



Horizontes Company Profile

Horizontes Story (in a few words):

In 1984 Horizontes was founded by two college friends who decided to challenge the advice of industry pro's and open a small travel agency with focus on nature tours. Ecotourism had not yet been born. But these two young professionals were spurred on by the love of their country and the idea that Costa Rica's breathtaking forests and wildlife were meant to be shared.

Intimate guided trips to areas of great biodiversity with a flawless operation quickly became central to the Horizontes travel experience. In its office, the message "Reduce, reuse and recycle" resonated throughout all departments and among its principal suppliers from back in the early years.

Today, its commitment to sustainability is as strong as ever, with annual monetary donations to local and international conservation organizations, as well as direct funding toward the preservation of Corcovado National Park, on Costa Rica's southern Pacific coast.

In 2006, the company was honored for these and other efforts with the Corporate Green Globe award by the New-York based not-for-profit Rainforest Alliance. The same year, Horizontes earned the highest possible 5-leaf certification for sustainable tourism with Costa Rica's official certifying body (CST). In 2007, the travel company designated \$10,000 to pay for the Environmental Services (fresh air, clean water, scenic beauty and biodiversity) through a reforestation project in the Corcovado area.

Leading in Ecotourism

Since 1984 Horizontes has been designing guided natural history programs that encourage the understanding, appreciation and conservation of tropical environments. We promote low impact itineraries led by local naturalists of high expertise who are environmentally and culturally sensitive. Horizontes participates in planning councils for "ecotourism" and collaborates with research in this field. Our commitment to conservation through tourism includes ongoing donations for the protection of natural areas, research, community projects and improvement of park services in Costa Rica.

We keep current on global and local conservation issues and are members of several international and national environmental organizations. Horizontes is a

sponsoring member of The International Ecotourism Society.

Standards of Service

Horizontes promises unforgettable vacations that are educational and fun.

Every itinerary is customized and designed for value driven travelers. We aim for a communication that is friendly, professional and helpful. All new requests are answered within 24 to 48 hours.

Experienced, Professional Staff

Horizontes' knowledgeable and experienced personnel enjoy excellent working conditions and ongoing training. The resulting low turnover in staff means a consistently professional service for our clients.

Office Staff: Our Sales and Operations staff is well traveled within Costa Rica, they are able to draw on personal knowledge of our country's attractions and services, when designing and operating itineraries. Many have also traveled abroad extensively, enabling them to gain a global perspective on standards of service and international tastes.

Over the years, they have developed a clear understanding of the needs and expectations of the international traveler, by fostering open communication with our clients, and by carefully analyzing feedback from tour participants and guides, alike.

Members of our staff take active roles in tourism industry affiliations such as the Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators, the National Chamber of Tourism and the Association of Tourism Professionals.

Field Staff: Our guides, we have been told, are among the finest in the world. They have been leading nature-based and adventure tours for several years.

Their interpretation of Costa Rica's nature, history and culture ensures the quality of experience that our discerning travelers are seeking. Horizontes provides ongoing training in passenger care, and in specialized subjects such as biology, history, culture and conservation issues. We send our guides to other countries - sometimes to learn, sometimes to teach.

A Wide Range of Services

Groups: Our group itineraries are all custom-designed, in accordance with the specific requirements of our clients, and constitute 75% of our business. Horizontes operates general natural history tours as well as special interest itineraries for activities such as birding, botany, photography, culture and folklore. We also develop educational tours for adults and students, with topics relating to

our country's outstanding performance in the areas of human rights, education, conservation, peace studies and different fields of agriculture. Often, these tours are part of a credit course. Horizontes has operated highly successful travel programs for organizations such as the Smithsonian Institution, the World Resources Institute, the University of Toronto, Cornell University and Stanford University - to name but a few. We also count some of the most respected and long-established international tour operators among our valued customers. A list of those operators is available, upon request.

FITs - Independent Travelers: Horizontes works with a number of local ground operators whose tours are noted for their excellence. These tours form part of our FIT programs, usually a component of a custom itinerary. We also offer our own pre-designed, soft-adventure packages. Thus, we have a wide choice of options for your clients. All FIT itineraries are designed to suit the visitor's interests, budget and physical condition. Moreover, we take particular care to recommend the most appropriate activities and destinations, in accordance with the time of year and special events that might be taking place during their stay. For the more independent traveler, Horizontes provides custom, 'self-drive' itineraries. Private tours with a naturalist guide are also arranged.

Special Interest Cruise Ships: Several years ago, our company began operating shore excursions for small, specialty cruise ships of 60 - 120 passengers. The cruise ship companies, which include Costa Rica in their programs for organizations such as the National Geographic Society and the American Museum of Natural History, have found that Horizontes consistently meets the high expectations of their clientele.

Research and Development: One of the most important aspects of Horizontes' service to our clients is our dedication to first-hand knowledge of the product we sell. Not one area of the country, not one hotel or other service is included in a Horizontes itinerary, unless someone from our staff has inspected it first hand. Our full-time research department keeps up to date with new hotels, restaurants, private reserves, tours and other services that have proliferated as a result of the recent growth in tourism to Costa Rica.

Horizontes is pleased to work with clients who share both our conservation and business philosophy.