

Travel Information for Costa Rica

As we get quite a lot of questions about travelling to and in Costa Rica, we've decided to help you on this new page and answer the most frequent questions. If for some reason you still need our personal advise, please feel free to get in [contact](#) with us! If you look for some more specific information about the diving, we invite you to check our Dive Trip section.

- When to visit Costa Rica?

The correct answer to this question is probably "it depends"! Costa Rica's geography is divided in over 10 climatic zones (when most other countries have just 1 to 4). Of course you'll be looking for as much sun as possible to profit a maximum of all the outdoor activities. All areas have one thing in common, there is a dry- and a wet-season. For some areas the dry-Season means just a little less rain, for others it means almost desert conditions. Wet-season on the other side can be anything from a daily precipitation to massive amounts of water falling from the sky. Costa Rica is a tropical country and rain is part of it as in the whole tropical area. When you plan your visit, just make sure to get the right information and don't hesitate to [contact us](#) for more details. If you are looking for more information about the when to come for diving, you'll find an answer [here!](#)

However, rainy season is considered from April to October, dry season from November through March. During the dry-season you'll definately have more time to explore without getting wet! On the other side, April and May as well as September and October seem to be the best choice if you limit your visit to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. For me the whole rainy season is also the best time to visit Guanacaste with the exception of October. During that time you will really appreciate the short, refreshing precipitations that color the Nicoya Peninsula in green! Dry season in Guanacaste really means dry and hot! While most vegetation will lose their leaves and turn brown, this is the time when most trees flourish and cover the landscape with colourful spots. In other words, you can't go wrong visiting Guanacaste any time of the year! Is there any need to say that the Summer-Salt Dive Center is located right in this area...;-D?

- How to get to Costa Rica?

Costa Rica is still a raising tourism destination becoming more and more popular. Therefore just about any flight companie from all over the world will offer you flights to one of the two international airports in Costa Rica: The Juan Santamaria Int. Airport in San Jose or the Daniel Oduber Int. Airport in Liberia.

Most flights from Europe (with Iberia, Condor, Air France, ect.) and its allies fly into San Jose, either direct or with a technical stop somewhere on the way. All major American Air-Lines offer flights either to San Jose or to Liberia. They also offer connections to Europe in case you plan to travel through the US (make sure you have the right passport). Actually, we recommend this option as it splits up the long trip into two more or less equal flights in duration without lasting any longer.

Flights to Liberia are usually somewhat more expensive, but if you plan to stay in the Guanacaste area, this is certainly the better option as you won't have to stay over night in San Jose before travelling about 5h by bus or taxi to the coast of Guanacaste. If you plan to visit different parts of the country, it's definately recommendable to fly into San Jose and start you exploration from there.

- What to bring to Costa Rica

Not much really! Especially if you plan a beach vacation...you know, sun-screen, swimm-suit! If you need further information about diving equipment, go to the corresponding section about [the diving](#).

1. For those who plan to explore the country a light pair of water-resistant hiking-shoes are very usefull.

2. If you plan to go up high (over 1500h/4500ft) the nights and sometimes the days can get cool; a long pair of trousers and a light jacket will usually give enough protection. Choose your trekking shoes accordingly.
3. It's also useful to always have a light rain-/wind-jacket with you. If you combine all of the previous, you'll be good for the highest peaks!
4. You'll have to think about rain-protection. If there is a wide choice (coats, panchos, ect.), I'd highly recommend a small foldable umbrella! In most areas, even if it's raining, the temperatures will be quite warm. Only an umbrella will keep you dry from rain AND sweat!

- How to travel around in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a small country, about 500 by 100km or 300 by 70 miles. Although the costarrican road-net is constantly improved, travelling on the road - either by bus, taxi or rental car - takes quite some time. Count with an average travelling speed of 50km/h or about 35 miles/h. I don't want to discourage you to travel on the road, but even if speed limits are much higher (up to 100km/h or about 65 miles/h over land), the heavy truck traffic or bad road conditions will sometimes slow you down to walking speed...and after all, we would like you to travel safely!

1. Rental Cars in Costa Rica: most international and many local rental cars offer their services to tourists. The most popular and recommendable type of vehicle are small 4WD like the Suzuki Jimny or Daihatsu Terios and BeGo. These cars will pass almost anywhere (careful: off-road driving is not covered by insurance) and are quite a cheap solution if you travel with 2 to 4 people considering the freedom of moving that they offer. Count 50 to 70\$ a day with basic insurance, unlimited mileage, one driver. Feel free to [contact us](#) if you would like help to find a vehicle for your needs at our preferred rates for divers.
2. Taxis in Costa Rica: They are the most convenient way of moving around for short distances as it avoids you waiting for a bus (and finding out where they leave, at what time and where to). I always use taxis in San Jose for example, where you can cross the whole city for a few dollars and they are very useful to bring you to the long range bus stations. You will also find "Piratas" - illegal Taxis - with negociable prices and therefore cheaper than other Taxis (under the condition to know what an official Taxi would charge...). I do not encourage this practice as it is...illegal and you have no protection in the unlikely event of an accident. But besides this, in some very remote areas, you will not have another choice and therefore it's useful to be mentioned! Hitch-hiking is fairly common, especially by people who have missed their bus to get to work...but use the same precautions as for pirate taxis and it's common to leave some money to participate at the cost of the gasoline.
3. Private busses in Costa Rica: Gray-Line and Interbus are the two most popular private bus companies to offer hotel to hotel transfers in all the country. If they are more expensive than public buses - count 30 to 40\$ per person to about any destination in Costa Rica - you will be picked-up and dropped-off at the hotel of your choice and travel in airconditioned busses with other tourists that might share your travel plans. if you have any planned trips we would be pleased to make your [reservation](#)!
4. Public busses in Costa Rica: Costa Rica is connected with a net of public bus companies that will bring you anywhere to the major towns and tourist attractions. They are the cheapest way of getting around in Costa Rica for just a few dollars and it's a great way to get in contact with local people who prefer this way of travelling. All you have to do is to adapt to the schedules (which are quite regular) and find out where the bus will leave from (a taxi driver will know and take you there...).
5. Inland flights in Costa Rica: Two local air-line companies share Costa Rica's airspace: Nature Air and Sansa. Both fly to just about any destination in the country if there is a landing lane...which can be quite bumpy at some locations! But nevertheless it's definitely worth of using this way

of travelling at least once during your stay as it gives you a great perception of the country's relief, its mountains, plains and coast-lines! You'll ideally fly when you have to cross the country like from Tortugero to Corcovado or from Cahuita to Guanacaste! The investment of approximately 100\$ will be worth it in this case, as you'll save a night in a hotel as such long trips can hardly be done on one day driving...

- How to get to Playas del Coco?

Of course we want to make sure you will find your way to meet us in Playas del Coco :-D!

When arriving in Liberia, taking a taxi for about 30\$ from the airport to Playas del Coco will be the most convenient way in just about 30min. You can also ask the taxi to take you to the next bus stop at the main road between Liberia and El Coco or walk along the access-road to and from the airport (you can't get lost, there is only one which leads to the main road) for about 3km/2miles to join the main road and the bus stop.

When arriving in San Jose, it might be a bit more complicated but we'd be happy to make all your arrangements as many airlines arrive too late to still make it all the way to Playas del Coco on the same day. If you want to fly to Liberia, choose Sansa as they have their terminal in the same airport (Nature Air is located at another airport). If you arrive in the morning, there should be time to catch either the Gray-Line or Interbus at one of the nearby Airport-Hotels where you can also spend the night before coming here. If you look for some cheaper possibilities you'll have to get to downtown San Jose, about 30min away by taxi (the airport taxis at the exit of the airport charge 20\$ by now). To catch a bus to San Jose, get out of the airport and walk around the parking building just in front of the airport, there you will find busses to take you to different places in San Jose (my suggestion: just pick any that says "San Jose" and once in town just take a regular, red taxi to bring you to your hotel (we have some great deals to suggest) or bus terminal). From there you can take the "Pulmitan de Liberia" bus-line which has a bus every full hour to Liberia and from there to Playas del Coco. They also have direct busses from San Jose to Playas del Coco leaving at 8a.m. and at 2 respectively 4p.m. It takes about 5h to get here with an extended stop somewhere on the road to use bathrooms and/or drink and eat something.

All rental car companies are close-by around the airport, just tell the taxi which company you need to go to. Although I don't recommend driving that far - and eventually by night - after a long flight to Costa Rica.

What to bring?

We are a full service PADI Dive Resort which means we can offer you everything it takes to go dive starting with full gear, breathing air-fillings, dive equipped boats and professional guides! But it will be helpful to us and maybe more convenient for you to bring some things along:

- Dive Certification Card: to take you dive, we will need a prove for dive training, no matter if it's with PADI, SSI, CMAS, NAUI or any other recognized dive organization. If for some reason you have forgotten or lost your card, we can only check PADI certifications on-line and it will be a pleasure to order a new one if needed for a replacement fee.
- Log-book: for certain dive trips or certification courses we need to know about your experiences. We will ask you to pass a refresher course for divers who have not been diving for more than a year.
- Dive gear: In case you come to Costa Rica exclusively to dive, it might be worth it to bring along your own equipment. Check with your flight company about extra charges for additional sports gear and make your figures. We will take professional care of your gear during your whole stay with us. We rent full 3mm wet-suits which are fine all year round but if you get cold quickly or plan

to dive over several days you might consider to bring a full 5mm wet-suit. Remember we only have int. tank-connections, if you happen to dive with a DIN first stage don't forget your adaptor.

- Referral Forms: In case you plan to use your stay with us to complete a dive course, don't forget to bring the filled out forms with signature and member number of your dive center at home. In case you have chosen to start your course with [PADI e-learning](#), just print your results or send them to us by e-mail.

When to come diving?

The Summer-Salt Dive Center is operating all year round, 365 days to explore the Gulf of Papagayo! Seasonal changings add to the variety of marine life during the year and it's interesting to dive at any moment of the year! For those who define "good diving" as diving in clear (>15m/45ft), calm and warm water (>25C/80F), the best time to come is from April to September. This is also the time to visit the famous Bat Islands and dive with the Bull-Sharks. For those who don't worry about lower viz (<15m/45ft) and water-temperature (<25C/80F), they will be rewarded with a generally richer marine life from November through to April when the Manta Rays visit the Catalina Islands.