



**SEA KAYAKING
COSTA RICA**
MULTI-DAY SEA KAYAKING ADVENTURES

☎ US: 719 581-9891

☎ CR: (+506) 4080-3803

✉ info@seakayakingcostarica.com

🌐 www.seakayakingcostarica.com

Sea Kayaking Costa Rica's Travel Tips & Useful Information

(Sea Kayaking Costa Rica, also written SKCR)

Arriving in Costa Rica: When you get off the plane, you will first be shuffled through the immigration area, where you might be asked where you will be staying; in this case, you can reply: ***The Country in and Suites Hotel in San Antonio de Belen***. If necessary, the hotel's address is ***Sobre la Autopista General Cañas, Cariari, Heredia Province, San José, 40701***.

Our office will be monitoring your flight; however, please keep us informed, preferably via WhatsApp (+506 70181622), letting us know if you are at a stopover and on time or not. In San Jose Airport, please use the complimentary WiFi to update us. For example, you can message: *"Hi, we've landed and are waiting in line for immigration."*

Once you have passed through passport control and retrieved your luggage from the belt, you will go through customs, which basically consists of an X-ray machine. All luggage and personal items need to go through the machine. You do not need to fill out a customs form prior to passing through customs. If you have any noncommercially sealed food (including fruits, vegetables, sausages, etc.) or substances that dogs can sniff, you will be stopped.

Once you have cleared customs, you exit the Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO) building by walking through the glass doors clearly marked "exit." Upon walking through the doors and reaching the arrivals waiting, **turn right** and walk along the sidewalk where everyone is waiting for arrivals. A Sea Kayaking, Costa Rica representative will be waiting for you with a sign with your name. The rep provides transportation to the hotel; the room will be under the same name as your booking with SKCR.

Most importantly—don't believe the taxi drivers who say, "Your driver/guide won't show up, and you should go with me," or "I have never heard of SKCR; they don't exist." Once we've got you, you're done with the hard stuff. The rest is all easy – like paddling bathtub waters, hiking slippery hills, twisting down rivers, startling a few toucans from their nests, etc.

-Arrivals to the Liberia International Airport (LIR) will be specified on a case-by-case basis-

What to Bring. We will provide you with a separate suggested packing list, specifically put together for either a Golfo Dulce or Tortuguero kayaking trip.

If possible, use only carry-on luggage (liquids and toothpaste have 3-ounce limits per item, packed in a Ziploc bag). Although lost luggage is not a common problem, it can happen when you are making connecting flights and reporting lost luggage is a long process.

Clothing: Most of Costa Rica is truly only moderately tropical. Lightweight clothing is advised, but long sleeves offer better protection from the sun and, when off the beaten path, against insects and foliage. A



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couple of pairs of shorts, T-shirts, and at least one pair of light, breathable pants for rainforest walks (if applicable) and for evening meals where insects might nibble on your ankles. For your arrival and eve before departure in San Jose, you'll need one lightweight jacket, sweatshirt, or lightweight Polar fleece (best because it dries quickly) for warmth, as it can get windy into the low 70s after dark.

DON`T FORGET personal medications, sunblock, insect repellent, anti-sting cream (like Cortaid or other after-bite lotion- the type of insect bites in Costa Rica may have very different reactions than the types you are used to in North America or Europe, so be prepared), artificial sweetener (if you use it), a wide-brim hat (necks and ears get really burned!), and, if you wear glasses or sunglasses, a strap to keep them in place as well as a backup pair. If you want to bring a camera on the water, be sure it's waterproof, or if you plan to use your smartphone, it is best to place it in a waterproof case.

Money: Bring only U.S. dollars in cash (traveler's checks are not recommended). Any other currency must be exchanged only at the central bank in San Jose, which is a long process (read: half a day!). U.S. Dollars are widely accepted throughout Costa Rica.

Don't worry about getting some Colones (or local currency) before you arrive in Costa Rica since you can exchange them in an exchange booth at the San Jose Airport when you arrive. Additionally, since U.S. dollars are so widely accepted, you really don't need the local currency during your trip unless you like to.

What is critical, however, is that you carry small denomination (U.S. currency) bills with no rips or tears since locals will be hesitant to accept \$100 bills for fear of a counterfeit bill. Any torn or broken bill will not be accepted for fear that their bank will not accept them.

Credit cards work well in the Central Valley and nowadays throughout the country. VISA and MasterCard are the most accepted credit cards in Costa Rica; AMEX is also growing in popularity. ATM cards from your local bank will work in most ATMs in the country, which are widespread. At most lodges where you will be staying during your Golfo Dulce kayaking trip, it is not possible to pay with a credit card. The lodging and meals will be pre-paid anyway; for drinks and possibly for souvenirs, we suggest bringing cash with you.

Passports: Mandatory for all persons, regardless of age. The passport cannot expire within 6 months of arrival date. Passports are necessary for domestic flights and for entering Corcovado National Park, so you will need them on your Golfo Dulce Sea Kayaking Trip. We also recommend all travelers have a photo of their passport's bio-date page and the page with the entry stamp; a photo on your phone will suffice.

Luggage: An SKCR representative cannot get into the airline desk to help with LOST LUGGAGE. To recover your lost luggage, you must have the name of the lodge and region you will be visiting (either Osa Peninsula Or Tortuguero Canals) so the airline can deliver your luggage. You should also give them the NAME of the hotel where you will be the first night (the hotel name and city will suffice). However, the single best thing to do is give them our Whatsapp number, +506 70181622, so we can directly coordinate the luggage delivery.



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Bugs: There are always insects and small animals around you while traveling in Costa Rica—sometimes in your bedroom, even at the best hotel, especially in ecolodges and beach hotels. Ants, geckos, small lizards, and sometimes large and impressive beetles enter rooms, vehicles, and restaurants. Avoid taking any foodstuff into your room (even an open roll of TUMS will attract ants), and be happy when you see small lizards and geckos (they eat mosquitoes). You can find clothing treated with Permethrin, or buy a can and spray on your clothing before coming to Costa Rica (we recommend Sawyer Duran Permethrin insect repellent, insect repellent in bottles (BEN`s 100% DEET, 1.25 ounce- get the drop bottle, not spray pump), rather than compressed gas sprays (think AIRLINE RESTRICTIONS), allow “spot treatment” of exposed skin rather than spraying the environment.

Drinking water: Bottled water is readily available; however, in all the areas we travel it is completely safe to drink water straight from the tap unless the hotel specifically directs you to drink bottled water. At all lodges on the Golfo Dulce where we will be staying, tap water is of high quality and safe to drink. Please ask your guide if in doubt. Parasitic infections are rare in Costa Rica, and the quality of drinking water in Costa Rica is excellent.

Phones: if you have an unlocked mobile phone, you will be able to buy a prepaid SIM Card at the SJO airport; this will allow you to make use of your cell phone in Costa Rica. Another possible option is to activate the International Roaming option for your mobile phone service. For this service, please be sure to contact your phone company about feasibility and fees.

Off the grid: During the actual sea kayaking paddling days, you will lose touch with the outside world, which is one of the perks of our off-the-beaten-path expeditions. Even though there might be limited opportunities to get online briefly, we like to prepare you for a totally off-the-grid experience (internet and mobile phone-wise). In case of an emergency, your loved ones at home can always reach you (by calling or emailing us), and we can reach them, too!

Crime: In general, daytime robberies in public places have been known to occur. Thieves look for cash, jewelry, credit cards, electronic items, and passports and often work in small groups. The most prevalent scam involves the surreptitious puncturing of tires of rental cars, often near restaurants, tourist attractions, airports, or close to the car rental agencies themselves. When the travelers pull over, "good Samaritans" quickly appear to help change the tire - and just as quickly remove valuables from the car.

Drivers with flat tires are advised to drive, if possible, to the nearest service station or other public area and change the tire themselves, watching valuables at all times. Another common scam involves one person dropping a change in a crowded area, such as on a bus. When the victim tries to assist, a wallet or other item is taken.

SKCR guests are encouraged to take proactive steps to avoid becoming crime victims. During your paddling trip, you and your belongings will be very safe. In other places, please be sure to use the hotel security deposit boxes for valuables left in your hotel room or take them with you. Although rare, theft of valuables from the hotel rooms has been known to happen. Visitors should not walk, hike, or exercise alone and should bear in mind that crowded tourist attractions and resort areas popular with foreign



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tourists are common venues for criminal activity. Travelers should ignore any verbal harassment and avoid carrying passports, large amounts of cash, jewelry, or expensive photographic equipment (and if you do, be discrete!). Tourists are encouraged to carry photocopies of the passport data page and Costa Rican entry stamp on their persons and leave the original passport in a hotel safe or other secure place. Costa Rican immigration authorities conduct routine immigration checks at locations such as bars in downtown San Jose and beach communities. Travelers detained during one of these checks who have only a copy of the passport may be required to provide the original passport with appropriate stamps.

Travelers using rental vehicles should purchase an adequate level of locally valid theft insurance, park in secure lots whenever possible, and never leave valuables in their vehicles. Thefts from parked cars occur in cities, at beaches, at the airport, in front of restaurants and hotels, and at national parks and other tourist attractions.

Travelers should use only UBER or licensed taxis, which are red with medallions (yellow triangles containing numbers) painted on the side. Licensed taxis at the airport are painted orange. All licensed taxis should have working door handles, locks, seatbelts, and meters (called "Marias"); passengers are required to use seatbelts.

Other Medicines and inoculations: Though not required, we recommend your TETANUS inoculations are brought up to date.

Costa Rica has been free of dangerous parasite diseases (Malaria, yellow fever, and typhoid) for a long time. In 1996, malaria reappeared in the two port cities (Puntarenas and Limon), was contained to those areas, and eradicated quickly (using DDT). Dengue (mosquito-carried) has also appeared, again in poor neighborhoods. Insect repellent is the best deterrent, and we recommend using the spray-on or roll-on type whenever you are out in the evenings. When applying spray, please step away from any enclosed area, food, or people (and keep the wind direction in mind).

Vouchers. When applicable, we will digitally provide you with vouchers prior to the start of your trip. We ask you to print out each voucher and take them with you on your trip (you may also take them with you digitally. They state the number of people, items included in each service (i.e., meals, gear, etc.), and especially the tour times, transportation times, and contact information. Please be sure to be ready to go by the designated time.

Last but not least, in case you would like to show a sign of appreciation towards your head guide & trip's staff at the end of your adventure you can choose to do so in the form of gratuity which supplements their salaries. Multiday adventure and sea kayaking guides usually receive about 10-15% of the total trip cost, depending on the quality of the service they've provided and on your preference.

Sincerely,

The Sea Kayaking Costa Rica Team



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