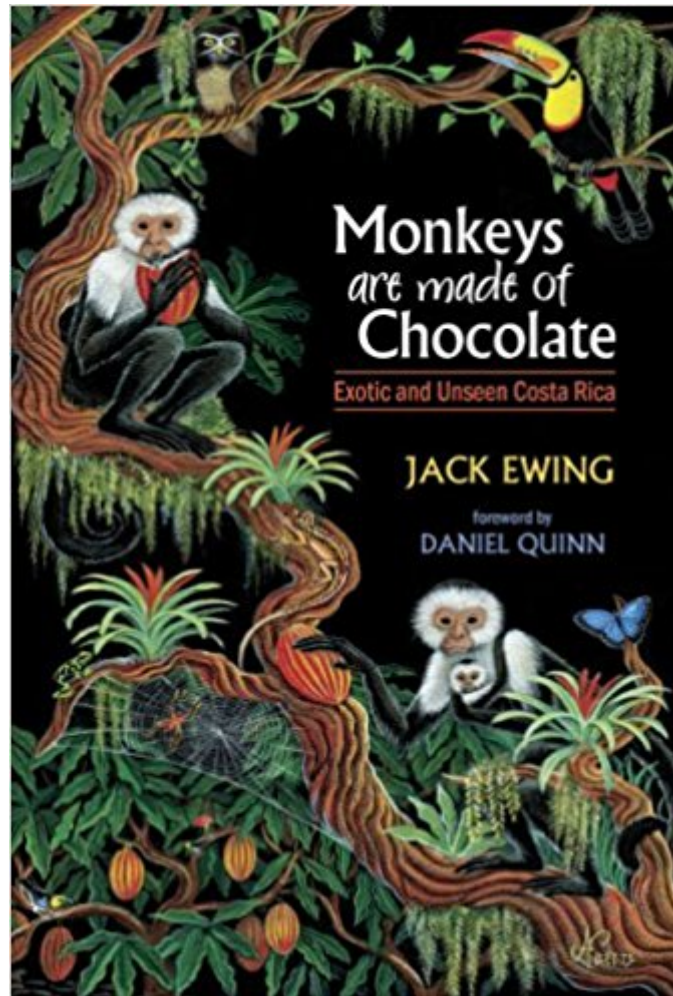




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# Monkeys Are Made Of Chocolate: Exotic And Unseen Costa Rica



## Synopsis

Discover the mysterious and fascinating ways in which animals and plants and people interact with one another in the rainforests of Costa Rica. Author and naturalist Jack Ewing shares a wealth of observations and experiences, gathered from more than three decades of living in southwestern Costa Rica, home to some of the most prolific and diverse ecosystems on Earth. More than just a simple collection of essays, *Monkeys are Made of Chocolate* is a testament to the wonder of life in all its countless guises, as seen through the eyes of a man with a gift for subtle discernment and a natural flair for storytelling.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ewing's 30-year adventure in Costa Rica has produced a book full of infectious love and amazing lore. -- Daniel Quinn, award winning author of *ISHMAEL* Jack's essays offer great insight into tropical natural history, rural Costa Rican culture and environmental issues. -- Richard Andrus, Professor - Binghamton Univ., NY This book is perfect reading for every inquisitive traveler to Costa Rica. -- Rob Rachowiecki, author of *Lonely Planet Costa Rica* guidebook

Jack Ewing's love affair with the rainforest began in 1970 when, in search of new opportunities for plying his Bachelor of Science degree and his skills as a cattle rancher, he left his native Colorado and moved his wife, Diane, and their young family to the jungles of Costa Rica. His ever-growing fascination with the rainforest, however, soon prompted his transformation into environmentalist and naturalist. A natural-born storyteller, Jack's articles about life in the

rainforest appear regularly in Costa Rican publications, and he often speaks to environmental, student and ecological traveler groups from around the world. He is currently president of two environmental organizations, ASANA and FUNDANTA. His expertise on biological corridor projects is much sought after. Jack and Diane live on internationally acclaimed Hacienda Barro National Wildlife Refuge, a well-known ecotourism destination, where he currently serves as the director.

Jack Ewing was a Colorado rancher and farmer who bought agricultural property in Costa Rica in the early 1970s. He was so impressed by the incredible richness of the remaining wildlife that he eventually restored the entire property to rainforest, and helped pioneer Costa Rica's now world-class ecotourism industry. Hacienda Baru now employs far more people than his ranch ever did, and has caused the return of many species long lost to that region of Costa Rica. It is a magnet for visitors from every nation. As pointed out by Daniel Quinn in the Foreword, Ewing illustrates a phenomenon not heralded in the press: business people acting to maintain biodiversity, and to mitigate the effects of climate change, while improving the standard of living of people around them.

This is a terrific collection of essays about Costa Rica, its biodiversity, wildlife and natural history. Little sprinklings of culture also give the reader a notion of how we live and interact with our natural world. Jack's clearly, crisply written prose provides colorful and detailed description of the Hacienda Baru natural wildlife refuge on Costa Rica's central Pacific coast. The reserve occupies a critical position within the Path of the Tapir initiative aimed at improving wildlife habitat and the ability of the country's megafauna, such as tapirs and jaguars, to move along their historic biological corridors. Particularly compelling is Jack's retelling of how the reserve converted from its past use as a cattle ranch. "Turns out," he writes, "if you stop clearing weeds, forest comes back." A very enjoyable read, with much to say about our future and living sustainably.

This wonderful book by Jack Ewing is about a nature preserve that Ewing established after realizing that the jungle he had cleared for farming should have stayed being a jungle. He then proceeded to allow this hidden area in Costa Rica to return- with his help- to being a jungle that has ecologically balanced wildlife. Ewing's nature preserve, called Hacienda Baru has predators as well, which he teaches, are necessary to maintain this natural health balance allowing those animals that are the fittest to survive while culling off the weak. The book has many cute stories about these hidden animals in the Costa Rican jungle. His writing style is a delight. A nature lovers must read book.

I visited Costa Rica 15 years ago and I'm now excited to go back and introduce my kids to this marvelous country. In preparations to learn more about the flora and fauna this time around, I read Jack's book and didn't want it to end. The stories are fun, educational and with a purpose tying everything back to the ecosystem. We plan on stopping by Hacienda Baru and hike through their rain forest, if I end not not hiring a guide I'll have sufficient background for a full experience.

I purchased this book prior to traveling to Costa Rica with a group of friends. It was purchased along with a few guidebooks. My friends all purchased guidebooks as well. This is not a guidebook. It will not tell you how to ID anything or where anything is located, but it will tell more about the real Costa Rica than any guidebook can. This book was passed around on my tour more than any of the guidebooks. Nobody who read it could put it down, and they all wanted to talk about it each other (so the next person said, "Can I read that?"). The author is a great storyteller and not at all preachy. The book is broken down into short, fun stories (the moral of most of them is conservation...but having a moral doesn't get in the way of the enjoyment of the story). Easily read by even the biology layperson. The book was read in 1-2 sittings by most of my friends. That's a sure sign of a good read.

This is a terrific compilation of essays from an author who lives in Costa Rica and makes his living by understanding the nature of this Central American country. The essays range from environmentalism to animals, evolution, and conservation. I purchased this book in advance of a family trip to Guanacaste in northwest Costa Rica. I consider this book a must-have for advance research, planning and understanding of the natural-side of this extremely eco-friendly and eco-aware country. "Monkeys" will provide insight into the country's natural history and you'll feel more prepared and aware of what the country has offer. The short essays (ranging from 3-6 pages each) are a quick read - perfect for the pool, beach or plane.

The book arrived in perfect condition and when it was supposed to. It was wrapped tightly in bubble wrap and didn't suffer from any type of damage. Overall, amazing product, definitively worth reading. Jack Ewing describes a lot of things and does so in a way in which the reader is both interested and entertained; it feels very personal and real, and has a very positive mind set while staying realistic and informing the reader about the problems that Costa Rica faces.

How many times do we look in the mail and see a letter from the same nonprofit organization

looking for money, even after we've sent the check? The key to marketing is brand recognition and message repetition. How many times did Jack Ewing mention Hacienda Baru in his book? I'm not sure. All I know is I want to visit. This book has all of the basic conservation messages in it, packaged in stories starring the flora and fauna of the Hacienda Baru National Wildlife Refuge. Its messages can easily be shared with young adults, as the book is written simply enough, and arranged in a manner that each chapter can stand alone as a lesson. Some stories seem incredible: snakes striking after being beheaded, toucans savaging other bird species, etc., but the author has not spoken from anything but what he and others around him have experienced. This is a great book to read either for literary enjoyment or as a primer before a trip to Central America.

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