



Brattleboro Museum & Art Center Art, Craft and Nature in Costa Rica

January 9–20, 2026

Pre-trip extension January 8–9

Itinerary

Trip Leader:

Ken Klothen

Guides:

Dra. Lauran Bonilla-Mechav (San Jose only)

Marco Fallas

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Thursday, January 8 — Pre-trip Extension

Bienvenidos!

- **Arrival** in San Jose *for those participating in the pre-trip extension*. Transfer to hotel.
- **Dinner at Sikwa** with Ken and Eve Klothen for those arriving in time. Sikwa is a restaurant devoted to honoring “ancestral cuisine” as maintained by Costa Rica’s indigenous groups and reinterpreting it in the context of contemporary high cuisine. It was recently named one of the 25 best restaurants in Latin America.

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana**.*

Friday, January 9 — Pre-trip Extension

Costa Rica’s Indigenous Peoples and Their Contributions to Contemporary Art and Society

- **Over an early breakfast at the hotel**, we will have an informal talk on Costa Rica’s pre-Columbian art by Professor Lauran Bonilla-Mechav. Luran is a professor of art history at the National University of Costa Rica.
- **From breakfast we will go to the campus of the University of Costa Rica** for a tour of their biological reserve, which attracts many species of birds and has a resident population of sloths.
- **After our tour we will meet with members of the Studio Arts ceramics faculty** at the university. We will have a chance to see some of their work, as well as that of their students. The professors will also tell us about an ongoing university project to assist indigenous potters in the northwest town of Guaitil in preserving their centuries-old ceramics tradition.
- **Lunch TBD**
- **After lunch we will visit the Jade Museum**, which houses the largest collection of pre-Columbian jade objects in the world, displayed to provide a glimpse into the lives of the objects’ creators.

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Friday, January 9

Mas Bienvenidos!

- **Arrival** in San Jose, Costa Rica *for those **not** participating in the pre-trip extension.* Transfer to hotel.
- **Welcome dinner** at Machu Pichu, the Peruvian restaurant that started San Jose's taste for international cuisine.

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.***

Saturday, January 10

Introduction to Costa Rica's Art and Culture + Studio Visits

- **Breakfast lecture** at the hotel by Lauran Bonilla-Mechav, professor of art history at the National University of Costa Rica, on Costa Rican art from the colonial period to the present.
- **After breakfast we will tour the famous Gold Museum**, recently remodeled to display its outstanding collection of pre-Columbian gold objects with more historical context and explanatory signage.
- **Next we will tour the National Theater**, one of Costa Rica's most beautiful and unique buildings. The National Theater was built by coffee barons in the late 19th century to give the Costa Rica an opera house to rival those of their European mother countries.
- **Lunch TBD**
- **After lunch we will visit the studio of Carolina Guillermet**, an abstract artist who explores color and shape in various media, including tapestry.
- **Dinner TBD**

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.***

Sunday, January 11

A Major Museum Collection, Studio Visits, and a Culinary Experience

- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Studio visit to Rossella Matamoros.** Rossella is one of the ‘deans’ of the Costa Rican art scene. She is an accomplished artist in many media, including: drawing, sculpture, installation, painting, video, performance art, and set design. Rossella is intensely interested in combining art forms, and in linking old and new. She is also a social activist, using art to empower young women from marginalized communities. Rossella was recently named by *Forbes* one of the 100 most influential women in Central America.
- **Afterward we will take a tour the Museum of Costa Rican Art,** housed in the former terminal of what was the country’s only airport – now the city’s central *La Sabana Park*.
- **Lunch at Soda Tapia,** an iconic *soda*, or diner/luncheonette, known for its 1950s US-style soda shop décor and as a popular family gathering spot on Sundays.
- **In the afternoon we will visit the studio of Mauricio Herrero.** Mauricio is a printmaker both steeped in Costa Rica’s rich print making tradition and committed to the use of the latest technology to push that tradition forward. He is also a valued mentor to many younger artists just starting their careers and often introduces us to some of their work alongside his own.

Overnight at Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.

Monday, January 12

Studio Visits

- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Studio visit to Adrian Arguedas.** We will leave the city for the outlying town of *Barva de Heredia*, where we will visit the studio of one of Costa Rica's most celebrated painters and printmakers. Both the town of Barva and Adrian are steeped in rich folklore traditions that influence Adrian's work — as do the politics of Central America.
- **After our visit** we will have lunch at the restaurant of the *Hotel Bougainvillea*, a beautiful country hotel with spectacular gardens that we can explore.
- **Studio visit to Philip Anaskin.** We will then journey farther into the countryside to visit Phillip Anaskin. Philip is a young figurative painter who was named Costa Rica's top visual artist in 2023. His family emigrated to Costa Rica from Russia when he was two years old. His powerful work focuses on a variety of social issues. Phillip's studio is on his family's compound, where his sister Olga and her husband, both highly regarded artists, also live and work.
- **Dinner at *Cafe Otoya*,** a long-time artists' hangout that always has something interesting hanging on the walls and coming out of the kitchen.

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.***

Tuesday, January 13

More Art to Explore

- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **After breakfast we will visit the nearby studio of Ivannia Lasso**, an artist who uses materials gathered in poor neighborhoods to produce constructions that comment on contemporary social issues. Ivannia is breaking onto the international scene, having recently exhibited for the first time in the U.S. Her partner José Carlos Muñoz is also an accomplished painter who will have some work on display.
- **From the studio visit we'll make a brief visit to the National Museum**, housed in a former army base and barracks. In 1948, it was from here that the abolition of the Costa Rican army was announced. The museum has been renovated recently to provide a glimpse into the development of contemporary Costa Rican society. It also houses beautiful examples of the mysterious pre-Columbian spheres that were a hallmark of indigenous civilization in the area. The museum's entrance is a lovely butterfly garden — a great way to convince yourself that you have left the cares of life in the United States behind, at least for a while.
- **Lunch TBD**
- **In the afternoon we will visit the workshop and gallery space of ConArte**, the leading art conservation and restoration consultancy in Costa Rica. The staff at ConArte always offer us a fascinating glimpse into the intricacies of their work, which has ranged from restoring a client's beloved childhood toy to restoring all the decorative work in the Grand Salon of the National Theater. ConArte also represents some of the best artists in the country and often has excellent work on exhibit and for sale.
- **Fine dining in small groups.** By now you are sophisticated *josefinos y josefinas*, ready to sample the upscale restaurants of the region on your own. We will divide our group into sub-groups to visit some of the region's finest restaurants. Each group will be joined by someone from Costa Rica's art world for lively conversation and a fun evening.

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.***

Wednesday, January 14

Studio Visit and Transfer South

- **Early morning breakfast** at the hotel, then departure. (Some luggage may be stored at the hotel, as we will be returning for the night before we leave Costa Rica.)
- **Studio visit to Deirdre Hyde.** Deirdre came to Costa Rica from England as an illustrator on a scientific expedition and never left. Her work in painting and mixed media is grounded in Costa Rica's natural wonders but reaches out from there in many directions.
- **After the visit we will head for lunch** (on your own) to the food court at *Plaza Tempo* — definitely not your average mall food court. It is modeled after Madrid's famous *Mercado de San Miguel* and offers everything from Costa Rican *gallos* (sandwiches on tortillas) to falafel and on to baos.
- **After lunch we will board the bus for the drive south** to Dominical on the Pacific coast — an approximately 3.5 hour drive. We'll stop halfway in Tarcoles for ice cream at the Pop's (Costa Rica's national ice cream chain, featuring tropical fruit flavors!) and a glimpse at the residents of the banks of the Tarcoles River.

*Dinner and overnight at **Hotel Cuna del Angel.***

Thursday, January 15

Rainforest Adventures

- **Optional guided bird walk** on hotel grounds for early risers.
- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Zipline tour or guided nature walk** at *Hacienda Baru*, a private nature reserve encompassing multiple habitats — ocean beach, riverine zone, mangrove, secondary forest, and primary rainforest. *Hacienda Baru* hosts healthy, sustaining populations of many species of birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. The reserve prides itself on hiring guides from the immediate local area and training them to professional licensure level, as well as employing local people in all of its other operations.
- **Lunch at Restaurant Mirador Don Roger**, a local place with a beautiful view of the famous “Whale’s Tail” formation off the Uvita beach.
- **Balance of afternoon at leisure:** hotel pool, air conditioning, bar, or additional guided nature walk in the area.
- **Dinner at *Restaurante Los Laureles in Uvita*.** This is Ken and Eve’s (and many other locals’) favorite place to dine. It is also the home of absolutely the best fish tacos and *patacones* in the universe (seriously) — *patacones* are fried non-ripe plantains, topped here with a variety of meat and vegetables to make *nacho patacones*. *Sabrosito!*

*Overnight at **Hotel Cuna del Angel**.*

Friday, January 16

River Cruise and Archeological Site

- **Early breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Boat trip** to view wildlife on the *Sierpre River*.
- **Lunch on your own** en route.
- **Visit archaeological site** at *Finca 6*. We are traveling in the Diquis area, in which the majority of the mysterious pre-Colombian stone spheres have been found. Finca 6 was a banana plantation on the grounds of which the remains of what appears to have been an ancient religious site was discovered. It is now a national museum location with an informative visitor's center.
- **Picnic dinner** of Argentine empanadas and pizza at Ken and Eve's home in Uvita.

*Overnight at **Hotel Cuna del Angel**.*

Saturday, January 17

Transfer to the Highland Coffee Country

Carry a light sweater and long pants for mornings and evenings.

- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Morning at leisure;** guided nature walk in the area for those who wish.
- **Late morning departure for Copey** in the Dota region of the Los Santos highlands.
- **Lunch en route at a local *soda*** with beautiful views of the valley below.
- **Tour of an organic farm** growing many high-elevation fruits, for which this region is esteemed.
- **Afternoon check-in** at Toucanet Lodge.
- **Dinner at the lodge**, which serves impeccably fresh trout from nearby trout farms just up the road.

*Overnight at **Toucanet Lodge.***

Sunday, January 18

The Magical Quetzal and Costa Rica's Grano de Oro

- **Early light breakfast** at the lodge.
- **Early morning tour to view quetzals**, the beautiful long-tailed green bird sacred to the Maya.
- **Lunch at *Paraíso del Quetzal Lodge***, an eco-lodge that coordinates the cooperative effort to track quetzals' locations for groups like ours.
- **Tour of the Coopedota coffee cooperative plant** to learn about the process of producing coffee from plant to roaster. We'll also receive an introduction to cupping, a technique for assessing characteristics of various beans and roasts.
- **Dinner at the lodge.**

*Overnight at **Toucanet Lodge.***

Monday, January 19

Return to San Jose

- **Breakfast** at the lodge.
- **Morning departure** for San Jose.
- **Lunch en route.**
- **Studio visit to Rolando Faba**, who describes himself as a “conceptual artist who paints.” Rolando spent much of his career in Spain but returned recently to his native Costa Rica because, he says, “it is a more fruitful place for me to work out the ideas that matter to me in this stage of my life.”
- **Return to the hotel.** Balance of afternoon at leisure.
- **Farewell Dinner at Emiliano’s Gastro Pub**, a small restaurant serving sophisticated Continental cuisine in a pretty, private room.

*Overnight at **Hilton Garden Inn La Sabana.***

Tuesday, January 20

Don’t Say Adios, Say Hasta La Próxima, Costa Rica

- **Breakfast** at the hotel.
- **Transportation to the airport will be provided** for your flight, arranged to arrive at the recommended time of two hours prior to takeoff.

PLEASE NOTE:

- All activities are subject to change based on weather, road, or other conditions or factors not subject to the control of the trip leaders and guides. A sense of flexibility and openness to the unexpected will greatly enhance your enjoyment of this trip.
- The workday in Costa Rica begins in the wee hours of the morning for many, and delivery vehicles frequently work at night to avoid heavy traffic. Also, all manner of birds tend to announce the dawn in the manner of, well, birds. If you are a light sleeper please consider bringing earplugs or a white noise generator of your choice.