

Photo journal from my adventures

-London and beyond



[A week of](#)

[adventures in Costa Rica {Press Trip}](#)

[/?author=56b8cacb859fd0951bc60bb6](#)September 21, 2019

{Disclaimer: I was guest of [Visit Costa Rica](#). All opinions are my own.}

Back in June, I boarded an 11 hour direct flight to San José, the capital of Costa Rica, and spent a week exploring this beautiful verdant Central American country. The Happy Planet Index ranked Costa Rica No. 1 in the world, one thing contributing to this is not having a standing army since 1948, the government has used the savings from defense spending to improve education, health care and a durable social safety net.

We spent most of our time immersed in nature, surrounded by no other sound than the ones coming from the rainforest, which it took me a while to get used to. The first evening, however, we stayed in the capital and fought the jet lag for an interesting (and delicious) gastronomical tour in Barrio Escalante with [Carpechepe](#). We had our first taste of Costa Rican food and were introduced to dishes like patacones (fried green plantains) and fruits like cas (known as Costa Rican guava or sour guava).

The day after, we drove to **Sarapiquí**, a popular destination for nature lovers due to the biodiversity that can be found here. **Costa Rica accounts for only 0.03 percent of the earth's surface. However it contains nearly 6 percent of the world's biodiversity.** Its natural wealth, both in species and ecosystems, is partly explained by its geographical position. The drive to Sarapiquí offered us some breathtaking views, as we drove through one of the many national parks and it was a glimpse into what we were about to experience. We stayed in lodges at [La Quinta de Sarapiquí](#), where we enjoyed the proximity to the river, its facilities includes a butterfly house, two swimming pools. We were able to spot a red eye frog on our first night, and enjoyed a dip in the pool from where we were able to observe some howler monkeys.



Casado is a Costa Rican dish with ostaric meal using rice, black beans, plantains, salad, a tortilla, and either chicken, beef, pork, fish.

This is where we had our first typical Costa Rican breakfast, which has to include Gallo Pinto, the literal translation is "painted rooster," Gallo pinto is rice and beans and it is usually eaten at breakfast with scrambled or fried eggs. Not only I enjoyed the food in Costa Rica, the coffee is also excellent and I have drunk endless amount of cups.

During our stay in Sarapiquí, we had a chance to experience different activities:

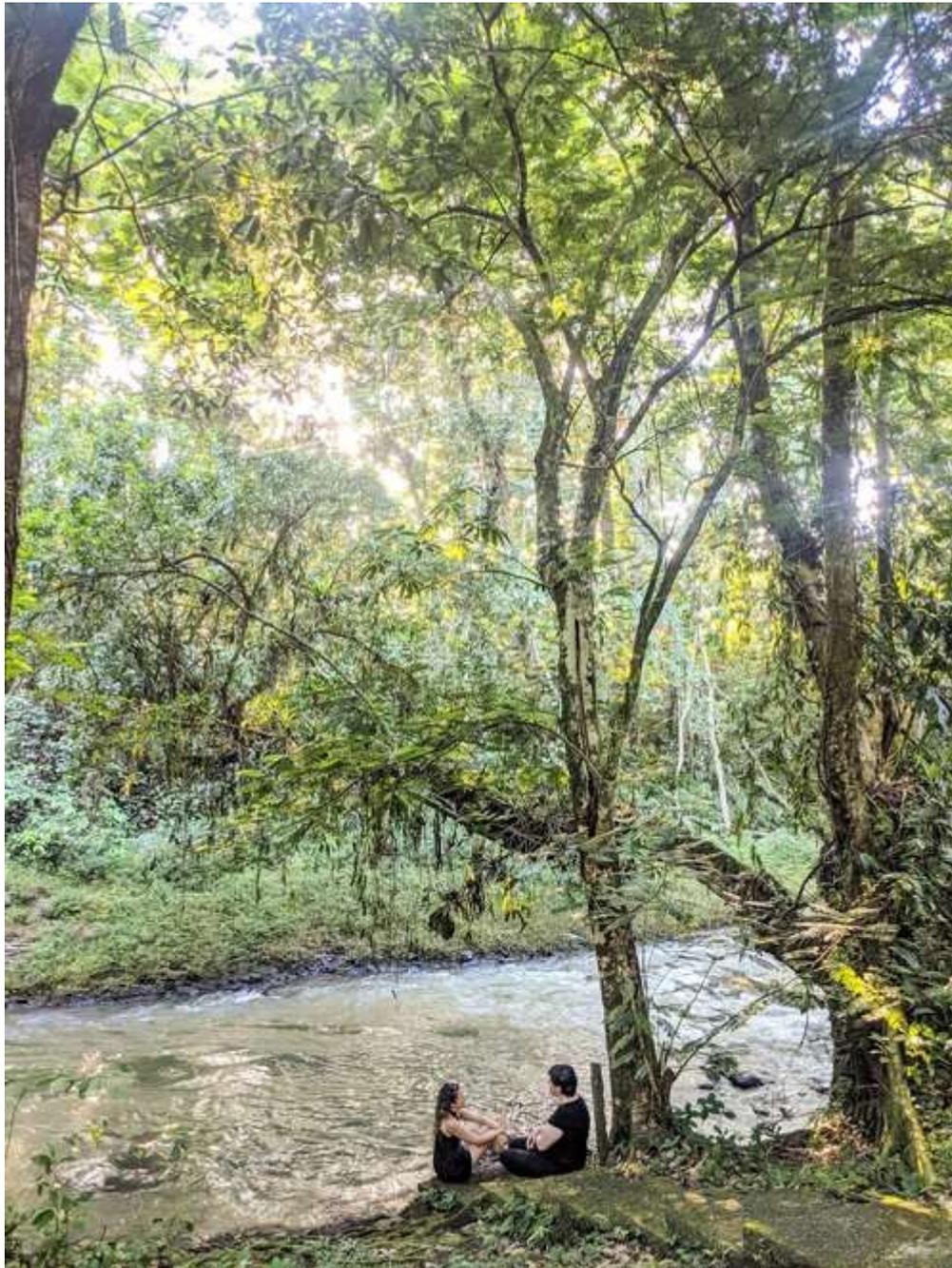
- [Chocolate tour](#) - (they offer other tours too) this is not just a chocolate tour, the aim is to educate both locals and visitors about climate change. Every year, as the temperature of the planet increases by 1%, the rainforest has 30% less growth. We also spotted our first sloth, before learning more about how chocolate is produced.
- [Water rafting](#) - a highlight of the trip, like any other water activities, we spent over 2 hours descending the river facing rapids between class III and IV, we were first, of course, briefed on safety and commands were explained (paddle forward, paddle backward, lean, etc.). An adrenaline filled afternoon, that I would have repeated straight away, even just to enjoy the wildlife from the raft's perspective.
- Ant tour - fascinating to learn about ants and how they operate, there are over 1000 species of ants in the world and 600 species can be found living in Costa Rica.
- [Tirimbina](#) visit - a protected area (345 hectares) and home to so many species, including 110 species of mammals and over 1400 species of butterflies, Tirimbina Rainforest Center is an educational, scientific and ecotourism destination, located between the forests and rivers of Sarapiquí, We protect 852.2 acres (345 hectares) of tropical rainforest. Their mission is to protect a resource of exceptional biodiversity through environmental education and scientific research that promotes conservation.



One of the two pools at [La Quinta de Sarapiquí](#).



[La Quinta de Sarapiquí](#)



Me and [Em](#) enjoying the morning light



[Tun](#) reading a book



Charlie from [The Travel Project](#)



After a couple of days in Sarapiquí, it was time to make our way to our next destination and move to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica- **Tortuguero**, often referred to as the Venice of Costa Rica due to its web of canals that pass through the dense rainforest. There are only two ways to reach Tortuguero: by plane or by boat- our hotel, [Mawamba Lodge](#), provided boat transportation from La Pavona and it took us around 40 minutes to reach it, and it was another journey that left me mesmerised by the beauty of this country, we even stopped when the boat driver spotted a small crocodile.

Tortuguero definitely has the wow factor as a destination, from the way you reach it, to being surrounded by beautiful landscape everywhere you turn: either the ocean or the rainforest. I could have happily stayed there the entire week. It is very popular as inhabited by turtles.

We had a packed agenda whilst in Tortuguero, however we also managed to enjoy our s

- **Tortuguero National Park visit**- both on foot and by boat- I particularly loved the boat tour, where we spotted capuchin, howler and spider monkeys! Visitors pay a daily fee to enter the park.
- **Kayaking** - another first for me, we were up very early, and got to our starting point by boat. I found kayaking tiring, it is very physical, but so peaceful. We observed some spider monkeys and even a snake.
- an afternoon walking around Tortuguero, the city, such a colourful and vibrant town.



[Mawamba Lodge](#)



The pool at [Mawamba Lodge](#)



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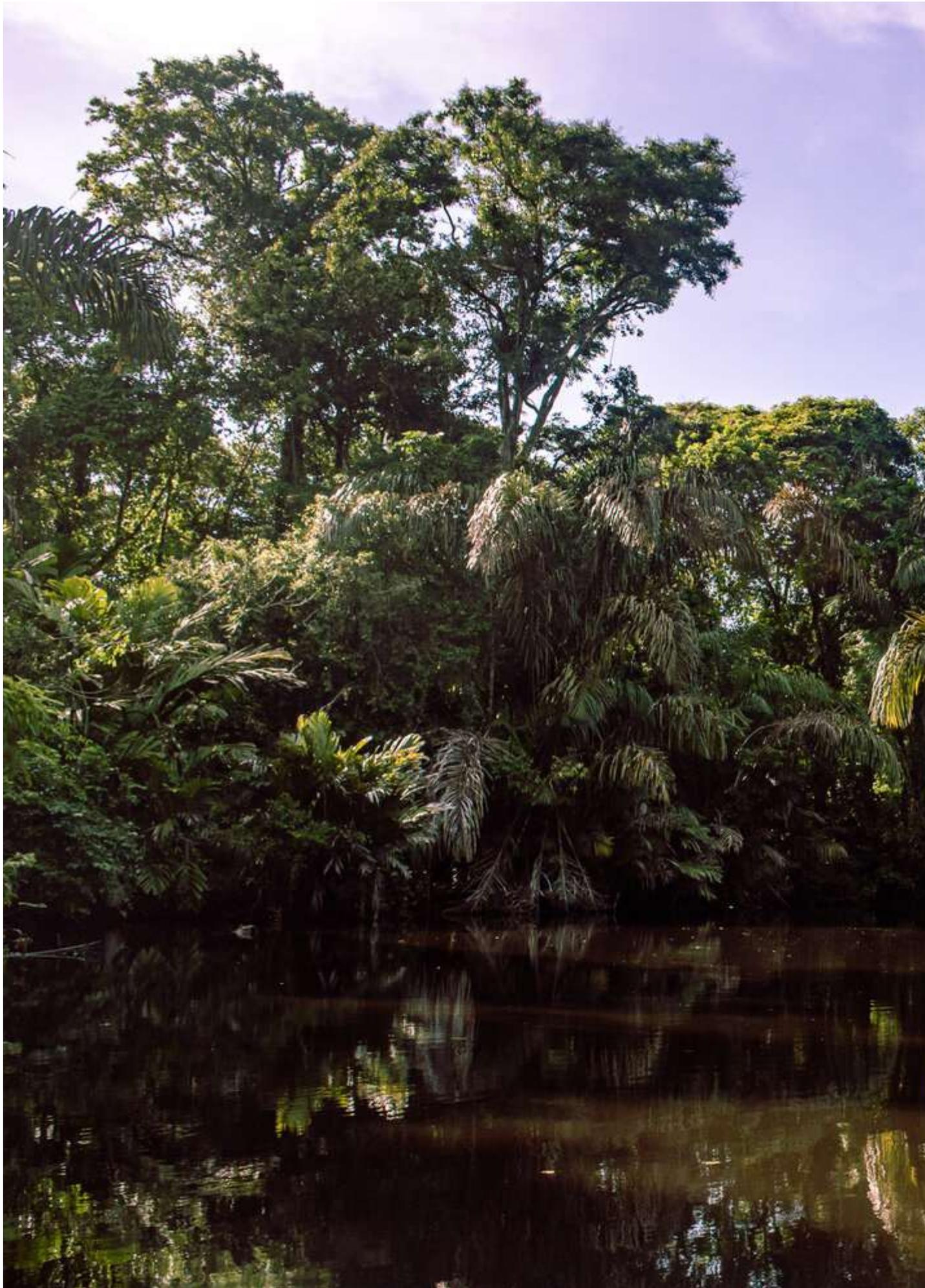


















The view from [Red Snapper](#)

Sadly, time to leave Tortuguero and take the boat back to La Pavona, ready to drive to our next destination: Limon for lunch with the best view and seafood at [Red Snapper](#), from there you can see Uvita, which hold a lot of historical importance to Costa Rica as it is where Christopher Columbus landed in 1502.

From there we continued to Puerto Viejo. The scenery outside our van window was changing again, as we approached the coastal city, we were driving alongside the ocean till we asked the driver to stop to capture the sunset.

Magical.

Our last days in Costa Rica, we stayed in another great lodge in Puerto Viejo, [Namuwoki Lodge](#), where, on our first evening, I had a close encounter with a racoon, whilst sitting by the pool trying to catch up with my loved ones.









Puerto Viejo has some amazing beaches, and 85% of tourists visiting the area are Europeans, but there is so much more to the area.

- [Sloth Sanctuary](#) another highlight of the trip, we met Buttercup, the first sloth rescued when she was only a month old by Judy (the founder) 27 years ago. Usually baby sloths would stay with their mum up to a year, but BUttercup's mum was struck by a car. Judy had rescued other animals (crocodile, frog) but never a sloth and when she contacted zoos for help, everyone said that sloth don't do well in captivity. She then decided to keep Buttercup. At the time of our visit, there were 170 sloths in the sanctuary.

They started a hotel (so one can book a stay at the sanctuary) and bird watching tort fund the animal rescue.

- **Park national Cahuita**, where we also did **snorkelling** the coral reef here is the third most important reef in the world.
- **We spent our last morning wandering around Limon**, since instead of driving back to San José airport, we were surprised with a flight there (with the most amazing views!).



Buttercup at the [Sloth Sanctuary](#)



Buttercup at the [Sloth Sanctuary](#)

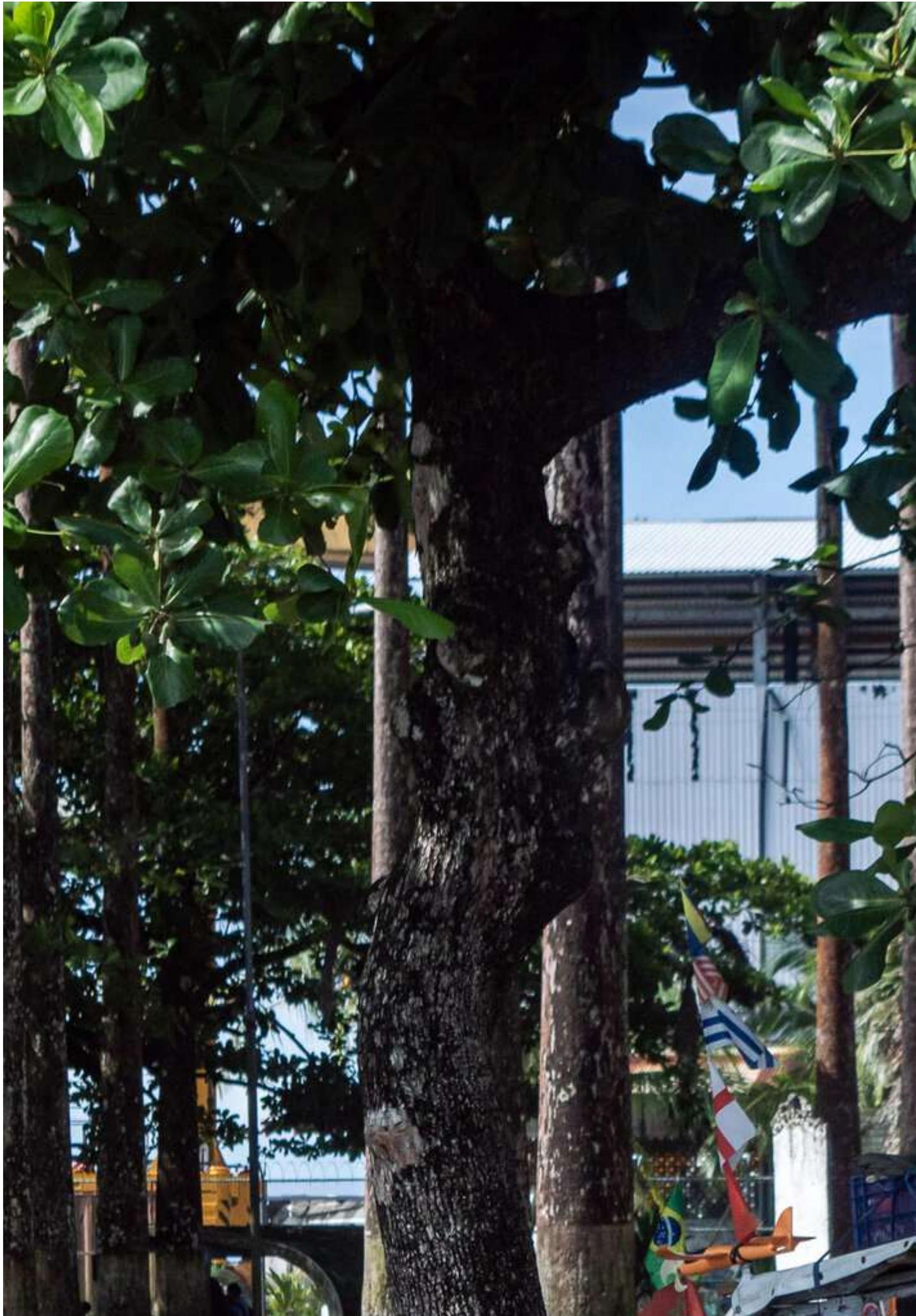


Buttercup at the [Sloth Sanctuary](#)



Buttercup at the [Sloth Sanctuary](#)

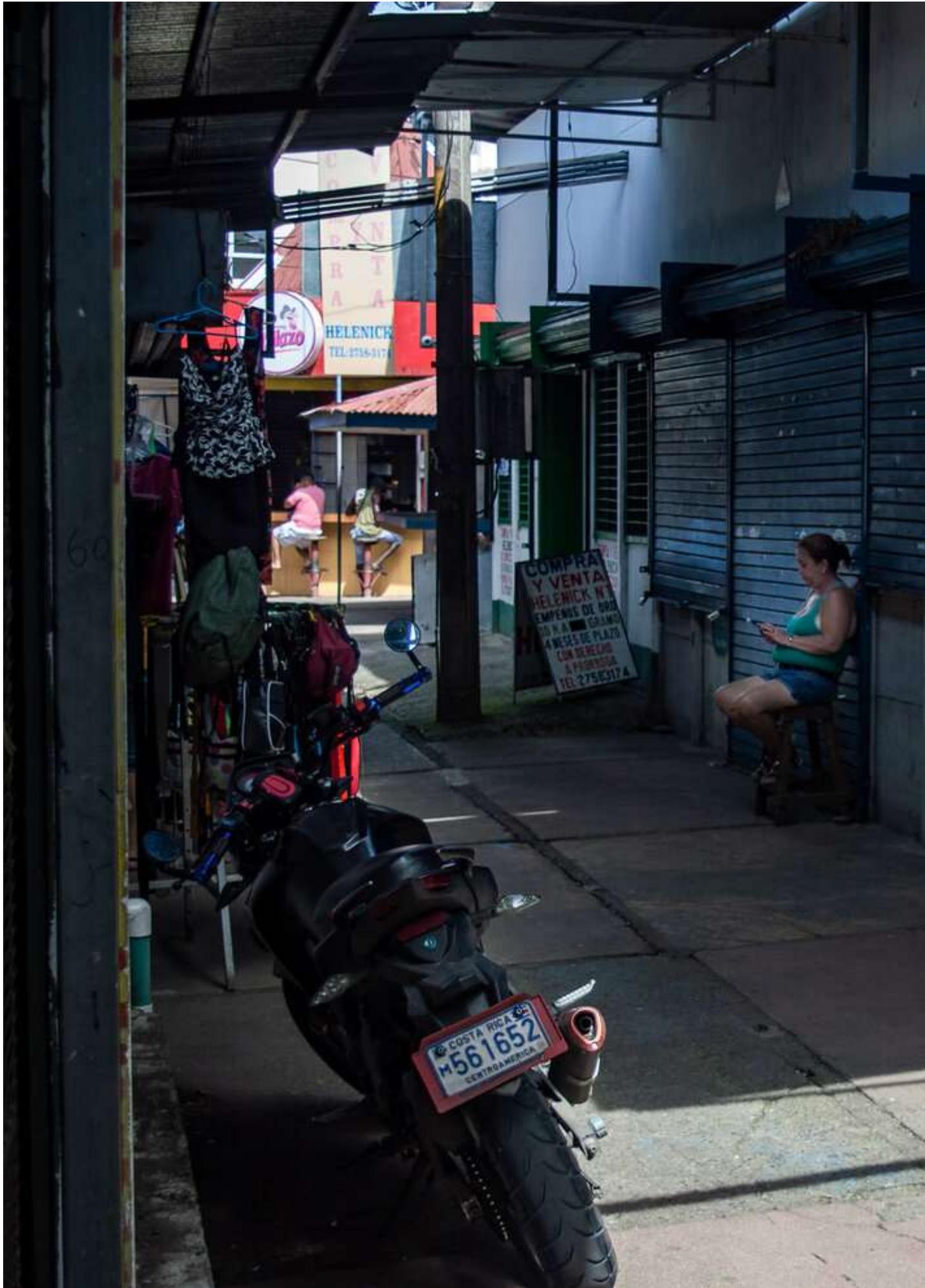


















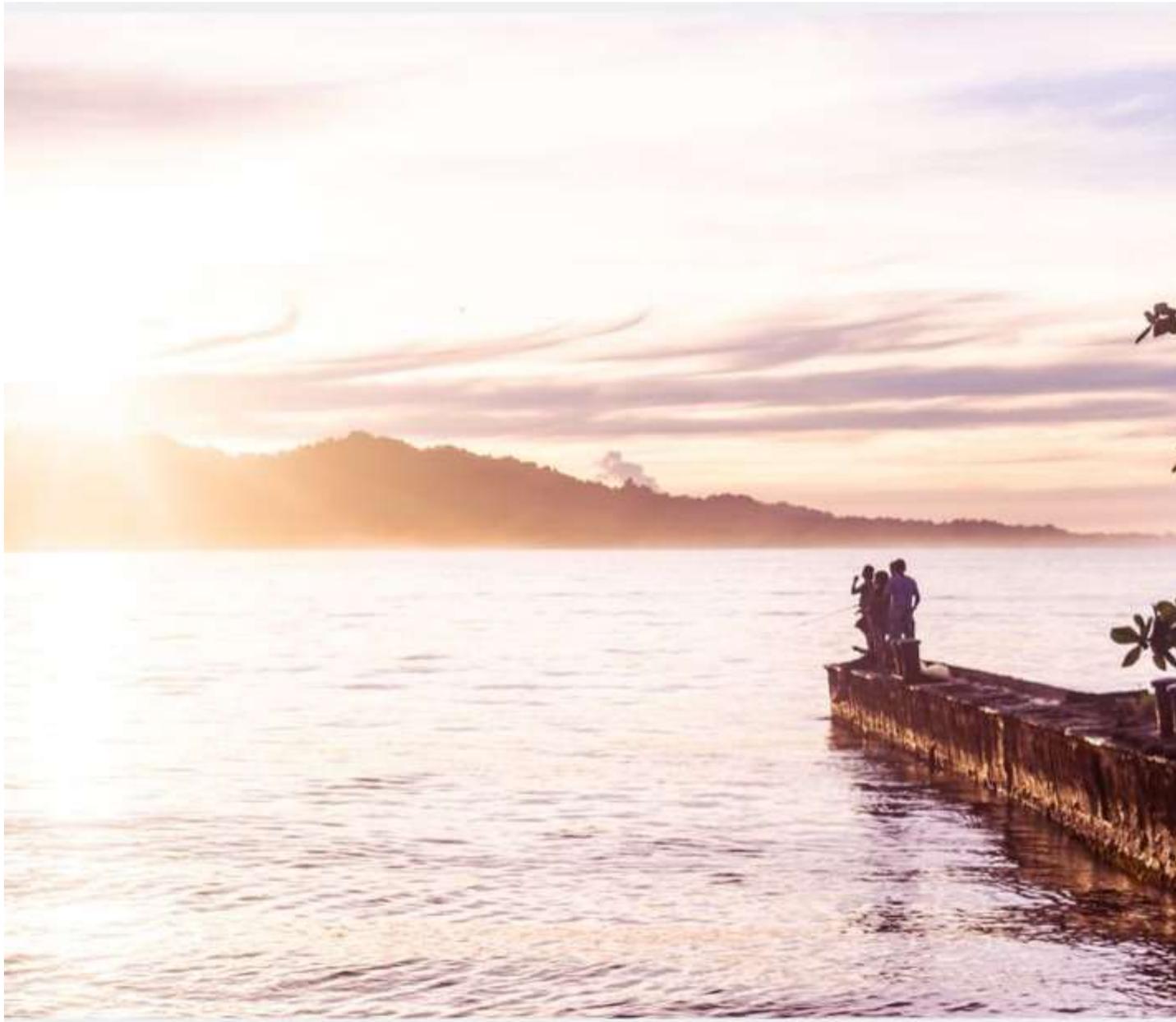


A week in Costa Rica is definitely not enough, however in seven days I learnt and seen enough to recommend this country to anyone who loves nature, water sports and delicious food. You wont be disappointed and you will be guaranteed a great welcome from the Ticos (Costa Rican).

I was also very impressed by how much more environmental friendly and sustainable the country is compared to the UK- it seems everyone is making an effort to meet the aim of the country to be a green, emission-free and inclusive economy. Even the smallest restaurant was using biodegradable straws.

At the beginning of this year, Costa Rica launched a plan to make Costa Rica one of the world's first decarbonized countries at an event in San José.

I highly recommend packing mosquito repellent, sun protection and never going out without applying both.



**A week of
adventures in
Costa Rica**

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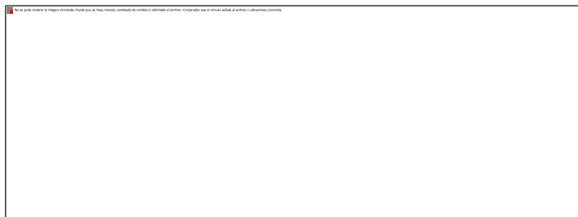
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• Hello, I am Steffi, I consider myself an adopted Londoner - even though I still have a very strong Italian accent, who loves to travel and is always looking for a good cup of coffee and brunch. I enjoy discovering new corners in the city I live and travelling to new places.



Me in Amsterdam, photo by [@ekkieboy](#)
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Took Kamil to Holland Park today, I can't believe he is 21 month old (or nearly two as I always say). He spent the... <https://t.co/QwTQnGoVEi> Oct 23, 2019, 8:01 PM

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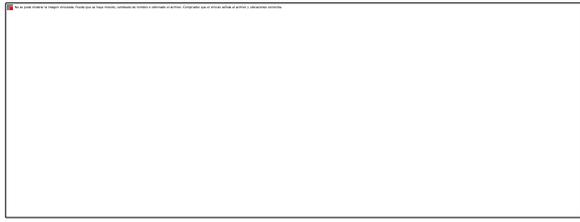
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