

Foodorama

Letter # 21: Family Break in Costa Rica

By Foodorama, April 24, 2019



After two days waiting at “La Union” in El Salvador we finally manage to connect Nicaragua by boat and thus avoid crossing Honduras. We land, always in intense heat, on a deserted beach and have to wait 2 hours at the customs that the electricity comes back to cross the border... The countdown is launched we have more than a week to find Kalima’s family in Monte Verde - Costa Rica.



Fortunately along the coast Nicaragua is flat and we cross it quite quickly. It's getting hotter and we dream of the mountains of Costa Rica where we'll find Kalima's family but also a little freshness. While we are soaked with sweat and climbing on a pebble road near Monte Verde, a car honks us, and guess who gets out? Kalima's family who offers us a triumphant welcome in the middle of this piece of countryside in Costa Rica. Alban – Kalima's brother and Sylvain's great friend - takes us in his arms, he is accompanied by his wife Margaux, his parents, Bernard and Thérèse-Marie and a newcomer... the little Milo who was born at the beginning of our trip and who is only 5 months old. This is the first time we meet him in the flesh! Great moment of emotion!



Now is the time to enjoy together all the beauties of the country. 25% of the territory of Costa Rica is occupied by national parks and protected areas. There is 6% of the world's biodiversity, an incredible wealth of flora and fauna. We start with the cloud forest of Monte Verde where we observe the birds and the canopy from hanging bridges. We even do a zip line, including one more than half a mile above the trees. Thrills to be like a bird for a few minutes.



Difficult to make an inventory of all the animals that we crossed as they are so numerous here. We must look as well on the ground, on the trees as above our head. We did some walks with guides to allow us to have more chance to cross the local fauna! On the ground we saw some beautiful snakes including the dangerous viper Schlegel. We crossed it at night near a path, twisted on a liana waiting for its prey. That night we also had the opportunity to find some big tarantulas at the entrance of their burrows. On the ground we also had the chance to see armadillos! Do you know this strange animal? We also see iguanas everywhere!



In the trees we can observe 3 types of monkeys: howler monkeys (they wear their names very well because they wake us up in the morning from our shelter), spider monkeys but also Capuchins with white faces! We often meet them, even on the roads and in the cities. Sloths are also present in this small country the size of Switzerland. These animals are very slow, which is why they are called lazy in French.



But the nicest thing here in Costa Rica is watching the birds! We could see birds bells (which have mustaches), Arras (huge red and yellow parrots), Toucans (with their big beaks) but especially Quetzal, this emblematic bird of Guatemala (there, the local currency is called the Quetzal and there is even a city called Quetzaltenango). They are hard to see and we had the chance to observe them thanks to a guide who brought us close to one of their nests. We had to wait 20 minutes for the female to come out of the nest and about 15 minutes later, the male arrived. The female and the male are distinguished mainly by the feathers of their tails. Those of the male are much longer and therefore much more impressive. It was an extraordinary sight. The guide even helped us take a video of the male with his binoculars!



In the middle of these 2 weeks of "bike holidays" we also took the time to meet Eric from the Kokopelli association for our documentary on sustainable food. But we'll talk about it in the next letter...



Another 3 days to enjoy a family time. We are now towards Chirripo volcano further to the south of the country with Alban, Margaux and Milo, Kalima's parents having stayed only the first 4 days, the time of a stopover between France and the USA where they go regularly. But we really had time to enjoy together...



We will keep all these beautiful memories to help us pedal and hold until Chile during the next 6 months!
Blessings Sylvain and Kalima