

RICA VIDA

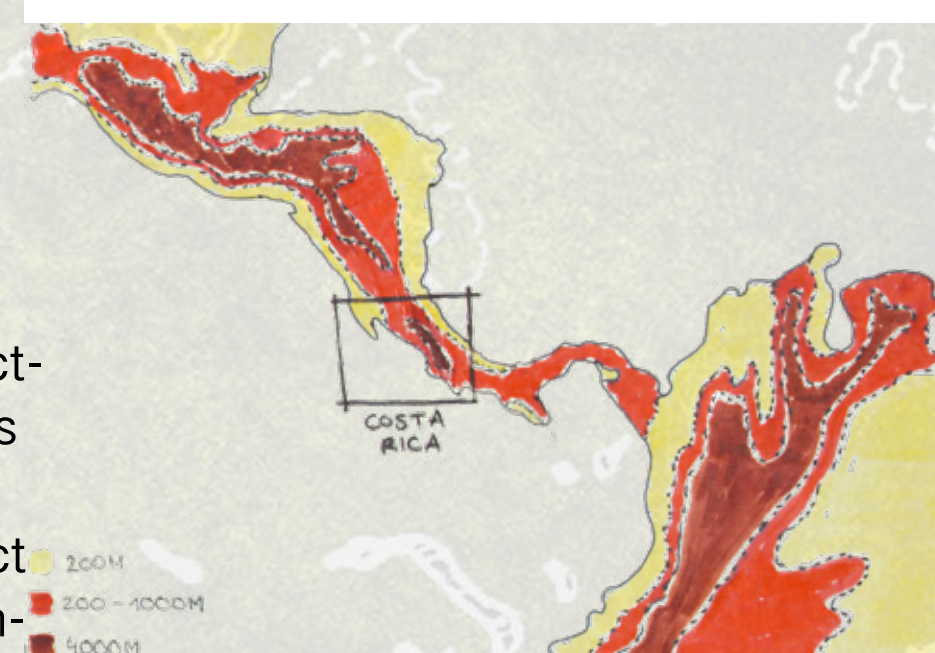
A future where nature, food and tourism are combined in both rural and urban areas



5 percent of the world's biodiversity belongs to Costa Rica. On one hand this is thanks to the geological formation and the resulting microclimates that form a habitat for different species. On the other hand, the fact that such a rich natural landscape still exists is due to the protecting and caring way which the inhabitants deal with it. Tourists are also very aware of its value and that also explains the fact that the top destinations within the country are rather places that were mainly shaped by nature.

Buildings and infrastructure that shape our daily needs gradually have been taking over urban spaces pushing us further away from nature. The further from nature, the further from essential elements to live a healthy life such as fresh air, reliable sources of nutrition and hydration. Starting in the busy markets of the great metropolitan area of San Jose still doesn't give one an idea of where the food that is consumed comes from. The closer one gets to the humble island of Chira, the stronger the connection between the living environment and nature. Tourists were nowhere to be seen. Only a few fishermen arriving with fish. Every other ingredient has to be imported from the mainland. Knowing from my research that the natural conditions not only in Chira, but San Jose and the landscape in between were suitable for all the food we ate during our journey made me think of a future scenario for food production. This is then a journey that stages a new layer to the already wide protected natural landscape allowing ticos and tourists to be part of local food production in the form of permaculture.

CENTRAL AMERICA'S TOPOGRAPHY



TWO MAIN TYPES OF FOREST



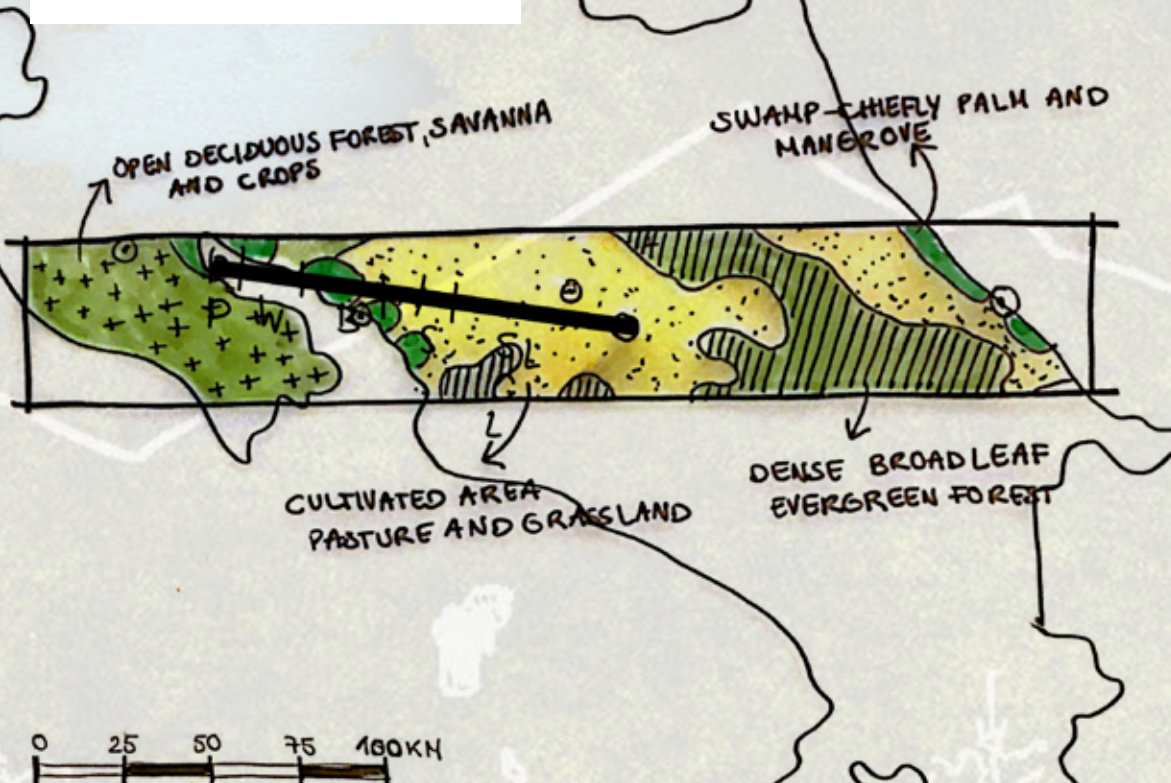
GEOLOGICAL UNDERLAYERS



DENSELY VEGETATED AREAS VS TOPOGRAPHY

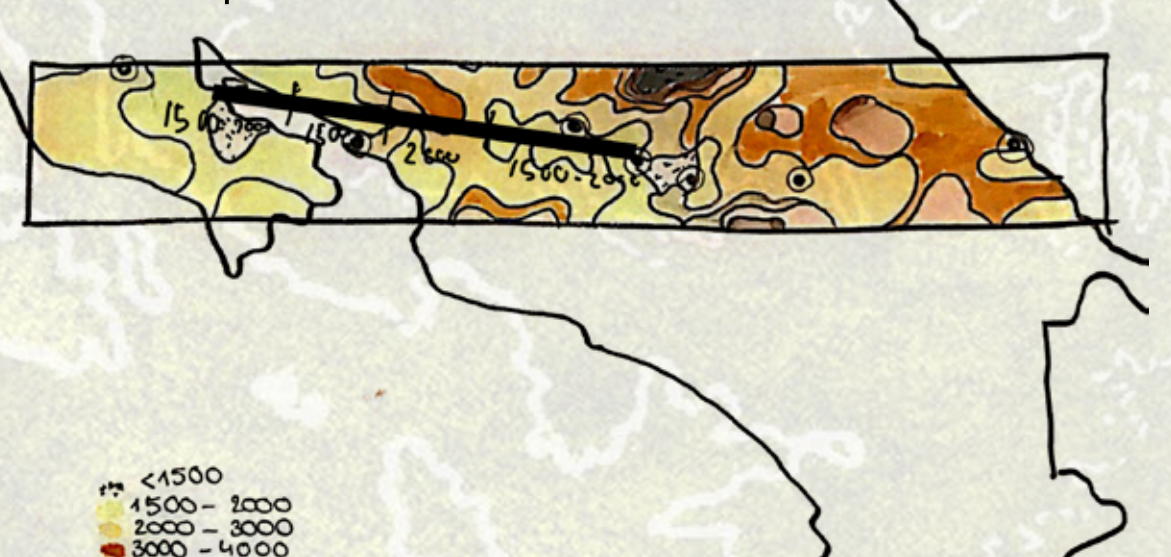


LAND UTILISATION

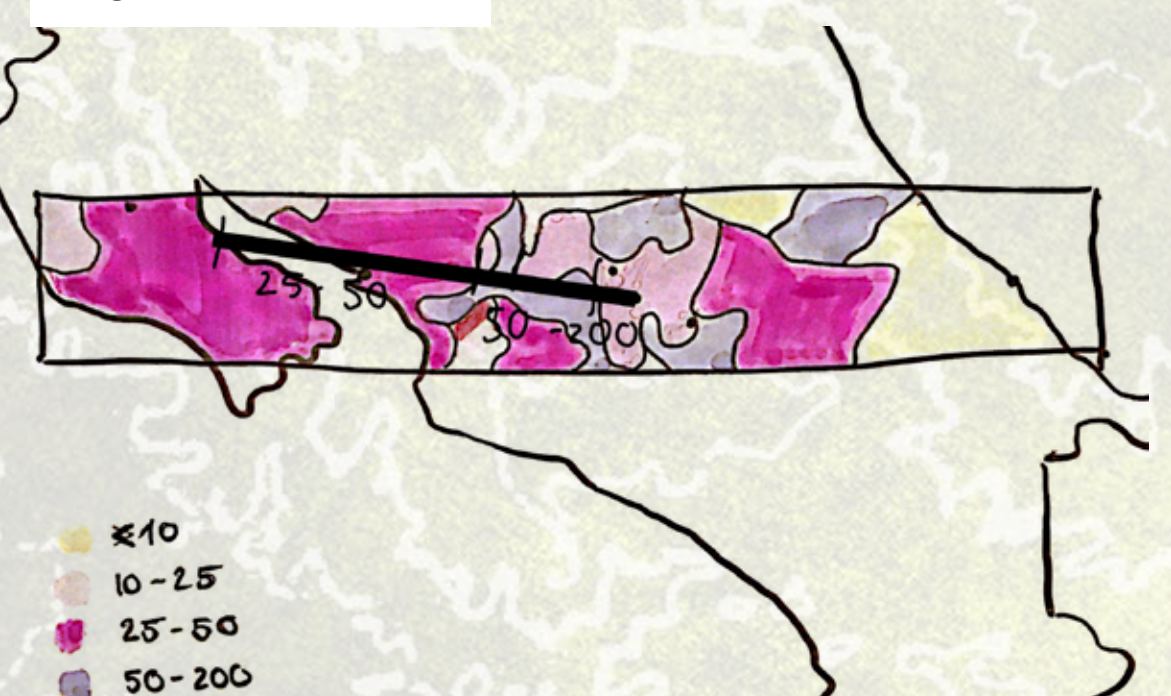


PRECIPITATION

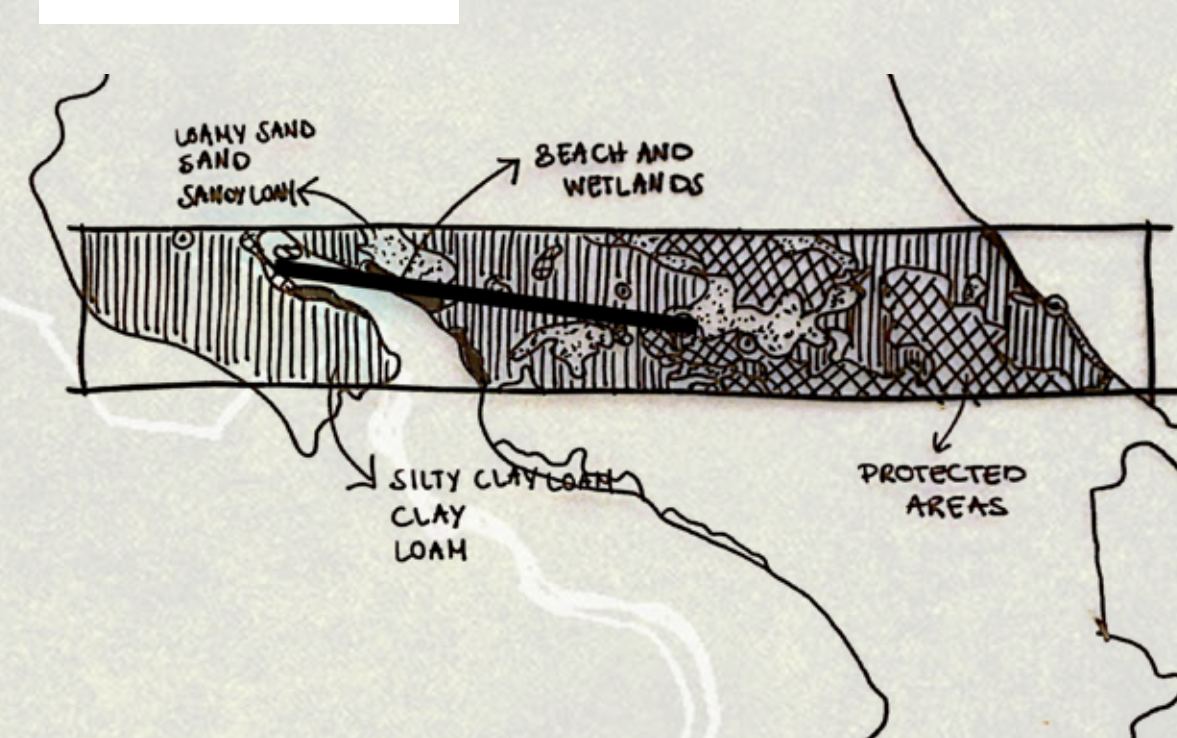
During dry season some areas don't receive any rainfall up to 8 months



PEOPLE PER KM2

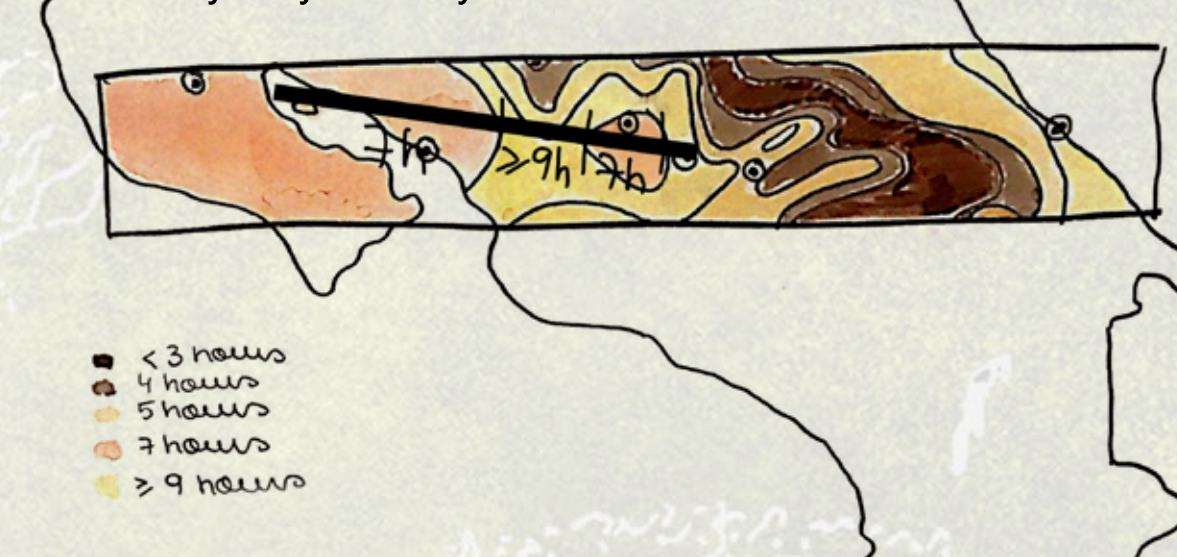


SOIL TEXTURES

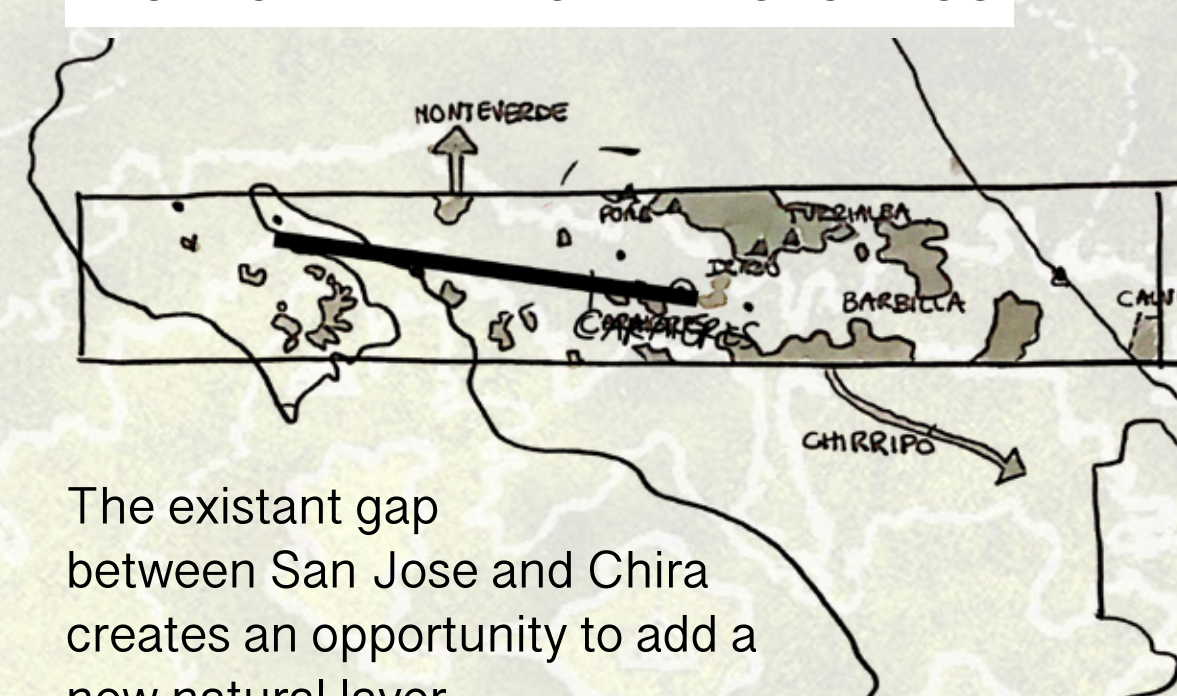


ANNUAL SOLAR AVERAGE BRIGHTNESS

a location close to the equator means a high amount of sunny days in dry and wet season



PROTECTED AREAS AND VULCANOS



The existant gap between San Jose and Chira creates an opportunity to add a new natural layer

HOLDRIGE LIFE ZONES

ecological zone based on temperature, precipitation, latitude, altitude

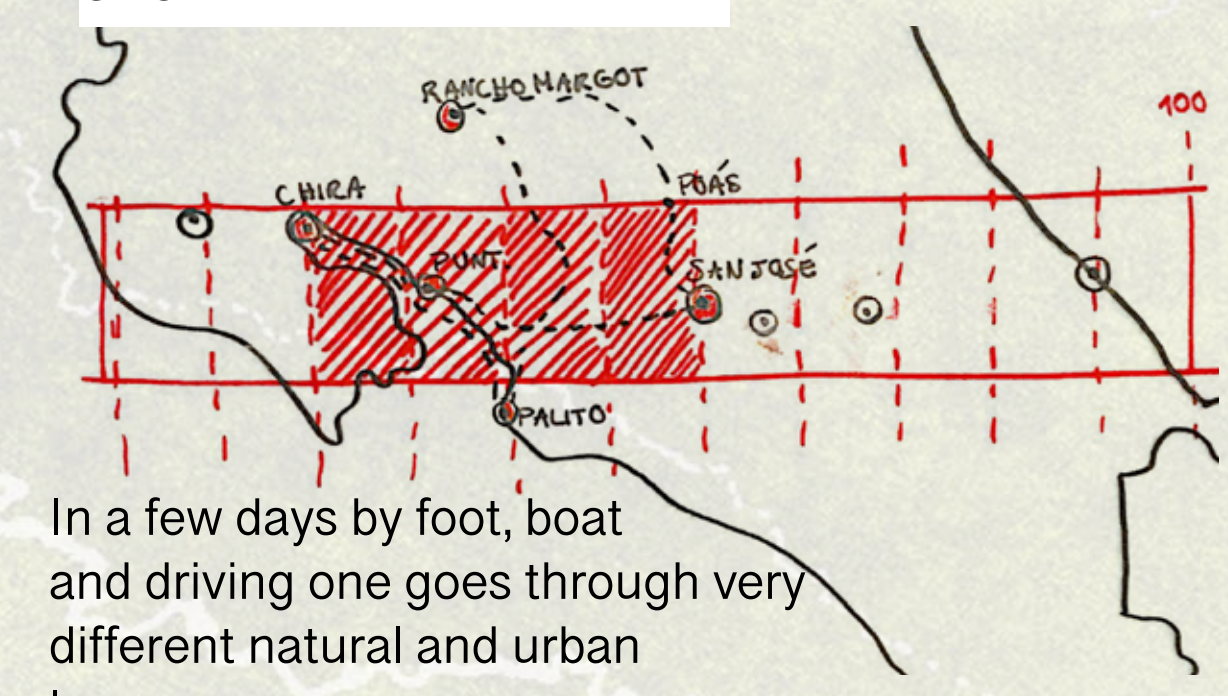


ANNUAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

In the peak of the dry season, March and April, are the hottest months.



STUDY WEEK ITINERARY



In a few days by foot, boat and driving one goes through very different natural and urban landscapes

Chira (43km2)
+15m

Puntarenas

Arajuela

SAN JOSE (2044km2)
+1170m

Cartago

Country: Costa Rica ("rich coast")

Capital: San Jose

Inhabitants (Ticos): 5,204,496 (2,2 million in San Jose Gran Area Metropolitana)

Area: 51.179 km2 (Netherlands = 41.543 km2)

Life motto: "Pura vida" ("Pure life")

Protected areas: 28% of the land (31 National Parks, 34 wildlife refuges, 15 biological and forest reserves, 11 wetlands, 10 protected marine parks and other marine protected areas)

Rica Vida sums up the pure life that is given by this precious piece of our planet. Its preciousness in terms of nature, variety in food sources and travelling destinations for every type of tourist there is. This project is therefore a design approach to a combination of a natural landscape and a productive food landscape where tourism takes part.

The current conditions as a basis to pass on knowledge about permaculture in both public and private spaces

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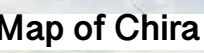
Fresh fish, locally grown gallo pinto and much more

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Since fishing is the biggest source of income of the island, growing food is no longer a big activity nowadays. By introducing permaculture as a communal activity there is an additional source of income in the wet season. During the dry season there will be again more focus on fishery and crops that can grow with little irrigation.

The most endangered habitat of the tropics

Found only in this part of the country, this deciduous forest has a dry season. This period used to last six months yearly but is now being extended by climate change and human activity. The soils that are currently used to grow crops were once also part of this fragile ecosystem. The fertile conditions and equable climate made it possible to ancient civilisations to harvest corn, beans and tomatoes. In the future it is possible to, together with locals and tourist, expand this forest by planting trees that are as resilient and drought resistant. Cattle can coexist with the typical fauna and flora of this forest to regenerate nutrients but also sustain the local economy.



SAN JOSÉ

The capital as an example of gastronomic richness based on locally grown food



1. National Congress building and the front square

The square in front of such an iconic building becomes a sample of the great variety of crops that can grow in Costa Rica. Corn, for example, was already consumed by indigenous people centuries ago before rice was introduced in the gastronomy of this country.

2. Train track from San José to Heredia

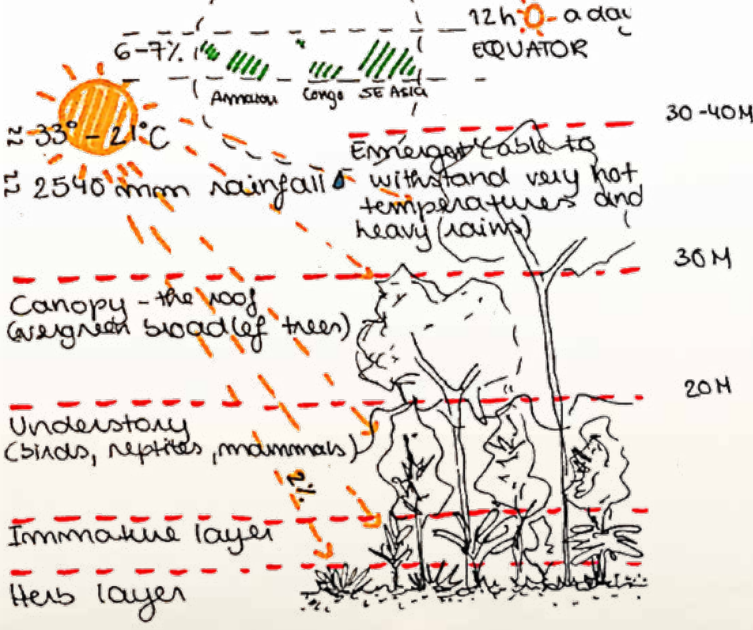
The train allows workers and tourists to continue their journey outside the city. Just like in Chira, everything regarding food production and consumption happens along this main route.

3. El mercado central - The central market

The already lively market is now closer to new food sources allowing visitors to taste even more of Costa Rica.

DAY 2 - Montane tropical wet forest (50km)

Layers of the forest



Abundant wildlife from the forest floor to the highest reaches of the canopy

Experiencing the tropical forest is worth the climb all the way from San Jose. The fauna and flora change drastically locally due to the climatic conditions. The mountain ridges are exposed to wind which explains the trees and shrubs that grow close to the ground. Wind protected areas, on the other hand, have taller vegetation and more layers as shown in the sketch on the left. The continuous change between sunshine, clouds and heavy rainfall however make it more difficult to spot all the fauna you may see on the travel guides. Nevertheless, it remains a breathtaking landscape rich in textures and vibrant colors.

DAY 1 - San José (25km)

A city rich in flavours and culture



The starting point of the journey for a tourist is very often the capital. Despite it being a strong urbanized area, the Great Metropolitan Area of San Jose has the space and the climatic conditions to create a patchwork of permaculture withing the city ring. The many inhabitants and visitors reconnect with nature and gain more knowledge about the production rather than only consumption when visiting the many markets. This is just the beginning of an exciting journey that can be done by train, bike or even walking.

