

# 2024-25

## HARVARD ALUMNI TRAVELS

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### **COSTA RICA FAMILY ADVENTURE**

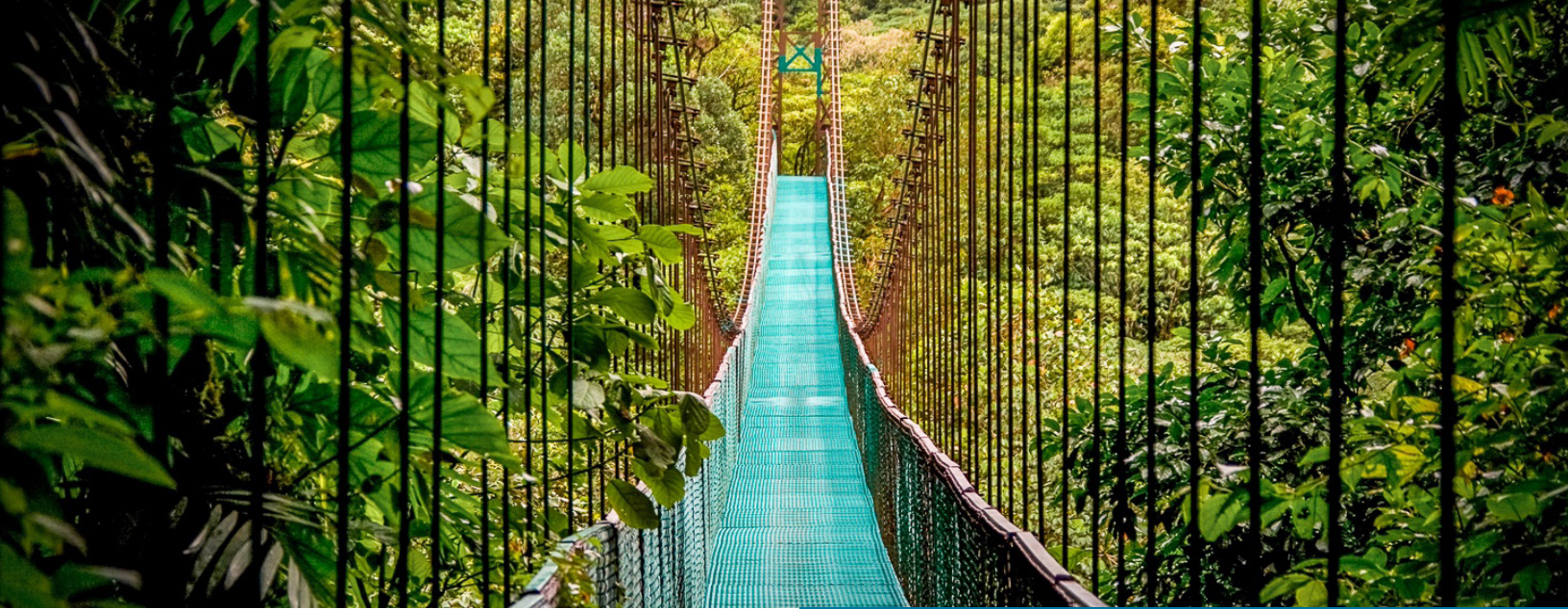
Rainforest, Rivers & Amazing Wildlife  
December 26, 2024 – January 2, 2025  
with **Hopi Hoekstra**



**HARVARD**

Alumni Travels





## Costa Rica Family Adventure Rainforest, Rivers & Amazing Wildlife

An 8-day family adventure unfolds in Costa Rica, revealing its renowned biodiversity and stunning landscapes. Navigate through rainforests teeming with wildlife, including sloths, monkeys, and a variety of bird species. Traverse dense forests to visit iconic locations such as Tortuguero National Park, where you'll have the rare opportunity to see turtles nesting on the beach. Explore the Sea Turtle Conservation Museum, the various canopies of Arenal Volcano, the intricate ecosystem of Monteverde's cloud forests, and the Bat Jungle that promotes public awareness of the ecological importance of bats. Thrill-seekers in the family will enjoy rafting down the Sarapiquí River. Hike through lush forests filled with the vivid sounds and colors of diverse wildlife, with opportunities abound to observe numerous bird species, mammals, and marine life.

A cooking class will provide insights into local, organic family farming and agriculture in the tropics, with a focus on delicious regional cuisine and specialties. Benefit from the expertise of an exceptional lecture team and local guides throughout our experience. Please note that this exclusive Harvard Alumni Travels opportunity is limited to 30 spots. Secure your reservation now for an unforgettable exploration

Hanging Bridges in Cloudforest, Monteverde

## Study Leader



In June 2023, **Hopi E. Hoekstra** assumed the role of the Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Currently, she holds the positions of Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology in the Departments of Organismic & Evolutionary Biology and Molecular & Cellular Biology, along with being the Curator of Mammals in the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Additionally, Hopi is an Institute Member at the Broad Institute and an Investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Renowned for her groundbreaking research on the evolution of morphological and behavioral diversity in mammals, Hopi focuses on identifying genes that shape coloration and influence complex behaviors. Her extensive fieldwork has taken her around the world, studying grizzly bears in Yellowstone, rodents in Chile and Argentina, and mammals in the Kuril Islands.

Hopi earned her B.A. from UC Berkeley and her Ph.D. from the University of Washington. Recognized with numerous awards for scientific contributions, she received the Lounsbury Medal from the National Academy of Sciences. Elected into the National Academy of Sciences (2016), the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (2017), and the American Philosophical Society (2018), Hopi is esteemed in academia.

In addition to her impactful research, Hopi imparts knowledge as a teacher in Harvard's introductory Life Science course, Genetics, Genomics, and Evolution, engaging approximately 500 freshmen annually. Her dedication to teaching excellence has earned her the Fannie Cox Prize and a Harvard College Professorship.

REGISTER

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Right photo: Sarapiquí River rapids

## Highlights for the Family Include:

- Embark on an exploration of the winding rivers of Tortuguero National Park, where you seek three-toed sloths, three species of monkeys, and 320 bird species.
- Visit the Sea Turtle Conservation Museum and join an evening turtle nesting tour, immersing yourselves in the captivating world of sea turtle conservation.
- Raft down Class II/III rapids on the Sarapiquí River, feeling the exhilarating rush of the water and soaking in the breathtaking views along the way.
- Savor the experience of a cooking class, gaining insights into organic farming in the tropics, and delighting in the flavors of locally sourced ingredients.
- Explore various canopies of the rainforest on trails and hanging bridges near Arenal Volcano. As the sun sets, embark on nighttime walks to experience the enchanting nocturnal sounds of both the rainforest and cloud forest.
- Immerse yourselves in Monteverde's complex ecosystem for two days, perched atop the continental divide. Witness the misty clouds and fog that envelop this unique environment, home to over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, tens of thousands of insect species, and at least 2,500 varieties of plants, including 420 orchid species.
- Experience the Bat Jungle, where you promote public awareness of the ecological importance of bats. Contribute to the conservation of bat populations worldwide as you immerse yourselves in the fascinating world of these nocturnal creatures.

## Activity Level 3:

To make the most of what this expedition has to offer, the trip will be active, requiring you to be in good health and physical condition. The schedule will include long days, with some early departures, and activities scheduled throughout the day and into the evening.

Daily excursions can require up to three hours of walking, often over loose rocks, and uneven terrain where stairs are unavailable or do not have handrails, and standing, often in the warm sun. Rafting down class II/III rapids on the Sarapiquí River is appropriate for kids 6 and older. The degree of difficulty for each day's activity will be described in daily briefings.

This promises to be a memorable journey, but as with all travel, a flexible attitude, a spirit of adventure and a willingness to explore new areas will enhance your enjoyment of this program. You do not have to participate in all the scheduled activities, except when traveling to the next destination. We are sure you will be pleased with the exciting educational program provided, but we want you to be aware of the pace and activity level.

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Left photo: Tortuguero National Park / Right photo: Arenal Volcano

## Schedule by Day

THURSDAY, DEC 26

### Depart from home city / Arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica

Arrive in the capital city of San Jose. Transfer to the Bougainvillea Hotel, and in the evening, join fellow travelers for a welcome reception and dinner. Bougainvillea Hotel (R,D)

FRIDAY, DEC 27

### Tortuguero

After breakfast, travel to Tortuguero National Park by motorcoach and boat. In the afternoon, explore the winding rivers of Tortuguero National Park, seeking three-toed sloths, various species of monkeys, and overserving a multitude of bird species. Learn about local marine conservation efforts at the Sea Turtle Conservation Museum. As the sun sets, participate in a sea turtle walk led by an expert guide, observe the baby turtles hatch, and walk alongside them as they find their way to the sea. Aninga Lodge (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, DEC 28

### Tortuguero

Continue your exploration of Tortuguero National Park, a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Navigate the canals and rivers, keeping a keen eye out for exotic bird species, playful monkeys, and elusive reptiles. In the afternoon, join a local

biologist to delve into the captivating world of sea turtle nesting, gaining firsthand knowledge about these ancient creatures and the challenges they face. This day promises encounters with nature's wonders and a deeper appreciation for the delicate ecosystems of Tortuguero. Aninga Lodge (B,L,D)

SUNDAY, DEC 29

### Arenal

Today, join a rafting adventure down the exciting Class II/III rapids of the Sarapiquí River, feeling the exhilarating rush of the water and soaking in breathtaking views along the way. Suitable for ages 6 and older, this thrilling experience is sure to create lasting memories for the whole family. Following the river adventure, continue your journey to the scenic Arenal National Park, where the majestic Arenal Volcano awaits. Check-in at Tilajari Hotel, your gateway to the wonders of the rainforest.

Tilajari Hotel (B,L,D)

MONDAY, DEC 30

### Arenal

Embark on a canopy adventure as you explore the rainforest trails and traverse hanging bridges near Arenal Volcano. Gain a deeper understanding of sustainable practices with a visit to an organic farm for lunch. As night falls, experience the rainforest in a new light with a captivating night walking tour, unveiling the mysteries of nocturnal flora and fauna. This day promises a perfect blend of adventure, education, and connection with nature. Tilajari Hotel (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, DEC 31

### Monteverde

Cross Lake Arenal by boat as you make your way to the Monteverde Cloud Forest, a biodiversity hotspot. Immerse yourself in the intricacies of the nocturnal ecosystem during an expert-led nighttime walk in the cloud forest. Explore various canopies of the rainforest on trails and hanging bridges near Arenal Volcano. As the sun sets, embark on nighttime walks to experience the enchanting nocturnal sounds of both the rainforest and cloud forest.

El Establo Hotel (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JAN 1

### Monteverde

Begin the day with a morning walk in Monteverde's cloud forest, gaining an appreciation for its diverse and rare plant and animal species. Visit the Hummingbird Gallery to understand the vital role these pollinators play in maintaining the ecosystem. In the afternoon, take a guided tour of the Bat Jungle, gaining insight into their intriguing feeding patterns and learning more about these often-misunderstood animals. Conclude your journey with a special farewell dinner. El Establo Hotel (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JAN 2

### Return flights home

Transfer to Liberia airport for your return flights to the U.S. (B, meals aloft)





Bougainvillea Hotel, San Jose



Aninga Lodge, Tortuguero



Tilajari Hotel, Arenal



El Establo Monteverde

## Accommodations

- One night** at the elegant Bougainvillea Hotel, San Jose
- Two nights** at the serene Aninga Lodge, Tortuguero
- Two nights** at the picturesque Tilajari Hotel, Arenal
- Two nights** at the tranquil El Establo Monteverde

## Pricing

- Per person 12 and older, sharing accommodations** ..... \$6,490
- Children (11 and younger)** ..... \$5,990
- sharing accommodations**
- Single Supplement** (limited availability) ..... \$1,990
- \$660 discount for 3rd person in a triple**
- \$560 discount for 3rd & 4th people in a quad**

Fees and services are based on current exchange rates

**PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE:** All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary • Comprehensive program of briefings, lectures, and presentations • Group transfers by motorcoach on group arrival and departure dates • Baggage handling • **Gratuities to porters, waitstaff, guides and drivers** • Entrance fees • Welcome and farewell wine receptions • **House wine, beer, and soft drinks with all group lunches and dinners** • Filtered water on motorcoaches • **Criterion Tour Manager and Youth Coordinator throughout the program**

**NOT INCLUDED:** U.S. domestic and international airfare • Passport/visa expenses • Medical expenses, immunizations, and Covid-19 testing if required at the time of travel • Private airport transfers or airport transfers outside of group arrival and departure days • Travel and trip cancellation insurance • Excursions that deviate from the scheduled tour options • Airline baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted • Laundry or dry cleaning • Telephone, fax, Internet and email charges • Room service • Other items of a personal nature



**AIR ARRANGEMENTS** U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc., can help with airline arrangements for this trip and can be reached at 877-376-1754. You are also welcome to book your air transportation through your local travel agent, an online travel site, or the airline of your choice. Further information about making flight arrangements will be sent to confirmed participants.





# Trip Registration is Easy

## Step 1

Visit: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/travel/trips/costa-rica-2024>

## Step 2

Click the Blue “**Register Today**” button and fill out the online form with your contact information and payment details.

## Step 3

Look for an **email confirmation** from Harvard Alumni Travels.

*All bookings are conducted online only.*

*Find complete trip-specific terms and conditions on the trip web page (link above).*

Left photo: Quetzal  
Bottom photo: Capuchin monkey

