

# TRAVELS NOW AND THEN

© Christopher Earls Brennan

## COSTA RICA 2007



**steps:** search flights review travellers purchase reservation

### review your flight details

#### Los Angeles to San Jose

##### Flight 1

**Saturday, September 01, 2007**

**Departure:** 12:30 Los Angeles, USA - Los Angeles International, terminal 2

**Arrival:** 18:25 San Salvador, El Salvador - Comalapa International

**Airline:** Taca Intl Airlines TA527 e **Aircraft:** Airbus Industrie A320-100/200  
Operated by another airline

**Fare type:** Economy Restricted

Change of plane required. Time between flights = 1:15

##### Flight 2

**Saturday, September 01, 2007**

**Departure:** 19:40 San Salvador, El Salvador - Comalapa International

**Arrival:** 20:55 San Jose, Costa Rica - Juan Santamaria

**Airline:** Taca Intl Airlines TA523 e **Aircraft:** Airbus Industrie A321  
Operated by another airline

**Fare type:** Economy Restricted

#### San Jose to Los Angeles

##### Flight 1

**Saturday, September 08, 2007**

**Departure:** 18:00 San Jose, Costa Rica - Juan Santamaria

**Arrival:** 00:20 +1 day(s) Los Angeles, USA - Los Angeles International, terminal B  
Note: includes 1 technical stop(s)

**Airline:** Laca LR640 e **Aircraft:** Airbus Industrie A320-100/200  
**Fare type:** Economy Restricted

**Legend:** e = e-ticket option, USD = U.S. Dollar

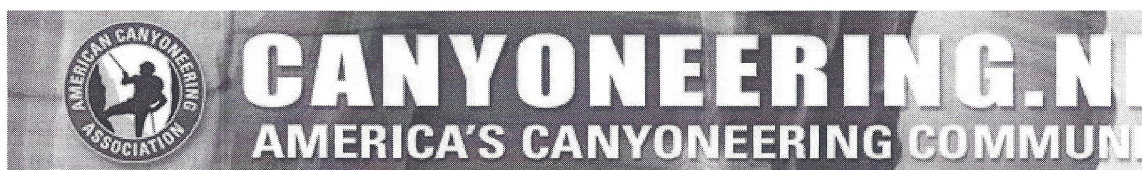
### price

travellers	flights	taxes	
1 adult(s)	x	(345.00 + 60.42)	= 405.42 USD
<b>total for all travellers</b>			<b>405.42 USD</b>

purchase conditions  
fare basis information

### flight notes

- This fare is bilaterally agreed between TACA and the selected airline(s).


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ACA Canyon Forums > AMERICAN CANYONEERING ASSOCIATION >  
 Rendezvous & Conferences  
**Costa Rica '07**

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07-25-2007, 11:03 AM

**rcwild**

Instructor Dude


 Join Date: Mar 2004  
 Posts: 1,452

**Costa Rica '07**

We hope you will join us for some canyoning fun in Costa Rica.

Have fun. Be safe.

**Rich**

*"If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself."*

**Minquass I**

[Quote Post](#)
[Multi off](#)
[Qu](#)

07-25-2007, 11:22 AM

**rcwild**

Instructor Dude


 Join Date: Mar 2004  
 Posts: 1,452

**Itinerary**

**5-Day Canyoneering FastTrack Course**

Monday, August 27th, to Friday, August 31st

Rancho Margot (near La Fortuna)

Fee: \$275

[Course Registration Form](#)

**Canyon Rendezvous**

Saturday, September 1st, to Sunday, September 9th

Rancho Margot – Turialba – Rio Pacuare – Caribbean

- Saturday; arrival and transportation from San Jose airport to La Fortuna.
- Sunday-Tuesday; canyoning and other activities near La Fortuna.
- Wednesday-Thursday; canyoning and other activities near Turialba.

Sat Sep 1  
 Sun Sep 9



- Friday-Saturday; whitewater rafting on Rio Pacuare.
- Saturday afternoon/evening; hanging out on the Caribbean.
- Sunday; transportation to and departure from San Jose airport

[Rendezvous Registration Form](#)

### **Canyon Leader Exam**

Monday, September 10th, to Tuesday, September 11th

Rancho Margot (near La Fortuna)

Fee: \$100

[Course Registration Form](#)

### **Wilderness First Responder Course**

Wednesday, September 12th, to Wednesday, September 19th

Rancho Margot (near La Fortuna)

Fee: \$450

[Course Registration Form](#)

Have fun. Be safe.

**Rich**

*"If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself."*

**Minquass I**



[Quote Post](#)

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[Qu](#)

07-25-2007, 11:33 AM

**rcwild**

Instructor Dude



Join Date: Mar 2004

Posts: 1,452



### **Transportation**

For the canyon rendezvous I will arrange group transportation from the airport to Rancho Margot on September 1st and back to the airport on September 9th.

If you arrive before the 1st or depart after the 9th, you will need to make arrangements for accommodations in San Jose. Check out the [Kabat Hostel](#). Ask for Mauricio. He'll help you with accommodations and transportation to or from the airport.

If you arrive after the 1st or depart before the 9th, you will need to make arrangements for your own transportation.



We will use group transportation between sites. The cost per person depends on the number of people. I'm estimating between \$40 and \$50 per person for the week.

While in town in La Fortuna and Turialba, it will be easy to get around on foot. Taxis are also available. Rancho Margot has a bus that runs between their property and La Fortuna.

Have fun. Be safe.

**Rich**

*"If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself."*  
**Minquass I**


 


[Quote Post](#) [Multi off](#) [Qu](#)

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07-25-2007, 11:45 AM

**rcwild**  
Instructor Dude



Join Date: Mar 2004  
Posts: 1,452  


**Accommodations**

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**LA FORTUNA**

Rancho Margot is a very nice ranch near La Fortuna, situated between Arenal Volcano and Lake Arenal. They're offering special rates for our students and rendezvous participants.

Rate per night for bunk room and breakfast will be \$20. Rate for bunk and three meals will be \$30. Participants in the Canyoneering FastTrack Course, Canyon Leader Exam and Wilderness First Responder Course want to take advantage of the 3 meal deal. Rendezvous participants prefer to take the breakfast only deal.

I've stayed in the bunk rooms. They're nice, but quite small. Toilets and showers are down the hall. The ranch has several communal areas – porch on the side of the bunk house, restaurant/bar, gazebos. If all you want to do is sleep while you're in your room, save some money and bunk room. If you prefer something larger, contact the ranch directly to make arrangements.

**TURIALBA**

There are several hotels in the area. Expect to pay \$40 to \$60 per night. Less if you share a room.

**RIO PACUARE**

Our overnight whitewater rafting trip on the Pacuare will involve camping at a developed campsite. Site is surrounded by rain forest and overlooks the river. It has tents with cots, dining area, showers, toilets.



**CARIBBEAN**

There are several hotels in the area. Expect to pay \$40 to \$60 per night. Less if you share a room.

Have fun. Be safe.

**Rich**

*"If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself."*  
**Minquass I**

[Quote Post](#) [Multi off](#) [Qu](#)

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07-25-2007, 11:55 AM

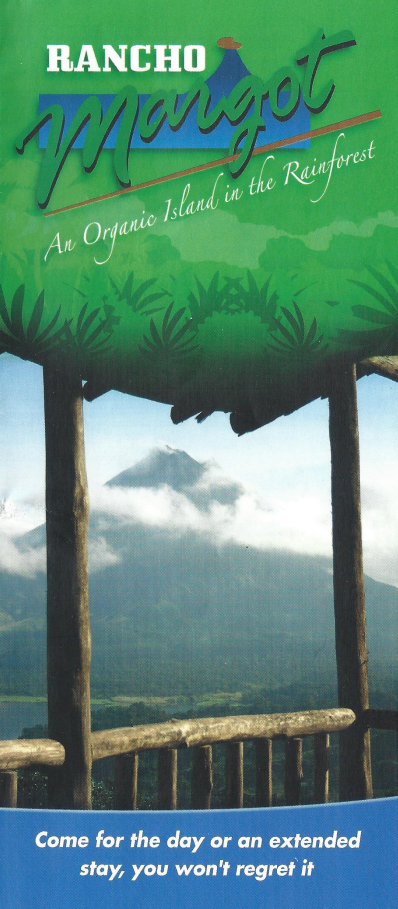
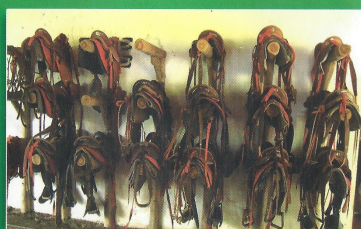
**rcwild**  
Instructor Dude

**The Canyons**

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During our seven activity days, I anticipate we will descend 5 or 6 canyons.

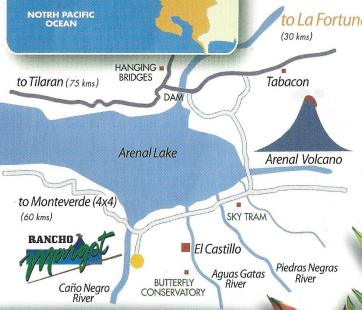




Daily shuttle  
bus service between  
LA FORTUNA &  
RANCHO MARGOT

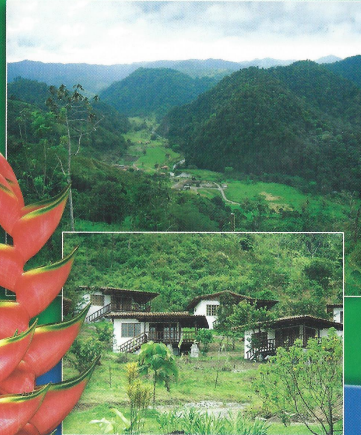
email: [info@ranchomargot.org](mailto:info@ranchomargot.org)  
[www.ranchomargot.org](http://www.ranchomargot.org)

Fortuna office Telefon +506 479-7259  
fax: +506 479-7260  
Skype: ranchomargot



#### Rancho Margot

El Castillo de Peñas Blancas,  
San Ramon Alajuela,  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 124-4417  
La Fortuna, Costa Rica.



Come for the day or an extended  
stay, you won't regret it



On the shores of Lago Arenal and the valley of the Rio Caño Negro surrounded by the Children's Eternal Forest and the Arenal Volcano Reserve, you will find our little piece of paradise that we call **Rancho Margot**: a sustainable organic ranch and wildlife rescue center.

### Accommodations

Overlooking Lake Arenal and the Caño Negro river, the rainforest birds and animals will lure you to sleep with the river whispers playing gentle background music.

*Bungalows  
Bunkhouse*

### Activities

On our private trails or in the company of the forest rangers in the Children's Eternal Forest you will enjoy a variety of hiking and horseback riding tours of no equal value in the area.

The Volcano, its lake and nearby waterfalls are the area's trademark. **Rancho Margot's** 400+ acres surrounded by 150,000 acres of rain and cloud forest reserves will live up to all your adventure expectations regardless of age or experience.

If sustainable ranch life is what you seek, at **Rancho Margot** you can milk cows; make cheese, yogurt or marmalades; tend chickens, cows, horses or pigs; till in our garden or nursery and agricultural

fields. Learn from our staff of professionals about worm composting, bio-digestors and hydropower; local orchids and medicinal plants; the processes of reforestation and wild animal reintroduction. We also have a top quality restaurant and full-service bar. If all you want to do is relax, that's OK too.

*Horseback riding  
Mountain bikes  
Hiking  
Rappelling  
Kayaks  
Yoga*





**Hotel Interamericano**

Luis Fernando Allen  
Patricia Levinson Vásquez

Tel: (506) 556-0142      Apartado 95-7150  
Fax: (506) 556-7790      Turrialba, Costa Rica

hotelint@racsa.co.cr

P.O. Box 124-4417 La Fortuna, Costa Rica



Juan Larry Sostheim L., Propietario  
Tel. Oficina: 479-7259  
Tel. Móvil: 848-2515  
Tel. Fax: 479-7260  
Skype: +1-352-5058206  
jsostheim@ranchomargot.org  
El Castillo, Peñas Blancas, San Ramón

www.ranchomargot.org



**RAID ARENAL** Costa Rica

**THE ADVENTURE STARTS AT RANCHO MARGOT**

www.raidarenal.com  
info@raidarenal.com

Rancho Margot  
El Castillo de Peñas Blancas,  
La Fortuna, Costa Rica.  
Phone +506 479-7259  
Reservation only by email

Google-earth coordinates  
lat=10.4202914246, lon=-84.7660145127

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Cédula jurídica N°3-101-454912



www.namuwoki.com / namuwoki@namuwoki.com Puerto Viejo - 750 0480

**Salida Puerto a Manzanillo**  
7:00 (lunes-viernes)  
7:30-12:45-16:30-19:30

**Salida Manzanillo a Puerto**  
5:00-8:30-10:30 (lunes-viernes)  
12:45-17:15

**Refugio Vida Silvestre Gandoca - Manzanillo**

**The Learning Trips** 2582293

**Hotel COLON CARIBE** 2005101

**Bungalows SIATAMI LODGE** 3967616

**REEF RUNNER DIVERS** 7500480

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**SIXAOA**

Manzanillo)-14:00-16:00  
to transportes Mepe  
osé Tel.257 8129  
0134

Puerto :750 0023  
8:00 10:00 15:00  
8:30 10:30 15:30  
9:00 11:00 16:00  
9:30 11:30 16:30

Km.4 Horas en bus

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Bomberos.....: 118  
Policia.....: 117 / 127  
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Aeropuerto Int.....: 443 29 42  
Oficina Policia Migración  
aeropuerto.....: 441 55 41  
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**www.micasahostel**

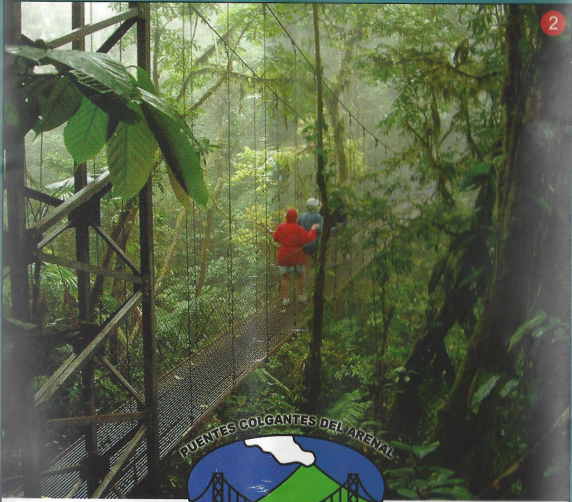
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corner of the I.C.E. building. Tel: info@





2

PUENTES GIGANTES DEL ARENAL


## Arenal Hanging Bridges

### Costa Rica

WELCOME to the most beautiful environmental project in Costa Rica. Located within the corridor followed by birds migrating between North and South America, the trails and bridges of this project will bring you as close as you could ever hope to get to the birds, the flowers and the lush vegetation of the primary rain forest. You will be able to walk right into the forest, thanks to the imposing hanging bridges and the beautiful trails that are comfortable and easy to walk on.


## ARENAL VOLCANO & LA FORTUNA'S MAP

July & August 2007



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3

Fourtrax Adventure

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ARENAL

JACO MANUEL ANTONIO



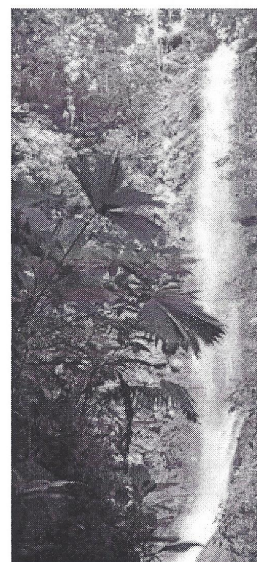
## Pure Trek Canyoning Costa Rica



### Pure Trek Canyoning Costa Rica - the ultimate waterfall rappelling adventure

- 4X4 drive into the Costa Rica rainforest
- Rappel down cascading waterfalls
- Trek through a magical canyon
- See monkeys, sloth's, parrots, and more...
- Lunch served at the base camp
- This tour is for anyone in moderate physical condition.
- Kid friendly, No experience necessary.

[Online Reservations](#)



We trek through the forest on magical trails that lead to some of the most spectacular waterfalls in Costa Rica, a place very

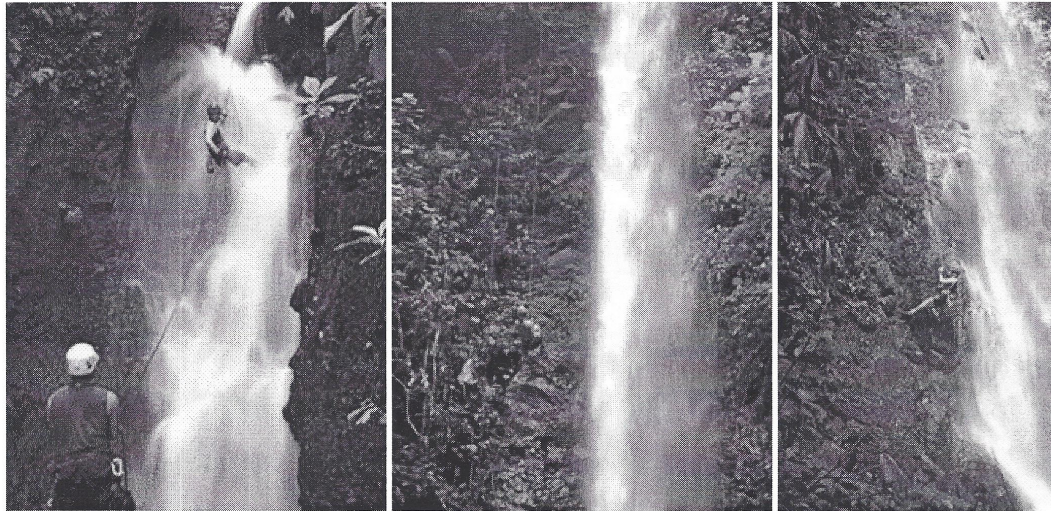


to experience. Along the way we will have the chance to discover the secrets that lie hidden deep within the canyon.

Your trip begins with a 30-minute 4x4 drive into the tropical rainforest outside the town of La Fortuna, in the shadow of the

From the first waterfall we will rappel down from the top into the beautiful and pristine canyon below. The adventure includes three of which are along waterfalls, and one dry rock face. Then just a short trek out of the canyon, jump in the vehicles and the base camp.

We have two tours a day, see [schedules and reservations info](#). Both tours include lunch at our base camp and snacks in the



## Customer Reviews and Feedback for Pure Trek Canyoning

*"Great time! Great people! Super fun! I've climbed all over...and this was COOL!"*

**Jim Turk, Anchorage, Alaska, USA**

*"This was the most incredible adventure that our family has ever experienced. Thank you for making our trip to Costa Rica."*

**Michell & Mathew, New Jersey, USA**

*"Better than anything I've experienced. My daughter (8 years old) was even more impressed! Muchas gracias to you all!"*

**Debbie & Greer Campbell, Denver, CO, USA**

### Pure Trek Canyoning Schedules, Rates, and Online Booking Forms

**Pure Trek  
Canyoning**

The Adventure of a lifetime, rappelling in wet and dry canyons in the heart of the Costa Rican rain forest

[Schedules, Rates, & Booking](#)

We use only the best gear used in canyoneering and rock climbing. All our guides have been professionally trained in Wilderness First Aid and CPR. Daily safety inspections are conducted on all







Arenal, Costa Rica

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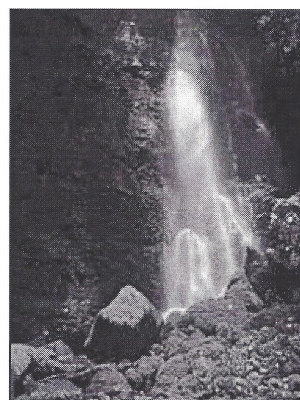
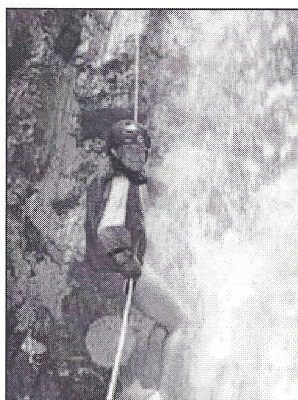
## Canyoneering Tour - Arenal Costa Rica

The Newest Concept in Adventure...

**Book Now**

Prepare to get wet as your experienced guides fit you into your safety harness and assist you as you make your way down a series of 5 amazing rappels! You will be descending a total of 600 meters (almost 2000 feet). This adventure is perfect for those looking to combine the thrill of abseil, breath taking, hundred foot waterfalls while taking in the beauty of the forest.

We save the best for last...The grand finale is a huge, 210-ft, 3-stage waterfall!



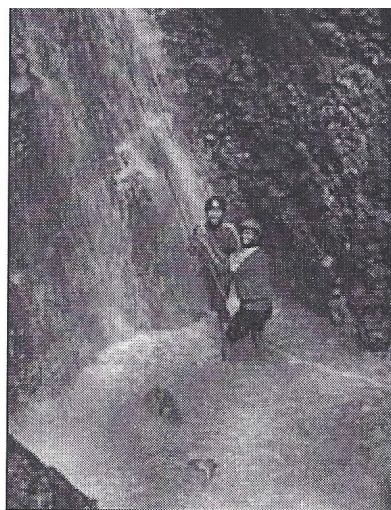




This is a new addition to our repertoire of adventure excursions being offered at the Arenal Volcano, making this adrenaline filled locality ever more exhilarating. Now in addition to canopy tours, white water rafting, horseback treks, we offer this exciting activity - Canyoneering in Arenal Costa Rica.







Imagine yourself in surrounded by lush rainforest atop a magical canyon full of tropical waterfalls with surprises each step of the way. This awesome canyon is located a short distance from the town of La Fortuna, Costa Rica. Desafio provides round trip transportation for most of the hotels in Arenal. A home cooked Costa Rican typical lunch is also included. Our canyon is a spectacular site to explore. The sounds of flowing water, waterfalls, tropical plants and massive trees. A magnificent experience for all the senses.

### **Book Now!**

**Departure Times:** 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm and 1:30 pm.

**Duration:** approx. 3 hours.

**Price per Person:** \$85.

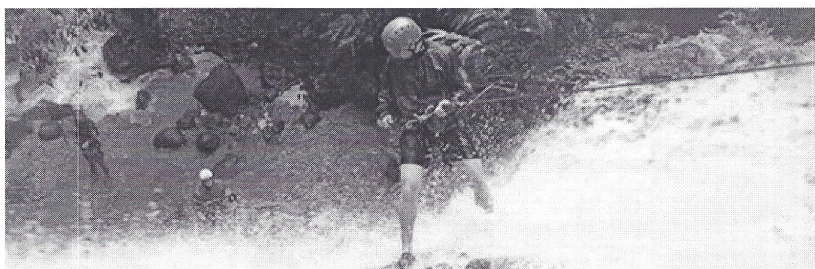
**Includes:** Lunch, Transportation, Qualified Guides and all Equipment, Rappelling and Hiking.

**What to Bring:** Secure shoes, clothes to get wet in and a change of clothes for after the tour, a sense of adventure.

Recommended for ages 12 to 55. Certified by The Costa Rican Tourist Bureau.

**Important Note:** Adventure tours such as whitewater rafting, canyoneering, kayaking and hiking require physical effort. Clients should be in good physical condition. For client safety and enjoyment, Desafio Adventure Company reserves the right to offer a substitution, postpone, change or cancel any tour due to unfavorable conditions. Full refund is given if (on





You are here: [Home](#) » [Tours](#) » **Canyoning**

## Canyoning



Canyoning has become very popular with extreme sport fans all over the world. This sport has been practiced in Europe for many years and recently has extended to the Americas. Canyoning is specifically practiced in the natural geographic setting of canyons.

This activity involves rappelling and descending cliffs and waterfalls within the canyon. The equipment for this activity - ropes, harnesses and carabiners - are the same tools that are used in rock-climbing.

The canyon that we explore in our Canyoning tour is located in the Puente Vigas Canyon. Our course guarantees you a memorable, safe, and thrilling day of Canyoning as we rappel down waterfalls, zip-line through the treetops, and enjoy the unique, natural beauty of this country.

Our Canyoning site is located in Calle Chirracá, a small, modest, yet lush place near the town of Turrialba, which is an hour and a half east of San Jose. We begin the Canyoning tour with an introduction of our guides and the equipment to help familiarize you with the different uses of the equipment. We start the tour at the first waterfall where a guide will give a speech on safety. The guide will explain the course and the equipment making sure you know the necessary mechanisms and procedures for canyoning, ensuring you a safe and fun experience. After this, you are off...rappelling down four waterfalls, zip lining down four canopy cables, descending down two tall trees and walking across a 132 foot hanging bridge - all giving you an unforgettable adrenaline rush!

This tour takes approximately 3 to 4 hours. We provide our canyioners with specialized equipment and a splash jacket for this tour. It is important to bring extra clothes and shoes to change into at the end of the trip.

### What to bring?

- T-shirt, shorts or pants (no jeans), swimsuit, tennis or hiking shoes, and insect repellent.
- Extra clothes and towel will be needed at the end of the tour.



**This tour is available for adults and children over 8 years old.**

**No previous experience is necessary.**

## Pricing

We run all of our Day Tours from both San Jose and Turrialba. The prices for each of these tours vary depending upon where you are coming from. The prices from Turrialba include pick-up and drop-off at your hotel, lunch, guide(s), and all equipment that is needed. The prices from San Jose include pick-up and drop-off at your hotel, breakfast, lunch, guide(s), and all equipment that is needed.

From Turrialba	From San Jose
\$60	\$90
<b>Included:</b>	<b>Included:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick-up and Drop-off in your hotel</li> <li>• Lunch</li> <li>• Your Adventure Tour</li> <li>• All equipment needed for the tour</li> <li>• Bi-lingual Guide(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick-up and Drop-off in your hotel</li> <li>• Breakfast and Lunch</li> <li>• Your Adventure Tour</li> <li>• All equipment needed for the tour</li> <li>• Bi-lingual Guide(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Not Included:</b>	<b>Not Included:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcoholic Beverages</li> <li>• Guide Gratuities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcoholic Beverages</li> <li>• Guide Gratuities</li> </ul>

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**Sun. Mar.23**

Fly to ???

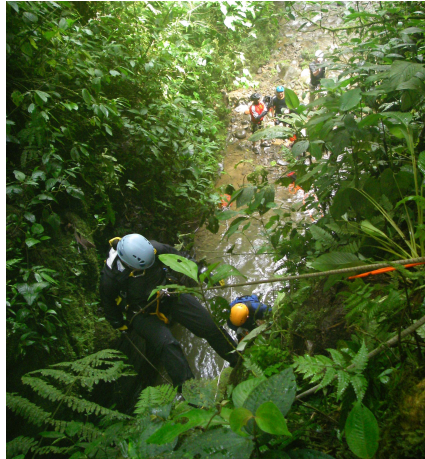
A number of months before the cataclysmic diagnosis of Doreen's cancer, I had learned that the American Canyoneering Association and its founder, Rich Carlson, were planning a trip to the canyons of Costa Rica. My tentative plan to attend this "rendezvous" with several of my fellow, southern California canyoneers had been abandoned in the maelstrom of the tragedy and I had not given it a second thought. But about a month after Doreen's death when I had just started to function at some elementary level, two of those friends hatched a scheme to persuade me to go on this trip. Randi Poer called Scott Smith and encouraged him to take me to Costa Rica. They knew I would not go unless one of them was to ask me to accompany them. Scott is such a kind and gentle man that perhaps only he, of all my friends, could have persuaded me to go. I knew he would let me be alone with myself, that he would shield me from unwanted attention, unwelcome sympathy.





*Descending Lost Canyon**Descending Lost Canyon**Big rappel in Lost Canyon*

So it was that on Sep.1, 2007, with little preparation, I found myself boarding a plane at LAX on my way to San Jose, Costa Rica. Scott had persuaded me that a physical challenge in an unfamiliar but spectacular place would help me find a little distraction even if it could not ease the pain. And that country in Central America is nothing if not spectacular. Costa Rica has a spine of steep mountains and volcanoes covered in dense tropical forest. The rivers and canyons that run through these mountains are magnificent and present very different flora and fauna, a very different visual experience than any in the USA or Europe. Many small companies run guided adventures in this wilderness and we were joining a canyoneering group that had planned a selection of these adventures. We would base our activities in two different locales, spending a few days near La Fortuna in the Arenal Volcano area northwest of San Jose and a few days more in Turrialba southeast of San Jose. In each of these locations, the group had signed up for help from guide services, Pure Trek Canyoning and Desafio in La Fortuna and Explornatura in Turrialba.

*Treking to Nonequito Canyon**In Nonequito Canyon**In Nonequito Canyon*

All of these companies had developed "commercial canyons" in which they had established anchors and other facilities to aid the inexperienced canyoneer. The defect with these commercial canyons is that they have usually been significantly altered to ease the passage for the guides and their clients. These alterations often include the installation not only of extensive fixed anchors but also of wooden platforms from which to enter the rappels. Some even have steps cut in the canyon bottom rock to ease downclimbs while in other canyons trails conduct the clients from one rappel to the next. Despite these alterations the canyons are spectacularly beautiful with luxurious multi-level canopies of tropical forest and exotic flora and fauna. It is a unique experience for a howler monkey to let loose with its terrifying howl just as you are about to enter a 150ft free rappel!

We spent the first four days at a ranch outside of La Fortuna, in the shadow of the towering Arenal Volcano. At night a continuous stream of red-hot rock could be seen tumbling down the side of this volcanic cone and lighting up the night sky. During the day the tropical heat and humidity matched by the surrounding jungle to create an otherworldly stage to draw my attention away from my grief. With this ranch as base we first descended two nearby commercial canyons, namely Piedra Canyon (translated as Stone Canyon but also known as Lost Canyon) run by the Desafio adventure company and Piedrita Canyon (translated as Little Stone Canyon) overseen by Pure Trek Canyoning. The first featured several big rappels (two from overhung wooden platforms) and some downclimbing in a glorious tropical canyon with just a modest water flow. The second involved several big rappels from overhung wooden platforms and descents through quite vigorous waterfalls. On the fourth day, the guides from the Explornatura Adventure Company agreed to show us a more remote, non-commercial canyon in order to exchange skills with the experts in our group. Thus we made our way through thick jungle to the upper reaches of the undeveloped Nonequito Canyon (translates to something like "no take away") and spent the day descending a wild and natural tropical canyon with a beautiful series of rappels and vigorous whitewater. All of these adventures were enjoyable and comfortably distracting though not technically challenging.

The action then shifted to the town of Turrialba, the home base of the Explornatura Adventure Company. There we began with a descent of Puente Vigas Canyon (translated as Rope Bridge Canyon) just above Explornatura's warehouse on the outskirts of Turrialba. This commercial canyon had been set up with a series of rappels interwoven with three long and exciting zip-line transits through the jungle canopy. Two of these ended high in trees and necessitated a rappel to reach the ground. These zip-line excitements were new to me and certainly entertaining but also well supervised and controlled. The adrenaline flowed but the soul was unstirred.

Scott had to return home and so I was left on my own before the last adventure; but I figured I should try to stand on my own feet. He had shown a special friendship and I was not going to impose on him beyond the marvellous kindness he had already shown me. This last adventure was to be a two-day descent of the wild Pacuare River, a white water rafting trip through some of the most spectacular and untouched wilderness in Costa Rica. The Pacuare has its source in the Cordillera de Talamanca and flows 108km to the Caribbean. It leaves the mountains just before the town of Siquierres and downstream of this is of lesser interest. The mountain traverse is a popular venue for white water rafting, kayaking and riverboarding; National Geographic named it one of the top 10 river trips in the world, as much for the untouched wilderness around it as for the whitewater adventure.





*The Pacuare River*

The rainforests that surround the river are indeed breathtaking, home to exotic species such as panthers, jaguars, ocelots and monkeys. In 1986 a rare black panther was seen about 2km from the river and jaguars have been spotted near the Haucas River Gorge. Anteaters are common as well as raccoons, river otters, iguanas, Capuchin monkeys, and sloths. Howler monkeys are found on the lower sections after the Dos Montanas canyon. Five species of snakes live in the forest; the poisonous ones include the Coral snake, the Bush Master and the Fer-de-Lance. The Laura and the Sopy Lota (a long black snake that eats poisonous snakes) are also common. The jungle frequently flashes with the bright blue color of the Blue Morpho butterfly, chestnut-mandibled toucans are common and parakeets can sometimes be seen after the Dos Montanas canyon. Other bird inhabitants include herons, hawks, ospreys and vultures.

Most of the river corridor through this wilderness is first generation rain forest that has never been touched. It is the traditional home of several groups of indigenous people. The Cabecar Indians live in the forest along the east side of the river. They are small scale subsistence farmers and ranchers, growing bananas and plantains. Although they are known to practice "black magic" they are peaceful and friendly. At one time another tribe, the Burucas Indians, lived on the other, Pacific side of the river.

The first known recreational river descent of the Pacuare was completed by Michael Cane in 1975. Three years later Cane started Costa Rica Expeditions to run commercial trips on the river and in subsequent years other commercial enterprises followed including the Explornatura Adventure Company of Turrialba with whom we were to travel. The heart pounding whitewater of the Pacuare along with its remote jungle location and warm water (65 degrees Fahrenheit) have made it a very popular destination with adventure seekers. The mountain traverse is commonly divided into three parts, the Upper Upper, the Upper and the Lower Sections of which the more technical are the last two. The Upper section ends at Finca La Cruz and consists of about ten miles of class IV and V rapids as well as waterfalls. Our goal was the Lower Section consisting of 18 miles between the put-in at Tres Equis and the town of Siquirres. Over this distance the river drops a total of 1200ft through numerous rapids of class III and IV whitewater. It starts with a series of class III rapids but the action heats up as the Pacuare enters the Huacas River Gorge where, in addition to many class III, there are two class IV rapids called the Upper and Lower Huacas. Downstream the excitement continues with at least one more class IV called Cimerones. The Lower Section is sometimes descended in one long day but it is more comfortably completed over two days. For these overnight trips, three campsites with lodges and canteens have been established about halfway through the Lower Section. The river is rain fed so it typically runs highest from May to January, the lowest water occurring in March and April. Though the river can be rafted all year round, the hurricane season in late summer can produce enough rain in 8 to 10 hours for the river to reach flood stage; it is then unsafe to attempt to run it.

We left Scott at the hotel in Turrialba; it was sad that he had to head home but I knew I needed to become accustomed to fending for myself. The rest of the group and I travelled by bus along a rough dirt road that dropped down to the Pacuare River at a place called Tres Equis, a name that signifies no more than a beach at which to instruct the rafters and pack supplies into the inflatable rafts. I was looking forward to my second significant whitewater expedition despite my misadventures on the River Kern in California (see "Cataracts of the Kern"). I hoped that this time I would be able to stay in the boat. There were five rafts each with five or six passengers plus one guide who sat in the back, steered and instructed. My fellow passengers were Jesus "Chewy" Guerrero who had guided us on Mexican canyoneering trips; he was accompanied by his wife. Also, sitting in front of me was Costa Rican Mauricio Odio who was a trained adventure guide. Fellow Californian Lauren Jefferis who sat behind me was a long time acquaintance with whom I had descended many canyons. It promised to be a fantastic adventure among some good friends. Though the river was somewhat swollen by recent rains, the guides had deemed it runnable though a little more exciting than usual.

The sun was shining as we set off from Tres Equis and readily negotiated the first few Class III rapids, appropriately called Bienvenidos (Welcome) and then Pelya Oho (Open Your Eyes). Other class III rapids followed in quick succession as we plunged deeper and deeper into the wilderness. I began to feel some competence and some confidence that I could stay in the boat even though I was somewhat reluctant to stick my feet as deeply as I should into the foothold pockets sown in the floor of the boat for precisely this purpose. My anxiety was caused by the possibility that an involuntary movement would torque and therefore reinjure one of my oft-damaged knees. But the day was beautiful, the company was delightful and there were moments when I could allow myself to smile. We stopped for lunch at a rocky beach where a magnificent waterfall tumbles down through the jungle into the Pacuare. Like the other meals this was a feast served on the makeshift table formed by turning one of the rafts upside down. After lunch some of us donned our rappelling gear and climbed up into the canyon above the waterfall. There we found a staircase of waterfalls and devised a canyoneering descent that dropped through some of the whitewater, though we avoided several of the most vigorous hydraulics. After this pleasant diversion we resumed our voyage down the Pacuare, through the Rodeo or Donde rapid and numerous others. Some where along this stretch, I had a momentary lapse of concentration while descending a fairly innocent Class III rapid. The boat unexpectedly beached on a midstream rock while I had my back to it and I fell backwards out of the boat into a pool by the side of the river. Though I was quickly hauled back



into the boat by my alert fellow crew, it was another reminder of my vulnerability to such accidents. However, there was little shock involved and I reclaimed my place with only a slightly damaged ego. The rest of the day was uneventful; we landed near our campsite in mid-afternoon and made our way up the jungle trail to our overnight campsite. This rustic facility consisted of an array of tents mounted on individual wooden platforms (designed to hold you above the ant-infested jungle floor) and a central canteen and dining area perched on the ridge overlooking a bend in the river. It was a spectacular setting and we all enjoyed an evening of good food prepared by the guides and spiced with lively conversation. The night passed pleasantly with many strange jungle sounds. However, alone in the tent without the need to pay constant attention to the swirling river, I wept quietly for my lost love.

The second day dawned with another fine meal. Soon the rafts were reloaded and we resumed our whitewater descent. Almost immediately, we passed Double Drop waterfall on the right side of the river, a signal that we were entering the Huacas River Gorge with a whole series of Class III rapids and two notorious Class IV, the Upper and Lower Huacas. I braced myself for what was to come. Several times we seemed to fly through the air only to plunge down underwater and then be jerked back to the surface. We crashed through Upper Huacas, raising our paddles into the air to celebrate that successful passage. Downstream our still-water passage passed beneath the towering Huacas waterfall that drops vertically over 100ft down a cliff on the right. Then into the roaring whitewater yet again as we surged through the Class IV Lower Huacas rapid, perhaps the most difficult of the Class IVs because of a tight move against an undercut cliff face. Soon we stopped again for lunch and I began to feel that I could complete the Pacuare adventure without any further mishap. After lunch we entered a lovely quiet section where the river meanders quietly between 100ft cliffs. An old suspension footbridge overhead reminded us of our imminent return to civilisation though even that seemed to lack many of its rungs. Most of us slipped into the river to drift along with the rafts in the lovely jungle sunshine. We also took advantage of this quiet section to take lots of photographs, perhaps to remind us of the combination of simplicity and beauty that marked this adventure. Our descent of the Pacuare was almost complete. I felt invigorated and somewhat cleansed.

*Cimarones Frame 1**Cimarones Frame 2**Cimarones Frame 3**Cimarones Frame 4*



*Cimarones Frame 5**Cimarones Frame 6*

Downstream of the narrow, graceful gorge the rapids resumed. Upper then Lower Pinball came next with technical moves between numerous rocks. These were followed by Guatemala Rapid as the violence of the whitewater increased. Ahead lay the last big challenge, the last Class IV, the notorious Cimarones rapid with its huge hydraulics and a great black monolith in center stream that had claimed one life in the year that had just passed. Ahead we could see other rafts fly into the air and then plunge out of sight. All seemed to make it, skirting the black monolith through the awesome chute to its right. Then it was our turn. Once we rose into the air and plunged deep into the whitewater. Up we flew again. And yet again as we raced toward the monolith. Then, just before the chute, another deep dive, unfortunately not centered on the hole. With the sidewise drop that ensued, I fell backwards as we crashed into the bottom of the hole. My momentum carried me out of the boat into the thundering maelstrom. The whole misadventure was captured by a series of still photos one of which shows what might have been my last moment, a single leg sticking up out of the water beside the crashing boat. What happened next I simply do not know. Except that somehow I hung onto the lifeline that is strung along the side of the boat and, somersaulting over this, managed to haul myself back to the side of the boat as we shot down the chute, missing the black monolith by a matter of inches. I do remember not knowing what way was up and struggling to find air. Riding along the side of the boat as my friends hung onto me, we somehow made it through the rest of the rapid. This time I was badly shaken. Yet through all that struggle, I remember thinking that it was not my time, that I needed to survive for many people some of whom had already suffered too much. It was a genuine epiphany, moment that would always separate my past from my future. Not that I recognized this at the time for shock held my perspective to a very brief window of the future. If I were a religious man, I might believe that Doreen was telling me something important. If so the message was clear.

There is not much left to tell. Through the mists of my shock I dimly recall the last few Class III rapids: Indian Rapid with its undercut features and many channels on the right hand side but which we snuck by on the left; Dos Montanas, an "s" curved rapid that feeds right into the steep and narrow canyon by the same name that was at one time going to be the site of a hydropower damn and then the final rapid known as "Graduation" or "Boats to the Wall". We landed at Siquirres and began the long trip home, benumbed by what had happened and yet excited about the future. Though a piece of me died several months before and a piece had been exorcised in Cimarones, there was much left to live with and hopefully much left to enjoy.





## Day Tours

### CATIE Mountain Bike Adventure

The perfect combination of adventure and learning - mountain bike through the lush plantations of one of the world's premier tropical agriculture research stations.



### Duckies (Inflatable Kayaks)

Get wet and wild in our 2-person inflatable kayaks on this beautiful class II and III rapid river near Turrialba.



### Turrialba Volcano Tour

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### Guayabo Archeological Site

Learn more about the mysterious, ancient civilization of Costa Rica as you explore on foot the ancient ruins, carvings, and structures of the only archeological site in Costa Rica.



## 2 Day Tours

### Pacuare River Rafting (2 days)

If one day of white water adventure isn't enough, then spread it out over two days and get the chance to explore the pristine, primary forest that surrounds the Rio Pacuare.



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**About Us** - In 1999 a group of adventure sport enthusiasts realized their dream as they combined their years of work and experience to create **Explornatura**. Their goal was to make their passion, adventure sports, accessible to everyone. **Explornatura** continues to operate with this goal in mind - to offer a safe and exhilarating way to experience the tropical paradise of Costa Rica.

**COSTA RICA**  
Design Expeditions  
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## RIVER RAFTING



# CANYONING



## ADVENTURE



BEST SELLERS







### Canyoning Tour

If you want to add a little spice to your Costa Rican vacation then spend the morning descending down rushing waterfalls, zooming through lush canopies, crossing hanging bridges, and doing a whole host of other surprises that your friends won't believe until they see the pictures! Canyoning is the perfect opportunity to completely immerse yourself in the jungle of Costa Rica and with our highly specialized, certified guides, you will have an adventure of a lifetime!

This tour takes approximately 3 to 4 hours and is open to anyone over the age of 8 and absolutely no previous experience is necessary.

#### What to bring for Canyoning and Rafting?

- T-shirt
- Shorts or pants (no jeans)
- Swimsuit
- Tennis shoes, hiking boots, or strap-on sandals (no flip-flops)
- Sunscreen and insect repellent

Extra clothes, shoes, and a towel will be needed at the end of the tour.

*"Add Explornatura to your must-do list in Costa Rica. Their combination canyoning-canopy tour is a blast! Led by professional guides who put equal emphasis on safety and non-stop fun."* - Rich Carlson  
Instructor, American Canyoneering Association



EXPLORNATURA IS AN AMERICAN CANYONEERING ASSOCIATION (ACA) ACCREDITED GUIDE SERVICE

### Pacuare River Rafting (One Day)

Live up your vacation with a day on the thrilling rapids of the Pacuare River as you venture down the class III and IV rapids of one of the top five rivers in the world to white water raft!

This tour takes about 4 hours (on the river) plus a break to have lunch on the riverbanks. Our Pacuare Rafting trip is limited to children and adults over 12 years old and no prior experience is necessary.

**You will:**

- Be immersed in some of the most breathtaking scenery in all of Costa Rica
- Have fun with our experienced, specialized river guides
- Enjoy a day of fun and excitement on the white waters of the Rio Pacuare





Passionate rafters from around the world agree the Pacuare River offers some of the most scenic class III-IV white-water rapids anywhere. The Pacuare River and the Pacuare Protected Zone are located between the coastal lowlands and the country's highest mountain range. This pristine jungle region, considered one of the most



important protected areas in Central America, is still inhabited by the Cabecar Indians. The palm-thatched dwellings of the Cabecar people are spaced far apart over large distances, rather than being clustered together as was true of many indigenous tribes.

Advantageously situated inside this protected wilderness is our very special jungle getaway, the **Pacuare Lodge**, accessible to travelers through our overnight white-water rafting tours on the Pacuare River. The river provides an adventurous ride filled with stunning natural beauty and exciting rapids, while the lodge offers a chance to explore the surrounding forest and then relax in complete comfort.



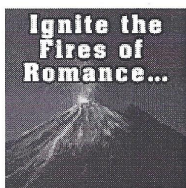
#### Day 1

This exciting outdoor adventure begins when you are picked up at your San José





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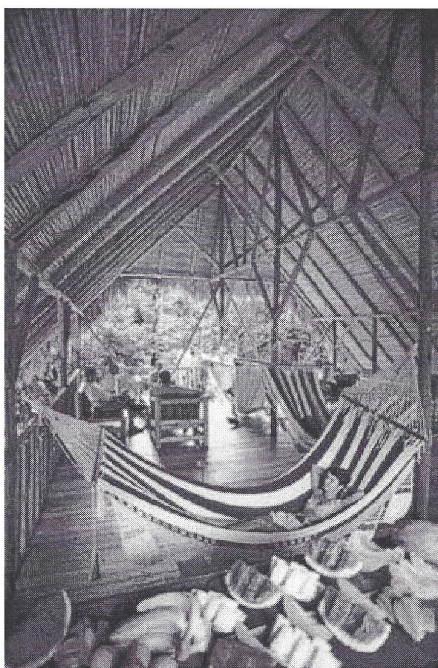
#### Costa Rica Pictures



#### Costa Rica Maps



hotel in a comfortable minibus and transported through the old capital city of Cartago and the lush green farmlands blanketing the slopes of the Irazú and Turrialba volcanoes. Before arriving at the banks of the Pacuare River, you'll stop to enjoy an authentic Costa Rican breakfast. When you arrive at the river, our expert guides will provide you with the rafting gear and explain safety precautions before the rafting adventure begins. Once in the water, you'll experience sheer exhilaration as you face the challenge of each huge wave, battling surging waters down miles of raging rapids. The river passes through scenic canyons where crystal clear waterfalls plummet down into the rapidly coursing river below. Tall trees and dense green vegetation come right down to the water's edge. The thick undergrowth of this protected area provides shelter for a variety tropical animals and birds, including some endangered species.



The first day on the river is an exciting journey that takes just over an hour and a half. When you arrive at the Pacuare Lodge, you'll find a unique jungle oasis nestled in a most remarkable setting. Huge trees and flowering shrubs dot the perfectly manicured rolling green lawns on the banks of the river. Modern wooden bungalows with thatched palm roofs are spaced out beneath the trees, providing both privacy and serenity. The two-story main lodge has breezy dining facilities on the first floor, and relaxing chairs and hammocks in the open-air second floor lounge. After a hearty lunch, you can try the **Pacuare Canopy Adventure**, take a guided hike to a waterfall in the forest, play dominoes or cards, or just relax. Shortly after, you'll be served a gourmet dinner by candlelight. Whenever you feel ready, you can head to the comfortable bungalow that awaits you, complete with private bathroom, comfortable beds and clean linen. The special **Honeymoon Suite** is a spacious bungalow tucked up on a wooded knoll away from the rest of the camp. It features a large tiled bathroom with solar-heated water and giant picture windows that frame the jungle view, as well as a unique hanging bridge that leads from the balcony across to a private platform in a giant tree.





#### Day 2

In the morning, you'll awaken to a harmonious melody created by the sound of the river rushing by and the sweet songs of the tropical birds from the thick of the forest. After a delicious buffet breakfast, we'll launch the rafts again for the second day of our river expedition. Rafting becomes even more thrilling as you begin to use the skills and experience gained the day before. You may stop to explore side streams that lead to striking waterfalls and pools with a natural waterslide that tempts you to jump right in. Later on, a tasty midday meal of sandwiches, fruits and dessert will be served on an overturned raft along the water's edge. The day ends with the triumph of having conquered one of the wildest and most scenic rivers in the world. At the river take-out, you can change into dry clothes at our private facilities before boarding the comfortable microbus for the return to San José.

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*Last updated 7/30/99.  
Christopher E. Brennan*