



Villa Paraiso

Dominical, Costa Rica

What to bring

- Pack light
 - No one listens on the first trip, but you don't need much clothing. The housekeeper will wash and dry for you (please don't give her anything that shouldn't go in the machine with everything else).
 - There is no dress code at even the best of restaurants. A pair of jeans, shorts, lightweight shirts, sandals, hiking shoes and lots of bathing suits.
 - The bathrooms have soap, but you will need shampoo. If you forget anything, it's very likely to be available locally, including medications.
 - Lightweight raincoats, bug spray for night excursions, and lots of sunscreen.
- You should exchange some money at the airport for tolls and small items, but most places will take dollars and credit cards.
- Your cell phone will work perfectly here. The rates are roughly \$1 per minute. Texts are inexpensive. If you have an unlocked cell phone, you can buy very inexpensive sim cards at the airport to use instead.
- The current exchange rate is around 545 Colones to \$1US.
- The management company will be glad to assist with with planning your travels. You will fly into San Jose International Airport (SJO).

- **To get to the house you have several options:**
 - Rent an SUV at the airport and drive. The roads are excellent and scenic running along the coast and through palm plantations. It's about 2.5 hours. Take the GPS option at the rental agency and program LaParcella Restaurant into the destination. 0.5km prior to getting to the restaurant you will see a sign on the left side of the road that says Las Olas Estate. Turn here. The house is the first one on the right. Pull up to the gate and the housekeeper will open it for you.
 - A private driver will pick you up at the airport and take you to the house.
 - Take a commuter flight from SJO to Quepos - it's a 15 minute scenic flight and then a 30 minute drive to the house.
 - It's quite costly, but you can take a helicopter from SJO and land at the house.
- The house has Wi-Fi. Facetime and Skype work fine. There is a US line at the house as well on which you can place and receive free calls to and from the US.
- The grocery stores near the house (1 in Dominical - 2 minutes away and 2 in Uvita - 10 minutes away) essentially have everything you would find in the US including liquor and take credit cards. The duty free shop at the baggage claim in San Jose has wine and liquor as well, has very good prices and quality, but you are limited as to how much you can buy and carry.
- The house has it's own wine cellar. You will receive a list of available wines. You can pre-order from the list or make your decisions when you get to the villa. We will try to handle special

requests.



- The area restaurants are amazing. Most do not need a reservation (Exotica is the exception), but some are not open every night and the European ones will often close for a week or more for “holiday.” You will receive a separate list.
- A team of private chefs is available as well. You can have them just for dinner or for 3 meals a day – one night or the whole week.



They are professionally trained and have worked the estates of Connecticut and the restaurants of NYC. They will tailor menus to your individual preferences. The management company can arrange this for you. If you want a bartender at the house, one is

available, just ask the management company for details. The chef are \$200 a day for their services plus the actual cost of groceries (they provide receipts).

A Perfect Week in Costa Rica

Day 1

Most flights arrive in San Jose around noon. The airport has recently been remodeled and is both modern and efficient.



As soon as you get off the plane, head to Immigration. You will have two forms from the plane, one goes to the immigration officer and the other you will give to the customs agent as you exit with your bags.

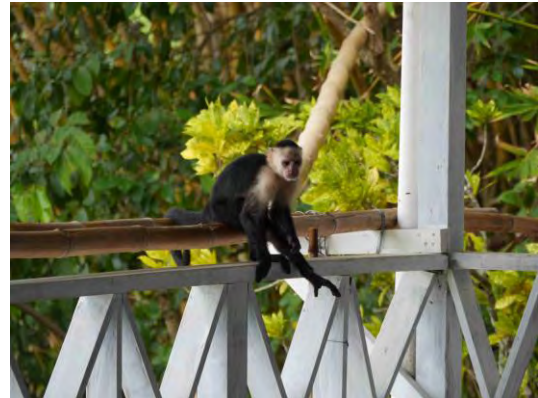
If you can wait, there are nice bathrooms at baggage claim. As all the planes arrive around the same time, the line can get long in Immigration, so it pays to get there first. From Immigration, head to baggage claim and pick up your bags. Here you can exchange dollars for colones. \$1 is about 525 colones. Practically everyone takes US Dollars, so you really don't need to exchange much and the rates at the airport are not the best. If you are driving, you will need about 3000 colones (\$6) in tolls each way for the expressway. The duty free shop here has the best prices on liquor in the country and you may want to stock up. As you exit hand the baggage form to the Customs Agent and put your bags into the scanner one last time. From there go to the car rental booth you selected (some companies don't have one and if you don't see yours then head to the curbing and look for someone with your companies sign near the exit – they will be there waiting for you) or head to catch your commuter flight or meet your driver. All of the

people trying to help you are just taxi drivers. You will need a vehicle with 4-wheel drive. I'd also recommend strongly renting a GPS with the car or download the app IGo Costa Rica for your iPhone. To find the house enter LaParcella Restaurant as your destination. The turn to the house is a few hundred meters on the left before you get to the restaurant at the sign that says Las Olas, Luxury Estates. The total drive usually takes about 2.5-3 hours. It all depends on the traffic in San Jose as you leave. The road to the house will take you through Jaco, which resembles a small Miami Beach, and Quepos/Manuel Antonio. The roads are new or newly paved the entire way and it's a pleasant and beautiful drive. DO NOT SPEED! The traffic fines are steep. If you have not asked the management company to do this for you, you might want to stop along the way to pick up some groceries. I'd suggest the new Maxi-Bodega at the turnoff for the Quepos bypass. It's huge and hard to miss. Turn left at the Las Olas sign and the house is the first one on the right. Pull up to the gate and the housekeeper will let you in. Her name is Isadey and we call her the Ninja housekeeper. She is everywhere and never seen at the same time. She lives in the apartment next to the house with her husband. You really don't need to bring a lot of clothes – but if you do the closets are huge. She will make your beds, change linens, pick up after you, do your laundry and clean up after meals. She does speak English, but gets embarrassed easily so she might put you on the phone with the management company if you have a complex question. If you have something too delicate to go in the washing machine, I would suggest not giving it her to wash. Everyone tries to take her home with them.



The sun sets at around 5:30 every day. If you made it to the villa in time head to the veranda right away and watch it go down. Every day is usually different and spectacular. Let Isadey know whatever you want from the wine cellar.

After sunset, it's off to dinner which is only about 2 minutes away. The first night I would suggest the La Parcella.



Back to the main road make a left and then a quick right at the La Parcella sign. The road will dead end into the restaurant. My favorites are the tuna tartar, the whole fish, and the lobster. At this point you will probably be tired and it's back to the house. The sun comes up at 5:30 and so does the wildlife.

Day 2



Start day 2 by taking in the view and exploring the house. If you do get up early go for a hike. From the back veranda head to the left as you face the ocean. Cut across the grassy area and in the far back corner you will find a stone set of stairs with a rope railing. Carefully descend and cross

that stretch of grass to the road and then follow the road upward. You have 2000 acres to explore and they're only 8 residences. The roads are old logging trails. They are kept cut for future lot sales. You should see monkeys, Toucans, and a large variety of birds. The earlier you go, the more you will see. The animals are most active in the morning and then go to sleep as the day heats up.

After your hike should be hungry at this point, so head down to Tortilla Flats in Dominical for breakfast.



It's right on the beach. The egg sandwich and banana pancakes are especially good. Check out the beach and the surf. You can see the house from the beach. Now is a good time to set up surfing lessons. Ask at Tortilla Flats for suggestions. There are literally dozens of instructors. Back to the house and spend the day at the pool relaxing. It's a good time to have a massages and facials to rub away the fatigue of traveling. Around 5pm start getting ready for the sunset. Enjoy drinks and snacks on the back veranda as the big orange ball drops from the sky. Don't leave immediately! The best come after the sunsets. Depending on the clouds present, the sun will reflect up to the underside of the clouds and the heavens will start to appear on fire.

Dinner tonight is a throwback to Jimmy Buffettville – the Jolly Roger.



After leaving the house, make a left on the main road (Costanera Sur) and go 4.8km south. You will see a sign on the left for Jolly Roger. Head on up the mountain until you see the restaurant on the left. You will probably think you missed it, but keep on going. The Jolly is owned by a Gringo (non Costa Ricans are Gringos and Costa Ricans are Ticos) who used to be a syndicated radio announcer in the US. Everyone down here has a story. As far as I'm concerned, he has the best chicken wings in the world and as many flavors as Basken Robin has ice cream. The burgers and fries are great too. Most restaurants take credit cards, but Jolly is only cash.

If you still have the energy, you might enjoy a movie tonight at the house.



The theater was designed by Central America's leading acoustical

engineer and completed by a US custom theater company. The sound system rocks and the chairs actually respond to the bass.

Day 3

Let's check out the area beaches in the morning. You have already looked at the tide tables. You want to be on Ballena Beach an hour before or after low tide. Make a left on the main road and head south 15.2km. Make a right at the sign that says Marino Ballena. (there is another sign that says Flutterby house). Either keep following the road bearing Left or the GPS. Eventually it will dead-end into the entrance to the state park. Pay one of the parking lots to park your car (\$4) and go to the man at the desk. It's \$6 per US adult to get in. Follow the path bearing to the right and then onto the beach and head right. You will see the famed whales tale if you are there around low-tide.



It is often rated as one of the best beaches in the world. The unique formation occurs because of a coral reef running perpendicular to the shore.

If the timing works and you have not yet eaten breakfast, head back to the Costanera Sur and make a left. Go back through Uvita (the grocery stores here are great) like you are returning to the house and after a few km you will see the entrance to Whales and Dolphins on the right. Head up there paved driveway. The view of the whales tale from the hotel is great and the breakfast is very good. Afterwards, head back down to the Costanera Sur and make a left and head south again. We are going to Playa Ventanas.



It's 27.8km from the house with the entrance on the right. There is a \$2 per person charge from the guy who owns the beach. Here the attraction is the two caves that have tunnels that run from the ocean to the beach. The waves come shooting through the tunnels and it sounds like thunder. The beach is also quite pretty.

If the timing has worked out, we are going fishing for our lunch next. Head back to the Costanera Sur and make a right and go an additional 2.7km south. You will see a sign on the left for tilapia restaurants. Head up this road for about 3km. You will see a restaurant Cassanda Tilapia first.



This is not the one you want. Keep going and you want the second restaurant, this the one is on the right. Let them know you want to catch your own fish. They will take you to their tilapia ponds and you will quickly catch your lunch. Don't worry if you don't know how, they will show you. When you have caught one fish each, they will take them to the restaurant and cook them for you. Their kitchen uses only a

wood fired stove. After a nice fresh fish lunch, ask them to show you the waterfall.



This is my favorite in all of Costa Rica. It has a perfect wading pool below and the water comes pouring out of a crack between two massive boulders with a rock hung in the middle. The Jacuzzi effect is unbelievable. When you descend to the pool, use the concrete steps and go slow, they can be slippery.

If the tides worked out, it's probably only about 2pm. You could go back to Dominical and shop the crafts or chill at the pool the rest of the day.

At 5pm it's time again to prepare for the next sunset. Afterwards, it's dinner at house. You have arranged for the private chef to come tonight and cook a wonderful Costa Rican feast. Later, it's movie time again.

Day 4



You have arranged to go fishing today. You had to choose between river fishing in the mangroves of the Sierpe (the waters are glassy calm and no experience is needed) or go offshore looking for big billfish. The

waters in front of the house are some of the most fertile in the entire world. Either way, the captain usually provides lunch. While the billfish are catch and release, everything else can be brought back to the villa. The boat crew will clean them for you.

It's been a long day of fishing (catches of over 80 sailfish in a day are not unusual). Dinner tonight is at my favorite restaurant: Exotica.



Make sure you have a reservation. The owner is typical French and will likely turn you away if you don't have one. If they are full, try Ylang Ylang or Citru. Head left from the house on the Costanera Sur and go 28.9km to Ojochal. At night it can be easy to miss the entrance to this thriving French colony, but make a left. The road will dead end shortly and make a left. Head back north until you see Exotica on the right. It's a couple of km drive. The food is amazing.

Day 5



Time to go horseback riding – no experience needed. With reservations made the day before, head right from the house on the Costanera Sur. Make sure you are wearing jeans (not shorts) and are carrying with you a bathing suite and towel. After you pass by the police station make a right heading to San Isidro. It's several km drive, but you will see Don Lulu's waterfall and horseback riding tours on your right. This is one of the best deals in the country. You will ride for about an hour, eat a Tico breakfast, ride for another hour and end up in a spectacular 300ft waterfall. If you are brave, you can climb the falls and just into the pool below. Afterwards, you ride back, eat lunch, and ride some more back to the tour office. Usually you are done around 1pm. Around 4 pm head out to Por-Q-No.



Dinner is pizza from a wood burning oven – Por-Q-No. Make a right on the Costanera Sur and head north for about 2km. Look for the sign and then turn left down their steep driveway. The restaurant is on the right, but head all the way down to the bottom and park there first. The beach to your left is the one in front of the house. The rocks there are the ones you have been looking at from villa for the past several days and are worth exploring. After, drive up to the restaurant and watch the sunset. The pizza is great, but the view is amazing.

Day 6



It's time to go surfing. Dominical used to be a hippy surfers retreat in the 60's. Legend has it that Endless Summer, the first of the cult surfing

films was made here. Everyday is surf day.

If you would rather go paddle boarding or even ocean kayaking that can be arranged too. The world paddle boarding tournament was just held here. It's traditional to each a big breakfast before surfing. The calorie burn is huge. Great choices include both Por-Que-No and Tortilla Flats. Remember, it's best to make your surf instructor reservations ahead of time. It is possible for the experienced to just rent equipment.

For dinner tonight I would suggest Cuna deAngel.



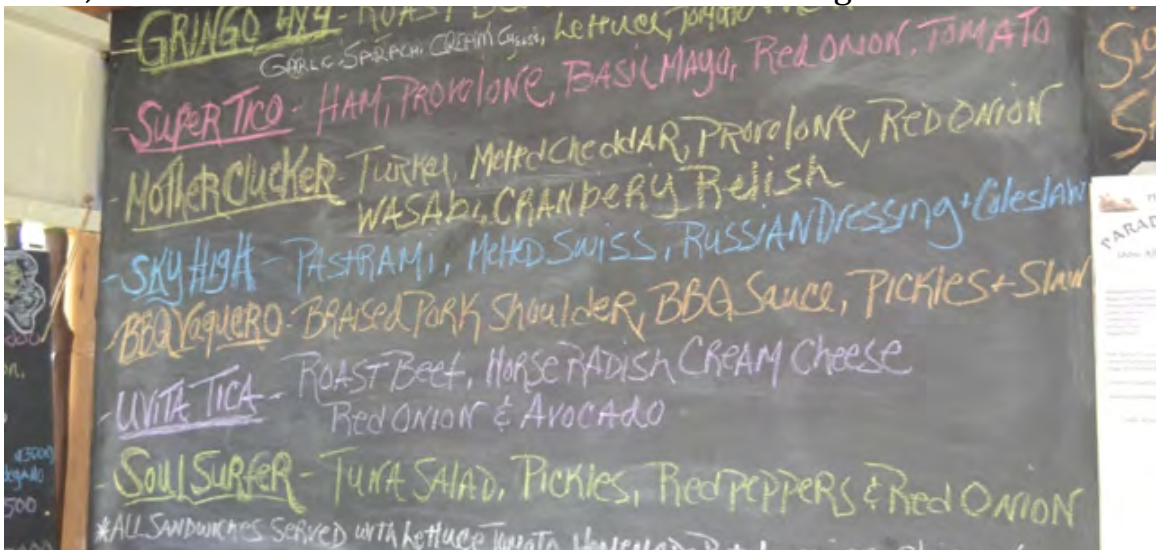
It's just 4.8km south of the house on the right. It's a really neat dining room with gluten free Austrian/Costa Rican food and great service. Don't miss out on the flambé desserts!

Day 7

Try not to think of going home. If you are craving bagels then it's time for a trip to the Bagel Barn in Uvita, which is on the right before you get to the grocery store. After, meet at the ATV adventures store which is on the dirt road opposite the grocery store. They do a great job with a tour up in the mountains ending at – of course – another waterfall.



After, lunch is next door at Road Shack Deli. Amazing sandwiches.



For dinner tonight I have two suggestions: The first is sushi, which is in Dominical right where the road makes the sharp right turn. It's very fresh and very good.



The second is more of an adventure. Marisqueria Lanosta Feliz. This is my favorite Tico restaurant. The service is very good, but the English is scarce. The seafood platter has the largest assortment of choices that I have ever seen. It will easily feed two. It's cooked with butter, but be sure to get the garlic too. The shrimp and pasta is excellent.



Day 8

So sad! It's time to go back. I would suggest taking the afternoon flight back. Give yourself 3 hours to drive to the airport plus 1 hour to return the rental car and 2 hours to check in to be safe. If you have a Platinum Amex, there is a free lounge with a bar and a sushi restaurant at the airport.

What to bring back:



As for gifts to come back with, I would suggest bags of coffee (from either the grocery store or the airport) or the hand made crafts found at the many stalls along Dominical beach. Of course a good tan and recharged batteries!

Pura Vida!!!!