-station/>

Our third planned activity is a private drive up the hills in hopes of seeing and photographing the beautiful King Vulture. The lodge owner owns this property and has been seeing them for a while. He is building a viewing platform for photographers with basic facilities. We'll be one of the first ones to enjoy a front seat view of the hills and opportunities to see a variety of birds and animals in a different environment. This will be about a 45 minute or so off-road type of ride, depending on how many stops we make along the way.

Sunday November 10th, Monday the 11th and the morning of the 12th.

After returning from our morning activity and having lunch, we'll be picked up by our private transport and head out to Tarcoles, on the central pacific part of the rain forest. A much different environment than Sarapiquí, Tarcoles is located on the coast. It is surrounded by lush vegetation that's not as dense or as tall as Sarapiquí and is surrounded by hills. It reminds me of San Luis Obispo County, but much greener!

In Tarcoles, we'll be staying at the beautiful Cerro Lodge <https://www.hotelcerrolodge.com/>. The lodge has nice, air-conditioned rooms, in a beautiful natural setting. Cerro Lodge was built to provide the best service to nature lovers, especially birdwatchers and photographers. It is surrounded by beautiful countryside, with views of the sea and mountains. The facilities are in a privileged location, since they are minutes from the Tárcoles River and the Carara National Park, which are excellent places for watching birds, butterflies, and other animals. They have a nice pool, a viewing/photography platform where you can see for miles and enjoy beautiful sunsets, and a top-notch restaurant on site.

While in Tarcoles, you'll have a chance to enjoy some free time. Explore the grounds for photo ops with birds and monkeys, relax by the pool, have a drink at the observation deck or whatever you'd

like. We'll be meeting with a local guide who will transport us and share his knowledge at our different activities:

Carara National Park <https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/ac/acopac/pnc/Paginas/default.aspx> . The Carara National Park, which in the Huetar indigenous language means "River of Lizards", has the only transitional forest in the Central Pacific, which translates into diversity of flora and fauna, where species typical of dry and humid forests converge. The park has easy to access smooth trails, making it an easy walk. According to scientific data, it presents the following records of flora and fauna:

- 480 species of plants including trees and shrubs, 14 species being endemic, and 29 species considered rare and endemic.
- 124 species of reptiles, that is, 53% of the reptile species in Costa Rica (234).
- 112 species of mammals, 47.8% of the total of these species in the country (237)
- 62 species of amphibians, that is, 32.8% of the 189 species of amphibians in Costa Rica.
- 420 species of birds, 47% of the 893 species reported in the country, considered one of the most important sites in CR for observing birds in their natural state.

The second activity will be an outing at the beach, where the river empties into the ocean. This area is very busy with bird activity. From herons and kingfishers hanging near the water to macaws, wood storks and frigatebirds flying high. Photo ops while enjoying a beautiful sunset at the beach; doesn't get much better than that!

Finally, we'll have a private boat tour on the Tarcoles river. This 2-3 hour tour will likely give us chances to see crocodiles, spoonbills, green kingfishers, anhingas, frigatebirds, ospreys, terns, hawks and so many others. It was my favorite activity from my last trip, I can't wait to get back there.

Tuesday the 12th, Wednesday the 13th and the morning of the 14th.

After lunch, we'll be heading to our final destination: San Gerardo de Dota (Dota for short). Our private van will take us to this beautiful cloud forest location, which depending on traffic, can take 2.5 hr to 3.5 hr to get there. However, you'll enjoy some spectacular mountain views along the way!

We'll be staying at the Mirador de quetzales lodge: <https://www.elmiradordequetzales.com/> . This remote lodge is in the heart of the resplendent quetzal habitat. The rooms are small mountain-cabin like structures, very basic but with bathrooms and hot water. The weather is colder than our other two locations and the cabins have minimal heating, so be prepared with some warm jammies and warm clothing, especially as we head into sunset and early morning tours. The altitude is almost 8,000 ft, you'll probably experience some adjustments in your body. Also, the lodge is located on a hill; there will be slopes to climb and go down everywhere, including the lobby, dining hall and rooms. Speaking of the dining hall, the restaurant has a great menu, and the food is exquisite! Truly gourmet meals.

While we're there, we will be going on two quetzal tours, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. These tours offer two different perspectives on the quetzals' habitats: Their nesting grounds and their feeding grounds. The quetzal is as fascinating in behavior as it is beautiful. Keep

in mind, there is no guarantee that we will see them; as you know, wildlife does not make appointments. However, the guides are local experts and will hopefully have a pulse on their hangouts.

We'll also take a guided tour of the Quetzales National Park. This beautiful park has amazing views, and the trails offer opportunities of photographing their local birds and estimated 65 species of butterflies.

Thursday, November 14th, and the morning of the 15th.

After our morning activity and lunch, we'll head out to our hotel, The Louisiana in Santa Ana, just 15 minutes from the San Jose airport <https://www.hotelluisiana.com/>. Take some time to relax, prepare for your return flight, enjoy the pool, or explore the area. We'll gather again for our farewell dinner and final reviews and reflections from our trip as we end the tour. Breakfast the next morning is included but not scheduled, so you can plan it according to your departure.

If you want to extend your stay or prefer to stay somewhere else the night of the 14th, please let me know.

Cost

The total cost is \$3,995 for single occupancy, or \$3,800 for a shared room.

The fee covers 7 nights of planned lodging from November 8th - 14th. During those dates, the following planned activities are also included: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Transportation, park fees, guide fees and tours. All instruction, workshops, and sessions by Adi Ringer.

I have a block of rooms reserved for November 7th at the Hotel Luisiana <https://www.hotelluisiana.com/> for \$55 including breakfast. If you arrive on the 7th and want to stay there, add this cost to the total fee.

Not included in the fee: Transportation into and out of Costa Rica, airport taxes, travel insurance (highly recommended). Lodging, tours, meals, or transportation not specified in the itinerary. Alcoholic drinks, hotel incidentals (laundry, phone calls, room service, movies, drinks, etc.); personal equipment, costs associated with changes to travel plans or itinerary for reasons beyond our control. Optional activities or activities during free time.

Deposit: A \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to save a spot; the tour is limited to a maximum of 8 participants. The balance must be paid no later than August 30th, 2024. All reservations after that will require full payment.

Refunds: The deposit of \$500 is non-refundable since I have to pre-pay for some commitments and reservation fees.

If payment in full was made and cancelled more than 120 days before the trip, a full refund, minus the \$500 deposit will be made. If cancelled within 90 and 119 days before the trip, the refund will be 50% of the payment. No refunds will be given for cancellations made after September 8th, 2024.

An exception will be considered if the participant finds a suitable substitute participant for the tour. "Suitable" is at the sole discretion of Adi Ringer to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the entire group.