

Chirripó: Costa Rica's Summit

Date:

Anytime of the year (subject to reservation).

Four days, three nights

Especially for:

People of any age and gender, who enjoy doing outdoor activities, achieving new challenges, visiting an internationally famous place, making new friendships and living an unique experience.

Where are we going?

We will visit the summit of the country:

With 3,820 meters above sea level (MASL) -12,550 feet-, **Chirripó's Summit** is the highest peak in the country and the second highest in Central America (second to Tajumulco, 4,210 MASL, in Guatemala). However, Chirripó's National Park is unique for its particular natural richness, its unforgettable glacier landscapes and the easy access offered by its trails. This Park was declared as a Biosphere Reserve in 1982, and a World Heritage Site in 1983.

What will we do at the Tour?

Trails and Sites we'll visit:

- **Day 1. Transportation to San Gerardo (160 km, 4.5 hours).** We will depart from San José at 8 am, making a ½ hour stop at Chespirito's restaurant, for coffee. The arrival to San Gerardo de Rivas (El Pelicano Hotel) will be at about 1:30 pm.
- In the afternoon we'll enjoy an to the Clouds Bridge Falls in San Gerardo de Rivas.
- **Day 2. Climb (14.5 km).** After breakfast, at 4:00-5:00 am, we'll start hiking at 5:15 am, from El Pelicano Hotel in San Gerardo de Rivas (1,520 MASL). The slow pace demanded by **El Termómetro Slope** (km 0, 1,520 MASL) and **Los Monos Tract** (km 1, 1,739 MASL), allows you to enjoy beautiful sunrises with landscapes comprised by prairies, forests, canyons, and the impressive Urán Row or "Paso de los Indios", where the Urán and Ventisqueros mountains stand out. Later, the **Cementerio de la Máquina Row** (km 2, 1,990 MASL) and **El Jilguero Tract** (km 3, 1,990 MASL) lead to the entrance to the Park, where there are forests with trees covered by lichens, moss, bromeliads and orchids. After a journey of about 7 km in at least 4 hours, we will have a well deserved rest at **Llano Bonito** (km 7, 2,400 MASL), where a small hut from the National Park works as a shelter for having a snack and refill our water bottles. The following 3 km (**The Water Slope**) are



magical, since the landscape and the slow pace appeal to a lonely walk and self meditation. Suddenly, at km 11 (3,096 MASL) your senses are shocked by **Los**

Quemados Tract, comprised by thousands of hectares of ghost trees, burned during the latest fires caused by hunters. Finally, at the foot of the **Old Refugio de Piedra** (3,183 MASL), the **Los Arrepentidos Slope** starts (km 13), which is the last self determination test, before getting to **El Páramo** (km 14.5, 3,393 MASL), in front of the impressive **Crestones**, and the goal at the end of the day: **El Páramo Environmentalist Center Shelter**.

- **Day 3. Climb to the summit and more (19.5 km).** After an early breakfast, we'll start hiking at 6:00 am, in order to reach the summit of the country preferably before 9:30 am, when it is most likely to be clear. We will first go through **Los Conejos Valley** (km 2.3), an interesting U-shaped valley because of glaciations, then the **San Juan Lake** (km 4.3), called "tortirrica" because of its tortilla-like shape, where besides, starts the Chirripó Pacífico river. Later, there is a sharper 500 m slope until reaching the final goal: the peak of **Chirripó Summit**, at 3,820 MASL (km 5). From there, if it is clear, the landscape is simply unforgettable: the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, Quepos, Caño Island, Osa Peninsula; the peaks of Turrialba, Irazú, Poás and Barva volcanoes; the Villa Mills Towers, and the challenging Dúrika, Kamuk and Barú peaks. In the surroundings, almost at the same height, there stand out the peaks of **Ventisqueros** (3,812 MASL), the Urán Row and, at the foot of Chirripó, **Las Morrenas Valley**, a complex of glacial lagoons (where the Chirripó Caribe river starts) that you will try to visit inevitably (+2.5 km). After Las Morrenas, we will go downwards to Los Conejos Valley (+4 km), and then to **Terbi Hill** (+2.5 km, 3,760 MASL), one of the coldest sites in the country, because of its constant breeze. After passing over the Pronto Row (+1 km) we will get to the emblematic **Crestones**, undoubtedly the symbol of the Park, given its magnificence and the paradisiacal views that surround the place, especially at sunset. At last, the descent to the shelter (+3.5 km) is through a zigzagging trail that ends at Talari River.
- **Day 4. Descent.** After breakfast (6:00 am), the return to San Gerardo de Rivas starts. Walking downward slope allows appreciating and enjoying the extensive variety of plants and landscapes of the zone with much more tranquility. It is recommended to walk at a slow and safe pace (at least 5 hours) to avoid unnecessary injuries.

Flora and Fauna:

About 3,000 MASL there are life zones called "páramo" (high plateau), where vegetation is stunted, without any high trees, about 4 m high and sometimes so mix up that it is considerably difficult to go through. One of the most common species here is the "**chusquea**" or the **Batamba "cañuela"**.

Another life zone present is the cloudy forest, wet and cold, that has oak and holm trees up to 50 m high, always green, stunted top, **coriacea** leaves and acorns as fruits. It is characterized by a big amount of arborescent ferns, moss, bromeliads, palm trees and orchids scattered among the different stratum of the forest.

Among the animals we can locate in the area there's **saíno**, tapirs, squirrels, jaguars, rabbits, coyotes, toads, frogs and big variety of birds, such as goldfinch, hummingbirds, **mosqueritos**, nuthatch, **reinitas escarcheras**, and the metallic green quetzal, bird that feeds from a type of **Laurácea** called **ira** or **aguacatillo**, worms, insects, reptiles and small amphibious.

Facilities:

The Park has facilities that provide accommodation services. The food will be provided by personnel hired by Ecogiras, to guarantee quality and a good service (we'll enjoy a typical menu). The trails in the Park are very marked, and in the Park administration there's a managed public phone.

Logistics:

Mk Connection has tried to cover every unexpected aspect of the logistic of this Tour. From that point of view, we'll have some materials that we hope will cover any contingency, such as: sanitary napkins, toilet paper, adhesive tape, first aid kit, material for repairing backpacks, etc.

Medical Assistance:

We advise everyone to bring their own personal use prescribed medication. Additionally, brings a first-aid kit with basic medicines, such as acetaminophen, bandages, alcohol, migraine relievers and others.).

We warn you not to start any medical treatment just before the Tour, due to unknown side effects.

Guides and specialized personnel:

The specialized guides are highly qualified in group handling, camping, and mountaineering and with an ample experience in outdoor activities and ecological field trips.

Transportation:

Deluxe bus and coach with A/C. They have all applicable permits and insurance policies required by law, for the tranquility and safety of participants; as well as the rescue capacity on the road, in case of mechanical difficulties.

Physical effort:

The physical level is high and not recommendable for people that have to limit exercise for medical reasons. For those who don't have this restriction, the dynamic of the walk is individual and at your own rhythm. We can assure you, after the experience of several years, that the key to reach the top doesn't consist on physical condition, but attitude towards the challenge.

Requirements:

Previous reservation and payment.

Minimum of 2 people.

Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

About alcohol consumption, it should be moderate. However we reserve the right to limit activities in case of disorder, as well to limit the participation of those under the influence of alcohol.

Details to remember:

Bus: departure, stops, route and return

1. For each group, the bus leaves Day 1, at 8 am from of Costa Rica Hotel in San José.
2. We'll follow the route Cartago-Pérez Zeledón-San Gerardo de Rivas.
3. On our way, we'll have a stop in the restaurant Chespirito for snacks.

Return will follow the same route backwards. For each group, the bus will leave the last day of the Tour, from San Gerardo de Rivas towards San José around 3 pm and will get to San José approximately at 8:30 pm.

Accommodations and meals:

- **El Pelicano Hotel:** It will offer accommodations Day 1. It's located in San Gerardo de Rivas, 2.5 km away from the park entrance and that's why the adventure starts with the transportation in pick up trucks from the hotel to the park entrance. The hotel belongs to a local family, with a warm customer care. It's rustic, the rooms have bunk beds or 2 twins, and shared bathrooms. Breakfast is included Day 2
- **El Páramo Environmentalist Center:** It will offer accommodations Days 2 and 3. It's located inside the park, in km 14.5, in Crestones Base. It has shared rooms, with 2 bunk beds and shared bathrooms.

Meals:

Day 1, it's included lunch and dinner at the Hotel El Pelicano restaurant; Day 2, breakfast (4:30 am) at the Hotel El Pelicano, plus a snack to go. Our cook, exclusive for the group, will be in charge of preparing all the meals in the Crestones Shelter. Arriving to Crestones, you will enjoy a delicious and stimulant lunch and warm beverages. On Day 3, breakfast (5:30 am), a snack to go and lunch once we get back to the shelter after our walk through out the park. Later we'll have dinner. Day 4 includes breakfast (6:00 am) and a snack to go. Lunch on Day 4 will be at the Pelicano Hotel.

Our Itinerary

DAY 1

08:00 am	Bus leaves in front of Costa Rica Hotel
03:00 pm	Tour to the Cloud Bridge Falls
06:30 pm	Dinner at El Pelicano Hotel

DAY 2

04:00 – 04:30 am	Breakfast and snack to go
05:00 am	Starts climbing to Crestones Environmentalist Shelter
09:30 – 10:00 am	Rest stop and snack at Llano Bonito (km 7)
03:00 – 4:00 pm	Check in at Crestones Environmentalist Shelter
06:00 – 07:00 pm	Dinner

DAY 3

05:30 – 06:00 am Breakfast and snack to go
07:00 – 10:30 am Climb to Chirripó Mountain (5 km)
11:30 – 01:30 pm Return to Los Conejos Valley (+4 km)
01:30 – 05:00 pm Visit to Terbi Hill (+2.5 km) and Los Crestones
05:00 – 6:00 pm Return to Shelter (+ 3.5 km)

DAY 4

06:00 – 06:45 am Breakfast and snack to go
06:45 – 01:30 pm Descent to San Gerardo de Rivas
01:30 – 02:30 pm Lunch and Change of clothes and bus
boarding
03:00 – 08:30 pm Transportation to San José

Other Options:

In case there are people who has visited previously Chirripó National Park, and wish to visit new places that that won't be visited this time, they can do so as long as they use one of our walkie-talkies, and report to the expedition guide as frequently as indicated.

Be prepared!

Essential Accessories:

Sun protection lotion
Two 600 ml water bottles or canteens
Small flashlight
Cap or hat
Rain cape, poncho style
Garbage bag
Small backpack

Not essential accessories:

Binoculars
Lip balm
Mosquito repellent
Not Denim pants (we recommend a light fabric easy to dry)
Whistle
Changing clothes (socks, pant and shirt)
Sweater

Extra money for any personal eventuality

Amount and type of Clothing:

It's preferable to take along clothes specially design for walks, it's much more comfortable because is lighter and looser. Avoid wearing denim clothing, since it's very heavy and friction burns the skin. The clothes you wear on the way there can be left in the Hotel El Pelicano (They lend us a room), and use it again on the way back. Take a change of clothes per day. We recommend pants that can take off the sleeves, and look like shorts. Use wool socks, thick and preferable seamless. Take a thick wool sport pant to sleep, and a coat, gloves and a wool hat.

Type of shoes:

At Chirripó you cannot experiment with shoes. You must have worn them in vigorous walks previously. In San José, there are several stores that sell special shoes for trekking or hiking. They're light, soft, with good ventilation, some dry fast, they have great traction in mud and rock trails, and some also have different types of curves in the sole, depending of the type of foot. Take an extra pair of shoes, soft and warm to use exclusively in the shelter, they can be tennis shoes.

Bedding and sleeping bag:

You have two possible options, to take your own sleeping bag or to rent one at the El Pelicano Hotel; its cost is per night. If you decide to take your own sleeping bag, this has to be for temperatures from 0 to 2 °C, the ones sold to use at the beach are not warm enough. You can consider taking your own bedding and pillow. Rooms at the park don't have bedclothes.

Personal hygiene essentials:

You have to take a medium towel, light weighted, the biodegradable soap and shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, toilet paper, sanitary napkin (a lot of women will have their period before time) and some garden plastic bags to protect dry clothes and keep the one already used, and some small bags with hermetic zipper for the electronic equipment (cameras, film, etc.)

Bag, backpack for the walks and porters:

The best option is for you to pay the local porter to carry up and down your luggage; the cost is \$45,00 per kilo each way (approximately). A well prepared bag doesn't normally weigh more than 14 kilos. To pay for the service gives you lots of advantages, avoids you possible injuries, you get less dehydrated, you save energy, and you have more freedom to enjoy yourself and you don't need a special bag because the porters have their own bags. You only have to give it to them very well packed in garden plastic bags to avoid your belongings to get wet. Besides, bring a small backpack to carry the basics (small flashlight, rain cape, light coat, water and the snack) during the walks.

Trekking poles:

It's very important to avoid injuries due to falls or slips, gives a lot of balance. Some stores sell special trekking poles for walking, around \$50. A broom stick works wonderfully because it's strong, light and cheap.

Meals before and during the Tour:

Nutritionists recommend that two days before the trip to Chirripó you add to your diet meals richer in carbohydrates. The reason is very simple, daily walks make your body demand much more energy than it normally does and this high energetic demand has to be compensated. For this reason, the menu that will be offered during the Tour is based in soups, pasta, rice and beans, etc. We always contemplate vegetarian options.

Snacks and extra budget:

There are no stores in Chirripó, so you can take anything else you consider necessary. Sweets and chocolate and granola bars give you a lot of energy. Finally, take along some extra money in case you decide to rent a sleeping bag. On our way back, we'll stop at a restaurant (approx. \$10.00).

Water & Hydration:

Bring two 600 ml water bottles to drink during every walk. On the way up to the Chirripó Mountain, there's water at two places of the trail (Llano Bonito and the start of Arrependidos). At supermarkets you can find hydrating powders, 3 packets are enough (try them before the trip in San José).

Protect yourself very well from the sun:

From January to April is the best weather to go to Chirripó. Rain possibilities are very low, but you must be prepared for everything. Take along a raincoat, a cap or a light hat, sunglasses, a least 30 SPF sun protection lotion and a lip balm with sun filter because the height makes solar radiation to be very high everywhere will visit.

Recent studies recommend the constant use of sun protection lotion, even in our daily activities. For this reason, as you can imagine, it is a must during this trip, because we will be exposed to the sun for many hours. It is important to have a plenty sun block dosage to avoid sunburn.

Included Services:

This amount includes transportation on a luxury bus San José-San Gerardo de Rivas-San José, 3 breakfasts, 3 snacks, four lunches and 3 dinners, accommodation for 3 nights, National Park entrances, Medical insurance, specialized guide services and trekking poles.

Not included Services:

Porters payment for the luggage.
Blankets or sleeping bag rental.
Tips.

Payment Options:

Once your reservation is confirmed, you can proceed to make a bank deposit or Internet transfer to:

1. Mercadeo y Conexión Uno S. A.

- ❖ Banco de Costa Rica: Cuenta corriente en colones #308-248-8
- ❖ Banco de Costa Rica: Cuenta corriente en dólares #206-212-7
- ❖ Banco Nacional de Costa Rica: Cuenta corriente en colones #100-01-002-0013985-7
- ❖ Banco Nacional de Costa Rica: Cuenta corriente en dólares #100-02-002-0601045-2

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More Information and Reservations at:

Telephones: 2430-6841

Fax: 2430-7062

Email: karla@mkconnectioncr.com

magaly@mkconnectioncr.com

Some Hints

Internet use

Internet service will be available at the Pelicano Hotel, however it will be limited to one work station.

Schedule

In respect to everyone in the group, we strongly ask you to be on time arriving to every activity, as even the enjoyment of some activities and landscapes depend of the starting time of the activities.

Luggage

At Chirripó clothing is essential, that's why a bag or backpack well prepared with the essential, shouldn't weigh more than 18 pounds. We want to mention that you can pack in any kind of bag, this is not an issue to porters. Remember to bring a small backpack for the everyday walks (indispensable)

Weather

The weather in Chirripó National Park is kind of unsettled in terms of rain, so we ask you to be prepared so this doesn't become an issue.



Batteries & Films

Electricity, phones and cameras:

The Park loads some batteries during the day with solar panels to have light only in the dining room from 6 to 8 pm. For this reason, don't forget to bring along a small and light flashlight, with alkaline batteries. In the shelter there's a managed public phone (2770-8040) for short phone calls, but it doesn't work when it's cloudy. Cell phones have very good signal in every high and open places (Bosque Quemado, Chirripó Mountain, Terbi Hill, Crestones, etc). If you carry a camera or video camera, bring some extra batteries because there's nowhere to charge them, and some plastic bags to protect them from the rain

Additional meals

Meals at restaurants on the road are not included in the rate.