



TRAVEL TIP
 17 Days –
 With Swiss
 Pioneers

COSTA RICA «PURA VIDA»

Swiss Tour to the central America Paradise

ITINERARY

When pioneers meet, usually something special arises. This happens after a meeting with the Pineapple King Johann Dähler. The adventure story of this Swiss of Thurgau, its unwavering desire to do something exemplary as a pioneer, even after a total loss of his business, has inspired me to develop this extraordinary journey program. It is exceptional, this time is not a river trip, it is a trip to the Switzerland of Central America – no boat and no river, but all around is presented with a large «Swiss» flavor. I have chosen this topic because we are on this journey with several Swiss culture features. And finally but not less important, from A to Z we are cared by Johann Dählers Family.

Moreover, we meet three pioneers, all Swiss and each one with its own life story. Johann Dähler, entrepreneur from the Thurgau Fruthwilen, created together with his sons a pineapple empire within a short period of time. And all this happened after he had lost everything overnight in Africa (Ivory Coast). Franz Ulrich, the second pioneer, came to Costa Rica decades ago and built a farm of Simmental cows. Over time, there came a chapel, a hotel, a Swiss chalet and a Panorama restaurant, which is reached using a small train. The third member of the group is Roland Zbinden, who has committed to the coffee grow industry. We visit the three pioneers in order to admire their life's work. Costa Rica is probably the most beautiful and safest country of Central America. Lush vegetation,

heavenly-looking plants and wildlife, mountain ranges peaked with majestic volcanoes and the deep blue Pacific are all one-of-a-kind experiences. The inhabitants of this democratic country dominated by the agriculture have a good economic and social performance. They are very polite and hospitable, which makes the trip even more attractive. We are delighted to have you on our journey to this Central American paradise. Meanwhile, more than 100 Thurgau Travel customers have enjoyed this trip.

1. Day: Zurich – Frankfurt – San José

Individual arrival to Zurich airport. Afternoon departure on Luft-hansa / Condor via Frankfurt to San José.

2. Day: San José

Arrival in the morning in San José, capital city of Costa Rica. Transfer to hotel Palma Real, where you will have time to rest afterwards. After lunch, an exciting afternoon program awaits you with Stéphane Dähler. You also have the possibility to explore San José on your own.

3. Day: San José – Poás Volcano – San José

After breakfast look forward to the trip towards the Poás National Park. The heart of the trip is the 2708 m high Poás volcano. Sulfur clouds rise from the 300-meter deep, turquoise acid crater lake located below the volcano summit. The volcanic gases minimize the occurrence of vegetation located towards wind direction. Nevertheless, there are numerous birds, including hummingbirds,

17 DAYS

Request prices

RESERVATIONS AVAILABLE FOR

- Throughout the year, for groups
- Individual travel with car rental
- Travel in small groups
- Thurgau Travel (Swiss Agency)

HIGHLIGHTS

Visit a pineapple planting in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, property of the king or pineapple, Johann Dähler and his family. Here you will learn all about the fabulous and touching story of the young farmer who had built an empire in the twentieth century in Ivory Coast, over 30 years ago, and then he lost everything, and now he leads another successful company in Costa Rica.

Today the family Dähler distributes quality fruits worldwide. With this first-hand experience in the day to day on the plantation and with a lot of manual work and passion, you will get an interesting insight behind the scenes of the operation.





RESERVATIONS

Groups
Small Groups
Individuals

tanagers and thrushes to be seen. From Poás one can enjoy a fantastic view of the surrounding landscape. At the foot of the volcano there are many coffee plantations; one of them belongs to the Swiss Roland Zbinden. During the sightseeing tour to his plantation you will be introduced to the secrets of coffee. Until the late 80s coffee was the main exportation product of Costa Rica and today large quantities are still exported all over the world. Then drive back to Hotel Palma Real in San José to stay overnight. Until the late 80s the coffee was the main export product of Costa Rica and even today large quantities of this product are exported worldwide. Then you return to the hotel Palma Real in San Jose and spend the night there.

4. Day: San José – Irazú Volcano – Guápiles

After breakfast you will take a ride from San José to Cartago, the former capital of Costa Rica. Enjoy the green landscape during this drive. In Cartago you will see the «Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles» the main cathedral of the country. Day after day believers flow into this cathedral to worship the Black Madonna «La Negrita», which is said to have healing powers. Continue to Irazú Volcano, which is with 3432 m the highest volcano in Costa Rica and also has a crater lake with green sulfur water. From the top of the volcano (weather permitting) you can have a beautiful view of the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. Drive through the rainforest to Guápiles. Overnight in Guápiles at the hotel Suerre.

5. Day: Guápiles – Puerto Limón – Guápiles

Today you will visit a banana plantation, enjoy the Caribbean feeling and the view over the Atlantic. After lunch starts the trip to the Caribbean coast to Puerto Limón, the capital of the province, and also the main port of the country. The railway line between San José and Puerto Limón was built in the 19th century and allowed the banana exports from the port town to grow rapidly. Return to Guápiles to the Hotel Suerre.

6. Day: Guápiles – Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí – Guápiles

After breakfast we drive to Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. Look forward to visit the Pineapple King, the Swiss Johann Dähler. He and his family have built a small «pineapple empire» in Costa Rica. The «Queen of Fruits» is sold to large corporations in Switzerland and Western Europe. You will visit the plantations, the flower farm and learn about the whole pineapple project – from cultivation, breeding, care and harvesting to the fruit sale. Return to Guápiles. Enjoy the afternoon in the Hotel Suerre, where you will find an oasis of relaxation.

7. Day: Guápiles – La Fortuna

While driving to La Fortuna you will visit a cocoa plantation. On a tour you will be introduced to the cocoa world. Continue to La Fortuna, which is adjacent to the Arenal, the youngest and most active volcano in the country. It often sprays lava from the vent at night, which is one of the greatest natural spectacles in Costa Rica. At the foot of this volcano is located the largest lake in the country, the Arenal Lake. Enjoy at Hotel Royal Corin or Los Lagos a relaxing bath with a view of the Arenal.

8. Day: La Fortuna – Pequeña Helvecia – La Fortuna

The small village of «Pequeña Helvecia» waits to be visited today. «Welcome and Grüezi» in the little Switzerland of Costa Rica, the empire of Franz Ulrich. He will tell you about his life and especially about his experience from being a Swiss farmer to becoming a tourist magnet. Take lunch at its panorama restaurant and enjoy by good weather the views of all seven provinces of Costa Rica. Return to La Fortuna to Hotel Royal Corin or Los Lagos.

9. Day: La Fortuna

An exciting program awaits you in the area of La Fortuna and around the active Arenal Volcano. Enjoy the beautiful scenery. In the afternoon you will have free time and overnight stay at Hotel Royal Corin or Los Lagos.

Days 10 to 14: Tamarindo

After breakfast, drive to Tamarindo on the Pacific coast. Here you can enjoy and relax during the forthcoming days according to your mood. The nearby National Park called Tortugas Baulas offers numerous possibilities to linger. With walks through this beautiful area, various water sports activities and entertainment at the hotel, you can still enjoy the last days of your trip in Costa Rica to the fullest. Overnight at the Hotel Barcelo.

15. Day: Tamarindo – San José

Transfer from the Pacific coast to San José to Hotel Palma Real. Dinner and overnight.

16. Day: San José – Frankfurt – Zurich

Morning transfer to the San Jose airport. Return flight with Condor / Lufthansa via Frankfurt to Zurich.

17. Day: Zurich

Arrival in the morning. Individual departure to your place of residence.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Flights Zurich – San José via Frankfurt and back with Lufthansa / Condor in Economy class
- Airport and security taxes worth Fr. 300 (as of May 2012)
- Round trip in air-conditioned trip bus
- Full board during the tour incl. 1 non-alcoholic drink per meal
- 14 nights in the best hotels according to the program
- All transfers
- Entrance fees and visits according to the program
- Guide by the Dähler family (except days 10–14)

NOT INCLUDED

- Arrival and return journey to / from Zurich Airport
- Personal expenses
- Insurance (Yearly insurance Fr. 141.– / single Fr. 83.–)
- Drinks (except 1 soft drink with meals)
- Tips
- Order fee Fr. 35.– per package
- Fuel surcharge Fr. 33.– per person
- This is just before the trip and only collected if the price of oil does not return to the level of June 2011.

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