

Welcome! We're pumped you're considering joining us!

Below you will find an answer to almost any question you may have. IF you still have questions, let us know so we can make sure you're armed with all the information you need!

So you have given yourself the gift of a retreat! A retreat from the routine, from the norm, from your day to day. A retreat to get away, rejuvenate, calibrate and reconnect with yourself. 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 Sueños Retreat and Wellness Center

Your retreats will be held at the beautiful Tierra de Suenos Wellness and Retreat centre. Tierra de Sueños is at Playa Chiquita in Puerto Viejo and is nestled in the jungle right next to some of the best beaches in Costa Rica. The center is just outside the touristy port town of Puerto Viejo 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 and other wildlife inhabit the area and are seen and heard overhead. There is an infrared sauna, massage, reiki and yoga on site. You can experience the quiet and refreshing area around the retreat center OR you can go into Puerto Viejo for an active nightlife.

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 lifestyle, and easy living. True PURA VIDA!

When you arrive on site, you will immediately be set about to relax and rejuvenate from your travels. After settling in you may feel teleported from stresses back home. The Tierra de Suenos staff are very much caretakers and they are there 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! Puerto Viejo, the township we are a part of, is definitely a little remote in Costa Rica. We are right in the jungle and out in nature far away from busy city energy, which is why people come here. But coming here means relaxing and understanding that sometimes things can happen and don't work as well as they do in the US all the time.

Eco-Friendly

We reuse as much as possible. We compost our waste. Everything goes back into nature here. We are eco-friendly and use very little 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 4-5 hours drive from the San Jose airport but the drive is pretty cool and relaxing if you are a passenger and if time permits you will have a stop along the way for an optional meal. Bring a good book to read or listen to, some snacks and you'll be set.

If a car ride is not your thing, hop on a national flight from San Jose to Limon using Sansa Air <http://crc.flysansa.com/en/home>. These national flights are around \$80. You can then take a shuttle or taxi from Limon to here, about an hour drive, for around \$20-\$25.

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 healthy 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. You will notice that conservation, recycling and reusing is a way of life throughout the country, but especially here in the remote area of the Caribbean.

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 your home country. So plan your finances as you would for a trip in your home country. Also plan to have some cash on hand as many items are cash only. USD works well for everything and is widely accepted.

Wellness Activities Available on Site

You can book any number of wellness treatments for your trip. Book your services on arrival or contact us by email info@tierradesuenoslodge.com or call the lodge directly in Costa Rica at 506-2750-0378 between 8am and 8pm UTC.

- Infrared sauna treatments

- Massage – Thai, deep tissue, shiatsu, or aromatherapy - we do open air massages on your room balcony.
- Reiki & Acupuncture
- Cranial sacral therapy
- 2 Hour Body Work Sessions including full assessment

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 are 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 more challenging waterfall hike
- White Water Rafting - this is a great way to get 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 of all kinds
- Healthy Caribbean Cooking Classes with Maria
- BriBri Cultural Farm Visit Tour and Tasting with Marvin
- Horseback Riding
- Snorkeling
- Surfing Lessons

- Native Medicine Man Assessment with Dr. Candido
- And much more!!

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** with no air conditioning as temperatures stay between 23-31 degrees year round. All bungalows have fans to keep air circulating and the evening air is often cooler. You'll hear the sounds of nature all around.
- **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.
- **Food Allergies** – If you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions please let us know beforehand so we can plan.
- **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 or time in a car. Please look up Sansa Airlines and the national airline in Costa Rica.

Limon is about a 1 hour drive from Tierra de Suenos.

- **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.

FAQ's

Where are you located?

We are 6 kms away from Puerto Viejo. Our physical address is:

Tierra de Suenos Retreat & Wellness Center
50 Meters North of Hotel Shawanda in Playa Chiquita
Puerto Viejo de Talamanca, Costa Rica

When do we check in and out?

Check-in time is 2:00 PM and check-out time 11:00 AM. Our lodge is open between 8am and 8pm - if you need to arrive outside of these times please contact us in advance so we can make arrangements.

What are your hours?

Our front reception is 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 2750-0378 if you are running late the day of your trip.

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 the a variety of beaches for whatever you heart desires, surfing, jumping the waves, relaxation, stand up paddle and more...

- **Playa Negra** – At the entrance of Puerto Viejo. This is where surf training and beginning surfers practice.
- **Cocles** – Cocles is just 5 minutes past Puerto Viejo.
- The **main beach Salsa Brava** – This is the competition wave area for extremely experienced surfers.
- **Playa Chiquita** – This is across the street from us and has a beautiful private beach area. Tan, swim or do your morning walk or yoga on the beach.
- **Punta Uva** – One of Costa Rica's most famous beaches 1 mile away and only 2 minutes drive from us!
- **Manzanillo** – 10 minutes from us. This is a calm beach and excellent for young families with children.

What is the weather and temperature like?

The local temperature averages 80-85 degrees (28 C) year around. 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.

When does the rainy season begin?

The best time to travel to Costa Rica is late **November through April**. If you are looking for great weather, you are almost guaranteed sunny skies and many rain-free days. However, this is also the high tourism season so plan on paying more for everything. From May through August, expect clear skies in the morning and rain in the afternoon or overnight. No matter if it rains or shines there is always

so many things to do and see in this beautiful location and often rains come and go leaving the air fresh and revitalized.

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. A bathing suit, yoga apparel, umbrella, flashlight, your own personal hygiene and care products and that's really all you need.

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 some on site.

What are the roads like?

The roads on the Caribbean side are very good. You are able to bike for long stretches but must be cautious of the fast drivers. The roads from the airport to our retreat center are some of the best roads in Costa Rica but the highway is also very slow moving so sit back and relax.

How are the beaches? Is there surfing?

Many of our guests have experienced rocky beaches on the pacific side. We are privy to many beach areas on the Caribbean side all of which are rock free and simply beautiful. 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.

Where can we shop?

We are less than 10 minutes away from Puerto Viejo where you will find many shops, restaurants and artisans offering unique designs. We also have small boutiques and sellers close by. There is a grocery store a short walk from our centre and you can buy beer, wine, snacks and basic necessities.

How do the telephones work?

Tierra has a local phone used for the lodge needs and for emergencies. We can also call anywhere in Costa Rica for you if needed. Cellular phones generally have good reception in our area if you are using one. If there is an emergency back home and a loved one needs to reach you, they can call our local telephone number from 8 to 8 and we can come and get you for that call.

Do you have WIFI

Tierra offers Free WIFI 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.

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. Bed nets are provided. You can bring bug repellent for your use or better yet a pair of pants and 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 the Puerto Viejo there are a couple banks and a few ATM machines. Most 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 do not apply an automatic gratuity but you will see this used across the restaurants in the area. Tipping in Costa Rica is not required, but very appreciated and our staff are grateful to receive gratuities. We do have a gratuity box onsite if you would like to leave something for the staff to share.

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/Europe. 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. It's handy and you will want to have some. If you forget there are bank machines here in town.

Can I use my Credit Card?

Credit card acceptance varies widely. Taxis, Tuk Tuks, smaller restaurants/stores and some tour companies will only take cash. Many larger companies are set up to take credit card which will also include a 11-13% Costa Rican Sales Taxes.

Common credit cards that are accepted are VISA and Mastercard. Very few places take American Express or other credit cards.

Cash is the most maneuverable way to pay for what you need and to sometimes receive discounts, 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 want to get your own travel insurance.

What taxes will I have to pay?

Tourist Tax Upon leaving Costa Rica a tourist tax must be paid before passing customs. A rate of \$28.00 can be paid directly at the airport at time of arrival or may have been included in your ticket price - check with your airline. The local tax rate is 13% in hotels. Other rates apply for other services.

What is the nature like?

Costa Rica is well known for its thriving natural habitat and is one of the main reasons so many tourists come to Costa Rica every year! Expect to see a variety of large insects, plants, butterflies, howler monkeys, sloths, agouti and more. 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 leaving 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 and is generally done the same day.

Do I have to bring shampoo and soap?

All bungalows have soap, shampoo and conditioner available.

Do I tip?

Tips are not required at our centre but are certainly appreciated. Standard service charges at restaurants in the area are generally 10% and added on automatically.

We do 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's the Yoga Pavillion like?

Our Yoga shala is an open air shala set in a jungle landscape. It's 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 mats and blocks available for use if you don't want to bring yours.

Suggested Packing List:

Expect temperatures to range from 23 - 30 (Celsius). You only need a light sweater or two for evenings, and a pair of light pants to protect your legs from mosquitos when the sun goes down.

- running shoes for fitness classes and / or light hikes or activities
- sandals for beach and retreat center use - slip ons are great
- 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 beach mat

- sun hat / high factor sunscreen / sunglasses / SPF clothing- be aware that you will be close to the equator so the sun is intense and you need protection
- sweater and light loose pants for in the evenings
- rain shell and an umbrella
- water drink bottle and a to-go hot beverage cup
- yoga mat if you will be doing yoga - there are also some at the centre
- flashlight
- baby wipes are handy
- moisturizer or aloe vera gel if you get a sunburn
- ear plugs - it's amazing to sleep in the sounds of the jungle but if they are too much you'll have ear plugs to help. Howler monkeys wake up really early ;-).
- natural bug spray if you are sensitive to mosquitos
- US or CR currency for purchases, massages, tours and transportation. Cash will almost always be your easiest option for paying for these things.

A Request...

In our remote town of Puerto Viejo we don't have many choices for shopping and a limited amount of materials are available. One thing that our family is always looking for is **kids books**. We have a 2 and 4 year old that love to read with us. If you have old or unused kids books around your home we would love to help you repurpose them and give them a home here.

Questions?

If you have any questions that you want to ask before you travel here please message us at info@tierradesuenoslodge.com or call us at 506-2750-0378 in Costa Rica.

Safe Travels ~ The Tierra de Suenos Team