

## Preparation Tips:

**Travel Insurance:** We recommend that you purchase travel insurance for theft, trip cancellation, and emergency medical attention. Travel health and cancellation insurance can be obtained through Travel Insurance Services, 800-937-1387 or [www.travelinsure.com](http://www.travelinsure.com).

**Transportation Security Restrictions and Prohibitions:** For information regarding international flight security visit: <http://www.tsa.gov> for USA travelers; visit <http://www.catsa.gc.ca> for Canadian travelers. If traveling from outside the USA/Canada, please request further information. Your airline(s) will clearly state rules on luggage weight and size requirements.

**Passports:** Mandatory for all, regardless of age. Passport cannot expire within 6 months of arrival date. Please also carry two photocopies of your passport for your own security.

**Converting Money:** US Dollars (USD) in cash are widely accepted throughout Costa Rica. Upon arrival to Costa Rica, it is quite simple to exchange to CRC, whether at the airport, at hotels, in tourist areas, or at the grocery store. Your Serendipity guide will assist you to exchange to CRC.

**Traveler's Checks:** Travelers checks are no longer common and have become obsolete in our world of modern internationalism.

**Credit Cards:** Master Card and Visa are widely accepted throughout Costa Rica, especially in cities and tourist areas. Please check with your credit card company to determine the international transaction fees applied. Without being aware of this factor, you may rack up a lot of charges. AMEX is not widely accepted throughout Costa Rica. ATM machines are widely available as well.

**Inoculations and Medications:** In Costa Rica, there currently are minimal threats of tropical disease such as Malaria, Typhoid and Yellow fever. We do recommend having your Hepatitis A and B vaccinations up to date. Many foreign authorities warn of high risk, but these advisories are conservative and intended for ultra risk-averse travelers.

**Tipping:** Serendipity uses a lump-sum gratuity system that you can charge to your credit card at the end of your trip. Your guide will give you a tipping form where you can allocate specific amounts or special commendations to any or all of the persons that contributed to your trip. An acceptable range used by many previous Serendipity clients to calculate total gratuities has been 7% to 12% of the retail price of your itinerary.



*Waterproof/Shockproof box made by PELICAN.*



*Soft sided luggage is the best option and REQUIRED for groups of 4 to 6 per vehicle.*

**Baggage:** Soft-sided luggage is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** for Serendipity trips. All vehicles include a rooftop cargo box (Thule) that can stow a reasonable amount of luggage. **CAUTION** to groups of 5 or 6: Our vehicles can hold 7 passengers comfortably but luggage space does become limited with full vehicles so please pack light (No hard suitcases **PLEASE!!**). If not possible (because of extended travel before/after) please alert your guide in advance to bring trailer.



*Waterproof 'point & shoot' type cameras are the most practical option*

**Lost Luggage:** If your luggage is lost upon arriving to Costa Rica, go to the lost luggage declaration desk. You must give them a photocopy of your passport, address of your first night's hotel, and the claim number on your baggage check stub (write down your baggage check stub for your records too). Serendipity will not be permitted to enter the airport to assist you in this process.

**Cameras:** The opportunities for photography are extraordinary – cameras are welcomed and encouraged. Cell phone cameras and “point & shoot” models are easiest to manage (preferably water/shock proof – see recommended Olympus model). **SLR and video cameras** require special protection and care including padded camera bags or water/shock proof boxes (see Pelican Box sample).



*“Cheater plug”*

**Laundry:** Most hotels offer laundry service, yet at a highly inflated price. It is available if absolutely necessary. At times, Serendipity guides may find economical alternatives. For this reason it is **critical** that you rely on a good set of quick-dry clothes you can wash by hand (if needed) and re-use on a daily basis.

**Electronics:** Costa Rican outlets are 110 volt, the same as the US/Canada. However, many outlets only support the two-prongs (non-grounding receptacle) and not the three-pronged grounded outlet. An AC ground lifter (A.K.A “cheater plug”) could come in handy.



*Don't forget your IPOD to Car Stereo cable!!*

**Tablets, Ipods & Laptops:** Our advice is simple: Bring ONE DEVICE ONLY and leave the rest at home – the smaller and lighter your choice, the easier to manage. We want to hear your music collection! Serendipity vehicles are equipped to connect Ipods/MP3 players using cable connection (radio- device) but if you can bring a wireless frequency adapter that would be optimums.

**Smart Phones and WiFi:** Your international roaming capabilities must be verified with your cell phone provider – **not** all services are covered in Costa Rica. GSM chips are available locally, but you still must verify if your phone is unlocked. Another option is to purchase a pay-as-you-go plan that includes a basic cell phone (cost: \$20 - \$40).

WiFi connectivity is common in most hotels (3 – 5 star) although the quality/stability of connection is often unstable. Some hotels only offer WiFi in common areas and not in the rooms. Almost all hotels do offer computers with internet connection for guest use, and internet café's are common throughout Costa Rica.

**Bugs and Other Varmints:** There are always insects and small animals around you while traveling in Costa Rica -- sometimes in your own bedroom, even at the best hotels. Ants, geckos, small lizards, and beetles enter rooms, vehicles, and restaurants. Do not take any food into your room. Bug repellents are important and effective.

**Airport Pick Up:** A few days prior to your departure you can expect an important email from Serendipity titled “**LAST MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS**”. This email will contain specific instructions that will help you prepare your arrival in Costa Rica including airport instructions, guide name/contact info and friendly reminders of important documentation.

**Emergencies:** For travelers that need to be accessible to business or family back home, please provide them with our international contact information:

**MONDAY - FRIDAY 8 AM to 5:00 PM Costa Rica time (-6 UTC)**

Calls from USA/Canada (toll free): 888-226-5050 or 877-507-1358

Within Costa Rica: 2556-5852

All other countries: +506 2556-5852

**AFTER HOURS AND ON WEEKENDS (24/7 emergency number)**

Calls from USA/Canada: 011-506-8703-8743

Within Costa Rica: 8703-8743

All other countries: +506-8703-8743



*Come prepared with repellent –prevention is the first line of defense.*