

# ALLGEMEINE REISEINFORMATIONEN

## ESSENTIAL TRIP INFORMATION

**Your trip will be operated by our trusted partner Intrepid Travel and includes travellers from all over the world.**

### Physical rating

None of the activities featured in this trip require special training or skills, just a reasonable level of fitness and a willingness to participate. Cobblestones and uneven roads are common and you may be required to walk in hot and humid conditions. If you are in any doubt, please share these concerns or issues with your sales consultant so that your leader is aware prior and can pre-empt your needs.

### Joining point

Autentico Hotel  
Calle 40 with the corner of Avenida 5  
San Jose  
10101  
COSTA RICA  
Phone: +506 22225266

### Joining point description

This streamlined modern hotel is a 15-minute walk from Contraloria train station. Unfussy rooms with warm decor offer free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs and coffeemakers, as well as safes and ceiling fans. Breakfast and parking are complimentary. Other amenities include a landscaped garden with an outdoor pool and seating, and an understated restaurant and bar that hosts regular themed buffets.

### Joining point instructions

We offer a pre-arranged arrival transfer service from San Jose International Airport at an additional fee. If you have pre-booked this service, please ensure you provide your flight details to your booking agent at least 14 days prior to travel so the transfer can be organised. If you plan to arrive earlier, this transfer can only be offered in conjunction with pre-tour accommodation booked through us.

If you have pre-booked this service; you will be met after exiting the terminal building to the outside. As you exit please look for a sign with your name on it. There is no designated area for transfer drivers to wait inside the building so please take your time to look around after exiting to the outside through the last glass automatic door.

If you have any problems and cannot locate your driver on arrival, please call our Emergency number listed under the Problems and emergency contact information section. If you don't have a device or mobile coverage, San Jose Airport has a free Wi-Fi connection so you can call that same number via an online application such as Skype.

There are also several information desks and tourist information desks around if you require further assistance.

Otherwise, you can travel from the San Jose Airport to the hotel by taxi. We recommend you use either the authorised taxi services organised from inside the terminal, or the authorised orange taxis outside the terminal building. They will charge you approximately USD for a trip to downtown. The drive to where the hotel is located is approximately 35-45 minutes depending on traffic.

### **Problems and emergency contact information**

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, you can reach our local office on the number below:

Local Operator: +506 6022 4721

### **Finishing point**

Autentico Hotel  
Calle 40 with the corner of Avenida 5  
San Jose  
10101  
COSTA RICA  
Phone: +506 2225266

### **Finishing point description**

This streamlined modern hotel is a 15-minute walk from Contraloria train station. Unfussy rooms with warm decor offer free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs and coffeemakers, as well as safes and ceiling fans. Breakfast and parking are complimentary. Other amenities include a landscaped garden with an outdoor pool and seating, and an understated restaurant and bar that hosts regular themed buffets.

### **Finishing point instructions**

We offer a pre-arranged departure transfer service to San Jose International Airport [SJO] at an additional fee. If you require this service, please advise your flight arrival details at least 14 days prior to your trip departure.

If you have pre-booked this service, your transfer driver will collect you from your hotel 3.5 hours before your flight time. If your transfer has not arrived within 15 minutes of the scheduled pickup time please ask the hotel reception to call our Emergency number, listed under Problems and emergency contact information section.

Alternatively, you can travel from the hotel to the airport by taxi. The hotel reception will be able to assist you with a taxi. The drive to the San Jose Airport will take approximately 30 minutes depending on traffic and will cost approximately USD.

### **Itinerary disclaimer**

#### **ITINERARY CHANGES**

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you review this information prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays, or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in-country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any such changes once on tour.

#### **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability, and maybe on a join-in basis. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested in the Group Meeting and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high-risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

### **Important notes**

1. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm on Day 1. There are no activities planned for the final day so you may depart at any time.
2. A single supplement is available if you'd prefer not to share a room on this trip. The single supplement excludes Days 5 & 6 (Rio Celeste) where you will be in shared accommodation and is subject to availability. Please speak to your booking agent for further information.

### **Medical and health information**

#### **GENERAL HEALTH**

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip.

When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy our style of travel. Please note that if in the opinion of our group leader or local guide any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained while travelling.

#### HEALTH SCREENING

If you are unwell prior to travelling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements. At the group meeting, you will be asked to complete a self-screening health form and report any COVID-19 symptoms as well as any close contact with someone who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19. If you are displaying any symptoms or have any health concerns at this time, we will follow the advice of local health authorities to determine whether medical assistance, isolation or further action is required. It's quite possible that the destination country may have different or more strict protocols in place in relations to a Covid-19 case from your home country. This may include hotel or hospital quarantine or quarantine for the group. Please check your government's travel advice or contact the closest embassies to find out the details. We ask all travellers to continue to monitor their health throughout their travels and report any relevant symptoms to their tour leader.

#### INSECT-BORNE DISEASES

The risk of contracting insect-borne diseases increases in the wet season (April - November). To protect yourself, use insect repellent, wear long, loose, light coloured clothes and seek medical advice if you experience fever, headaches, a rash or muscle pain.

#### ZIKA VIRUS

Zika virus is present in Costa Rica. We recommend that you discuss your travel plans with your doctor prior to departure if you are currently pregnant or trying to conceive.

#### OTHER HEALTH RISKS

Protect yourself from other illnesses by only drinking boiled or bottled water, avoiding ice cubes, don't swim in freshwater sources, ensure your vaccinations are up to date and avoid direct contact with dogs and other animals.

#### **Food and dietary requirements**

While travelling with us you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in this region. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during your trip. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule, our groups tend to eat dinner together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though.

#### DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Please let us know your diet requirements before your trip starts.

Generally speaking, in bigger cities/towns vegetarians can expect a reasonable range of vegetarian venues and/or vegetarian options within tourist restaurant menus. However, vegetarianism is not the norm in this part of the world so options can be limited when eating at homestays, small local restaurants, street stalls, markets, etc.

More restrictive diet requirements (vegans, coeliac, gluten intolerance, fructose intolerance, lactose intolerance, etc.) can also be accommodated along this trip but you should expect a lesser variety than what you can expect at home. We recommend that, if possible, to bring your own supply of snacks with you.

### **Accommodation**

Hotel (7 nights), Lodge (6 nights), Homestay (1 night)

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline only and may change. On some occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our preferred accommodation. In these cases, we will use a similar standard of accommodation.

Throughout the trip, we request that our properties prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However, this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination or on some trips, have use of shared day rooms until all rooms are available.

### **Transport**

Private vehicle, Public Transportation, Boat

### **Money matters**

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget an appropriate amount for things like optional meals, drinks, shopping, optional activities, and laundry. Make sure you have read the itinerary and inclusions thoroughly so you know what is included in the trip price and what you may need to pay for while travelling.

### **COSTA RICA**

The official currency of Costa Rica is the Costa Rican Colón (CRC). You can pay with major credit and debit cards at many hotels, restaurants and stores. You can use major credit cards and some debit cards to withdraw colones from ATMs. US dollars are widely accepted except for taxi fares (so if you arrive by plane please ensure you get some local currency at the airport before taking a taxi).

Costa Rica is the most expensive country in Central America, particularly compared with its neighbouring countries Nicaragua and Panama. Expect meals, souvenirs and optional activities to cost as much as they would in western countries. That said, Costa Rica has done a great job of looking after its natural wonders yet maximising their potential as tourist attractions. So, while optional activities are pricey, you can expect a high standard of service, well-maintained gear, clear paths and signage and well trained local guides that allow you to make the most of every activity.

## CONTINGENCY FUNDS

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. We reserve the right to change an itinerary after departure due to local circumstances or a Force Majeure Event. In such emergency circumstances, the additional cost of any necessary itinerary alterations will be covered by you. Please note we are not responsible for any incidental expenses that may be incurred as a result of the change of itineraries including but not limited to visas, vaccinations or non-refundable flights. Make sure you have access to an extra US\$ for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last-minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result, there may be some extra costs involved. The recommended amount is listed in USD for the relatability of universal travellers, however, local currency may be needed once in the country to cover these costs.

## TIPPING

If you're happy with the service you receive, providing a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations. Please note we recommend that any tips are given directly to the intended recipient by a member of your group, rather than collected and passed on by the group leader.

The recommended tipping amounts are listed in USD for the relatability of universal travellers. We do however recommend that you tip in the local currency - Hold on to your smaller notes and coins to make tipping easier. The following amounts are per person suggestions based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

- Restaurants: Local markets and basic restaurants - round your bill up to the nearest US\$. More up-market restaurants we suggest 10% of your bill.
- Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide. We suggest US\$-5 per passenger per day.
- Drivers: You may have a range of drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We suggest US\$-6 per day for drivers.
- Local guides: There might be times during the trip where you'll have a specialist local guide alongside your trip leader. We suggest tipping these guides about USD-3 per day.
- Your Tour Leader: You may also consider tipping your tour leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline USD-4 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service. In total, we recommend you budget approx USD-10 per day of your trip to cover tipping.

## Packing

Most travellers prefer to take a small to medium wheeled suitcase, which is a great size for the packing capacity in our private vehicles. Whatever you take, be mindful that you will need to be able to carry your own luggage, handle it at airports, take in/out of

accommodation and perhaps even walk short distances. Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible. You'll also need a day pack/bag for activities and day trips. In terms of weight, airlines generally allow a maximum of 15-20kg for check in luggage and a maximum of 5kg for carry on.

#### **VALUABLES**

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables, and use your safe if available. It's also a good idea to purchase a money belt or pouch that is easily hidden.

#### **LAUNDRY**

Laundry is available at many hotels and towns during this trip, although you might need to wait for a two-night stop in order to make sure you get it back in time. While laundry at hotels is usually charged by the item, laundromats usually charge by the kilo, which is generally inexpensive (about USD 2 per kilo).

#### **Group Leader**

All group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. We endeavour to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious, and social aspects. We aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you are interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

#### **Safety**

Most national governments provide regularly updated foreign travel advice on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all destinations and activities on your trip.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, flight tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however, during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your our itinerary, and we make no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

#### CRIME

Travellers have been the target of crime in Costa Rica, with main targets being popular tourists sites, airports, bus stations and public transport. Petty crime such as pickpocketing and bag snatching is common in downtown San Jose and in popular tourist areas. To protect yourself from crime, plan to arrive and depart the country in daylight hours, be alert to drink spiking and only use officially registered taxis. Credit card fraud is a risk as is counterfeit Costa Rican and US currency from street exchanges. Keep your card in view when making purchases and only change money at banks or official exchanges. Your leader can advise on the best ways to withdraw or exchange money on tour.

#### PETTY THEFT AND PERSONAL SAFETY

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

#### MONEY WITHDRAWAL

In order to avoid fraud and theft, it is advisable that you withdraw money from ATMs located inside banks or guarded shops during business hours only.

#### LOCAL LODGINGS

On this trip you will be staying in some restored houses and local lodges - these are one of the charms of this journey, but their staircases, balconies and passages etc may not always comply with western safety standards. Please do not expect elevators in these properties as they are preserved to their original state.

#### SEAT BELTS

Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and not all the transport which we use is able to provide seat belts.

#### FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in this region differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

#### WATER SAFETY:

Please take care when taking part in any activities in the ocean, river or open water, where waves and currents can be unpredictable. It's expected that anyone taking part in water activities is able to swim and have experience in open water. All swimmers should seek local advice before entering the water.

#### **A couple of rules**

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving



our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited, and you also agree to travel in accordance with our Responsible Travel Guidelines.

The decision of the group leader is final on all matters likely to affect the safety or well-being of any traveller or staff member participating in the trip. If you fail to comply with a decision made by a group leader, or interfere with the well-being or mobility of the group, the group leader may direct you to leave the trip immediately, with no right of refund. We may also elect not to carry you on any future trips booked.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section.

### **Travelling on a group trip**

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons, we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

### **SOLO TRAVELLERS**

This is the beauty of our style of travel: many of our travellers join because they are travelling solo and want to meet and share experiences with like-minded people.

We pair up solo travellers with another traveller of the same gender as per your passport or the information we have in our booking system, so if you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport, please let us know in advance. We also have a Single Supplement available on most trips for travellers who prefer to have their own room.

Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour. Pre-trip and post-trip accommodation booked through us will be on a single room basis.

Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on an open gender, multi-share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Essential Trip Information.

### **Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance is compulsory on all our trips for those travelling internationally. We require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. If you are travelling within your home country or region please confirm before travel that you are entitled to access the public medical system easily should an accident occur. We strongly recommend all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international trips, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number has been sighted by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

Travellers who reside within the European Union or Switzerland receive basic international health insurance, so travel insurance is not mandatory under European Union Law. However, as this does not cover situations such as emergency rescues, private health care, or repatriation to their home country, comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended. European Union or Swiss travellers who decline travel insurance when travelling outside of their home region must sign a Travel Insurance Waiver Form at the Group Meeting.

### **Responsible Travel**

Our Responsible Travel Policy outlines our commitment to preserving the environment, supporting local communities, protecting the vulnerable, and giving back to the places we travel. All our trip leaders, suppliers, and staff are trained on these principles and are core to us delivering sustainable, experience-rich travel.