

## COSTA RICA TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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Depending on the passport you hold, a visa may be required for entry to Costa Rica and is not included in the tour price. Please visit the Costa Rican Visa Application Centre website below to find out more. <http://www.costarica-embassy.org/index.php?q=node/72>

### INSURANCE:

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It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### EATING IN COSTA RICA:

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Costa Rican cuisine is a combination of influences of both the colonial Spanish and Afro-Caribbeans. The food is mild, and has a high reliance on fresh fruit and vegetables – which isn't much of a surprise when you consider Costa Rica's huge biodiversity. Staple foods include rice and black beans, which are served at most meals, alongside plantain and grilled or sautéed meat or fish.

A typical breakfast is Gallo Pinto – rice and beans stir-fried together and served with eggs and sour cream or cheese, whilst a typical lunch, casado, is rice and beans (not mixed) with meat and a salad. Both are delicious and seasoned beautifully with local herbs and vegetables. The indigenous people of the Central American region ate corn as a large part of their diet, and it still features today. Tamales, for example, were introduced by the Aztecs and are still eaten at celebrations, especially Christmas. These are a dough of cornmeal, lard and spices stuffed with meat, rice and vegetables and steamed in a leaf. Another food not too miss are empanadas, a delicious snack. Similar to a Cornish pasty but with a corn-based dough, these are filled with beef, chicken, cheese or fruit.

Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Costa Rica also has a wide range of international foods available – Mexican, steakhouses, Chinese and Italian are particularly popular.

### ACCOMMODATION:

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to rainforest lodges. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between the UK and Costa Rica.

All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

### SOUVENIRS:

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Costa Rica is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. To avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

By law, there is a 10% fee on any restaurant bill that is designated to the servers. Keeping this in mind, you are more than welcome to add some more tip upon your discretion, to a server of a specific place if you consider your service was exceptional.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

### TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Costa Rica have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

### APPROPRIATE DRESS:

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Water-proof jackets for rainforest, walking shoes, dry fit clothing, some warm clothes for the cloud forest (especially at night), closed toe sandals, hat and sunglasses (preferably with a cord)

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP for advice on vaccinations and travel health.

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers.

<https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/help-and-advice/travel-health/>

### ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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