



# Welcome to Your Retreat

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This document is provided to all retreat guests in advance of arriving to share important details and answer questions that are useful to know in advance.

You have given yourself the gift of a retreat away from the routine, from the norm, from your day to day. A retreat to get away, rejuvenate, recalibrate and reconnect. There are few better opportunities than this to have an experience of a lifetime and take care of yourself so well all in one!!! You are going to LOVE it!

## You'll be staying at Tierra de Suenos Retreat & Wellness Center

Your retreat will be held at Tierra de Suenos Wellness & Retreat center in Playa Chiquita. The center is nestled right in the jungle surrounded by some of the best beaches in the Caribbean of Costa Rica with typical soft beige sand and warm turquoise waters. The center is 5 kms outside the tourist town of Puerto Viejo de Talamanca which offers an active nightlife, shopping, and local culture.

As an Eco facility in a remote area of the country we are considered off the beaten track. We keep things simple and do our best to protect the beautiful area where we are situated. Monkeys, toucans, sloths, green macaws and other wildlife inhabit the area and our property. You will find simplicity - clean air, healthy food, active life, nature, and easy living. True PURA VIDA!

## Preparing for Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a rugged lush rainforested country. That's part of the charm and also part of the challenge! Costa Rica is not like North America and to understand "pura vida" (pure life) means to learn to go with the flow. The infrastructure in Costa Rica is not up to the same standards of North America, and while everything works most of the time, sometimes things happen like loss of power, water and/or internet. We don't have some of the modern conveniences like dishwashers and do some things the old fashioned way.

Humidity! It's good to be prepared for really high humidity. You will notice that things here feel damp. It's still very warm and comfortable but things don't dry easily and all soft materials pick up moisture. Keep in mind that this is a rainforest.



## **We are Eco-Friendly**

We reduce and reuse as much as possible. We compost and recycle our waste. Everything goes back into nature here. We are eco-friendly and use only essential chemicals. We are also right in the midst of the jungle so expect a natural environment teeming with life. Remember that here we can't separate ourselves so definitively from nature as is possible in other places.

## **Is this like an all inclusive resort getaway?**

No, this is not an all inclusive resort center with buffets and bottomless drinks and in fact it is a different approach altogether. The Caribbean of Costa Rica has less access to supplies and large vendors but instead has a bounty of fresh delicious fruits, coconuts, fish and vegetables. We use these foods, and others, to make the most delicious and nourishing meals you could imagine. All homemade, all from scratch, and all fresh to your table. You may notice that the foods are refreshing and cleansing. We offer clean health drinking water, fresh vitalized air, and then top that off with local Caribbean delights in food and culture! It's truly a unique experience.

Importation is very costly and limited so we source locally and buy loads of fresh foods from markets and make everything from scratch. You will notice that conservation is a way of life throughout the country, but especially here in this remote area of the Caribbean. We will invite you to enjoy quick showers and you are always welcome to assist us in washing your plates and cups if seva (or sewa) is a part of your yoga practice. Please do let us know if your group would like to be responsible for your post meal washing up.

## **Is Costa Rica cheap?**

No. An interesting thing about Costa Rica is that you may find that it is not as inexpensive as you may have been told or expected. The dynamics in the economy have shifted over the years and made it such that the cost of many things like transportation, tours, food, souvenirs and massages are comparable to what you would pay in North America.

We suggest planning your budget as you would for a trip in your home country. Plan to have cash (small bills in good condition - very important!) on hand as some items are cash only. USD works well for everything and is widely accepted, but your change will come back to you in Colones. If you don't want to deal with Colones, bring



smaller USD bills. Ripped or damaged bills are not accepted due to bank restrictions.

## The Planning Process

Traveling to the center can be made to be smooth and easy if you are prepared. We are a 5 hour drive from the San Jose airport but the drive and scenery is quite interesting. As a passenger you will have a stop along the way for an optional meal. Bring a good book to read or listen to, some snacks, water, and you'll be set.

If a car ride is not your thing (and yes things happen on the highway here) hop on a national flight from San Jose to Limon using Sansa Air <http://flightsansa.com/en/home>. These national flights are usually around \$200. You can then take a shuttle from [Limon to here](#), about an hour drive, for around \$25. Taxis are also available but will cost more. If you KNOW that sitting in a car for too long could drive you mad, take the flight.

## Wellness Activities Available on Site

You can book any number of wellness treatments for your trip when you arrive.

- Infrared Sauna
- Massage – Thai, deep tissue, relaxation, and other styles of massage
- Reiki
- Cranial Sacral Therapy
- Yoga Sessions

## Tours and Activities available from the Site

One of the best parts of your trip is including some fun activities that speak to you and what you want to experience in Costa Rica. Additionally, tours are something that many groups love to do together and include everyone. Tours can be booked through the lodge when you arrive on site. Here are the top favorites...

- Chocolate Tour - farm tour and chocolate making process
- Waterfall Visit - more than one option is available
- White Water Rafting - this is a great way to get here or back to San Jose!!
- Jaguar Rescue Center - less than 2kms from Tierra de Sueños daily tours at 9:30 and 11:30am Monday to Saturday



- Jungle Hikes and Walks
- BriBri Cultural Tour with chocolate making and waterfall visit
- Cooking Healthy Foods Class
- Horseback Riding
- Snorkeling
- Surfing Lessons
- Kayaking on your own or with a tour guide
- Cultural Walking Tour in town with local food
- Bike Riding - not a tour but definitely a favorite activity
- Cacao Ceremony for groups
- And much more!!

You can pay CASH for ALL tours at our front desk and we will book and pay the tour on your behalf. Unfortunately we CANNOT process your credit card at Tierra de Sueños as it has to be processed by the company that provides the tour. In the case where you need to pay for a tour on your credit card you may be able to go to their office to pay or some tour companies can send you a link by email.

Keep in mind that all tours have their respective cancellation policies and most still happen rain or shine.

## Important Details

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- **Weather** – The best time to visit Costa Rica is February to April. However, temperatures are great year round. And even in other months you will still get lots of sun mixed with some rain. The fall months of September - November can also be very beautiful here with more quiet waters.
- **Bungalows** – Our bungalows are **open air** without air conditioning as temperatures stay between 77-89 degrees Fahrenheit or 23-31 degrees Celsius year round. All bungalows have ceiling fans to keep air circulating and the evening air is often cooler. You'll hear the sounds of nature and the community all around from the neighborhood.
- **Beds** - Our rooms are equipped with twin beds.
- **Caribbean Style** – Our bungalows are also fitted with zinc roofs meaning that you will hear the sweet sound of the rain on your roof top. For some this



is amazing for others a lot to take in. Come prepared with earplugs in case you are in the latter group!

- **Food** – We prepare healthy, locally sourced, fresh meals. Our standard menu is vegetarian and includes eggs for breakfast, many beans, legumes and pulses for protein. Some groups opt to add in fish and chicken a few times.
- **Food Allergies** – If you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions please let us know beforehand so we can plan. We are not set up for lethal allergies.
- **Drive from the airport – Tierra de Sueños Retreat & Wellness Center is about a 5 hour drive at peak driving times.** There are also flights from San Jose to Limon if you are looking to reduce your travel time in a car. Please look up Sansa Airlines. Limon is about a 1 hour drive from Tierra de Sueños and there are regular shuttles.
- **Beaches** – Our retreat center is a short 5 minute walk across the street to a beautiful body of turquoise water. Warm like a bathtub but refreshing from the heat. The beach may very well be your favorite place to be when you are not participating in your program.

## FAQs

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### Where are you located?

We are 5 kms away from Puerto Viejo de Talamanca. In our immediate area we have a local market, a few cafes, a few great eating options including pizza places and a slow food restaurant, as well as a great artesian souvenir shop. If nightlife, noise and bustling activity are more your thing, you can visit Puerto Viejo. Transportation between Playa Chiquita and Puerto Viejo is readily available and inexpensive.

### What's your address?

Tierra de Sueños Retreat & Wellness Center - 50 mts. North of Hotel Shawanda in Playa Chiquita, Puerto Viejo de Talamanca, Provincia de Limón, Costa Rica 70403

### When do we check in and out?

Check-in time is 2:00 PM and check-out time is 11:00 AM. Our reception desk is open between 8am and 5pm so let us know if you will arrive outside of these hours.



### **What are your lodge hours?**

Our lodge and gates are open from 8am to 8pm daily. If you are arriving outside of these times, please let us know so we can make sure to meet you at your arrival. Call us at 506-2750-0378 if you are running late the day of your trip. Or connect with us through whatsapp at 506-8726-7448.

### **What beaches are in the area?**

The Caribbean side of Costa Rica is host to some of the most beautiful rock free beaches in all of Costa Rica. At our location, you have the choice of a variety of beaches for whatever your heart desires, surfing, jumping the waves, relaxing and floating, and more...

- **Playa Negra** – entrance of Puerto Viejo. This is where surf training and beginning surfers practice. It's open and long and black and 6kms away.
- **Cocles** – In Cocles just 5 minutes past Puerto Viejo and 2kms from us right in the middle. This is a dynamic beach with many entrances and places to find.
- **Salsa Brava** in Cocles – This is the competition wave area for surfers. If you are into surfing and socializing, you'll want to go here 3-4 kms from us.
- **Playa Chiquita** – This is across the street from us (5 minutes walk) and has beautiful private beach areas. Tan, swim or do your morning walk or yoga on the beach. It has lots of coral, nooks and crannies.
- **Punta Uva** – One of Costa Rica's most famous beaches 2kms away and only 2 minutes drive! It has almost no undertow and you can really relax and swim.
- **Manzanillo** – 10 minutes drive from us and about 8kms away. This is a calm beach and excellent for young families with children. Manzanillo is an old fishing village.

### **What is the weather and temperature like?**

The local temperature averages between 77-89 degrees Fahrenheit or 23-31 degrees Celsius year round. The climate has often been called a "micro-climate", implying that the variable factors affecting this region are independent from the rest of the neighboring areas.

This region shares very little in common with the rest of the country's weather cycles and prognostication, as the rainy season is often blessed with several weeks of dry, hot and sunny days, while tropical showers can be experienced during the summer season. It is a different weather pattern than the pacific coast of Costa Rica and does NOT have a very distinct rainy and dry season. It is very humid year round.



### **When does the rainy season begin?**

If you are looking for great weather there are regular sunny skies and many rain-free days then February to April and September to October and great. From May through August and November through January, expect clear skies in the morning and higher chances of rain in the afternoon or overnight. No matter whether it rains or shines there is always so many things to do and see. Often rains come and go leaving the air fresh and revitalized but tours still happen and life carries on.

### **What are the essentials to bring on my trip?**

Be sure to plan for both the heat and rain. Sneakers and flip flops. The jungle loves to ruin leather so plastic footwear is better! Long pants for excursions, a light coat or sweater for those cooler evenings or pesky bugs. Rain gear, bathing suit, yoga apparel, umbrella, flash light and your own personal hygiene and care products.

You can bring your personal yoga mat if it will make you feel comfortable and at home even while in the jungle. But if you can't fit it no worries as we have mats here.

### **What are the roads like?**

The roads on the Caribbean side are very good. You are able to bike for long stretches with good side shoulders but must be cautious of the fast drivers. The road from the airport to our retreat center is one of the best roads in Costa Rica but the highway is also very slow moving with lots of trucks so sit back and relax.

### **How are the beaches? Is there surfing?**

On the Caribbean side we are privy to many beautiful sandy beaches. We have some great surf areas as well. When in the water always watch the flag system while at the beach Green is mild current, yellow-medium and red- high current and where you shouldn't swim. We'll tell you where best to swim and how to stay safe..

### **Where can we shop?**

There is a grocery store a 3 minute short walk from our center and you can buy beer, wine, snacks and basic necessities. We also have lots of eating options and small vendors close by.

We are a short 10 minutes drive away from Puerto Viejo where you will find many shops, restaurants, pharmacies, clinics, and artisans offering unique designs.



### **How do the telephones work?**

Tierra has a local phone that can call anywhere in Costa Rica. Cell phones generally have okay reception in this area. If there is an emergency back home and a loved one needs to reach you, they can call our local telephone number 506-2750-0378 from 8am to 5pm and we can come and get you for that call. Or they can call our North American number as well 360-799-3033 but this number is less well attended.

### **Do you have WIFI?**

Tierra has fiber optic WIFI available to all guests. WIFI is available in the main lodge and eating area at all hours of the day. Do keep in mind though that the internet is NOT in your bungalow as we are focused on disconnecting and slowing down.

### **Do I need vaccinations? Where are the closest medical facilities?**

No vaccinations are required to enter Costa Rica. If you have questions it is advised that you speak with your doctor about any vaccinations or considerations.

A fully equipped emergency facility and clinic is located 10 minutes/ 5kms away in Puerto Viejo.

### **Do I need Travel Insurance?**

Medical travel insurance is always advised when traveling but is not required to enter Costa Rica at this time.

### **What are the entry requirements for Costa Rica?**

Currently there are no entry requirements to visit Costa Rica. However you can check the Costa Rica website to follow the most up to date information.

[www.visitcostarica.com/en/costa-rica/planning-your-trip/entry-requirements](http://www.visitcostarica.com/en/costa-rica/planning-your-trip/entry-requirements)

### **Are there mosquitoes?**

This is the jungle, so there ARE mosquitos and many other bugs. The mosquitos are not excessive (depending on where you're from and your mosquito experience) but you will notice them. Bungalows are enclosed and bed nets are provided but certainly optional to use. You can bring bug repellent, a light pair of pants and a long sleeved shirt for evenings.





### **What currencies are accepted?**

- The Costa Rican currency is colones.
- You can likely order colones from your local bank to bring with you.
- You can use your ATM card and withdraw colones at a bank machine here.
- USD and colones can be used to pay for all things related to tourism.
- In Puerto Viejo there are two banks and a few ATMs that give either currency.
- Some small tour operators and small businesses only accept cash.
- Tours are often priced in dollars.
- To book a tour at Tierra de Sueños reception you may need to pay cash.
- If you pay in USD your change will likely be returned in colones.
- Exchanging currency at the airport will be very costly and is discouraged.
- If you bring USD your bills need to be perfect or will be rejected.

### **Tipping?**

- Cash, in either currency, is great for tipping.
- If you tip in USD use bills in good condition so they can be used.
- 10% is automatically applied to restaurant bills in Costa Rica.
- Tierra de Sueños has a gratuity box onsite if you would like to leave gratuities for the Tierra de Sueños staff to share equally.
- You can always TIP someone directly as you desire.

### **Can I use my Credit Card?**

Credit card acceptance varies. Taxis, Tuk Tuks, smaller restaurants/stores and some tour companies will only take cash. Larger companies are set up to take credit cards which will also include a 13% Costa Rican Sales Taxes and in restaurants an automatic 10% gratuity for service. Some tour companies use email payment links.

Common credit cards that are accepted are VISA and Mastercard. Some places take American Express, Discovery, Diners or other credit cards. If you are planning to use your credit card, please inform your bank that you will be traveling and using your credit card outside the US/Canada. Cash is easiest as it's accepted everywhere.

### **What travel VISAs are needed?**

No travel VISA is necessary as you are allowed to be in Costa Rica for 90 days.

### **What taxes will I have to pay?**



There is a tourist tax of \$28 upon leaving Costa Rica but it's most likely to have been included in your airline ticket price. You can check with your airline to be sure. The local sales tax rate is 13% on all products and services.

### **What is nature like in Costa Rica?**

Costa Rica is well known for its thriving natural habitat and is one of the main reasons so many tourists come to Costa Rica yearly. Costa Rica has done a good job of protecting nature. Expect to see a variety of large insects, plants, butterflies, howler monkeys, sloths, agouti and more even on the property. It's all jungle. There are wildlife facilities close by as well.

### **What other amenities should I think about?**

Electricity voltage and plugs are the same as in the US 110 volts. However electricity systems have more surges than we are accustomed to in North America so be aware that these can affect electrical devices at times.

Each room is equipped with a safe deposit box, ceiling fan, and hot water. If there is something you need that your room doesn't have please speak with us at the lodge so we can see how we can better serve you.

### **What about laundry?**

Laundry service is only a short 3 minute walk away. Usually it can be done within a day. We can also send laundry out once or twice a week to be washed and returned within one day. Laundry services need to be paid in cash.

### **Do I have to bring shampoo and soap?**

All bungalows have locally made soap, shampoo and conditioner available.

### **What is tipping like in Costa Rica?**

Tips are not required but are certainly appreciated. Standard service charge at restaurants in the area is 10% and added on automatically. Tips are received by most service providers however it's not customary to tip taxi or tuk tuk drivers.

### **How do I tip Tierra de Suenos staff?**

We have a tip box in our lobby eating area and when tips are received they are shared across all our staff, unless you choose to tip someone directly.



### **What is the Yoga Space like?**

Our Yoga Pavillion is open air and set into a jungle landscape. It is made of wood and can be quaintly creaky. The surface is smooth and slippery so please be aware of this when doing movement. There are props of all kinds available for your use, but they are jungle props meaning they've lived in the jungle for a long time.

### **Do you have some space?**

If you are a light packer or have extra baggage allowance please let us know as bringing small items here is really helpful. We can have the items shipped to your home before you depart.

### **Are there useful donations for the area?**

Animal Support - [The Jaguar Rescue](#) center welcomes support of various kinds. Also, there are many cat and dog lovers who get involved to support domestic animals as well. The main volunteer based programs here are [PV Dogs](#) and [Marlies Cats](#).

Native Community Support - The local Bribri people are supported by [El Puente](#) and additionally school supplies for kids are welcomed in months December, January and early February which is the beginning of their school year.

Used Kids Books - We have an 8 and almost 10 year old who live here and LOVE ♥ to read and would welcome the donation of any used kids books for this age range. Graphic novels of all kinds are welcome. The donated books will be used for a local English / Spanish library project in the future.

### **Where can I find out more about your center?**

[tierradesuenoslodge.com](http://tierradesuenoslodge.com)  
[facebook.com/tierradesuenoslodge](https://facebook.com/tierradesuenoslodge)  
[instagram.com/tierradesuenoslodge](https://instagram.com/tierradesuenoslodge)

## **Suggested Packing List**

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Expect temperatures to range from between 77-89 degrees Fahrenheit or 23-31 degrees Celsius. Mostly on the upper end of this range.



- running shoes for fitness classes and hikes
- sandals for beach and retreat center use - slip ons are great
- day pack to carry water/snacks/personal items to the beach or on tours
- swimwear - even if you don't swim you may want to wade in the ocean
- beach towel and / or sarong
- sun hat / high factor sunscreen / sunglasses / SPF clothing- be aware that you will be close to the equator so the sun is intense
- sweater and light loose pants for in the evenings
- rain shell and an umbrella - if you are going out when it's raining
- refillable water bottle and/or drink mug
- yoga mat or towel if you prefer your own
- flashlight
- baby wipes are handy - also can be purchased easily in the area
- ear plugs - it's amazing to sleep in the sounds of the jungle but if the sound is too much ear plugs help. Howler monkeys wake up really early ;-)
- natural bug spray if you are sensitive to mosquitoes - also can be purchased easily in the area
- USD or CR colones currency for purchases, tours and transportation. Cash, in good condition, is often your easiest option for paying for these things
- USD or CR colones currency in small denominations like \$1, \$5, \$10's **in good condition** as we can't accept ripped or damaged bills

Safe Travels! ~ From the Tierra de Suenos Team



*~ Spanish in Costa Rica in 10 seconds ~*

*Hi = Pura Vida*

*How are you? = Pura Vida*

*Yes = Pura Vida*

*OK = Pura Vida*

*Thank-you = Pura Vida*

*You're Welcome = Pura Vida*

*Bye = Pura Vida*