



CENTRAL SOUTH AMERICA

Ample lodging options for Costa Rica explorers

By Judy Koutsky | Oct 29, 2014

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What makes Costa Rica so great for kids is that each day can bring a different adventure, particularly when it comes to wildlife encounters: sloths while ziplining, toucans on a hike



Photo by Judy Koutsky

A Mawamba Lodge canal tour.

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through a cloud forest or howler monkeys during a canal tour, to name but a few.

There are plenty of activities to keep kids busy during the day plus plenty of family-friendly accommodations in which to spend the night. **Mawamba Lodge** in Tortuguero, just outside Tortuguero National Park, bills itself as "a tropical lodge in the heartland of the rain forest," and that's the perfect description. The focus is not on the interior of the rooms; they are perfectly fine, clean and simple with a bed (or if you're traveling with kids, beds), bathroom and shower. But you'll spend little time in the rooms; instead, the kids will love seeing the large iguanas roaming around the grounds and crawling up the trees throughout the property.

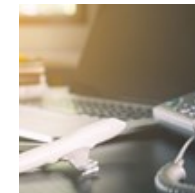
The resort offers a plethora of excursions: canal tours, evening walks to see the turtles nesting on the beach, village encounters. Three meals a day, served buffet-style, are provided in the room rate. Meal options include freshly caught sea bass; ripe, local pineapple, papaya and watermelon; an array of salads and pastas; and yummy local desserts.

Another great option is **Trogon Lodge** in San Gerardo de Dota, an ecoresort nestled in the cloud forest in the southwestern part of Costa Rica. It's about 2 1/2 hours from San Jose but worth the journey. Architecturally, the design of the hotel is such that it blends in with the lush, green vegetation that surrounds it. Tropical flowers and plants are found throughout the resort. Kids will enjoy the hike (it actually starts right from the lodge) through the cloud forest where magnificent quetzal birds can be seen. With their red chests and long green feathers, they're simply gorgeous, and kids love to see how many they can spot while walking with the naturalist.

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A beautiful, kid-friendly property about 10 minutes outside Manuel Antonio National Park is [Parador Resort & Spa](#). The resort is expansive, and with just 129 rooms it never feels crowded (even at full occupancy, like it was when I visited). The amenities are great for families: three pools (one adults-only), three restaurants, a spa, gym, kids club and lots of walking paths. The views of the Pacific Ocean are amazing. This is a good base to spend some time in Costa Rica's most visited national park, Manuel Antonio.

For an overnight in San Jose, try the [Alta Hotel](#), a 20-minute ride from the airport. This boutique hotel is located in the suburb of Alto de las Palomas, a relaxing oasis from the hustle and bustle of San Jose. The views of the countryside from my balcony were the ideal spot for my morning *café con leche*. The food at the hotel's La Luz restaurant is sourced from local suppliers and is often organic. Besides being sustainable, it's all quite delicious.

There's also a good-size pool, a nice touch after a week of traveling. The property is a great last stop on a Costa Rican adventure tour with the family.



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