

April 8, 2008

Hi,

I made it back from Costa Rica sunburned, but otherwise OK. It was a tour arranged by Adventure Life of Missoula, Montana. I spent the first night in a nice hotel in San Jose and the next morning, me and Tim, a 41 year old software engineer from Boston and the only other person on this particular tour, were driven to Bananito Lodge, which on the east side of the county, on a huge, remote farm at the foot of the mountains. We each had a cabin to ourselves. The cabin had solar-heated water, but there was no electricity and no phones anywhere. Meals were served family style in the "rancho". More guests arrived after the first day, a couple from Switzerland and a family with 2 children from Santa Barbara, CA.

"Activities" were offered. We learned how to climb a rope up a tree, went on a horseback tour of the farm, rappelled down a waterfall, and hiked. It got dark at 6:00, so we stretched out dinner - by candlelight - as long as possible, but I usually got to bed by 9:00. Although my cabin was wide open, there were no mosquitos or other critters. We saw a lot of leaf cutter ants and several poison dart frogs (see attached photos).

After a couple days, we were driven to Shawanda lodge, a short walk from the Caribbean beach 4 miles south of Puerto Viejo in the southeast part of the country. That place was nice too, with a great restaurant - elegant dining that I wouldn't have been able to afford had meals not been included in the package. From there we went on a snorkeling trip, followed by a nature walk in a national park. The next day, we were picked up and taken back toward San Jose for a rafting trip on the Reventazon River, a big, beautiful river with lots of rocks and rapids. There were 4 or 5 rafts, each carrying 8 paddlers and a highly-trained guide. It was a wild ride. We got soaked, but the water was warm. After the trip, we were driven back to San Jose.

It was a good trip, but would have been better if I wasn't travelling alone.

Steve