

# Our Favorite Memories

## Costa Rica Adventure & Discovery

By Tour Leader Debra Asberry

*It's who you travel with* that makes a destination truly memorable, and in the case of WTT's trip to Costa Rica this was especially true. Sixteen women traveled to Costa Rica, eight of whom were taking their first trip with *Women Traveling Together*. When the group first gathered in the hotel lobby, I asked everyone to look around at their traveling companions and explained that while we were just meeting, in 10 days time we'd become great friends having shared wonderful experiences together. The veteran WTT travelers nodded their heads in knowing agreement while the eight first-time travelers looked expectantly around the room.

Our group began to bond very early in the trip when we rafted the Pacuare River. Considered one of the top five rivers in the world for scenic beauty and white water excitement, we put on life jackets and got instructions on paddling commands from our river guides. Off we went with six women to a raft working to paddle as a team. Before we knew it, the rafting trip was over and we arrived at a lovely lodge perched riverside in the rainforest. There were hammocks to lounge in, good food to enjoy, walks to take, exotic flowers and wildlife everywhere but a main topic of conversation was how much fun the rafting had been. We laughed and laughed as each woman shared her rafting story. This was our first of many shared experiences throughout the week that transformed us from new acquaintances into friends.

Throughout the trip each place we stayed was its own miniature wonderland, from the riverside lodge to La Quinta Country Inn and its lazy river, to the Magic Mountain Inn with the Arenal Volcano in its back yard and finally to our last stop at the fabulous, all-inclusive Pacific Ocean Resort. Each hotel we stayed in was unique in its own way and definitely added to the entire pleasurable experience of the trip.

Have you heard the song "When the Volcano Blows" by Jimmy Buffett? It goes something like: "I don't know where I'm gonna go when the volcano blows." While we were never in any danger, our group got a real feel for this tune during our stay near the base of the Arenal Volcano. The first time the Arenal began one of its minor eruptions, we didn't know it was the volcano because it sounded like a loud thunderstorm rolling in. It was an experience like no other to feel the rumble of the earth and see the belching smoke and lava flowing. Our local guide informed us we were incredibly lucky to have witnessed this because while the Arenal is known to spew rocks, it rarely releases lava. This demonstration of Nature's awesome power was another shared experience we talked about as the trip continued.

If I described all the marvelous things we did, I'd be writing pages and pages—4 wheeling into the rain forest, soaking in hot springs, waterfalls, lizards(!) and so much more—but to put it in a nutshell, our time in Costa Rica was packed with new experiences, adventure and lots of fun. Of course the perfect trip must include a day of doing nothing which is exactly what we did at our last hotel, the fabulous all inclusive, Pacific Ocean Resort. We floated in the huge pool that had palm trees growing in the middle, swam in the ocean and walked on the beach just a few steps away, visited the shops, picked up a cool drink at the swim-up bar and just lounged in small groups. The day just drifted by in such agreeable harmony that it was over all too soon.

On the last evening, as our group farewell dinner was winding down, I reminded my new friends of what I had told them the first day of the trip... that we would become great friends having shared wonderful experiences together. This time, every woman in the group nodded her head in agreement. ❖



Rafting the Pacuare River—what a blast!

I received an email from Lynda after our return from Costa Rica. She shares my opinion that it's who you travel with that makes for the best travel experience.

Debra-  
I'm having Costa Rica withdrawal! The trip was fantastic, with great experiences, good accommodations and tasty food. The best part of the trip was fantastic women who were traveling together. The women were interesting, all had different stories, perspectives and experiences and by the end of the trip, I felt I'd made 16 new friends.

- Lynda 50+ Florida



Debra on the beach at the Pacific Ocean Resort.



Enjoying the beauty of a waterfall.



Photo op--one of many in Costa Rica.