Next Step Travel
a program of the National Peace Corps Association

Explore

OPERATED BY DISCOVER CORPS

COSTA RICA

*with the **National Peace Corps Association***

MOMENTS THAT MATTER:

- Explore the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, the oldest institution of its kind in Latin America
- Create alongside Wearsos, meeting the women artisans transforming discarded airline seats into upcycled products
- Support a women-led social enterprise in the rural community of Mollejones with a current Peace Corps volunteer
- Visit a sustainable cacao farm, to enjoying time on the Carribean coast & explore Cahuita National Park, Punta Uva and the Jaguar Rescue Center

TRIP AT A GLANCE

Day 1 - Arrive in San José and drive to Turrialba for a welcome dinner

Day 2 - Explore CATIE Research Center and enjoy a botanical garden tour. Later, meet the women at Wearsos.

Day 3 - Volunteer in the community of Mollejones & take part in a traditional cooking experience.

Day 4 - Morning at Nortico Cacao Farm before departing to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica

Day 5 - Take a guided tour of Cahuita National Park Guided Tour & enjoy some free time

Day 6 - Learn about the conservation work happening at a jaguar rescue center & explore the lush Punta Uva.

Day 7 - Take in a final morning in the Caribbean before driving back to San Jose.

Day 8 - Departure day!

COSTA RICA WITH NEXT STEP TRAVEL

TRIP DATES: March 11 - 18, 2027

Experience a unique side of Costa Rica, where sustainable practices meet high-impact social entrepreneurship!

This journey centers on the Wearsos initiative, where you'll work alongside local artisans in Mollejones to transform retired Southwest airline seats into handcrafted goods, supporting meaningful employment for rural women. You'll have the chance to exchange service stories with fellow NPCA volunteers, gaining a firsthand perspective on how circular economy models are reshaping modern community development from the highlands of Turrialba to the Caribbean coast.

Beyond the workshop, this itinerary immerses you in the region's rich ecological and cultural heritage. From exploring the historic CATIE Research Station and organic cacao farms to witnessing wildlife conservation at the Jaguar Rescue Center, every stop highlights a commitment to the land and its people. This trip is a rare opportunity to see environmental stewardship in action, blending professional-grade research with the vibrant Afro-Caribbean rhythm of Puerto Viejo.

HIGHLIGHTS

NORTICO CACAO FARM

At Nortico Cacao Farm, you'll discover the full bean-to-bar chocolate-making process. Walk through the cacao fields, learn about sustainable farming practices and get your hands dirty crafting your own artisanal chocolate. The farm champions ecological balance and rural development, making every bite part of a bigger story. Plus, the tasting experience is a sweet reward for your effort!

VOLUNTEER IN MOLLEJONES

Spend time in the rural community of Mollejones, where you'll lend a hand alongside local women transforming repurposed airline materials. This visit offers a unique opportunity to connect with NPCA volunteers on-site while seeing firsthand how this circular initiative reduces waste and creates meaningful employment. Get a look at the raw materials and the transformation process before crafting your own upcycled luggage tag with Wearsos,

CRAFT YOUR OWN LUGGAGE TAG

Step inside the Wearsos Coffee Shop & Atelier, where local women artisans breathe new life into retired airline seats and other discarded materials, transforming them into functional works of art. During this hands-on workshop, you'll join artists to glue, sew and paint your own upcycled luggage tag. More than just a craft activity, this is a window into the power of the circular economy and community innovation.

CAHUITA NATIONAL PARK

Wander the coastal jungle trails of Cahuita National Park and join our expert guided tour. You may spot white-faced monkeys and sloths before swimming in the turquoise Caribbean Sea. Enjoy the white-sand beaches and explore local Afro-Caribbean culture and flavors. This curated journey ensures you experience the very best of the coastline's vibrant wildlife and landscapes.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrive and Settle In

Arrive at Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José, where you'll be greeted warmly by your Discover Corps guide. Take in the beautiful views on your three-hour drive to the Central Valley before getting settled in your accommodations. This evening we'll enjoy a welcome dinner and get to know one another. *(D)*

DAY 2: Upcycling Workshop & Farm-to-Table Experience

Get breakfast at a local farm-to-table bakery, then head to the CATIE Research Station and botanical garden for a morning tour. After lunch we'll spend time at the Wearsos Atelier & Coffee Shop to visit their Learning Lab and Upcycling Workshop. Learn how retired Southwest Airlines seats are transformed into artisan products and design your own upcycled luggage tag alongside artisans. In the evening enjoy a local dinner. *(B, L, D)*

DAY 3: Community Volunteering & Cultural Exchange

After breakfast, travel about an hour to the rural community of Mollejones to volunteer alongside local artisans disassembling the discarded airline seats that Wearsos transforms into handmade products. Learn how this circular initiative reduces waste while creating meaningful employment for women in this rural region.

This community also hosts Peace Corps volunteers, and the day will include time to interact and exchange stories with them, offering a deeper perspective on community development and service in Costa Rica. Share a home-cooked lunch at the community center before joining Doña Laura in her kitchen to make traditional Costa Rican bread or sweet *cajetas*. Return to your accommodations in the evening for a relaxed dinner on your own. *(B, L)*

DAY 4: Cacao Farm & Caribbean Coast

Have breakfast at a local *sodita* before spending the morning at a unique, award-winning sustainable cacao farm known as Nortico. Learn about organic chocolate production and get hands-on as you make your own chocolate from scratch.

Hit the road and stop for lunch en route before arriving on the Caribbean coast, known for its vibrant Afro-Caribbean culture, laid-back rhythm of life, and lush tropical landscapes. Check in at your hotel and enjoy dinner on site, followed by a free evening at the beach to relax and unwind. *(B, L, D)*

DAY 5: National Park Adventure Day

Today we'll spend the morning at Cahuita National Park. Enjoy a guided walk through the lush forested park, with hopes of spotting sloths, monkeys and other flora and fauna the area is known for.

Follow this with a beachside lunch featuring classic Caribbean cuisine, including coconut rice and beans. In the afternoon, choose your own pace: opt in for a kayaking adventure or return to the hotel to relax and enjoy the beach. Dinner is on your own this evening to taste the local and international cuisine on offer in Puerto Viejo and explore the little shops nearby. *(B, L)*

DAY 6: Wildlife Conservation

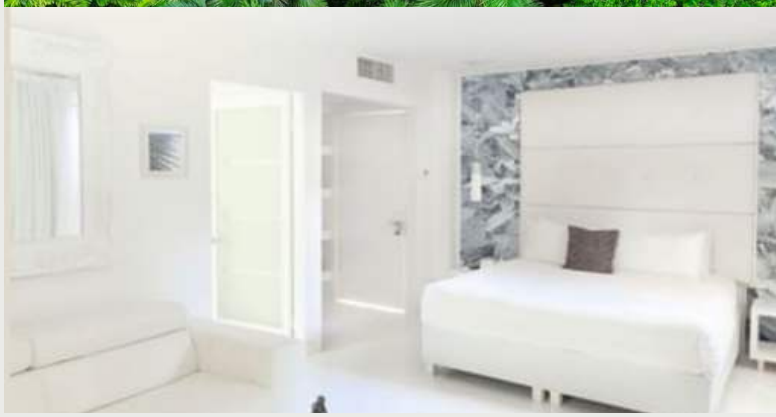
Enjoy your last breakfast on the Caribbean coast before a behind-the-scenes visit to the Jaguar Rescue Center. This unique experience combines wildlife conservation, nature and education as you learn about the rescued animals in their care and the center's ongoing protection efforts. Afterward, explore the stunning forest and beach landscapes of Punta Uva. In the afternoon, have some free time but meet for final dinner on the beach for our final sunset by the water. *(B, L,D)*

DAY 7: Return to San Jose

We'll depart early for the five-hour drive back to San Jose. If time permits, explore San José at your leisure—perhaps visiting the bustling Mercado Central or one of the city's local museums. We'll have dinner together on the town. *(B, L, D)*

DAY 8: Departure Day

It's time to say goodbye! After check-out, transfer to the airport for your journey home, carrying with you unforgettable memories of Costa Rica. *(B)*



UNIQUE LODGING

Turrialba
Stay on campus at CATIE (the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center), one of Costa Rica's most highly respected research institutes and an international hub for sustainability, conservation, and rural development. Surrounded by lush gardens and working landscapes, CATIE offers a unique opportunity to live within an institutional community dedicated to supporting environmental innovation and education.

Caribbean
Wrap up your time at Le Cameleon Hotel, a luxurious property tucked between the lush jungle and the rhythmic tide of the Caribbean Sea, These accommodations boast three swimming pools, a gym with yoga classes and a spa. This will provide a serene home base where you can immerse yourself in the beauty of the coast and the spirit of Costa Rican hospitality.

Please note the exact property is subject to change.

Strategic Stewardship & Global Education

With over 10 years of experience in international development, Lynne & Chris have dedicated their career to crafting, hosting, and leading transformative educational groups across the globe. Their background isn't just in travel—it's in building meaningful connections between people and the places they visit.

As a Travel Specialist for Discover Corps, Lynne has been instrumental in curating this specific journey for the NPCA. She brings a deep understanding of how to blend immersive education with seamless logistics, ensuring every participant walks away with a profound connection to the mission. Lynne will also get the pleasure of meeting you on the ground in Costa Rica and hosting you at her social enterprise!

COSTA RICA TRIP DETAILS

MARCH 11 - 18, 2027

PRICING

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: $3,995 per traveler
Single-room supplement: $1,100 per traveler

If you are a solo traveler and would like us to match you with a roommate of the same gender, please book as double occupancy.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 7 nights lodging
- 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches & 5 dinners
- Transportation in private vehicles
- An immersive itinerary including behind-the-scenes visits to local organizations
- Discover Corps Guide that is there to support, guide, and inform you throughout the trip
- All scheduled activities and excursions
- $50,000 emergency medical evacuation insurance
- Trip literature and pre-departure support from Discover Corps
- 24-hour Discover Corps emergency hotline

REFUND POLICY

The amount of your refund is based on how far in advance from the start date of the trip you notify us of your cancellation.

- More than five months prior, everything is refundable!
- Less than five months prior, 75% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. There is no fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than four months prior, 50% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. $100 fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than three months prior, 25% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. $395 fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than two months prior, the program fee is non-refundable. Changes to trip destination or start date are not possible and will be subject to refund policy.

If the balance has not been paid in full, the above percentages apply to all monies paid at the date of cancellation.

BOOKING GUIDELINES

It just takes $365 per person to register for this trip. The remainder of the trip fee is due 30 days after registering for the trip or 60 days prior to departure, whichever comes first. The registration can be completed HERE.

ABOUT DISCOVER CORPS

Discover Corps was founded on the belief that travel can enhance and preserve the character of a place: its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

Our principles don't just apply to our trips, but to everything we do as a company. **We are a certified B Corporation, which means we have passed a rigorous independent audit of our social, environmental, and legal practices.** B Corporations (or Benefit Corporations) are recognized by the State of California as providing a social good.

By adopting a clear set of responsible travel guidelines, we use our trips to improve the lives of people in the communities we visit and also support the integrity of a place, allowing it to retain the distinctive character that makes it unique. Not only is it the right thing to do, it also provides a richer experience for our travelers.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is a mission-driven social impact organization that encourages and celebrates lifelong commitment to Peace Corps ideals. NPCA supports a united and vibrant Peace Corps community, including current and returned Peace Corps volunteers, current and former staff, host country nationals, family and friends in our efforts to create a better world.

NPCA exists to fulfill three specific goals:

- Help the Peace Corps be the best it can be
- Empower members and affiliate groups to thrive
- Amplify the Peace Corps community's global social impact