



PREPARING FOR YOUR MULTI-DAY KAYAK TRIP IN COSTA RICA

Health

Anyone who is moderately fit, not adversely affected by intense heat, and has the endurance to paddle at a moderate pace for several consecutive days can enjoy this trip. No matter what your age or fitness level, it is important to meet with your physician to discuss your travel plans. Even though Costa Rica is a fairly safe country to travel in, your doctor may want to prescribe preventative medication for Malaria, Typhoid and Hepatitis. The Travel Wise Global Immunization Guide recommends you get the vaccinations for Hepatitis A, Tetanus-Diphtheria and Poliomyelitis. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends taking “Chloroquine” (the most benign of the anti-malarial drugs), as malaria prevention treatment two weeks prior to traveling. The “Ministerio de Salud” (Health Ministry), also recommends the use of environmentally friendly insect repellent (non-DEET products).

Packing Recommendations

You will find that if you pack light, your trip to Costa Rica will be easier and more enjoyable. Follow the list below and you will have all the necessary items. If you are excellent packers and are able to bring as light a bag as 27 lbs. per person, we may fly you on a small charter from San José to Tambor rather than traveling on the road; we can discuss this closer to the trip time.

Checklist of items to bring for your comfort and safety:

- Light sleeping bag and Thermarest sleeping pad
- Small to medium-sized dry bags (2-3)
- Light-weight hiking shoes or tennis shoes
- Teva or Chaco sport sandals
- Cotton or Smartwool socks (2 pair)
- Wide-brimmed sun hat or ball cap
- Quick-dry t-shirts (3)
- Quick-dry, collared long-sleeved shirts (2)
- Windbreaker or light paddling jacket
- Bathing suit
- Quick-dry shorts (2)
- Quick-dry wind pants (1)
- Sunscreen (large bottle, SPF 15 or higher)
- Lip balm with protection
- Sunglasses and grippers (2 pairs)
- Nalgene water bottles with your name (2)
- Flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries)
- Small towel or chamois
- Personal toiletries and any medications you take

Bring two-three dry bags or nylon duffel bags; the smaller the bag the easier it is to pack in boats. You'll want one small dry bag or stuff sack for your sleeping bag and two small to medium sized dry bags for your clothes and shoes. Bring a small light-weight day pack for hiking and a duffel bag to transport clothing from home. Some additional items you may want are a camping pillow, personal first aid kit, bug repellent (we use Natrapel with Citronella), 100% pure Aloe, camera (water proofed) film (very expensive in Costa Rica), binoculars (water proofed), bandana, notebook and pen, reading material, pocket knife, power snacks (to share with guides). We can leave some items in a safe place on shore during the paddling trip for you if necessary.

Language

It is highly recommended that you pick up a basic Spanish handbook or Spanish/English dictionary and learn simple greetings such as “Hola,” “Buenos dias,” “Muchas gracias,” and “Como Esta Usted?” before your arrival. Most Costa Rica guidebooks will have a language section for basic phrases in the back; we recommend *Lonely Planet*. This will make your trip more enjoyable, as local people everywhere feel honored and appreciated when travelers make attempts to communicate with them in their native tongue.

Money

Traveler’s checks are not recommended. The local currency is the Costa Rica *colon*. You will have access to banks and ATMs for taking out cash in San José. You need to know your 4-digit pin identification number to get cash advances from your credit card. Before or after the trip, you will be purchasing meals and accommodations, for many of which you can use your credit card. Once we are on the water on the kayaking trip, everything is provided, so no money is necessary. Keep in mind that you may also wish to have some *colones* available to purchase souvenirs at Curú Wildlife Refuge just before or just after the paddling trip. All the profits generated from purchases are directed towards conservation efforts in the park.

Passport

You will need to present a valid passport when entering and exiting the country. It is a good idea to make two copies of your passport and leave one with someone at home, and bring the other along but pack it in a checked piece of luggage. Your travel documents and other valuables can be stored at the hotel in Tambor while you are on the trip.

Insurance

Trip cancellation and medical/health/accident travel insurance are highly recommended. One good resource for this is TravelGuard -- <http://www.travelguard.com/> Bring your medical insurance cards with you. It is essential to carry medical insurance for your trip in Costa Rica.

Medical and emergency form

Please fill out the Seascape medical and emergency form and e-mail it back to us prior to arrival. *If you have any special dietary needs or restrictions, let us know this before your arrival.*

ARRIVAL IN COSTA RICA

Transfer details

Your trip price includes all transfers: Round-trip land-based transportation from San José to the Pacific Coast, airport pickups, drop-offs and hotel shuttles. From the moment you arrive at the Juan Santamaria International Airport in San José, Seascape will take care of your transportation. You will be met by a friendly face outside the airport and escorted to your hotel accommodation for the evening (30 minutes). The day following your arrival, you will be picked up at your hotel and travel via air-conditioned microbus to Puntarenas (2 hours). A lunch / snack break is included in the trip. You will then take the ferry with a Seascape escort to Paquera on the Nicoya Peninsula (1.5 hours) and then ride the short distance with Seascape hosts to the seaside village of Tambor and your accommodation there. The next morning, Seascape will transport you to Curú Wildlife Refuge, where your paddling trip will be based. After the trip, we will shuttle you back to Tambor for another night and then back to San José, to your hotel accommodation there, and then pick you up next day and deliver you to the airport.

Customs

A steward will give you a customs/immigration form to fill out before landing. When you land at the Juan Santa Maria Airport in San José, you will follow the others on your airline to the customs area. Customs lines can be long; there is a restroom opportunity just before you enter the line. Signs will indicate “Immigration,” and you will need to get in the line for non-Costa Rican citizens. A customs agent will look at your passport and customs form and may ask you a few brief questions about your visit, such as whether you are in the country on business or pleasure. It is a good idea to attempt to use some very basic Spanish at this time.

Baggage

Once you have cleared customs, you will take your passport and customs form to the baggage claim area. Secure a cart (free), reclaim your baggage from the carousel and take the form to the agent at the exit gate. You will be asked to place all of your baggage on a conveyor belt that takes it through a final security check. Then you will load it back onto your cart and make your way out to the taxi area. Just before you exit the airport, you will need to leave your cart and carry your bags just a short way out to where someone from Seascope will be waiting with a sign that has your name on it as well as the Seascope logo. *Remember, Costa Rica is a Latin American country. Do not expect things to be expedient. Relax and enjoy the adventure. Pura Vida!*

Time in San José

You will travel by microbus from the airport to your accommodation (30 minutes). The hotel is in a safe neighborhood and in walking distance to many restaurants and historic sites. The breakfast is enjoyable and included in your rate.

Travel to Tambor

The day following your arrival we will travel via air-conditioned microbus to Puntarenas (2 hours). A lunch / snack break is included in the trip. We will take the ferry to Paquera (1.5 hours) and then ride the short distance to Tambor. You will spend an evening at the boutique hotel Tambor Tropical. Tambor is a quiet seaside village located on a beautiful long sandy beach in Bahía Ballena. You will have the afternoon to explore the village and enjoy the beach. A traditional Costa Rican dinner will be followed by an evening discussion concerning Costa Rica, its national parks, and diverse wildlife. We will also provide an in-depth overview of the trip at this time.

THE PADDLING EXPERIENCE

Your kayak trip

The expedition begins at Curú Wildlife Refuge, which is located 20 minutes drive from Tambor. We will travel to the reserve following breakfast. The pre-trip preparation will include a comprehensive orientation to sea kayaking, packing, organization of equipment and kayaks. We will be kayaking in the Gulf of Nicoya for the next few days. Refer to your itinerary for details. The “Islas del Golfo de Nicoya” is a region of Costa Rica that is off the beaten path. The island archipelago is comprised of small fishing hamlets, lowland tropical dry and humid forest, mangrove, estuaries, the crystal clear Pacific and abundant wildlife. Island hopping, wildlife observation, hiking in protected reserves, swimming, snorkeling and unique cultural experiences are all part of the adventure. After journey’s end, the group is picked up following lunch and we will return to Tambor Tropical. The final evening on the Pacific will be spent enjoying a delicious dinner and listening to the ocean surf. The next day, you will travel by microbus to San José and to your comfortable accommodation there before the next day’s departure.

Gear details

Seascape uses some of the finest outdoor equipment available for client comfort and safety: Single and tandem fiberglass and roto-molded sea kayaks by Seaward and Current Designs; light-weight fiberglass paddles; comfortable, specialized personal flotation devices (life vests); and well ventilated four-season tents by Mountain Hard Wear.

Culinary overview

An essential component of any outdoor adventure, meals on Seascape tours are healthy, delicious and plentiful. Fresh seafood, meats, fruits and vegetables are carefully prepared with attention to detail. Juice is served with every meal and wine complements dinner. Certified Organic and Fair Trade products are used whenever possible. Dietary restrictions are happily accommodated with advance notice of at least two weeks. Breakfasts are included in your hotel stays. We provide meals starting with lunch on the first paddling day through lunch on the last paddling day. *Other meals are on your own.*

Paddling distance

The itinerary is flexible, and may vary due to rapidly changing weather conditions and the experience level of participants. We normally paddle 4-5 hours a day except for the first day, which is usually shorter. This is at a relaxed pace, so there is a lot of time for wildlife observation, swimming etc. On a five-day trip, the most groups would paddle is approximately 64 kilometers or 40 nautical miles.

Temperature and heat precautions

Costa Rica is a tropical country and the temperature can be very warm (30+ C / 80+ F). We tend to rise early in the morning to paddle when it is cooler and rest during the heat of day. We will continue paddling later in the afternoon. We also take numerous breaks to swim and cool down. It is important that you take care of yourself in this tropical environment. This means appropriate clothing (refer to the detailed clothing and equipment list on your itinerary), applying sunscreen repeatedly and drinking sufficient fluids.

Environmental safety

Life in the tropics is very different than in North America. Prior to the expedition, your guide will outline the potential hazards you may encounter on the trip. This knowledge combined with common sense will go a long way in assuring a safe enjoyable experience.

Camping and washroom facilities

Camping is usually on beaches, islands or the mainland. Rustic washrooms and shower facilities are available in certain locations. We carry a lot of fresh water, which can be used for washing when facilities are unavailable. To maintain the islands' and beaches' natural state, we utilize proper human waste procedures. Please refer to the Sustainability page on our web site for more information about our responsible tourism practices.

Health risks

Any time you engage in a sport such as kayaking, you are exposing yourself to certain risks. You will sign a standard waiver with Seascape Kayak Tours before beginning your trip. If you have questions about this or would like to see a copy of the waiver before your trip, please e-mail us.

Evacuation procedures

Your guide has wilderness first aid and emergency medical technician certification. When you register for this trip, you will provide us with your insurance policy number and details. In the event that an evacuation should be necessary, your guide will work with your insurance company to orchestrate your transportation out of the country smoothly and safely.

Payment schedule

A deposit of 25% of the listed trip cost will secure your trip reservation at the time of booking. The remaining balance is due 60 days prior to your trip date. Payment may be made in the form of check made out to Seascape Kayak Tours and mailed to Seascape headquarters in Canada, or via credit card (Visa or Master Card), e-mailed to Seascape in a secure method.

Cancellation policy

If you cancel at least 30 days prior to the trip date, you will receive a full refund less a \$300.00 administration fee. If you cancel up to 29 days prior to the trip date, no refund will be extended. You will receive a full refund if a cancellation is made by Seascape for safety reasons. Refunds should not be expected in the event of unfavorable weather conditions during the trip.

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