

Preparation Tips

All you need to know before you go.

Travel Insurance - We recommend that you purchase travel insurance for theft, trip cancellation, and emergency medical attention. Insurance can be obtained through Travel Insurance Services, 800-937-1387 or 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 - Citizens of the United States, Canada and most European countries are not required to have a visa to visit Costa Rica. However, they must have a current valid passport and a return ticket to exit Costa Rica within 90 days (either to return to your country or to go to another country). 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. It is better to bring small bills (\$20 bill maximum). On arrival, 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.

Credit Cards - Mastercard 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 to avoid a lot of charges. AMEX is not widely accepted throughout Costa Rica. ATM machines are widely available as well.



Each traveler needs a valid passport and two photocopies



Costa Rican Colones (CRC) is the local currency, but USD is accepted



Mastercard and Visa can be used to pay in cities and tourist areas

Traveler's Checks - Traveler's checks are no longer common and have become obsolete.

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 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.

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

Medication - If you use any type of over-the-counter or prescription meds regularly, including aspirin or similar, asthma spray, and/or medication for car sickness, we recommend you bring a supply with you. Drugstores are common in Costa Rica, but we cannot guarantee your preferred brand is available here. Serendipity's first aid kits contain common pills such as Aspirin, Advil, Tylenol, and Benadryl, but guides are not allowed to prescribe any meds to clients. You are welcome to use pills from our first aid kit at your own risk if you are sure you are not allergic to the substances.

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.

For 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 let us know in advance to bring a trailer.

Lost Luggage - If your luggage is lost upon arrival to Costa Rica, go to the lost luggage declaration desk. You must give them a photocopy of your passport, the 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.



Check if your Hepatitis A & B vaccinations are up to date



Bring a good supply of prescription and over-the-counter meds



Soft-sided luggage, such as a duffel bag, is highly recommended



If your luggage doesn't arrive, don't panic! Head to the declaration desk

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.



A 'cheater plug' will come in handy during your trip

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 reuse.

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/shockproof – see Olympus model). SLR and video cameras require special protection and care including padded camera bags or water/shockproof boxes (see Pelican Box).



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

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 a cable connection (radio device) but a wireless frequency adapter would be ideal.



Waterproof/Shockproof box made by PELICAN

Smart Phones and WiFi - Your international roaming capabilities must be verified with your cell phone provider – not all services are covered in Costa Rica. SIM cards 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 and be mindful of where you step.



Wildlife in Costa Rica is best kept outside your hotel room

Sunblock and Repellent - Airlines restrict you to 3 ounces of liquid in carry-on baggage or aerosol cans in general. Serendipity Expedition vehicles are equipped with extra SPF 30+ sunblock and OFF! Deet bug repellent. If your itinerary includes independent time without the Serendipity guide, and you run out of these products, please know these items are readily available for purchase here.

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 details that will help you prepare for your arrival in Costa Rica including airport instructions, guide name/contact info, and friendly reminders of important documentation.

Contacting Serendipity Adventures - 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)

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)

From USA/Canada: 011-506-8703-8743

Within Costa Rica: 8703-8743

All other countries: +506-8703-8743



Come prepared with repellent



Keep an eye out for our 'Last Minute Instructions' email

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