

Costa Rica  Sun Tours  
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# SARAPIQUÍ

WONDERS OF THE RAINFOREST





## ABOUT SARAPIQUÍ

The Sarapiquí region of Costa Rica is renowned for its **verdant rainforest**, and its **rich animal, reptile, and bird life**—more than 400 species of birds have been recorded here! Naturalists, adventure seekers, and families love to discover the nature reserves, national parks, and the Río Sarapiquí—home to **river boat** tours and some of the most **thrilling white-water** rafting within the Caribbean watershed. Here, within the lush and vast lowlands are **outstanding examples of the rainforest**—La Selva Biological Reserve and Tirimbina being favorites—and a **natural sanctuary** for wildlife including such famous residents as monkeys, parrots, toucans, iguanas, caimans, sloths, poison dart frogs, and basilisk lizards. Beyond the natural component, this area is wonderful for **cultural immersion** and lends itself visits to family farms, involvement in volunteer projects, and short, meaningful homestays.

A one-and-a-half-hour drive from San José through the dramatically forested mountains of Braulio Carrillo National Park makes it doable as a day trip from the city, but with so many cultural, natural, and adventure-filled activities and lodgings from basic to boutique, it is easy to fill a few days exploring the area.

# SARAPIQUÍ: ON THE WATER



## RIVER BOAT SAFARI

On this boat tour, you can observe the exuberant tropical flora and fauna of the majestic and historic Sarapiquí River. Enjoy the opportunity to spot monkeys, iguanas, crocodiles, lazy sloths, river otters, and caimans, among other creatures in their natural habitat, as well as a great diversity of colorful birds. The boats are comfortable and equipped with quiet motors and the experienced captains will be on the look-out for wildlife sightings for you!

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon departures

**Includes:** Local guides, entrance fees, local guides, gear as needed



## WHITE WATER RAFTING

The Sarapiquí River descends from the central mountains into the Caribbean lowlands passing through lush rainforests and farmlands. Just an hour away from La Fortuna, enjoy over 2 hours of rafting along a 15 km section of exciting white-water Class II-III rapid – a guaranteed thrill! The rafts fit 4 to 6 passengers and an expert guide and are followed by safety kayakers. Lower sections of the river are suitable for families with young children and an upper section of the river is prime for those looking for more challenging rapids.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon departures

**Includes:** Transportation, local guide, entrance fees, lunch, local guides, gear as needed



# SARAPIQUÍ: NATURE RESERVES

## OTS LA SELVA NATURE WALK

The Organization for Tropical Studies at La Selva in Sarapiquí has one of the premier rainforest field stations in the world. Researchers have published thousands of scientific papers on tropical ecology based on their studies here. La Selva teems with wildlife, and you can easily see monkeys, toucans, sloths, poison dart frogs, green iguanas, peccaries, morpho butterflies, and many bird species. An exploration here with an expert naturalist immerses you in and educates you about the beauty and biodiversity of the surrounding forest.

**Length:** Full and half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guides, entrance fees



## TIRIMBINA BIOLOGICAL RESERVE

Experience the biological richness of the rainforest at the Tirimbina Biological Reserve in Sarapiquí. This nature reserve focuses on several year-round monitoring programs of rainforest residents, such as rainforest bats and birds. Additional areas of focus include studies on the natural history and the phenology of tropical native plants in relation to the local animals and insects. Understanding and appreciating the complexity of the rainforest is so enjoyable on a walk through the extensive trail system, along a suspension bridge over the wide Sarapiquí River, and during special tours featuring chocolate or bats!

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fees



# SARAPIQUÍ: CULTURAL CUISINE



## LUNCH WITH DOÑA MARZARELLA

With a genuine tico welcome to her family farm, Doña Marzarella delights in sharing her life story and lessons learned along the way—a genuine conversation wrapped up with a tasty home-cooked meal in her traditional open kitchen. This finca focuses precious energy on growing black pepper as their main crop, as well as a variety of other goods for local consumption. Doña Marzarella also hosts foreign students as part of local Spanish immersion programs.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Lunch



## SAN MIGUEL FARM

Enjoy a special welcome by Irene Gomez and Gabriel Carvajal on a visit to their productive San Miguel de Sarapiquí Farm. Founded in 2018 and located at 272mts elevation, this 3-hectare farm is uniquely designed into micro plantations featuring a large variety of tropical products, such as pepper, cocoa, coffee, cane, heart of palm, pineapple, sweet sugar cane, and turmeric, among others. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn firsthand with the owners about tropical agriculture on a smaller scale. With a hearty appetite worked up, round out the visit with a delicious traditional lunch overlooking the beautiful Sarapiquí River.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Lunch and guided farm walk



# SARAPIQUÍ: IN THE TREETOPS



## AERIAL TRAM + CANOPY TOUR

A one-and-a-half-hour drive from San José, through the magnificent forest of Braulio Carrillo National Park, brings you to an exciting canopy zip line tour. A beautiful nature walk and tram ride acquaints you with the forest before you set off on the zip line. This thrilling ride travels through the rainforest treetops on a series of 10 cables strung between 14 platforms. During the ride one zip crosses above the local Molinete River several times and even passes over a small island—awesome for the vistas and the fun! A new 2000-foot-long line has been added and can be combined to the regular zip line tour if you are looking to go all out—this cable rises nearly 200 feet above the forest floor, and speeds of 30 mph can be reached on the ride!

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Round trip transportation, local guide, entrance fees, gear as needed





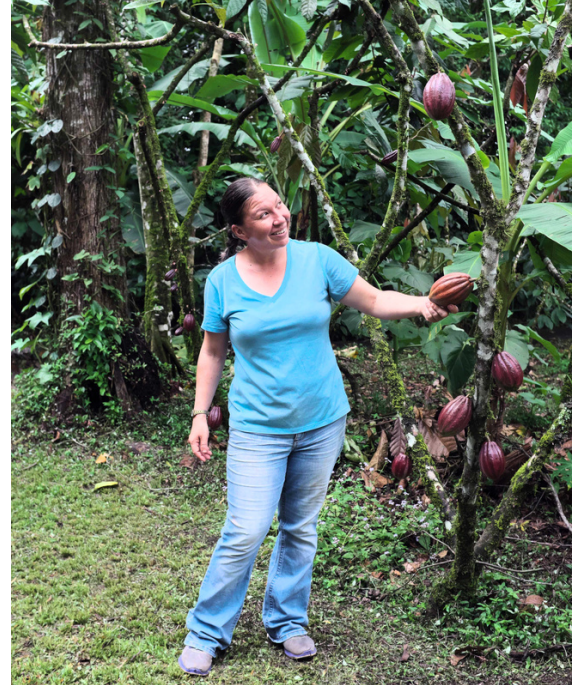
# SARAPIQUÍ: SWEET TREATS

## RAINFOREST CHOCOLATE TOUR

This sweet chocolate tour is designed as a fun and educational activity. You will learn many interesting aspects about the cocoa pods, cacao's native origin, an introduction to its history, and the production process—from the harvesting of the fruit, drying and grinding of the seed to a handmade organic chocolate! Of course, there is the chance to taste it through all the stages of this marvelous chocolate process. A great tour for families, children love it!

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guides, entrance fees, chocolate tasting



## BANANA TOUR

Let's go bananas! This sustainable family business unites the common love for, enjoyment of, and fiscally important aspects of bananas and myriad tropical fruits. On the Cultural Banana tour, you'll learn about the many types of bananas, plantains, medicinal plants, fruit trees, tubers, and vegetables grown on the property. In addition to sharing insight on tropical farming practices with curious visitors, this family farm is fruitful—with a high production of bananas and plantains, they produce several local products for sale in local markets and the Central Valley. Favorite treats include “the tostón Sarapiqueño”, patacones or green plantains, ripe plantain empanadas, frozen plantain for “picadillo” recipes and banana flour for pancakes!

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fees



# SARAPIQUÍ: IN THE GARDEN



## PIERELLA ECOLOGICAL GARDENS

Visiting Pierella in Sarapiquí is a great way to support a local woman-run family business. Over the course of a few decades, Pierella has transformed her property into a five-hectare area that hosts a great diversity of habitats and wildlife—a true ecological preserve—where amateur and expert photographers alike revel in the close-up opportunities. The garden offers great birding trails, a butterfly farm, bird feeders, a cocoa tour, many varieties of native and tropical fruit trees, sloth watching, and some of the best traditional food around! Visitors have the bonus option to be a part of this butterfly conservation project by dedicating a few hours to volunteer in the butterfly nursery and lab.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fees



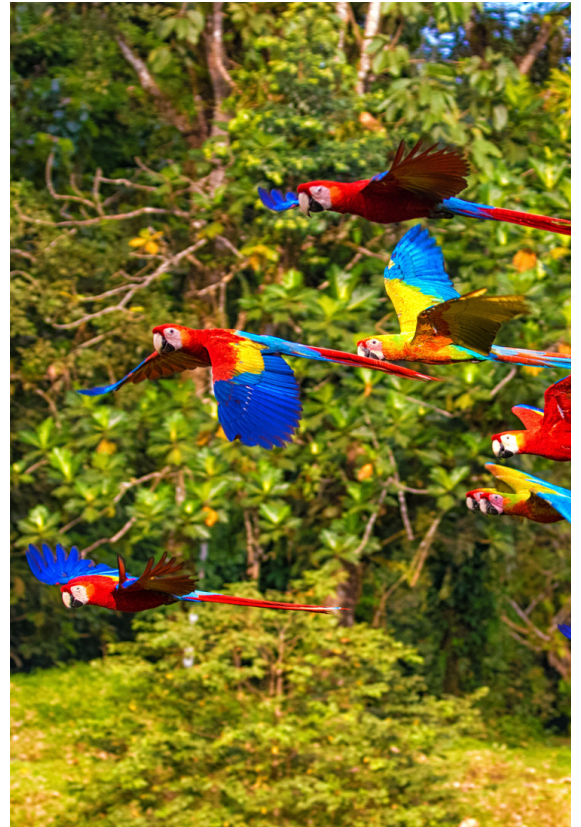
# SARAPIQUÍ: CONSERVATION + EDUCATION

## DON ALVARO'S MACAWS

Within the lush and vast lowlands, is Don Alvaro's macaw refuge—a sanctuary for Scarlet and Great Green Macaws and an opportunity to learn about and enjoy these vibrant birds. It is a hot spot for photographers with great eye-level perches for photo shoots of flight paths and close-up captures of the macaws. Hear the inspiring story that began with rehabilitating eight injured macaws and now nearly 80 live on the property. Additional resident wildlife includes parrots, toucans, iguanas, caimans, sloths, poison dart frogs, basilisk lizards, and the rare Sunbittern. Other attractions are the magnificent tropical gardens, a small population of water buffalo, a sugar cane mill, and an old house typical of the lowland haciendas.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fee



## THE ANT EXPERIENCE

Explore the beautiful and intricate world of ants! Hormigas Town, a family-run project, is focused on studying and teaching about the importance of ants, and protection of the environment. A unique learning experience specifically highlighting the magnificent world of leaf cutter ants—their social structure, the depths of their colony, and their complex process of mushroom cultivation. You won't look at the forest the same after spending time learning about these small but mighty workers.

**Length:** Half day, morning and afternoon

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fees



# SARAPIQUÍ: HUMMINGBIRD HAVEN



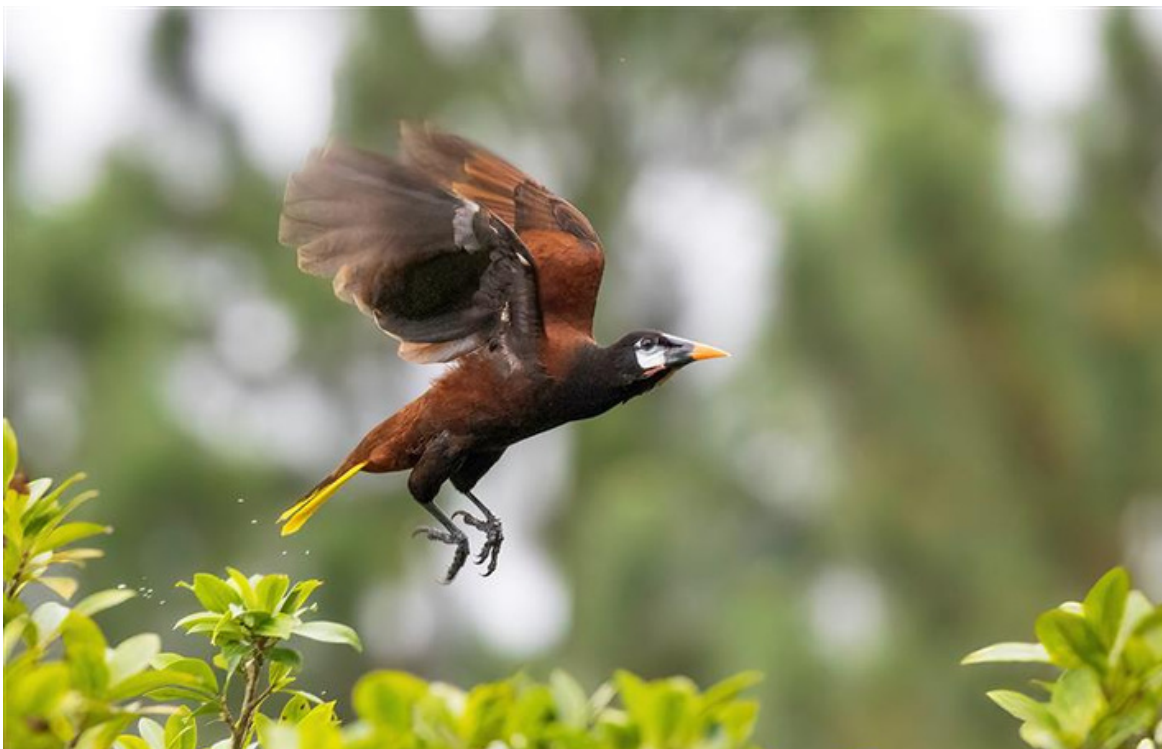
## PLUMAS & PICOS, BIRD LOOKOUT & GARDENS. GUAPILES

Since Jayro, a passionate birdwatcher from Río Blanco in Guapiles, Limon Province, founded Plumas & Picos (Feathers & Beaks), a bird lookout and gardens three years ago, more than 300 bird species have been identified in this remarkable area. Nearly 20 species of hummingbirds thrive in this unique lowland setting. During your visit, you can explore the adjacent rainforest and discover hidden hotspots where you can spot with some luck owls and other wildlife.

Conveniently located just 20 minutes from the famous Braulio Carrillo National Park, this natural sanctuary is a prime spot to see tropical birds, including the Blue-chested Hummingbird, Keel-billed Toucan, and Yellow-throated Toucan. Fruit feeders attract a variety of species, such as tanagers, oropendolas, and honeycreepers, providing excellent opportunities for close-up photography. Lunch can be arranged on-site, with options including grilled pork chops, fish, chicken, and a vegetarian selection if desired.

**Length:** Half day, morning departures

**Includes:** Local guide, entrance fees





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