

## **Getting to Costa Rica & Baggage Restrictions**

Costa Rica has two international airports. For optimum convenience, we recommend that you fly directly to San José rather than the more distant Liberia International Airport.

Pack lightly since you will be dressing for warm tropical weather. Please check with your airline for weight allowances and baggage policies. Airlines have ever-changing baggage limitations that can affect divers and photographers, so always check for updates on regulations.

Currently, Costa Rican customs places no limitation upon entering the country with personal equipment such as diving gear, cameras and video equipment or even computers meant for personal use. However, we do recommend that if you are carrying excessive amounts of equipment or professional gear, you simply declare that gear to customs.

### **Entry Requirements**

All passengers must have a valid passport to enter Costa Rica. Most U.S., Canadian, EU and Japanese citizens do not require a visa. If in doubt we recommend checking with the nearest Costa Rican consulate to see if you will need a visa.

### **Vaccinations**

Please note, if you are traveling to Costa Rica from some South American countries then you will need to have a yellow-fever vaccination prior to traveling in order to enter Costa Rica.

### **Upon Arrival**

Upon arrival in San Jose, you may take a taxi to your hotel. There are always taxis available at the airport and minivans for those of you who have a lot of gear. We can also arrange for your airport pickup as well as for accommodations at several fine hotels in San Jose. The night before departure, an Undersea Hunter/Fiesta Tours representative will inform you at your hotel of your precise pickup time for transport to our dock and your awaiting vessel. Please note that we only pick up from a set list of San Jose hotels to go down to the vessels. The evenings on shore are at your leisure. Hotel nights and meals before and after the cruise are not included in the charter.

### **Transfer to the Vessel**

Please note that we only pick up from a set list of San Jose hotels to go down to the vessels. On the day of departure to Cocos, generally between 8 AM and 1 PM, you will be picked up from your hotel and transferred by Fiesta Tours to Puntarenas, the seaport village where you will board the vessel. The drive takes about 3 hours, including a stop on the way for a snack or lunch. The price of this meal is not included in your trip package. The ride will give you an opportunity to view some of the lush tropical forests and rich farmlands of the region.

### **Transfer from the Vessel**

At the end of your Cocos adventure, you will usually disembark the boat at 8 AM and be transferred back to your hotel in San Jose. The transfer takes approximately 2 hours, give or take.

### **Other Transfers**

If, for some reason, you should need travel to or from Puntarenas, other than the by the transport offered by the Undersea Hunter Group, a taxi service is, of course, available. The cost of independent transportation can run in excess of \$100 one-way.

### **Land Arrangements**

While you are here in Costa Rica, it is certainly worth the extra time to experience some of the other

aspects of our little country that truly make it a natural wonderland. Active volcanoes, white water rafting, zip-line tours, mountain biking, pristine jungles, coffee plantations, horseback riding, visits to craft centers and of course some of the most beautiful beaches in the world are among the activities and destinations available to you here. After all, you've come this far! We would be happy to arrange one-day tours or longer trips to more remote areas, at your request. Only Costa-Rican approved companies recommended by USHG will operate these tours.

### **Language**

Spanish is the official language, but English is widely spoken within regions associated with tourism.

### **Currency & Exchange Rate**

Colones are the national currency, with \$1 US equal to approximately ¢545 (colones) as of June 2014. International credit cards and US dollars are widely accepted in regions associated with tourism.

Hotels and banks will exchange US Dollars for Costa Rican colones. US dollars as well as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted on the vessels. We cannot accept personal checks or travelers checks onboard.

### **Health**

We recommend checking the CDC's website for the latest health news and information - [CDC Costa Rica](#)

### **Time Zone**

Costa Rica and Cocos Island are 1 hour behind US Eastern Time during the North American winter and 2 hours during the North American summer.

### **Departure Tax**

There is currently a departure tax of \$29 US as of February 2015.

### **Dive Experience for Cocos & Malpelo**

Cocos Island presents the same diving challenges as any other Pacific, Indian or Red Sea diving location. Cocos, however, is not recommended for inexperienced divers because it is an open ocean destination that requires advanced open water diving skills.

Please note, the minimum required level of certification to dive at Cocos is Open Water with the additional Specialties of Deep & Night Diver. We also recommend having a minimum of 25 hours of diving experience.

Most dives are at depths deeper than 60 feet / 18 meters. At Cocos currents and visibility can be entirely different in just a few hours. Please note, the dive guide will always be the final authority as to whether a passenger can do any specific dive.

Malpelo Island can offer more challenging conditions. Please note, at this time we are not scheduling regular trips to Malpelo.

### **Dive Conditions**

Most of the action is at 60-90 feet / 18-27 meters, and most dives are between 60-130 feet / 18-40 meters. The safety limit is set at 130 feet / 40 meters and a dive computer is necessary. Visibility averages 60-100ft/18-30m.

### **Water Temperature**

Average temperature is 79 F to 84 F (26 C to 29 C), although it can be a few degrees lower under the occasional thermocline.

Please note Malpelo can have significantly cooler temperatures.

### **Certification**

All divers must bring proof of certification by a national certifying agency. The certification must allow the diver to dive to the recreational dive limit of 130 feet (40 meters). The Dive Master will request to see your certification before you are allowed to dive. If you are certified for Nitrox and rebreathers as well, then remember to also bring those certifications.

### **Nitrox**

To increase safety and bottom time while maintaining safe non-decompression dives the use of Nitrox is recommended. The vessel offers full onboard TDI training in Nitrox, with rental of Nitrox computers. Nitrox fills are free for Nitrox certified divers.

### **Rebreathers**

Please check directly with our office if you are bringing a rebreather with you. We can supply you with tanks, scrubber material and any further assistance you need, and can provide you with the costs of these items.

Please note, at this time we are no longer teaching the rebreather course and we do not have any units available to rent. Check for further rebreather information on this website at PRICES & SCHEDULES - Rental Gear

### **The Crossings**

When all passengers are boarded, the vessel will take 32-36 hours to reach Cocos Island (check specific itinerary of Malpelo/Cocos trips for further details on those trips). Crossings are normally calm, but to prevent motion sickness we advise you to take the necessary precautions. At the conclusion of your trip, we will return to Puntarenas where a bus will be waiting to return you to your San Jose hotel.

### **Gear to Bring With You**

You will need the following gear: 3-5 mm (1/8" to 3/16") wetsuit, mask, fins, snorkel, regulator with visible pressure gauge, a mandatory dive computer, buoyancy compensator, depth gauge, dive gloves, weight belt (without weights), dive light, and dive watch. It is recommended that you mark each piece of gear with waterproof paint or tape. We suggest you put all or most of the above items in a carry-on bag. There is ample storage space for your diving equipment, including your own personal locker.

### **Equipment Provided Onboard**

We provide you with weights for your weight belt: 2, 3, 4, and 6 lbs. (1, 1.5, 2 and 3 kilos). We also provide you with air or Nitrox tanks -- 80 cubic ft. aluminum (12 liters).

Please note, our tanks are standard yoke (INT), not DIN. Please notify our offices in advance if you need an adaptor.

### **Rental Equipment Onboard**

You can rent a complete line of ScubaPro dive gear: BCD, regulator, wetsuit, mask, fins, snorkel, and Aladin Nitrox dive computers.

We have a limited supply of 15 Liter steel tanks. If you would like to rent one, make sure to reserve

it well ahead of time.

## **Meals & Beverages**

The menu aboard offers a delicious combination of American and local cuisine. Meals are varied and well balanced, and we also offer delicious snacks between dives. Food is abundant with plenty of fresh tropical fruit and salads and is served buffet style. Please let us know of any special dietary needs or requests, but try to be lenient, as storage and preparation space is limited.

Soft drinks: Free, Bottle of wine: \$15 - \$35.

Hard liquor is not available on board but our guests are welcome to bring their own, which should be purchased prior to boarding.

## **Clothing**

We recommend casual and cool cotton attire while on board. Nights can be chilly and/or drizzly so bringing a sweater, light jacket or windbreaker is recommended. In San Jose dress is slightly more conservative, like long jeans and collared shirts. For women, we recommend holding off wearing shorts and beach type clothing till you are aboard the vessel. We suggest packing in a soft duffel bag for easy luggage storage. Booties or hiking shoes are recommended if you want to visit the island.

## **Visiting the Island**

We will usually make one or two visits to the island itself during a trip.

## **Crew**

The Undersea Hunter, Argo, and Sea Hunter crews consist of a unique combination of talents, offering the ultimate in service. The Undersea Hunter has a crew of seven, while the Sea Hunter and the Argo have a crew of eight. The dive masters, deck hands, and skiff drivers make sure you have the best possible diving adventure, while the chef and steward prepare delicious meals and take care of all your needs on board.

## **Communication Onboard**

The vessels maintain constant radio contact in the event of any emergency. Your family and friends can contact our office at telephone: +506-2228-6535. We are happy to let family and friends know how you are when they call our office.

Our main office is open 8.00 - 17.00 Monday - Friday (except for national holidays). Outside of those hours our emergency contact number is +506-8813-5656.

Please understand, however, that you will be in a remote area and it is preferable that personal communications to the boat be limited to emergency use only. We also now keep a satellite phone on board, which costs \$3.50 per minute.

Cocos Island is now equipped with a cellular phone tower, as well as a public phone. When in closer proximity to the Island at certain locations (assuming your cell phone works in Costa Rica), it is possible to use your cellular phone services, but keep in mind, it is still an international call.

## **Electricity**

The vessels have both 110 and 220 volts ac. The cabins have 110 volts ac only.

The vessels have standard US and European sockets (but not British style sockets).

## **Entertainment**

There is a variety of nightly entertainment available on board: slide shows, DVDs, music, games and much more. Please feel free to bring along your favorites.

### **Tips**

Since it is customary to tip crew members, many people ask us what tip amount is appropriate. This is a very personal decision, as tips are your way of expressing satisfaction. Generally the tip is given to the captain who distributes it equally amongst the crew. Please note that we do not dictate or include tips.

### **Medical Support On-board**

We have a well-equipped first aid kit including oxygen on-board. You should bring anti-seasickness medicine and ear drops if you feel you will need them.

Please inform us and especially the dive guides if you are taking medication or suffer from allergies.

### **Safety Onboard the Undersea Hunter**

Life rings are on located on either side of the boat, and life jackets for all passengers are located in the lockers on both sides of the sun deck. Fire extinguishers are located in the hallways leading to your cabins. The emergency exit from the aft passenger cabins are located through cabin 5.

### **Safety Onboard the Sea Hunter**

Life rings are located on either side of the boat, and life jackets for all passengers are located in the lockers on both sides of the sun deck. Fire extinguishers are located in the hallways leading to your cabins. Emergency exit from the aft passenger cabins is possible through an overhead hatch above the doors of cabins 7 and 8. The emergency exit for the forward passenger area is through a door in cabin 4 and up the stairs in the engine room.

### **Safety Onboard the Argo**

Life rings are located on the starboard side and sun deck. Life jackets for all passengers can be found on the upper sundeck at either side of the step ladder, as well as on the lower sundeck. Fire extinguishers are located in the hallways leading to your cabins. The emergency exit is located between cabins 5 and 6.

### **Re-compression Chamber**

The nearest Re-compression Chamber is in the capital of Costa Rica, San Jose, about 36 hours sailing from Cocos, the implications of which are obvious.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is strictly prohibited throughout the boat, each boat has a designated location on the sundeck if one wishes to smoke.