

Time codes of the documentary film: Escape to Costa Rica - CONNECTED WITH THE EARTH  
director Libor Spacek  
produced by Escape to Nature  
[www.escapetonature.eu](http://www.escapetonature.eu)

2:17 - 2:38

According to the Bri Bri,

Nothing in this world was created by chance.

In the beginning, there was only darkness and rocks. Our god Sibó needed soil in which to plant seeds. He sacrificed his niece Iriria - a little tapir girl. And from her blood and skin, the soil was formed.

2:57 - 3:17

Iriria isn't dead - we must remember that she's the very ground we walk on. The soil is a living thing, it sees, hears and feels us through the spirits of the animals, the forest, and the sea. If we protect her, she'll nourish us.

3:47 - 4:00

Over 10,000 years ago, Costa Rica was already inhabited . Those original local inhabitants were a tribe of natives called the Bribri. Keysh was raised by his aunt Juanita, a teacher.

4:06 -4:37

*I'm sad because here in Costa Rica, our children must go to school from age 7. That's the age at which they start to learn the BriBri language, its traditions, and its values. When you go to school and learn another language, it gets a little confusing. You're a BriBri, but you're not. If we want to maintain the traditions, our children must first become aware of their own culture.*

4:40 - 5:00

*We belong to Sibó. He cares for us just as other supernatural forces care for plants and animals. If we kill a wild animal to sell it, we will be punished. We can sell pigs and chickens that we raise. Nothing that comes from living creatures can go to waste, otherwise Sibó will punish us. In this way, he teaches us how to co-exist with all the creatures of the world.*

5:15 - 6:06

*Sibó gave us the jungle - we need it to live. We can have small fields where we grow vegetables, but we can't clear more than we need. For us, large pastures don't make any sense - but the jungle is like a natural nursery for crops that we depend upon to live. We cultivate some on small farms for our own use and to sell.*

*We're poor, but finally once again self-sufficient. We carry on our traditions thanks to tourists that come here, take interest in our culture, and buy our products. Our men work for themselves and don't have to toil on banana plantations from which they brought home only diseases because of the poisonous sprays they used.*

6:24 -6:33

Children learn handicrafts typical for their mothers' clan. Important plants and animals are considered to be female.

6:56 - 7:11

According to legend, the cacao tree was a woman who was transformed into a tree. For that reason, cacao tree branches are never used as kindling. The pods are harvested by men, but only women are allowed to make the drink made from it.

7:46 - 8:03

Before the traditional drink can be prepared, the cocoa pods undergo fermentation to eliminate acidity and bitterness. Unlike the hot chocolate we know, they use the entire pod and don't add anything to it except brown sugar.

9:47 - 9:56

While in the west, hot chocolate or other chocolate drinks are considered mainly for kids, here it's even drunk during ritual ceremonies.

11.29 - 11.42

Keysh says that if you really want to understand nature, you have to be a bit child-like. Play, feel what it's like to touch the soil and water, feel the breeze.

12:10 - 12:27

According to aunt Juanita, he knows how to listen to nature and has all the prerequisites to become a shaman. But he'll first have to spend twenty years in the jungle without the company of women. But he prefers to guide in the jungle, especially women.

12:58 - 13:06

Keysh loves animals, so when his aunt offered to let him take on a special project, he didn't hesitate for a second.

13:08 - 13:16

When the sun rises, dozens of iguanas from far and wide meet for breakfast in the place where they were born... attracted here by young females.

13:25 - 13:34

*This project has started in the Eighties because in Costa Rica the iguana population was almost extinct.*

13:34 -13:56

Keysh told us the story of how they started breeding iguanas and releasing them into the wild here on the farm in the 1980s after logging almost eradicated all the species. He said with the help of biologists, they were able to return thousands of iguanas back into the wild.

15.22 - 15:41

In Costa Rica, distances aren't expressed in kilometers, but rather in hours. Journeys here go a long way towards testing your adventurous spirit. From Talamanca on the Caribbean coast, we head for Cabagra on the Pacific coast to meet other Bribri tribes.

16:13 - 17:00

If we traverse the rivers, we'll save three hours and be able to catch the sunset. But what man proposes, God disposes. The most commonly used expression in Costa Rica is "Pura Vida". Translated literally, it means "pure life" and is used as a greeting, as well as a universal answer to every problem. In short: everything's cool. With this kind of attitude to life, it sometimes happens that the locals will throw themselves into something with gusto - even when it's plain to us to see it that can't possibly turn out well. Thankfully, this time we could depend on Pura Vida. Someone always shows up at the right moment to help you out of a tight spot.

17:07 - 17:12

We didn't manage to film today's sunset, but this lesson was worth it.

17:25 - 17:55

While the local natives have a relationship with nature based on the nature of their lifestyle and religion, others need a reminder of the interdependence of humans and the forest.

National parks and reserves make up a fourth of Costa Rica's land area. This sign says: You are entering the territory of the Cabagra indigenous people. With every forest fire, something of yours burns. Help prevent forest fires.

18:38 - 18:50

To a certain extent, life in mountainous areas is rather solitary and people who live here must rely exclusively on themselves. Along the way, we stopped to visit Airam and his family.

18.55 -19:34

*I'm a farmer, a small farmer. I work with the earth. I grow beans, corn, rice - so my family is completely self-sufficient. We don't need hospitals - we have medicinal plants for free, you just have to find them in the forest. My wife taught our children to speak Bribri and I taught them how to work with nature.*

*They go to public school, but I don't need to know much of that, just what I use. Most of all how to understand nature. How to use it, but not abuse it.*

19:50 - 20:17

According to BriBri legend, the white man came into existence during the day. Just as the leafcutter ants chew up all the leaves around and bring them back to their anthill, white men too collect things for themselves. But he is more clever; he knows how to build airplanes and cars, but he doesn't

know as much about nature as they do. Sibó created the BriBri at night and gave them knowledge for them alone to use and care for.

21:41-21:56

In recent years, Costa Rica has become a favorite destination for tourists, who like the BriBri have come to realize the importance of the man/nature balance. And like Lura, a yoga teacher, they've created a functional society here.

21:58 -22:38

*I came to Costa Rica about twenty-three years ago and I fell in love with it. It was pure and clean, and the jungle was just alive. I've been to other tropical places, but this place spoke to me. So for many years I came just a little bit each year and it was my respite, my place away from the busy world. To catch up on reading that I wanted to do, to do my own yoga and meditation practice, to have time by myself and with my family, to deepen everything in my life. And the jungle seemed to make that even deeper, purer.*

22:39

*It was easy to spend time doing these things here uninterrupted by our busy schedules. So it's my goal to help people find ease and grace in their bodies, in their breath, to learn to have a deeper connection, to relax. And doing that in nature just makes it easier. There is no...you're out of the everyday world, you don't have schedules, you don't have busyness, you're not loaded up with thoughts of the past and future. We have to remember that nature only lives in the present moment. The birds that we hear, the animals that we see, are only doing what they're doing.*

23:28

*(Laugh) Sorry, all of a sudden the ants got me!*

*So the ants included only live in the present moment. Nature only knows this moment - it's not thinking about past or the future. And when we're not thinking about past or the future, we have a deeper connection to our beings. So here in Costa Rica when you lay on the platform, I'm close enough to the ocean. You hear the waves coming in and you can move the length of your breath. Lengthen it, go in with a wave and slide back out.*

24:05 - 24:27

*As you breathe, you hear the bird songs, you hear the little whisper of the wind in the bamboo trees. Everything is happening around you and ever-changing moment to moment. That's what true nature is, that's where our true nature is, and it gives us peace and the quiet. That's why I'm here and that's why I love it.*

26:05 - 26:25

Costa Rica means "rich coast", and it's said that the number of animal and plant species per square kilometer here is unequalled in the world. Travelling along the Sierpe River is an ideal way to get deep into the jungle and quietly observe its diversity.

27:34 - 27:48

The space-traveling squirrel monkey makes its home in the palm groves and the riverbanks. These monkeys from the Cebidae family were the first primates that humans sent into space in 1958.

28:51 - 29:32

Although a large part of the country is cultivated by multinational companies, traditional methods for clearing agricultural land mean that

only a small controlled part of the rainforest is burned. The ash releases minerals into the soil, nourishing cultivated crops for many years. The field is then moved and the original field is left to be overgrown by the jungle and the nutrients returned to the soil. Agriculture is the primary source of income of most Costa Ricans, and their organic crops are exported worldwide. Coffee connoisseurs consider Costa Rican coffee to be some of the best on the planet.

30:11 - 30:28

From the dock where the BriBri farmers bring their fruits and vegetables, we head out on a long journey to visit a shaman who can heal as well as communicate with the spirit world. We're curious what he thinks about the future of his own culture.

30:33 - 30:44

We have no idea if the meeting will even take place. Keysh says it's difficult to meet with him as he spends entire days in the jungle or performing healing rituals.

31:30 - 31:40

Before he became an "Awa", the BriBri word for shaman and healer, he had to study for twenty years, adhering to strict discipline.

31:42 - 32:48

*Nowadays, the young people don't study the stories and knowledge of their own culture. The older generations took the rituals very seriously. But Awapas still exist and continue to heal using plants, bark, and roots that Sibó gave us along with good places for living and learning. He also taught us the value of communication and solidarity. Now we're influenced by foreign knowledge, which creates confusion. Diseases have appeared here,*

*and we are losing the battle. The elders warn that the wisdom of the Awapas is disappearing. The planet will then wither, and people will become extinct in places. The water is not being cared for properly, and this could be fatal. God never wanted to punish people - everything is only our fault. With the condition the earth is in, we must cooperate and help each other. We can only maintain balance together. Then we can change the world for the better*

33:14 - 33:28

Badly maintained roads are a sure sign that we're in a place that the tourist industry hasn't reached yet. No one maintains the roads in places that they hope to protect from the heavy pressure exerted by travel agencies.

33:32 - 34:02

We've been invited to visit a fellow Czech from Prague who found his life purpose here. We head to Arenal, one of the most famous volcanoes in Costa Rica. When Tomas arrived on Easter in 1999, he left his fate to chance and hitched a ride in the first car that went by. He had no idea that he was being carried along like a seed on the wind to the place where he would later put down roots and become a farmer.

34:35 - 34:57

*"We live in the small village of El Castillo. El Castillo is located between Lake Arenal, Arenal volcano, and a big section of protected forest and mountains in the northern part of Costa Rica. El Castillo became kind of a little island with its own special atmosphere. It has an incredibly unique geographic position."*

35:11 - 35:45

Tomas invites us on a trip to the mountains to show us the place where - in his own words - he has his own “garden-forest”. Shortly after he ended up in El Castillo, he made friends with a local family that soon “adopted” him and taught him to grow and use mountain plants and crops. On hillsides that were once pastures, he built a small hut and began planting fruit trees, cacao trees, herbs, and pineapples. Today most of them grow wild here.

36:23 - 36:47

While learning to grow crops, Tomas came to the realization that every plant has its own place in the world. A weed is only a weed until you discover that plant’s potential. The same is true in life, when one has the feeling that they’ve found themselves in the right place and that what he does begins to make sense.

36:48 - 37:09

Like his friend Mike. He left his life as a successful motorcycle racer and trainer when he realized that he was no longer willing to risk his life. Although he left all his worldly possessions in America, it’s here - working as a guide - that he feels truly rich.

37:14 - 37:26

When we live close to nature, where everything works in cycles, and begin to merge with it, a calmness descends on us and we realize that we are part of a greater whole.

39:22 - 39:40

You can find at least two or three medicinal plants in every family's garden in Costa Rica. Tomas and his wife took a liking to a plant with strong anti-parasitical effects, from which they also make a healing tincture. So they named their little shop and café after it.

39:50 - 40:19

*“Gavilana is a medicinal plant that grows here in the wild. It grows in something called the “light gap” - along the roads. We chose gavilana as the representative of all the plants that grow wild or are cultivated here, plants that represent a source of some type for humans, whether as medicine, or food, or to build with, or some other material.”*

40:35 - 40:58

*“We work hard to maximize the natural diversity we have here. One thing we are working on is creating tree canopies (sheafs). When you plant trees and other vegetation they grow together upwards and outwards, where they conjoin. It's a very significant moment.”*

41:03 - 41:15

Once the tree canopies grow together, they provide shelter for birds and mammals. The garden becomes maintenance-free and protects the earth just like the forest.

41:39 - 42:00

Squatters from America were behind the birth of the famous Monteverde cloud forest near Arenal. They moved here in the 1940s to distance themselves from the American war campaigns. On pieces of land that were very cheap to buy, they renewed part of the original rainforest.

42:06 - 42:29

Costa Rica has no mineral wealth, so it has never had to protect itself from stronger nations in the struggle for resources. In 1948, the government abolished the army and formed instead an “army of teachers”. In remote locations, you can ask the government to provide a specialist who will train you in the necessary skills.

42:57 - 43:11

A myriad of ways to use natural resources and not deplete them lies dormant and undiscovered. Even the trees themselves offer experiences that, according to Peter, can save the entire forest.

43:17 - 44:23

*“I came to Costa Rica 16 years ago. I stayed a year and built homes for German tourists, then I began coming back regularly two or three times a year, and then finally I stayed for good. I like the simple life, the beautiful nature, and there’s very few places like this where the rainforest grows right next coral reefs. The sea is always warm here, Costa Rica is one of those places with the greatest diversity of animals on the planet...and the rainforest is incredibly captivating. It’s my second home.*

*For me, living in nature isn’t just about breathing fresh air and going for walks, it’s a whole lifestyle in which one can learn new things and be inspired by everything you do. For example, as a builder, I find more and more new inspirations for how and from what things can be built. From nature, from birds who built their nests in the tree canopies. We can take something and learn something from every living thing.”*

44:33 -45:02

After traveling halfway around the globe, it’s kind of funny to find out that places that no one has ever been have always been within someone’s reach.

For the indians who helped Peter choose a suitable tree in the rainforest, climbing into the canopy was a tremendous experience. Climbing to such an amazing observation point, where we're even going to sleep tonight, requires using muscles that we had no idea we even had.

45:05 - 45:21

The jungle is at its most lively at 25 meters above the ground, and it's definitely worth getting over your fear of heights to take a look.

46.05 -46:57

*The people that I showed the designs to and how it was going to be built - they didn't think it was possible. It was as if I'd told them we were flying to Mars and that we'd build something there. When you consider that you have to carry the entire house through the forest - but I didn't want to, I didn't want to have to chop down trees and lianas. Lianas in particular - it's completely forbidden to cut them. You have some larger elements that you have to push through the lianas, or under them, or head in a different direction through the forest and drag it up hill, and it just poured down rain. It took us ten days to bring it all up the hill and it rained the whole time.*

47:05 - 48:55

*Everyone who helped us was from the Nasatariver tribe. They are forest people and they came with their shaman. So when we'd finished bringing up the entire structure and were just about to hoist up the first part, they all sat down and begun to chant. What's the problem, what are they thinking up? Consecrating the tree. To ask for permission and ask the tree spirit to accept us. They lit a fire, some shaman smoke, they sang something, I didn't understand what was happening, but I went along with them because it was for the sake of the building and the sake of the tree.*

*Because the tree is a living thing - we estimated it's 350 years old - it's been through hurricanes and storms, and we need to have the permission of the tree spirit to let us build this structure. The entire construction is suspended. It starts on nylon straps, there's 8 of them, they're hung from a ring. From the ring cables are suspended, and from these the second floor, and from these other cables are suspended, another floor is created, third floor, fourth floor...there could be a whole apartment here in the tree without damaging it.*

48:56 - 50:30

*"I came up with the idea of the treehouse when I climbed up into the treetops and saw this gorgeous view, animals, flowers, fruit, bromeliads, orchids - a completely different world. For me it was a beauty that I wanted to show people, for them to come and experience it. So we built this treehouse, and people can stay, not just view the forest from below and walk around, but actually get up into the treetops and spend a night or two, or even a week if they want. And the money they pay us to sleep in the trees is used to buy more forest land. This living tree that has no fruit, that would otherwise be cut down, they'd saw planks from it, and then here some pasture for cows, and the flora and fauna would be destroyed....this tree, from which we've borrowed a bit of its life, a tiny little bit. It could live a thousand years or more, and we've been here for 7 years, that's less than one percent of its life, without damaging it in any way. Because this tree earns money, it saves more trees which saves more of the forest."*

50:38 - 50:54

Nothing in this world was created by chance. Sibó's little niece Iriria, is not dead - she hears and feels. If we protect her, she in turn will protect us.