



# Condé Nast Traveller

JUNE 2019 £4.90

## OFF-GRID ADVENTURES

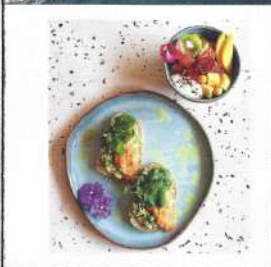
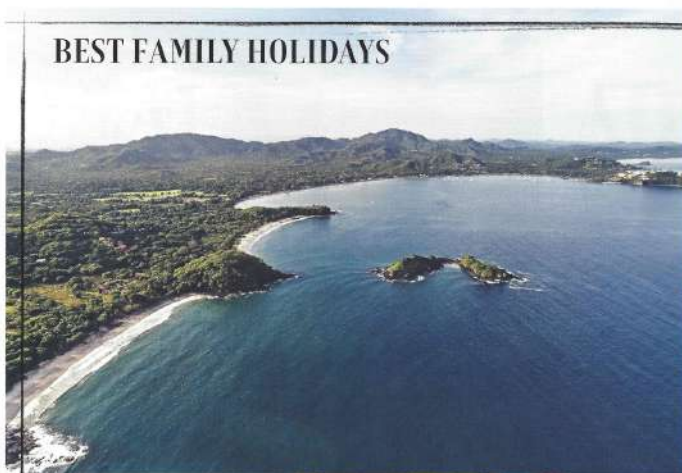
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GUIDE

THE  
WORLD'S  
BEST  
FAMILY  
HOLIDAYS  
2019

GALLIVANTING IN CHILE, IBIZA, TASMANIA, ICELAND, INDIA & GREECE



## BEST FAMILY HOLIDAYS



THERE ARE SLOTHS,  
NEVER-BLINKING  
CAIMANS, VIBRANT  
GREEN LIZARDS  
AND TOUCANS,  
PLUS GENTLE-  
GIANT IGUANAS  
SNOOZING  
BY THE POOL



### JUNGLE AND BEACH EAST COAST, COSTA RICA

'Most people go to Costa Rica and busily criss-cross from coast to coast in an attempt to see absolutely everything. We wanted to focus on getting a real flavour of the country's Caribbean side. Arriving by tiny plane into Tortuguero National Park, bumping along the skimpy tarmac strip between remote rainforest, river and coast was scary. The sort of fear which, when your heartbeat finally slows, makes you hug your children tight, grateful to be alive. We came for the adrenalin rush, though, to this unspoilt wilderness, to explore the waterways by kayak (no roads here) amid warm downpours; to see a family of spider monkeys holding canopy branches together as a makeshift bridge across the river, to spot never-blinking caimans, sloths, vibrant green basilisk lizards and toucans, plus gentle-giant iguanas snoozing by the swimming pool at Tortuga Lodge. After our jungle expedition, we headed south to the hippie surf area around Puerto Viejo de Talamanca. This tropical backpacker spot is just, gently, starting to smarten up with cool restaurants and bars. It's still a place to ride bikes to the beach for snorkelling, or pootling about on a boat; to eat Cajun chicken or *rondon* fish stew, and chill to reggae or calypso music with a cold Imperial beer. The Hotel Aguas Claras here is truly lovely, a collection of cabanas on stilts, dotted among steamy gardens. Playing card games in the balmy warmth under wooden fans, drying out after our last swim of the day, we listened to the stereo call of howler monkeys and macaws across the forest. The rooms are filled with locally made artworks designed by owner Elizabeth Steinvorth. Everything is vibrant and colourful, tasteful and original. Just past the hotel's back gate is a sweep of wild beach, for surfing and boogie boarding, with lessons at hand in the nearby Rasta-loving town of Puerto Viejo. This is Costa Rica's new cool side.'

**INSIDER TIP** 'Visit the Bribri tribe, a bumpy 90-minute drive and one-hour canoe trip up the Yorkin River towards the Panama border, to share a home-cooked meal with an indigenous family. The forest is a source of food and medicine; they soothed our unacclimatised tummies with amargo bark, known as bitterwood. It's an eye-opener for 21st-century Western kids.'

**BOOK IT** Steppes Travel offers an 11-day trip to Costa Rica from £3,155 per person based on a family of four, including accommodation, some meals, guided excursions, a Bribri community visit, transport and flights. +44 1285 601 050; [steppestravel.com](http://steppestravel.com)

BY SOPHIE PITHER