23rd RDA Plenary

TRAVEL GUIDE TO COSTA RICA

12-14 November 2024

Travel Guide to Costa Rica

Estimated time of reading 8 minutes

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VISA INFORMATION

Summary of entry to Costa Rica.

WEATHER, TIME ZONE, LANGUAGE, CURRENCY

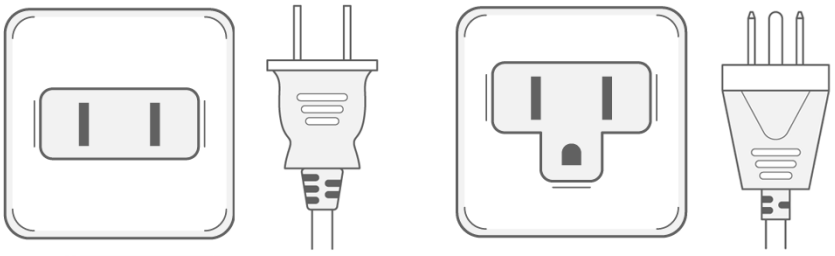
Climate and what to wear: Temperatures in Valle Central (San José) range from 16°C to 27°C (60ºF to 80ºF) in November, with rains in the afternoon. Please bring appropriate clothes for this climate (comfortable footwear, a light coat or raincoat, and an umbrella).
In certain areas of the country the use of insect repellent and sunscreen is recommended.

Time zone: Costa Rica is in Central Standard Time all year (UTC/GMT -6 hours) and the clock does not change. The sun rises around 6 AM everyday and it gets dark by 6 PM.

Language and Currency: Spanish is the official language, but some speak some English. The Costa Rican colón is the official currency, but US Dollars are accepted in some businesses. Avoid exchanging money at the airport (rates are higher) and opt to exchange at banks or supermarkets (the latter only exchange $5, $10 and $20 bills). To exchange money at the bank, you need to bring your passport.

Payment Methods: Payments can be made with credit or debit cards (e.g., VISA, Mastercard, American Express). Make sure to check accepted payment methods at the establishment you are visiting before consumption.

Electricity: Electrical outlets are 110V, with standard two-prong plugs (A/B, see image). Bring an adapter to charge your devices.



TRANSPORTATION

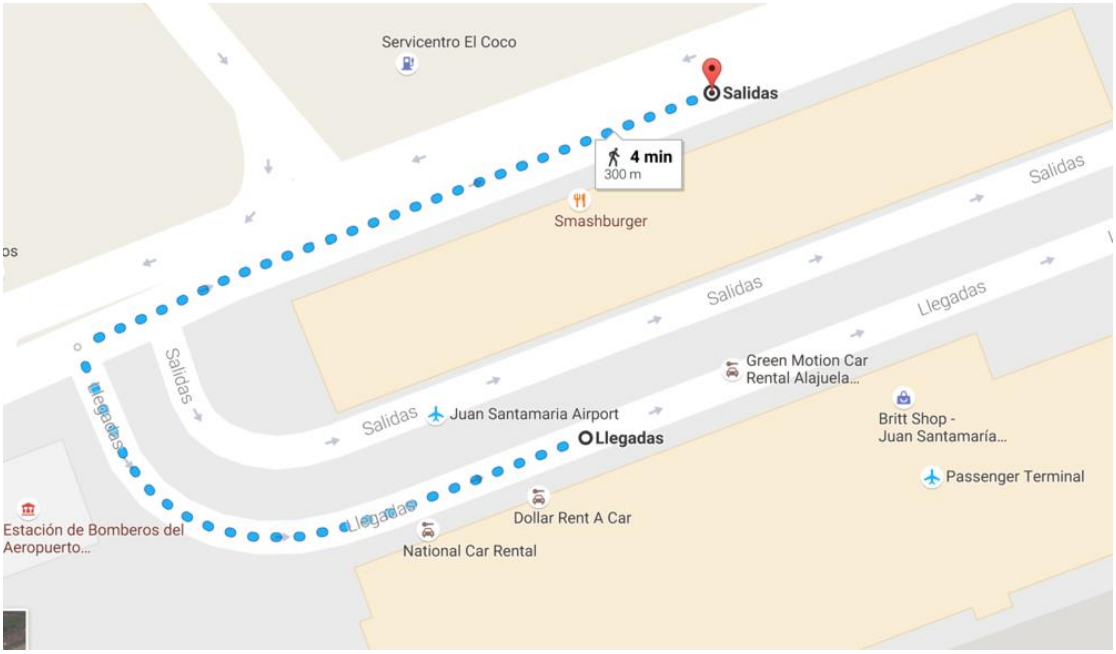
Flight booking advice:
When booking flights, make sure to select San José in Costa Rica and not San Jose in California. This is a common mistake that could cost you an additional 4,000 miles trip.

International Airports: Costa Rica has two international airports. The airport closest to the event venue is Aeropuerto Internacional Juan Santamaría (SJO), located in the province of Alajuela, Costa Rica. Official website: https://sjoairport.com/ Address: Province of Alajuela, 20 km west of the city of San José and takes 30 minutes in a taxi.

Local transport:

- **Airport**: To get to the city center from the airport, you can take
  - a taxi (which are more expensive and the fare depends on the taximeter. Generally, they are not less than $30),
  - private transportation arranged through an app (the fare depends on the distance and time of day). You can use ***Uber***, ***Didi***, ***inDrive***. A note from local hosts: we **do not recommend** using the Alajuela-San

José bus that leaves from outside the airport to the downtown TUASA Terminal in San José center.



- **Buses**: schedules can be viewed on the *Moovit* or *Yo viajo Costa Rica* apps. In the Great Metropolitan Area (GAM), tickets are paid to the driver in cash (only colones). They rarely accept card payments, so make sure to always bring cash with you. Tickets for locations outside the GAM are purchased at ticket offices at terminals.
- **Taxis**: Red (official) taxis: these are more expensive, and the trip price is not known until the destination is reached. Cash only. Taxi apps like ***Uber***, ***Didi***, ***inDrive*** are used by most Costa Ricans, rather than the red taxis.

ACCOMODATION and RDA's P23 VENUE LOCATION

Accommodation Guide:

November is the low season, but prices may increase towards the end of the month. Make sure to book your reservation in advance to benefit from discounts. It is advisable to request written confirmation of your reservation and cancellation policy from the selected accommodation. Please check the official website of the accommodation to verify if it has a better price than agencies/virtual platforms.

We strongly recommend that you book accommodation near the University campus (See 'P23 Location').

Accommodation where public transport/taxis are needed to get to the campus are not recommended due to the heavy traffic and congestion on the roads.

The suggested areas of the city to stay close to the University campus are indicated on this map.

P23 Location:
RDA's 23rd Plenary Meeting will take place in various buildings at Universidad de Costa Rica's Ciudad de la Investigación in San Pedro, Montes de Oca, San José (see maps for details).

P23 Location Logistics:

- There are several bus lines that pass near the University campus (P23 venue). The ones that pass closest to the P23 venue are Sabanilla and Carmiol. You can also reach it by any bus that passes by the Outlet Mall and then take the internal bus on campus. **Public transportation can be a bit complicated** due to being slow and poor signpostage of bus stops and buses.
- Rodrigo Facio Campus' internal bus: it is free and runs across the main campus, Ciudad de la Investigación and sports facilities every 15-30 minutes. There is a printed schedule at every stop, where you can check the next bus' arrival. Buses that start at Educación and Artes Plásticas take you to the other campuses, and the ones that start at Odontología make the same route, but in the opposite way.

Addresses: In Costa Rica, addresses are given with cardinal points and a reference to the place instead of the street number (for example: 300 meters north of the National Bank, next to the museum). Apps like Waze or Google Maps are useful for finding your way.

Traffic Regulations: If driving, always use seat belts, and remember fines are paid at banks, not to traffic officers. Call 911 in case of an emergency on the road. Gas stations are not self-service; don't get out of the car as someone will assist you.

MOBILE NETWORK and INTERNET

Mobile Network and Internet: The main cell phone line and data plan providers are Kölbi, Liberty, and Claro. It is recommended to obtain a local SIM card to stay connected; eSIM is also an option. You can buy SIM cards at commercial stores near the Rodrigo Facio campus or at the airport.

The following links provide access to official websites of the different providers:

- **Kolbi**: https://bit.ly/45CmGge / WhatsApp +506 85505550
  Information about e-SIM: https://bit.ly/3KRHoPJ
- **Claro**: https://www.claro.cr/personas/ WhatsApp +506 70027002
  Information about e-SIM: https://www.claro.cr/personas/beneficios/moviles/
- **Liberty**: https://bit.ly/4bdh90D / WhatsApp +506 63111693
  Information about e-SIM: https://libertycr.com/esim-costa-rica/apple
- Information about e-SIM (movile data only): https://bit.ly/3z5mvOb

SUSTAINABILITY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Sustainability: Contribute to reducing your carbon footprint by using reusable bottles and avoiding excessive use of single-use plastic. In Costa Rica, tap water is drinkable; you can refill your bottle anywhere, unless there is a warning not to. The country has a policy

of separating solid waste, which applies in homes, eateries, and at the university. Please check the containers where you deposit any waste.

Safety: Avoid walking alone at night or in isolated areas. Taxi apps like Uber and Didi are recommended (bearing in mind 5-15 minutes waiting time). Keep an eye on your belongings at all times, and do not leave valuables unattended. Watch out for pickpocketing on the streets and public transport.

Health: Check vaccination requirements before traveling. Vaccines against Hepatitis A and B, Rabies, and Tetanus are recommended. As an entry requirement, proof of yellow fever vaccination is required when traveling from countries in Africa (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan), Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, and the Republic of Guyana. This vaccine must be administered at least 10 days before travel (https://bit.ly/4ezihP9 Article 5).

FOOD AND TOURISM

Food: Visit nearby "sodas" (eateries) to taste reasonably priced local food. There are also international chains and fast-food restaurants and home deliveries. Places like Barrio Escalante, Pinares, Escazú, Rohrmoser and Santa Ana have a wide gastronomic offering and are more expensive.

Taxes and tips: Consumptions in bars and restaurants have a 10% service tax and 13% VAT included in the final amount of the bill. Menus usually have a note stating if such taxes were added or not.
It is prohibited to consume alcohol in public places and smoke inside commercial and campus buildings.

Tourism: The organizing committee of the RDA P23 will provide a direct link with a recommended tour operator, or you are free to organize your visit independently. Recommendations for places to visit, where to stay, restaurants, and more are available https://guiadeviajeacostarica.com/destinos/.

National parks: Some tickets to enter national parks are purchased online or reserved by phone. A list of national parks with such conditions and the reservation methods are available https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/resvlinea/Paginas/default.aspx. Tickets for parks that are not listed are purchased at the entrance of each park.

Other tourism recommendations: When opting for tours, verify that they are offered by authorized travel agencies. Check the weather conditions before booking outdoor activities. There are some activities that are dangerous in rainy conditions (rafting and canyoning).

In protected areas, remember:

- Carry and take all your food waste and plastic wrappers with you. National parks have limited garbage collection service, and animals often raid trash cans.
- Do not feed animals or leave food unattended. Keep your bag monitored at all times. Animals open bags and backpacks and take any food they find.
- Respect warning signs. There are places with crocodiles and other dangerous animals. There are also areas where swimming is dangerous.
- Respect marked trails and national park schedules. It is easy to get lost in thick forests, and schedules are established in order to ensure that visitors can leave while there is still daylight.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. It is recommended to wear at least closed-toe shoes, long pants, and a cap. In cold places, bring a windproof coat.

Local hosts in collaboration with a local tour agency prepared a selection of exclusive one day tours. **A brochure** offers a variety of tours to the most spectacular places in Costa Rica.

NEED HELP?

Emergencies: It is recommended to acquire travel insurance with medical coverage to visit the country. In case of an emergency, you can contact:
911: Emergency system
2511-4911: Emergencies within Universidad de Costa Rica campus.

Assistant staff will be onsite in case of emergency during the RDA P23.

Contact RDA P23 Organisers

If you require any additional information, please use PLENARY23.RDA@ucr.ac.cr or WhatsApp: 506-2511-4297