



## Costa Rica

**The Osa Peninsula Expédition**  
**20 November - 10 December 2025**

# Itinerary

# Costa Rica






20th November – 10th  
December 2025

21 Days • 20 Nights

Cost - £4199 per person  
excluding international flights

San José - La Palma – Ngabe village - Manzano Bridge (Carate area) -La Leona camp near Carate - Manzano Bridge Opening Ceremony - Luna Lodge - San José

## Highlights

-  An expedition in the Osa Peninsula area of Costa Rica whose aim is to refurbish the Manzano Bridge in Corcovado Park
-  Interaction and aid work in remote communities, learning about the Ngabe (pronounced No-be) people and their unique way of life
-  Experience a Costa Rican celebration as part of the Manzano Bridge reopening
-  Study the local wildlife including involvement in a Turtle Conservation Programme
-  Participation in a beach clean-up, collaborating with local people to remove rubbish and plastic waste from the coastline

## Tour Essentials

Tour Start	San José
Tour End	San José
Accommodation	Hotel in San José and La Palma, tented/ camps in the villages, overnight at Luna Lodge
Included Meals	Breakfast, lunch, dinner unless stated
Difficulty Level	Medium

# The Osa Peninsula Expedition, Costa Rica 2025

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Join us for an unforgettable adventure in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula! You'll work with local communities, support wildlife conservation, do anthropological study and help refurbish the Manzano bridge. From hands-on service to exploring rainforests and pristine beaches, this expedition is your chance to make a lasting impact while experiencing Costa Rica's natural beauty.

The expedition is being led by

**Expedition Leader:** Col John Blashford-Snell CBE

**Deputy Expedition Leader:** Yolima Cipagauta

**Corporate organiser:** Pioneer Expeditions Worldwide Limited

**Expedition Administrator:** Philip Beale





# The Objectives

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1. **Community Aid:** Providing support to local villages, including tasks like dental treatment (mainly extractions) and assistance with community projects.
2. **Wildlife Studies:** Conducting studies of the local wildlife and producing a guide booklet to enhance knowledge of the region's biodiversity.
3. **Bridge Refurbishment:** Assessing and refurbishing the Manzano bridge in Corcovado National Park, originally built by a previous expedition. Recycled plastic material is to be used for this.
4. **Environmental Conservation:** Engaging in a Turtle conservation project and beach cleaning activities to remove plastic and rubbish alongside local communities.
5. **Educational Support:** Engaging with local primary school (assisting with lessons, providing books and resources). Community aid projects, including potential repairs or improvements for the school.

# The Osa Peninsula

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The Osa Peninsula, located in the southwestern part of Costa Rica, is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, known for its pristine rainforests, stunning beaches, and rich wildlife. Though it is now celebrated for its conservation efforts, including the renowned Corcovado National Park, the region also has a fascinating history shaped by indigenous cultures, explorers, and legends.

## Indigenous Roots

The Osa Peninsula has long been inhabited by indigenous groups, particularly the Ngabe people, who still live in the area today. Historically, the Ngabe lived off the land through agriculture, hunting, and fishing, developing a deep connection with the natural environment. They are known for their distinctive traditions, including handicrafts, spiritual practices and rich oral history.

## Sir Francis Drake

One of the enduring legends of the Osa Peninsula is tied to Sir Francis Drake, the famous English sea captain. Local lore claims that in 1579 Drake sought refuge from storms in what is now Drake Bay, on the peninsula's northern coast. Though historical evidence is scarce, the story persists, with tales of Drake hiding from the Spanish fleet and possibly burying treasure, captivating the imaginations of locals and visitors alike.

## Conservation

In the 1970s, the Costa Rican government recognized the Osa Peninsula's global ecological importance and established Corcovado National Park in 1975. This park, covering nearly a third of the peninsula, has been instrumental in preserving the region's rainforests and protecting endangered species such as jaguars, tapirs, and scarlet macaws. It is often referred to as the "crown jewel" of Costa Rica's national park system.

# The Manzano Bridge

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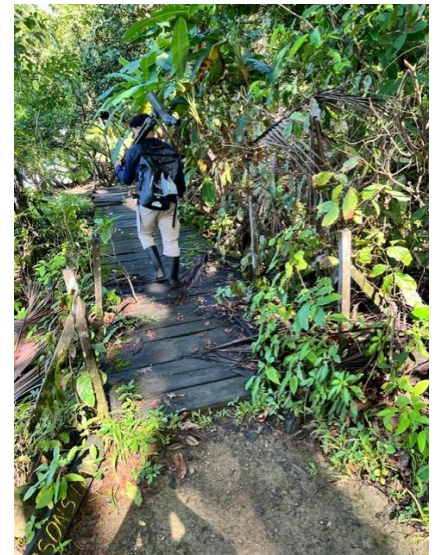


The Manzano Bridge was built by an SES expedition in 2015. The original plan was to build a 23m suspension bridge and a professional design was produced by civil engineer, Jim Paterson, from the UK. Alas, this could not be afforded by the park. However, a 10-metre site was selected by the Park Director, Etilma Morales, who aimed to use stocks of illegally cut timber, that had been confiscated by her staff. Once all material and a petrol generator to drive power tools was on site, work quickly got underway.

After 3 days, on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July the bridge was completed. As work finished and the celebration was due to start, a waterspout came in over the ocean and the rain fell heavily. Nevertheless, standing in the deluge, the tape was cut (with a Swiss Army knife of course!) and Champagne was toasted, while the storm raged all around.

## Today

Unfortunately, the Bridge has weathered badly over the last 10 years and now needs to be refurbished. A major part of this expedition is to carry out these refurbishments working with a team of experts who create building materials from waste plastic - the waste plastic comes from over production by companies, hospitals and beaches.



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## Provisional Itinerary

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### DAY 1: 20 Nov 2025 Arrival in San José

After arriving at San José International Airport, we will check into a local hotel.

**Evening:** Briefing and informal gathering for the expedition team, getting to know team members and leaders.

### DAY 2: 21 Nov 2025 Recovery & Preparation in San José

In the morning you will be able to rest and recover from travel before preparing for the upcoming expedition by shopping for supplies, expedition equipment and personal essentials.

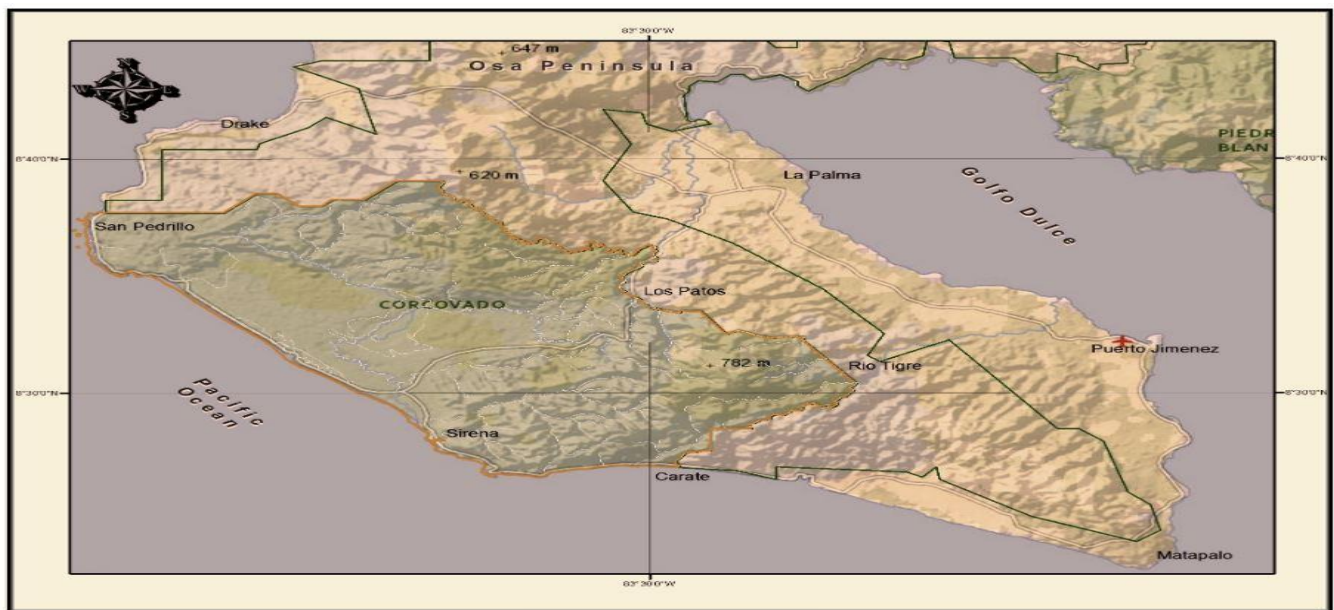
**Evening:** Team dinner and final briefing on logistics, objectives, and safety protocols.

### DAY 3: 22 Nov 2025 Travel to Osa Peninsula (La Palma)

This Morning we will depart by 4-wheel drive vehicles from San José to La Palma, Osa Peninsula (~7-hour journey).

Upon arrival in La Palma we will check into local accommodation before being briefed on the upcoming tasks.

**Evening:** Meet with the local team, introduction to drivers and local support.



### DAY 4: 23 Nov 2025 Travel to Ngabe Village

Today we will travel to Ngabe village (population ~200) and set up camp. We will begin initial wildlife studies, community aid tasks and start dental treatment which will primarily be extractions.

One team will travel by 4WD to visit the Manzano Bridge site (Corcovado Park) for an assessment and liaison with the park director on refurbishment plans.

**Evening:** Camp at Ngabe village.

### DAYS 5-7: 24-26 Nov 2025 Work in Ngabe Village and Bridge Work

During these three days, some of the team will be based in Ngabe Village, carrying out community support activities, wildlife research, and dental work.

Depending on the recce, part of the team will camp near the Manzano Bridge (Carate area) and begin refurbishment work, assessing necessary repairs and materials. Daily visits to San Miguel de Cañaza to aid villagers (population approximately 600).

**Evening:** Ngabe camp or stay at Carate for bridge workers.

#### **DAY 8: 27 Nov 2025 Visit to San Miguel de Cañaza**

Visit to village, 60 minutes' drive from Ngabe.

Once there, map trails, do wildlife studies, community aid tasks, dental treatments and assess the crossing of a local river.

**Evening:** Briefing and planning for the next three days of activities.



#### **DAY 9: 28 Nov 2025 Move to La Leona Lodge**

All move early am to Carate by 4WD for 1 hour 45 minutes, then walking for 45 minutes along the beach and set up camp at La Leona Lodge. Baggage & stores to be carried by horse or ATV. Community aid tasks, carrying out wildlife studies in forest to produce a guide booklet, dentistry. Possibly assist with the local primary school. The Bridge Team will continue with the bridge refurbishment work in Corcovado Park.

**Evening:** Team debrief and prepare for the next day's activities.

#### **DAY 10-15: 29 NOV - 4 DEC 2025 In La Leona area and Corcovado Park**

Community aid, wildlife tasks, sketch maps of trails, dental work whilst bridge party continues work. It may be necessary to reinforce the bridge team.

**Evening:** Team debrief.

#### **DAY 16: 5 DEC 2025**

This morning the expedition team will travel to the beach in Carate where they will participate in a beach clean-up, collaborating with local people to remove rubbish and plastic waste from the coastline.

On completion of the beach clean-up there will be a review of the impact.

**Evening:** Return to La Leona Lodge for the final debrief and preparations for the bridge opening.





#### **DAY 17: 6 DEC 2025 Bridge Opening Ceremony**

On the morning of the ceremony there will be an opportunity for completion of any remaining tasks for the Manzano Bridge refurbishment.

You will have the pleasure of attending the official opening ceremony of the refurbished bridge, in partnership with local officials, park rangers, and the community.

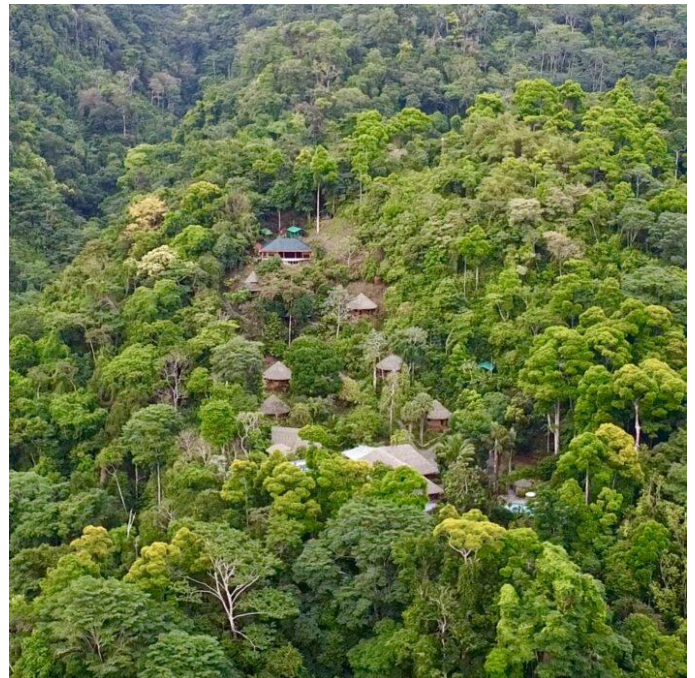
**Evening:** Move to Luna Lodge in the afternoon. Overnight at Luna Lodge.

#### **DAY 18: 7 DEC 2025 Relaxation at Luna Lodge**

Today is a day of relaxation at Luna Lodge.

During the afternoon you will be able to enjoy the natural beauty of the Osa Peninsula, and participate in optional activities such as hiking, birdwatching, etc.

**Evening:** Burns Supper celebration at Luna Lodge, featuring Scottish traditions, food, and stories. Overnight stay at Luna Lodge.





DAY 19: 8 Dec 2025 Return to San José

Today we will drive back to San José (approximately a 9 hour journey). Once we arrive in the afternoon, we will check-in to the hotel and have a chance to rest.

**Evening:** Informal dinner and relaxation at the hotel

DAY 20: 9 Dec 2025 Recovery Day in San José

Today you can relax and explore San José at leisure. Key attractions include the National Museum, Pre-Colombian Gold Museum, and Jade Museum, showcasing the country's rich heritage. The National Theatre is a must-see for its stunning architecture, while Central Market offers a taste of local life. For relaxation, visit La Sabana Metropolitan Park or explore the historic Barrio Amón with its colonial architecture and art galleries. Don't miss Spirogyra Butterfly Garden for a peaceful nature experience.

**Evening:** Final team dinner to share stories and review the expedition's outcomes and successes.

DAY 21: 10 Dec 2025 Expedition Ends - Departure

Today Team members will bid a fond farewell to each other and depart San José for return flights home or begin personal travel extensions.

# Important Information

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>🌿 All activities as mentioned</li><li>🌿 All transportation</li><li>🌿 All sightseeing costs</li><li>🌿 National Park fees</li><li>🌿 Meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) as specified in the program</li><li>🌿 Twin accommodation in local hotels, and accommodation in tents /homestays/community buildings. It may be necessary to use rooms with 3 beds/bunks at times.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ International flights and taxes</li><li>➤ Spending personal money</li><li>➤ Alcoholic drinks</li><li>➤ Donations, tips and gratuities</li><li>➤ Costa Rican Visa (required for some non-UK residents)</li><li>➤ Travel insurance Inc. medical repatriation cover</li><li>➤ Single occupancy rooms at hotel</li><li>➤ Pre and post expedition transfers /accommodation.</li><li>➤ All transfers on Day 1 &amp; Day 21.</li></ul>

# Additional Information

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ACTIVITY DURATION	21 days, 20 nights
GROUP SIZE	20 Maximum of persons plus Expedition Leaders
Meals	All meals except on the first day and last 2 days where breakfast and dinner only will be served.
JOINING DETAILS	Your final instructions and any relevant tickets will be sent to you approximately 4 weeks before date of travel, after full payment has been received.
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS	We can help you organise and book your flights if departing from the UK. Please contact us for information and a quote.
KIT LIST	This can be sent to you upon payment of your deposit and a copy will be sent with your final documents.
TRAVEL INSURANCE	It is a condition of the expedition that you have personal travel insurance in place for the duration of the expedition. It must include medical repatriation. We can recommend travel insurers should you need advice.
TERMS & CONDITIONS	The full terms and conditions of the expedition will be sent with the application form to join the expedition. Your application will be submitted for review by the expedition leaders who will then confirm participation. Please note that the expedition Itinerary should be viewed as a likely guide to the activities of the expedition but may have to change for operational reasons at the time of the expedition.

## Why Pioneer Expeditions

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Pioneer Expeditions has been appointed to administer the expedition. They are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures and have been operating since 2006. The company is led by the adventurer Philip Beale and co-director Laureenne Mansbridge. Further details at [www.pioneerexpeditions.com](http://www.pioneerexpeditions.com)