



COSTA RICA TALL SHIP ADVENTURE WITH STAR CLIPPERS

Classic Cruising Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 2

SAN JOSE – TORTUGUERO – ARENAL – MONTEVERDE – COIBA NATIONAL PARK – MARINE PARK GOLFO DE
CHIRIQUI – GOLFITO – QUEPOS – ISLAS TORTUGAS – SAN JOSE

From Costa Rica's rainforest-lined canals and volcanic landscapes to the Pacific coasts of Costa Rica and Panama aboard Star Clipper, this Cruise & Tour combines wildlife-rich national parks, cloud forest scenery and a distinctive tall ship sailing experience.

- Discover the jungle waterways of Tortuguero National Park
- Admire Arenal Volcano and walk the Arenal 1968 lava trail
- Explore Monteverde's cloud forest and rural traditions
- Sail the Pacific coast aboard the tall ship Star Clipper
- Port at Coiba National Park, Golfo de Chiriquí, Golfito, Quepos and Islas Tortugas

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.com.au

TOUR MAP



TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Return international economy flights, taxes and fuel surcharges (unless on land only option)
- 7 night cruise with Star Clippers aboard Star Clipper
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated (*if dining on board throughout*) - 15 breakfasts (B), 14 lunches (L), 15 dinners (D)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees, transportation and transfers pre and post cruise
- English speaking Local Guides pre and post cruise or English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guide

Pre and post cruise, the only elements you may have to pay for are personal expenditure, such as drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check-in or late checkout, and any other items not specified on the itinerary.

During the cruise, your meals onboard will be included. Drinks and shore excursions are not included unless otherwise stated and will be payable locally. In addition, if you opt to dine off the ship, these meals will also be paid for locally, and please note you will not be refunded for meals missed onboard.

CLASSIC CRUISING TOURS

These tours are designed for travellers who want to experience Costa Rica's lush rainforests, volcanic landscapes, rich wildlife and Pacific coastline, combined with a memorable tall ship cruise aboard Star Clipper. Offering excellent value, this group tour allows you to explore some of Central America's most beautiful natural wonders while travelling with like-minded people.

Your tour is fully inclusive before and after the cruise, ensuring that all arrangements, from accommodation to guided sightseeing, are seamlessly taken care of. Throughout the land portions of your journey, you will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and Local Guides, whose expert knowledge and passion will transform your holiday into an extraordinary adventure. While on the cruise, you will enjoy the services and facilities provided by the Star Clippers crew. There will be no Wendy Wu guides or representatives on the cruise.

PHYSICAL LEVEL

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Costa Rica Tall Ship Adventure' is rated as a physical level 2 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required, and you should expect to be on your feet for much of the day. You will be getting on and off coaches, boats and the cruise ship, as well as walking around the sights, often including steps, plus occasional longer walks.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time, often on uneven or natural surfaces.
- This itinerary includes walking in rainforest, lava trail and cloud forest environments, where paths may be uneven, muddy or slippery depending on local conditions.
- You will be required to get on and off boats during the land touring portion of the itinerary, including transfers in Tortuguero and the Lake Arenal crossing.
- You will be required to board the cruise ship without assistance and get on and off at ports if you wish to disembark the ship.
- During the cruise, disembarkation at some ports may be by tender, shuttle boat or zodiac, and in some locations may involve a wet landing. Passengers should be comfortable boarding and disembarking independently. While guides and crew will provide assistance where possible, travellers should consider their mobility when selecting this itinerary.

Of course, while on land, our National Escorts and/or local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR

The tour is 18 days in duration including international flights. Join the tour on Day 1 in San Jose, Costa Rica and end the tour on Day 16 at San Jose, Costa Rica.

For travellers booked on a 'Land and Cruise Only' package, which omits the inclusion of international flights, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour or if booking pre/post accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please advise your international flight information to our reservations team.

ITINERARY CHANGES

We intend to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours, or as dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Similarly, while Star Clippers will endeavour to follow the published cruise itinerary, sailing routes, port calls and timings may be changed due to weather, sea conditions, operational requirements or other unforeseeable circumstances. Shore excursions and onboard watersports may also be amended, restricted or cancelled where necessary. If changes occur during your cruise, the Star Clippers crew will keep you updated with the latest arrangements wherever possible. Your safety will always remain the priority.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1: Arrive in San Jose****Meals: D**

Fly to San José, Costa Rica's capital, where you will be met at the airport by an English-speaking representative and transferred for approximately one hour to your hotel. The rest of the day is yours to relax or begin exploring. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at your hotel.

Please note: Early check-in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant.

**Destination Information**

San Jose – Located in the centre of the country, San José is Costa Rica's political, economic and social centre. The city reflects a strong European cultural influence, particularly in its architecture and historic institutions.

Day 2: San Jose to Tortuguero**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast, travel by road for approximately four hours towards the Caribbean coast, passing through Braulio Carrillo National Park as well as open pasturelands and small farming towns. A fruit snack stop will be made en route.



On arrival at the embarkation point, board a boat for a shared transfer of approximately one hour and 45 minutes through Tortuguero's rainforest-fringed canals to your lodge. Upon arrival at the lodge, you will receive a short briefing about the property and the activities included during your stay, followed by lunch.

This afternoon, enjoy a guided walking tour of Tortuguero Village, learning about the lifestyle of local residents and the important conservation efforts to protect the sea turtles that come to nest along the surrounding coastline. Dinner will be served at the lodge this evening.

Please note: Between January – April if the water levels are too low, the main dock cannot be used. You will then be transferred to a secondary dock, 45 – 60 minutes drive away.

Destination Information

Tortuguero – A village located on Costa Rica's vibrant Caribbean coast, Tortuguero is one of the country's most unique areas. The surrounding national park is home to a network of canals, dense rainforests, rivers, lagoons and beaches, and is especially known for its rich wildlife and sea turtle nesting grounds. Both the village and national park take their name from the area's close association with marine turtles; Tortuguero is often translated as "land of turtles" or "place of turtles".

Day 3: Tortuguero**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast at the lodge, explore Tortuguero National Park by boat, travelling through its network of rainforest canals. This unique experience brings you closer to the incredible biodiversity of the region, with opportunities to spot a variety of wildlife such as otters, howler and capuchin monkeys, toucans, herons, caimans, green iguanas and, if you are lucky, a sloth resting among the trees.



Lunch will be served back at the lodge. The afternoon is then at leisure to relax and enjoy the natural surroundings before dinner at the lodge this evening.

Day 4: Tortuguero to Arenal**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast and check-out, board a boat transfer of approximately one hour and 45 minutes back through the canals to the disembarkation point. Upon arrival, continue by road towards the Arenal Volcano area, a journey of approximately four hours, with lunch served en route in the Guápiles area.



Afterwards, travel towards Costa Rica's northern lowlands, passing mountain scenery and vast agricultural fields along the way. En route to Arenal, visit a local family at their heart of palm plantation. During your visit, learn about the cultivation and harvesting of this traditional Costa Rican product, gaining insight into local rural life and sustainable farming practices.

Later this afternoon, arrive in the Arenal area, where you may catch your first glimpse of the volcano's impressive conical peak rising above the surrounding rainforest. Check in to your hotel and enjoy dinner there this evening.

Destination Information

Heart of Palm – Known locally as *palmito*, heart of palm is a traditional Costa Rican product harvested from the inner core of certain palm plants. Mild in flavour and tender in texture, it is used in a variety of local dishes and offers an insight into the country's agricultural heritage.

Arenal – Set in Costa Rica's northern lowlands, the Arenal region is known for its lush rainforest, rich biodiversity and striking volcanic landscapes. The area is dominated by the distinctive cone-shaped Arenal Volcano and is one of the country's most popular destinations for nature, scenery and outdoor experiences.

Day 5: Arenal Volcano Views & Local Flavours**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast, enjoy a guided walk along the Mirador Arenal 1968 Volcano View Lava Trail. This scenic route crosses old lava fields formed by the volcano's 1968 eruption and offers panoramic views of Arenal Volcano and Lake Arenal. As you walk, your guide will share insight into the volcano's geological history and the regeneration of the surrounding ecosystem. Afterwards, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.



This afternoon, take part in an interactive chocolate and coffee experience. Learn about the process from cultivation to preparation and enjoy a tasting of two of Costa Rica's most iconic agricultural products. Later enjoy diner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Arenal Volcano – One of Costa Rica's most iconic natural landmarks, Arenal Volcano rises above the northern lowlands with its distinctive cone-shaped profile. The surrounding landscape was shaped by the volcano's major 1968 eruption, and today the area is known for its lava fields, rainforest scenery and views towards nearby Lake Arenal.

Day 6: Arenal to Monteverde**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast and check-out, transfer to Lake Arenal for a scenic boat crossing towards the Monteverde region. Combining land and water travel, this unique journey offers spectacular views of the lake and surrounding mountains. Upon arrival in Santa Elena, explore the town with your local guide, learning about the history and conservation efforts that have helped shape Monteverde into one of Costa Rica's most important ecotourism destinations.



Pause for lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to your hotel for check-in.

This evening, after dinner at your hotel, participate in a shared Night Walk experience. Accompanied by a specialised guide, explore the forest after dark, when many species become active, and gain a deeper appreciation for the biodiversity of the cloud forest.

Destination Information

Monteverde – Set high in Costa Rica's mountainous interior, Monteverde is renowned for its cloud forest landscapes, conservation heritage and extraordinary biodiversity. The region is closely associated with ecotourism and is home to several protected reserves, where mist-shrouded forest creates a rich habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal life.

Day 7: Monteverde Cloud Forest & Rural Traditions**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast at the hotel, begin with a private guided walk at Curi Cancha Reserve, a renowned private reserve known for its rich biodiversity and excellent wildlife observation opportunities. As you explore the cloud forest trails, your guide will help identify bird species, mammals and native flora that make this ecosystem one of the most unique in the country.



After lunch at a local restaurant, enjoy a shared Sustainable Farm and Artisan Cheese Tour. This authentic rural experience introduces you to sustainable farming practices and traditional cheese-making methods carried out by a local family. During the visit, learn about dairy production, animal care and artisanal processes, while enjoying a tasting of freshly prepared products. Stop for dinner at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel.

Destination Information

Curi Cancha Reserve – Set within the Monteverde region, Curi Cancha Reserve protects areas of primary and secondary cloud forest as well as open habitat, creating excellent conditions for wildlife viewing. The reserve is particularly known for its birdlife, with more than 200 species recorded, alongside mammals such as coatis, sloths and monkeys.

Day 8: Monteverde to Puerto Caldera - Embark Cruise**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast and check-out, transfer to Puerto Caldera, where you will board your tall ship, Star Clipper. This scenic journey takes you from the Monteverde highlands towards Costa Rica's Pacific coast, offering views of rolling hills, rural communities and coastal plains along the way. Throughout the drive, your guide will share insights into the regions you pass through, including local agriculture, history and the importance of this corridor connecting the mountains to the coast.



On arrival at the port, embark Star Clipper and settle into your cabin. The rest of the day is yours to begin exploring the ship's facilities as your tall ship adventure begins.

Please note: *Your National Escort or local representative will accompany you to the port; however, they will not board the cruise with you.*

Destination Information

Puerto Caldera – Located on Costa Rica's central Pacific coast, Puerto Caldera is one of the country's main Pacific ports and an important gateway for cruise travel. Set within the wider Puntarenas region, it provides access to a coastline known for its beaches, islands and rich natural landscapes.

Day 9: Cruise – At Sea**Meals: B, L, D**

Spend today at sea as Star Clipper continues her journey along the Pacific coast. Take time to relax onboard, enjoy the ship's facilities or simply watch the wind fill the sails from the deck. More adventurous guests may also have the opportunity to climb the rigging or try steering the ship, subject to onboard arrangements.

**Day 10: Cruise – Coiba National Park, Panama****Meals: B, L, D**

Today you will arrive at Coiba National Park in Panama. Disembark Star Clipper and enjoy a day at leisure before returning to the ship later in the day for your onward journey.

Here you can enjoy a range of excursions at your own expense, bookable onboard. Please note, if you dine off the cruise ship, these meals will be at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Coiba National Park – Located off Panama's Pacific coast, Coiba National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site made up of Coiba Island and a surrounding marine reserve. Known for its rainforest-covered islands, coral reefs and rich biodiversity, the park is home to an exceptional variety of marine and terrestrial wildlife.

Day 11: Cruise – Marine Park Golfo de Chiriquí, Panama**Meals: B, L, D**

Today you will call at Marine Park Golfo de Chiriquí, off Panama's Pacific coast. Disembark Star Clipper and enjoy a day at leisure before returning to the ship later in the day for your onward journey.

Here you can enjoy a range of excursions at your own expense, bookable onboard. Please note, if you dine off the cruise ship, these meals will be at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Marine Park Golfo de Chiriquí – Located off Panama's Pacific coast, this protected marine park encompasses a collection of islands, coral reefs and surrounding waters. The area is known for its natural beauty and rich wildlife, with opportunities to spot marine life, nesting sea turtles and a variety of bird species.

Day 12: Cruise – Golfito, Costa Rica**Meals: B, L, D**

Today your cruise continues to the port of Golfito, Costa Rica. Disembark the cruise ship and enjoy a day at leisure before returning to your ship later in the day for your onward journey.

Here you can enjoy a range of excursions at your own expense, bookable onboard. Please note, if you dine off the cruise ship, these meals will be at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Golfito – Located on Costa Rica's southern Pacific coast, Golfito is a small port town set between the calm waters of Golfo Dulce and surrounding tropical rainforest. Once closely associated with the banana trade, it is now a gateway to the natural landscapes and outdoor experiences of the region, including mangrove forests, kayaking, wildlife viewing and sport fishing.

Day 13: Cruise – Quepos, Costa Rica**Meals: B, L, D**

Today you will call at Quepos, Costa Rica. Disembark the cruise ship and enjoy a day at leisure before returning to your ship later in the day for your onward journey.

Here you can enjoy a range of excursions at your own expense, bookable onboard. Please note, if you dine off the cruise ship, these meals will be at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Quepos – Located on Costa Rica’s central Pacific coast, Quepos is a lively coastal town and the main gateway to Manuel Antonio National Park, one of the country’s most celebrated natural attractions. The town offers a relaxed atmosphere, a waterfront setting and access to the surrounding region’s beaches, rainforest and wildlife-rich landscapes.

Day 14: Cruise – Islas Tortugas, Costa Rica**Meals: B, L, D**

Today your cruise brings you to Islas Tortugas, Costa Rica. Disembark the cruise ship and enjoy a day at leisure before returning to your ship later in the day for your onward journey.

Here you can enjoy a range of excursions at your own expense, bookable onboard. Please note, if you dine off the cruise ship, these meals will be at your own expense.

**Destination Information**

Islas Tortugas – Located in Costa Rica’s Gulf of Nicoya, Islas Tortugas are known for their white-sand beaches, clear aquamarine waters and relaxed tropical setting. The island group is made up of two small neighbouring islands, Alcatraz and Tolinga, and is a popular place to enjoy Costa Rica’s Pacific coastline.

Day 15: Disembark in Puerto Caldera – San José**Meals: B, L, D**

Bid Star Clipper and her crew farewell as you disembark at Puerto Caldera. Meet your guide at the cruise port and begin the journey back towards San José, travelling from the Pacific lowlands towards the Central Valley.



En route, enjoy a shared coffee tour experience, where you will learn more about Costa Rica's rich coffee heritage, followed by lunch. Afterwards, continue to San José and check in to your hotel in the mid-afternoon. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at your hotel.

Destination Information

Costa Rican Coffee – Coffee has played an important role in Costa Rica's history and economy since the 19th century. The country's volcanic soils, mountain landscapes and varied microclimates provide favourable conditions for cultivation, and coffee remains one of its most recognised agricultural products.

Days 16-18: Depart San Jose**Meals: B**

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred to San José International Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Fly home to Australia, arriving home two days later.



Please note: Late check-out is not included. If you wish to book a late check-out or additional nights, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and arrangements for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

PLEASE INFORM OUR RESERVATIONS TEAM OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS

Costa Rica

Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Costa Rica for stays of up to 90 days.

Panama

Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Panama for stays of up to 90 days.

Please note: Flights to Costa Rica usually transfer through the United States, an ESTA Waiver is required to transit through the USA.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Please note, the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visa processes are changing on regular basis. For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE

It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours. We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time.

We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

LUGGAGE

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: one suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. While luggage allowance on your cruise may permit further capacity, we ask you to adhere to the above restrictions due to airline and touring requirements.

On your cruise: Your cruise documents will include Star Clippers luggage tags. Please complete these with your name and attach them to your luggage before checking in at the port, to assist with identification and help prevent loss. Star Clippers also recommends placing an identification tag inside your baggage.

We recommend keeping any medication, valuables, travel documents and other essential items with you in your hand luggage during embarkation. Star Clippers specifically advises guests travelling with prescription medication to keep this in their hand luggage.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, passengers may arrive and depart at various times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving or departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel or airport may vary.

On arrival in San José, you will be met by English-speaking staff and transferred to your hotel. The transfer will be arranged according to the flight details provided in your final documentation. Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase or hand luggage, as this may assist your guide or representative in identifying you.

On departure day, you will be transferred from your San José hotel to San José International Airport according to the departure time of your international flight. Guide services will end at the airport, and you will need to check in for your flight independently.

You will meet your National Escort or local representative on arrival, at the welcome dinner, or, if arriving late, the following morning. If at any stage you are unable to locate your representative please contact the local contact number included in your final documents.

TRANSPORT

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used for airport transfers, sightseeing, excursions and longer road transfers where necessary. Roads in Costa Rica have generally improved over recent years, although traffic, weather conditions and local roadworks may affect journey times. For this reason, any transfer or journey times stated in your itinerary should be treated as approximate.

Boats: This itinerary includes several boat journeys, including transfers through the canals of Tortuguero, a wildlife boat tour in Tortuguero National Park and a scenic crossing of Lake Arenal. You will need to be able to board and disembark boats without assistance. Timings and arrangements may be affected by weather, water levels and local operating conditions.

PORTERAGE

Pre & Post Cruise: Porterage is not included in our tours before or after the cruise. Travellers will need to manage their own luggage within hotels and when using transport such as coaches, boats and road transfers. While some hotels or lodges in Costa Rica may provide porterage, services are not guaranteed, and tipping is customary if assistance is given.

Cruise: Upon arrival at the check-in area, luggage will be collected and delivered directly to your cabin. For disembarkation, guests are asked to place their luggage outside their cabin door on the evening before they disembark. The crew will then offload the luggage, which can be collected in the arrivals area at the cruise port. This service is included in your tour cost.

ACCOMMODATION

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and may range from city hotels to rainforest lodges. Hotels are generally rated as local four star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality may exist between Australia and Costa Rica.

In more remote or nature-based locations, such as rainforest areas, accommodation may be simpler in style and facilities may be more limited than in larger towns or cities. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed.

If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

GROUP SIZE

For pre and post cruise touring most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by National Escorts. On this tour, there will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. Your Star Clippers cruise has a maximum capacity for 166 guests, most of whom will not be part of your Wendy Wu tour group.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

TIPPING / GRATUITIES

Tipping while on holiday is common in Costa Rica, and this is no exception during the land touring sections of this itinerary. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time.

In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour, and tips are disbursed to local guides, drivers and relevant service staff throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and, also includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid at each destination. To be fair to the guides, we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

On the cruise: Onboard standard gratuities are included in your trip cost.

FOOD, MEALS & DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

On this tour, you will enjoy a variety of dining experiences across Costa Rica and onboard Star Clipper. Pre- and post-cruise, meals will be arranged as a group, offering a mix of local and international cuisine. During the cruise, you will dine independently onboard the ship.

Costa Rican cuisine draws on Spanish, Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean influences. The food is generally mild and makes good use of fresh fruit and vegetables, reflecting the country's rich natural abundance. Staple foods include rice and black beans, which are served at many meals, alongside plantain and grilled or sautéed meat or fish. A typical breakfast is gallo pinto – rice and beans stir-fried together and often served with eggs and sour cream or cheese. A popular lunchtime dish is casado, usually made up of rice, beans, salad, plantain and meat or fish. Corn also remains an important ingredient in Central American cuisine. Tamales, for example, are made from cornmeal dough filled with meat, rice and vegetables, then steamed in a leaf, and are especially associated with celebrations such as Christmas. You may also encounter empanadas, savoury or sweet filled pastries that are a popular snack.

Costa Rica also has a wide range of international foods available, with Mexican, steakhouse, Chinese and Italian restaurants particularly common in larger towns and cities.

Pre & post cruise: All meals (excluding drinks) are included during the land touring portion of the itinerary from arrival to departure. Breakfast is usually served at the hotel or lodge, while lunches and dinners may be pre-arranged group meals featuring a selection of local and Western dishes. In some locations, meals may be arranged in local restaurants, allowing you to sample regional specialities. On days with extensive sightseeing, meals may be served as part of the day's touring rather than returning to the hotel first.

Cruise dining: Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included onboard Star Clipper. Dining is relaxed and open-seating, with no fixed sittings or seating plans. Breakfast includes continental and cooked options, lunch is generally served buffet-style, and evening meals are served in the Dining Room with a choice of dishes inspired by both international and regional flavours.

Dietary requirements: If you have dietary requirements, please inform us at the time of booking. Our guides, local suppliers and cruise staff will make every effort to accommodate requests such as gluten-free, vegetarian or lactose-free meals. However, in some locations and during the cruise, food availability and preparation methods may limit certain options.

Specific requests may not always be met in the same way as at home. Travellers with food intolerances or particular dietary needs are encouraged to bring extra snacks or suitable food items, especially for the cruise portion of the tour, where availability of specialised items may be more limited. Your patience and flexibility are appreciated in ensuring an enjoyable and varied dining experience throughout your journey.

CRUISE – STAR CLIPPER

Star Clipper is a traditional tall ship that combines the romance and nautical heritage of classic sailing vessels with the comfort and amenities of a modern cruise ship. With her polished brass, teak decks and elegant nautical styling, the ship offers a relaxed and informal atmosphere that feels quite different from a larger resort-style cruise experience. Life onboard is designed to reflect the spirit of sailing, with plenty of outdoor deck space to enjoy the views as you journey along the Pacific coasts of Costa Rica and Panama.

Onboard, guests can dine at leisure in the open-seating Dining Room, relax in the Tropical Bar or Piano Bar, browse the Edwardian-style library or enjoy time on deck beside one of the ship's two swimming pools. The atmosphere is sociable but unhurried, allowing guests to enjoy the destination, the sailing experience and the ship's distinctive character at their own pace.

A voyage aboard Star Clipper also offers opportunities to engage with the traditions of tall ship sailing. Passengers are welcome to help the crew raise the sails if they wish, while informal talks may cover subjects such as navigation, tall ships, the wind and the stars. The crew may also offer knot-tying lessons and, weather permitting, mast-climbing to the first crow's nest. Star Clipper also operates an open bridge policy, allowing guests to speak with the officers and Captain at appropriate times.

CRUISE ACCOMMODATION AND CABINS

At the time of booking, subject to availability, you may have the option to choose from a Category 2 Large Outside Cabin, Category 3 Outside Cabin or Category 4 Outside Cabin. If you wish to upgrade or have a specific request regarding cabin location or bed type, please contact our reservations department for assistance. Although these requests cannot be guaranteed, we will do our best to accommodate them.

Category 2 Large Outside Cabins are the largest of the cabin categories offered on this Cruise & Tour, with an average size of approximately 12 square metres, and are located on the Clipper Deck. Category 3 Outside Cabins are approximately 11 square metres and are located on either the Clipper Deck or Commodore Deck. Category 4 Outside Cabins are also approximately 11 square metres and are located on the Commodore Deck. Cabin layouts and individual dimensions may vary.

All cabins offered on this Cruise & Tour include private bathroom facilities with a shower, air-conditioning, a flatscreen TV, hairdryer, private safe and radio. Please note that cabins have American and European-style plug sockets, so guests travelling from Australia should bring a suitable travel adaptor.

CRUISE EMBARKATION & DISEMBARKATION

Embarkation time is when you should arrive at the cruise terminal. Departure time is when your ship sets sail.

On Day 8, you will be transferred to Puerto Caldera to board Star Clipper. Please follow the embarkation instructions provided in your final cruise documentation. Star Clippers advises that passports are collected upon boarding and held by the Purser during the cruise to complete port and immigration formalities, before being returned at disembarkation.

At the end of the cruise on Day 15, you will disembark Star Clipper in Puerto Caldera, where you will be met by your guide to continue your land touring programme.

Boarding Time in Ports of Call: In all ports of call, it is the guest's responsibility to be back onboard the ship by the time advised by Star Clippers and the ship's crew. In the event a guest misses the ship, it will be the guest's responsibility to pay all expenses incurred to rejoin the ship.

In some ports, Star Clipper may anchor offshore and guests may be transferred ashore by tender or zodiac. Some landings may be wet, and appropriate footwear is recommended.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

Your itinerary combines two different styles of touring, each offering a distinct experience. The land portion pre- or post-cruise is more in-depth and fast-paced, with full days of sightseeing, cultural highlights, and detailed commentary from local guides. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of each destination, although the pace can feel busy and information-rich.

During the cruise, the touring style becomes more relaxed. Shore excursions still provide opportunities to explore each port, but they are typically less intensive, with a slower pace, lighter commentary, and more free time. This contrast is designed to offer a balance between structured, guided touring and more flexible exploration.

At ports of call, optional shore excursions will be available through the cruise line. These are subject to availability and may be amended or cancelled due to weather or operational reasons at their discretion. Unless otherwise stated, excursions are at your own expense and can be booked in advance through your Star Clippers reservation, onboard the ship, or independently with a third-party provider. If you choose independently or through a third-party provider, it is your responsibility to ensure the excursion timing allows sufficient return time before the ship's all-aboard deadline.

If you opt to book through the cruise line, we recommend booking early, as availability is limited and operates on a first-come, first-served basis. Shore excursions may be booked onboard for last-minute arrangements, although this does not always guarantee availability. Excursions can be pre-booked online via your Guest Account. Please note that any add-ons must be paid within 72 hours of being added to your reservation to avoid automatic removal. To secure your selections, payment should be completed at the time of booking. Shore excursions are not always available online straight away, and sometimes appear closer to the departure date. If you cannot see them, it is worth checking back at a later date.

Complimentary watersports are available to passengers where permitted by local authorities and local conditions allow. These may include snorkelling, water-skiing, windsurfing, dinghy sailing, kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding. During boarding formalities, guests will be asked to sign a waiver for participation in watersports.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES PRE AND POST CRUISE

Our fully inclusive Classic tours are designed to ensure you experience the must-see sights and memorable moments of each destination. Occasionally, when time allows, optional extras may be offered for those wishing to add further experiences to their journey. These will be communicated and paid for locally through your guide.

SOUVENIRS

During this tour, there may be opportunities to purchase locally made products or souvenirs, particularly during cultural and rural experiences. We understand that souvenir shopping is not for everyone, so these opportunities are included only where they form a natural part of the visit or offer insight into local traditions and products. We trust you will enjoy these chances to learn more about Costa Rican crafts, agriculture and local life, whether or not you choose to make a purchase.

APPROPRIATE DRESS / WHAT TO PACK

When travelling through Costa Rica, pack for warm tropical conditions, rainforest environments and cooler cloud forest areas. Lightweight, breathable clothing is recommended, along with a waterproof jacket or poncho for rain showers. Comfortable walking shoes are essential for sightseeing, forest trails and nature-based activities, while a warmer layer is advisable for Monteverde, particularly in the evening and for the night walk.

For sun protection, bring a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Insect repellent is also recommended, particularly for rainforest, lodge and coastal areas. Swimwear is useful for hotel facilities, the cruise and any watersports or beach time during the itinerary. Closed-toe sandals or similar practical footwear may also be helpful.

During the cruise, Star Clipper may use tenders or zodiacs to take guests ashore when the ship is at anchor, and some disembarkations may involve a wet landing. Star Clippers recommends appropriate footwear, such as plastic sandals or similar, for these occasions.

Don't forget a camera or smartphone with extra storage and chargers to capture Costa Rica's wildlife, rainforest landscapes and the tall ship sailing experience. You may also wish to bring a small medical kit with basic first aid supplies and any personal medication you may need.

Cruise Dress Code

Life onboard Star Clipper is relaxed and informal. Beach or resort wear is suitable during the day, while evening attire is casual to smart casual. Star Clippers advises that shorts and flip flops are not accepted in the Dining Room in the evening, and gentlemen are requested to wear shirts with collars and sleeves. Jackets and ties are not required.

There is usually one Captain's dinner during the cruise, when guests may choose to dress up a little more, but there are no black-tie events or formal nights.

TERRAIN CONSIDERATIONS (STEPS, SLOPES & UNEVEN SURFACES)

Many of the destinations visited on this tour involve walking over uneven ground, natural paths, forest trails, slopes and steps. Comfortable, sturdy footwear is essential. In rainforest, cloud forest and rural areas, paths may be muddy, slippery or uneven, particularly after rain.

The itinerary includes nature-based walking in areas such as Tortuguero, Arenal and Monteverde, including rainforest environments, a volcano-view lava trail, cloud forest trails and rural farm visits. Be prepared for uneven surfaces, changes in gradient and periods spent standing or walking during guided visits.

Those with knee or hip difficulties, balance issues or reduced mobility should carefully consider the physical requirements of this itinerary.

MONEY, CASH AND PERSONAL EXPENSES

Exchanging cash: The unit of currency in Costa Rica is the Costa Rican colón (CRC). US dollars are also widely accepted, and major credit cards can be used in many places. We recommend using banks or approved exchange offices if exchanging currency locally. ATMs are available throughout the country, although access may be more limited in remote areas.

During your Star Clipper cruise, onboard purchases are charged to your personal onboard account and settled in Euros. Star Clippers recommends using an international credit card for onboard spending, although cash payment is also possible with a deposit arranged onboard.

Personal expenses: You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs, optional excursions and any additional sightseeing or personal purchases you may wish to make during the tour.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Costa Rican culture reflects a blend of Indigenous, Spanish, Afro-Caribbean and other influences. The country is closely associated with the expression “pura vida”, often used as a greeting or positive expression and widely seen as reflecting Costa Rica’s relaxed and welcoming outlook. Visitors are not expected to understand every local custom, but politeness, patience and respect for local communities will help ensure an enjoyable experience.

This itinerary also places a strong emphasis on nature, wildlife and conservation. When visiting national parks, reserves, rural communities and protected coastal areas, please follow the guidance of your National Escort, local guides and cruise staff. Stay on marked paths where requested, avoid disturbing wildlife and respect local conservation rules designed to protect the environments you have travelled to see.

DEVELOPMENT

Costa Rica is a well-established tourism destination, with good visitor infrastructure in major towns and popular touring areas. However, this itinerary also visits rainforest, cloud forest and coastal regions, where facilities, road conditions and services may be simpler or more variable than in larger urban areas. In destinations such as Tortuguero and Monteverde, travel arrangements may be shaped by local geography, weather and conservation considerations.

During the cruise, you will also visit natural areas along the Pacific coasts of Costa Rica and Panama. Some calls are centred on marine parks, islands or smaller coastal communities, where facilities ashore may be limited. Timings and access may be affected by sea conditions, local operating arrangements and the nature of the destination.

WEATHER

This itinerary operates in January and February, during Costa Rica's drier travel season overall. However, weather can vary significantly by region, with the Caribbean coast, northern lowlands, cloud forest and Pacific coast each experiencing different local conditions.

In Tortuguero on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, rain is possible at any time of year, and January can still bring wetter conditions, particularly during the night and morning. The Arenal region is warm and tropical, while Monteverde sits at higher elevation and can feel noticeably cooler, particularly in the evenings and during night-time activities.

During the Star Clipper cruise along the Pacific coasts of Costa Rica and Panama, conditions are generally warm and tropical. Costa Rica's Pacific side has a more clearly defined dry season from December to March, making this a favourable period for coastal cruising, beach calls and outdoor activities. Rain showers can still occur, so light waterproof clothing remains advisable.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Based on current holiday calendars, no major Costa Rican or Panamanian national public holidays appear to fall during the scheduled tour dates.

Please note that local events, regional celebrations or operational arrangements may still affect opening hours, traffic, public areas or excursion availability. Tourist attractions are likely to remain open, but some locations may be busier than usual depending on local circumstances.

SAFETY & CRIME

Costa Rica is a welcoming destination, but as with many countries, travellers should remain alert and take sensible precautions with personal belongings, particularly in busy areas and when travelling independently. Avoid displaying valuables unnecessarily, keep bags and passports secure and use hotel safes where available.

During any time ashore in Panama, please follow the advice of your cruise staff and local guides, and take normal precautions with valuables and personal belongings.

Your National Escort, local guides and cruise staff will advise you on local conditions where relevant to help ensure a safe and enjoyable journey.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: June 2026