



# Welcome to Your Retreat

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This document is provided to all Retreats in advance of arriving to give you 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 are going to Tierra de Suenos Retreat and Wellness Center

Your retreat will be held at Tierra de Suenos Wellness and Retreat center. Tierra de Suenos is in Playa Chiquita nestled in the jungle surrounded by some of the best beaches in Costa Rica. The center is just outside the tourist port town of Puerto Viejo de Talamanca on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica with typical warm and turquoise Caribbean beaches. This is as far east and south in Costa Rica as one can get.

Monkeys, toucans, sloths, green macaws and other wildlife inhabit the area and are seen and heard overhead. There is an infrared sauna, massage, reiki, energy work, and yoga on site. You can experience the quiet and refreshing area around the retreat center in Playa Chiquita OR you can go into Puerto Viejo (5-6 kms away) for 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. Submerged in the jungle and right across the street from the beach you will find simplicity - clean air, healthy food, active life, nature and easy living. True PURA VIDA! The Tierra de Suenos staff are here to be your liaisons to this new area.

## 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.

## Eco-Friendly

We reuse as much as possible. We compost 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.

## The Planning Process

Travelling to the centre 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 is pretty cool and relaxing. 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://flysansa.com/en/home>. These national flights are usually under \$100. You can then take a shuttle from [Limon to here](#), about an hour drive, for around \$22. Taxis are also available but will charge more. If you KNOW that sitting in a car for too long could drive you mad, take the flight.

## Is Costa Rica like vacationing in Mexico?

No, this is not an all inclusive vacation centre with buffets and bottomless drinks and in fact it is a different approach altogether. The Caribbean of Costa Rica has minimal 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.



Because importation is very costly and limited we source locally and buy loads of fresh foods from markets and make everything from scratch. You will notice that conservation, recycling and reusing 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 assist us in washing your plates and cups which allows us to run our small kitchen despite lacking the convenience of a dishwasher.

## 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. There was a point in time where things here were much less. But the dynamics in the economy have definitely 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 are best) 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 to make the change you need.

## Wellness Activities Available on Site

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

- Infrared sauna treatments
- Massage – Thai, deep tissue, shiatsu, or aromatherapy - we do open air massages
- Reiki & Acupuncture
- Cranial sacral therapy
- Nutritional Analysis

## 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
- Waterfalls - easy waterfall visit or a more challenging waterfall hike
- White Water Rafting - this is a great way to get here or back to San Jose!!
- Jaguar Rescue Center - only 1 mile from Tierra de Suenos daily tours at 9:30 and 11:30am Monday to Saturday
- Jungle Hikes and Walks
- BriBri Cultural Farm Visit Tour with chocolate making
- Group Breath Workshop
- Horseback Riding
- Snorkeling
- Surfing Lessons
- Kayaking on your own or in a tour
- 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!!

Tours are most easily paid for in cash. In the case where you really need to pay for a tour on your credit card you may have to go into their office to pay. You can pay cash for all tours at our front desk and we will book and pay the tour on your behalf. All tours have their respective cancellation policies and most still happen rain or shine.

## Important Details

- **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 a Queen bed in each. If you are sharing a room with someone we will add a twin bed to your bungalow so you can have your own sleeping space.



- **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 Suenos Retreat & Wellness Centre 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 Suenos 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 5-6 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 a pizza place and slow food restaurant, as well as a great artistic 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 lodge is open between 8am and 8pm so let us know if you need to arrive outside of these hours.

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

Our lodge and gates are open from 8am to 8pm. 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 call 360-799-3033, our North American, line if you can't call the Costa Rican one.

### **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!!
- **Cocles** – In Cocles just 5 minutes past Puerto Viejo and 1 mile 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 you'll want to go here!
- **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 and usually mostly locals.
- **Punta Uva** – One of Costa Rica's most famous beaches 1 mile away and only 2 minutes drive! It has almost no undertow and you can really relax and swim.
- **Manzanillo** – 10 minutes drive from us. 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. 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. However, January to April is also a high tourism season so plan on it being a little busy in the area. From May through August and November through January, expect clear skies in the morning and 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. Rain gear, bathing suit, yoga apparel, umbrella, flash light and your own personal hygiene and care products.

You can bring your own personal yoga mat for your practice. It will make you feel comfortable and at home even while being in the jungle. But if you can't fit it no worries as we do have mats on site.

### **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. If you are interested in surfing we have some great surf areas. When in the water always watch the flag system while at the beach Green is mild current, yellow-medium and red-high current and caution while swimming is recommended. We'll tell you where best to swim and how to keep yourself safe in the ocean.



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

There is a grocery store a short walk from our centre and you can buy beer, wine, snacks and basic necessities. We also have lots of eating options close by as well. 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. We also have small boutiques and sellers close by.

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

Tierra has a local phone that can call anywhere in Costa Rica if needed. Cellular 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 8pm and we can come and get you for that call. Or they can call our North American number as well 360-799-3033.

### **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 as reliable as other developed areas of the world and it is NOT in your bungalow.

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

No vaccinations are required. A fully equipped emergency facility and clinic is located 10 minutes away in Puerto Viejo. Also, it is advised that you speak with your doctor about any vaccinations or considerations that they may suggest about traveling in Costa Rica. Medical travel insurance is always advised and since COVID may be required.

### **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. You can bring bug repellent, a light pair of pants and a long sleeved shirt for evenings.

### **What currencies should I use?**

The local currency is Colones however bring U.S.\$ cash which can be used in Costa Rica to pay most things related to tourism. In Puerto Viejo there are a couple banks





and a few ATM machines. Some tour operators and small businesses only accept cash so it's wise to have some with you, and tours are often priced in dollars.

Cash is also great for tipping. We have a gratuity box onsite if you would like to leave gratuities for the staff to share. We don't have a customary tipping % but 10% is used in restaurants here.

Tierra de Suenos does not apply an automatic gratuity to anything but you will see an automatic gratuity of 10% used in restaurants. Tipping in Costa Rica is not required, but very appreciated, and our staff are grateful to receive gratuities.

If you are planning to use your credit card, please inform your bank that you will be travelling and using your credit card outside the US/Canada. Often banks will shut down credit card payments outside the US if not informed.

Exchanging currency at the airport will be very costly, check with your bank before you leave your home country to bring some US cash or Colones with you. If you forget to bring cash there are bank machines in town.

### **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.

Common credit cards that are accepted are VISA and Mastercard. Some places take American Express, Discovery, Dinners or other credit cards. Cash is the most maneuverable way to pay for what you need but you will be fine with either.

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

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

### **What travel insurance is needed?**

You will need to get travel insurance in case of emergencies. You will also need to complete the Costa Rica Health Pass before your arrival. Please visit here for more information - <https://salud.go.cr/>



### **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. We suggest using electricity as needed but not leave your devices plugged into the sockets when not necessary.

Each room is equipped with a safe deposit box, ceiling fan, as well as other amenities. 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 and a half.

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

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

### **Do I tip?**

Tips are not required but are certainly appreciated. Standard service charge at restaurants in the area is 10% and added on automatically.

We have a tip box in our lobby eating area and when tips are received they are shared across all our staff, unless of course 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 off your mats or moving quickly. 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.

### **Can I bring some items for you?**

If you are an ultra light packer or have an extra empty bag let us know as bringing supplies here is always really helpful and we can have them sent to your home before you depart. Email us at [info@tierradesuenoslodge.com](mailto:info@tierradesuenoslodge.com) if this is you.

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

School Supplies - There are native schools in the area who welcome school supplies.  
Animal Support - The Jaguar Rescue center welcomes support of various kinds.  
<https://www.jaguarrescue.foundation/>  
Used Kids Books - We have a 6 and 8 year old who live here and LOVE ♥ to read and would welcome the donation of any used kids books for this age range.

### **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 light hikes
- sandals for beach and retreat center use - slip ons are great
- hiking shoes or boots if you want to do a more advanced hike

- 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
- yoga mat if you will be doing yoga - there are also some at the centre
- flashlight
- baby wipes are handy
- ear plugs - it's amazing to sleep in the sounds of the jungle but if they are too much ear plugs help. Howler monkeys wake up really early ;-)
- natural bug spray if you are sensitive to mosquitos
- USD or CR colones currency for purchases, tours and transportation. Cash will almost always be your easiest option for paying for these things
- USD or CR colones currency in small denominations like \$1, \$5, \$10's

### Questions?

If you have any questions that you want to ask before you travel here please message us at [info@tierradelodege.com](mailto:info@tierradelodege.com). We would be happy to answer your questions.

Safe Travels! ~ From the Tierra de Suenos Team