

## The Pacuare Lodge: Whitewater Thrills, Ultimate Isolation, Pure Bliss

Aventuras Naturales, a San José-based river rafting tour operator, runs several rivers in Costa Rica. Highly trained professional guides, a flawless operation, and well coordinated excursions make for a great trip - not to mention the spectacular natural scenery. Their Pacuare run, on one of the world's five best whitewater rivers, ranks as one of Costa Rica's best tours.

### The Trip:

An extended, leisurely but thrilling two-or three day rafting trip down one of the world's best class III and IV whitewater rivers. In between days you'll pull up to a secluded, rustic jungle ecolodge with elegant modern touches, enjoying a 74-acre primary rainforest reserve, private waterfalls, natural mud masks, gourmet cuisine, and unmatched natural peacefulness.

### The Accommodations:

The two-story lodge and the individual thatched-roof cabins are comfortable and serene, offering sublime comfort without a trace of flamboyance or extravagance - but no detail is overlooked, either. There are no roads or electricity for miles, and all supplies are floated down the river.

Torches and candles mark the way. As the lodge is near the rustling river and is ensconced in primary rainforest, the gentle rhythms of the jungle sing you to a deep sleep. Rafter Melissa Azofeifa said, It's an impressive example of fine attention to detail and a simple way of life. The Pacuare Lodge is a great mix.

### The Extras:

After happy hour, your guides will cook a fantastic gourmet dinner by candlelight, warmed up with wine. The guides have been trained by a French chef, and these gruff backcountry folks can whip up quite a meal.

Incredible blends of flavors and great conversations with fellow travelers makes for a memorable experience. Optional tours include a canopy tour through the top of the rainforest, hikes through the forest floor, and trips to local Cabécar Indian settlements.

Near the cabins is an ice-cold waterfall tumbling into a crystalline pool. Rafters can take a dip or make natural mud masks, enjoying the feeling of true, responsible communing with nature without leaving behind any creature comforts.

### Highlights:

There are too many to list here, but even though the lodge is impressive, nature takes center stage. Some of our favorites:

#### Two mountains canyon:

Here the current slows down enough so that rafters can safely throw themselves overboard and swim between the sheer narrow cliffs that soar up from both sides - so steep that sunlight only enters for around an hour each day.

#### The Graves:

Several extensive whitewater sections send rafters through foam-capped waves, demonstrating the power of the rapids.

#### The Rest of the River:

Ample stretches of lazy, languid glass-like water slowly take you past the pure jungle setting: dense, lush forest begins at the water's edge; wild jungle songs emanate from the many species of land mammals and birds; in fact, many people run Costa Rica's rivers especially to see the scores of birds, monkeys, sloths and other animals that reside near the river.

The Pacuare River was the setting for footage in the movie Congo, and the crystal-clear whitewater provides 18 miles of an excursion into the interior of Costa Rica, where the air is sweet with tropical fruits, thick with spraying water, and buzzing with the electricity of rafters stoked to ride one of the world's best rafting rivers.