



Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica

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## **BLUE OSA F.A.Q.'s**

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*Do I need a passport or a visa to travel to Costa Rica?*

As of December 31, 2002 all Canadian, US and EU citizens who travel to Costa Rica for tourism and pleasure purposes need a valid passport. A visa is not required.

*Do I need any shots before visiting Costa Rica?*

You do not need any shots or vaccines before visiting Costa Rica. However, we always suggest speaking with your Doctor and referring to the World Health Organization's website before traveling anywhere.

*How much money should I convert to local currency?*

For Americans, it is really not necessary to convert any money to local currency (colones) as all businesses happily accept U.S. dollars (however, expect your change to be in colones). The current rate of exchange fluctuates around 500 colones for every 1 US dollar.

*Do you have a gift shop?*

*We have a gift shop available providing yoga cloths, t-shirts, local artwork and jewelry, sun tan lotion, bug repellent, etc.*

*Do you have yoga mats available?*

Yes we have yoga mats available. You may purchase yoga mats in our gift shop. We also have yoga mats available for rental. They are extra thick mats, and the price is \$5, or \$30 for the week.

Our yoga studio is fully equipped with yoga props: chairs, blankets, sandbags and blocks.

*Should I drive to Blue Osa from San Jose?*

Driving to Blue Osa from San Jose is a wonderful way to view and experience the beautiful country of Costa Rica. Contrary to some of the stories that you hear about Costa Rican roads, the fact is that Costa Rica actually has a very stable infrastructure with a great road and highway system so, if you've got the time and patience for the 8 - 10 hour drive- we would highly suggest it!

For directions and maps, please ask the car rental agency. They will be very happy to help and provide you with directions and, once out of San Jose, you will

have no problems finding your way to the Osa Peninsula. You can even take a different way back to San Jose from the route you took to come down here. We recommend driving one way over the mountains on the Interamericana Highway, leading through to San Isidro, and then driving back up the coast through Quepos and Manuel Antonio on your way back to San Jose.

### *How long is the flight from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez?*

A much simpler, faster, and more direct route to getting to Puerto Jimenez from San Jose is to use one of the two trusted air-carriers Costa Rica has to offer- Nature Air and Sansa. Both of these air-carriers offer numerous flights daily from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez, with the one-way trip taking approximately 50 minutes. It should be noted, however, that there are no late afternoon or evening flights with either air-carrier (the last flight into Jimenez is at approximately 3 in the afternoon), so visitors arriving into the country in the late afternoon or evening should take this into consideration.

### *How much baggage can I bring?*

There is a 25-pound baggage limit (including carry-on's) enforced on the "in-country" flight to/from Blue Osa. Baggage over 25 pounds will incur a surcharge, so pack light! Besides, how much clothing does a person really need in the tropics? (Please double check with airlines to find out exactly how much weight your baggage can be.)

### *What should I pack?*

Less is always more in Costa Rica. The tropical climate makes it very comfortable, if not necessary, to wear light weighted clothing, with sandals also being the norm rather than shoes.

Blue Osa also has a gift shop that will have many items available for purchase as well.

### *Is there a departure tax when leaving Costa Rica?*

There is a departure tax when leaving Costa Rica that must be paid at Juan Santamaria International Airport. This fee is \$26 USD and is payable in either colones or U.S. dollars. We believe they only take this in cash, but are unsure.

### *What is the weather like in Costa Rica?*

Costa Rica is a tropical country located between 8 and 11 degrees north of the equator. It has twelve bioclimates, three different rainfall regimes and many microclimates, so researching its climatological conditions can be an almost never-ending task.

Although Costa Rica is considered to have a stable climate, it is important to note that different temperature and weather conditions may be experienced within the same day, or within short distances, due mostly to the rugged terrain of this mountainous country. There are two well defined seasons: the rainy/green season (invierno), and the dry/summer season (verano), with one main difference between them: rainfall averages. Dry season runs from December to April, and the green season from May to November. Rainfall averages for the country may reach the highest point during the months of September and October -- approximately 650 mm per month.

Seasonal changes don't bring significant changes in temperatures, although nights may be cooler in some areas during the rainy season. Mornings will most commonly be sunny all year round. San José is located 1150 meters above sea level, and has a moderate temperature throughout the year. It may go as low as 15° C at nighttime, and up to 26° C during the day, giving rise to the image of San José as a city with an eternal spring climate. The Intermontane Central Valley where San José lies has an average temperature of 20° C, and may actually be considered as dry compared to the humidity of the Caribbean Slope. When it rains, temperatures will drop slightly, mostly because of humidity and winds.

The Caribbean coastline has an average temperature of 21° C at night, and 30° C during the day. The rainy season has a rainfall average of 224 inches (5,600 mm) per year, along the coast, on the eastern face of the mountains and in the Caribbean lowlands. In most of Costa Rica the peak periods of rainfall occur during May to June and September to October, although precipitation remains substantial throughout the period. Though it is considered to be the wettest region of the country, rains usually occur in the late evening and nighttime. Due to humidity and trade winds, temperatures will remain low, and even drop noticeably during rainy nights.

The Pacific coast is warmer than the Atlantic by 3° to 5° C. The northern part of the country is totally dry for six months of the year. Rainfall averages only 59 inches (1,500 mm) a year in the northwest and central part of the country. The South Pacific region, where Blue Osa is located, is generally wetter than its counterpart to the north. General rainfall will reach up to 197 inches (5,000 mm) a year. High mountainous areas, such as the region surrounding Costa Rica's highest peak Cerro Chirripo, have cold, windy and cloudy conditions all year

round. Chirripo remains below 10° C (50° F) during the day, and may experience temperatures as low as 0° C (32° F) at night. Frost and even snow have been reported (okay, just once in the last century). As a general rule, temperatures decline with elevation at a rate of approximately 3.5 Fahrenheit degrees per thousand feet in Costa Rica (6.5° C per 1000 m). Thus, average December temperatures vary from 79°F (26°C) at Orotina on the coast, to 66°F (19°C) in San José at 3500 feet (1100 m), to a chilly 43°F (6°C) in Villa Mills at 10,000 feet (3050 m).

First-time visitors to Costa Rica often neglect to bring a warm jacket with them after reading about the climates of the coastal regions and the Central Valley. If guests are planning on spending any time in places of higher elevation (such as San Jose) or visiting any of the cloud forests (such as Monteverde), we would recommend bringing a light-weight jacket for the evenings. This is NOT necessary at Blue Osa.

#### *What is the weather like at Blue Osa?*

The Osa Peninsula (where Blue Osa is located) is characterized by warm, breezy days, with highs between 82 - 92 degrees, and lows in the range of 75 - 85. Please take note, however, that the Osa Peninsula IS part of the rain forest, and is surrounded by jungle, so humidity is also a factor that should be taken into consideration.

The middle of December to the end of April is summer season here at Blue Osa, and excellent sunny weather can be guaranteed. Indeed, in this time it is rare that it will rain at all. In the "green season", which usually runs from May through to November, it will generally rain three to four times a week, usually in the late afternoon and early evening. All outdoors activities are still offered, however, as the rain is very warm and actually quite pleasant. This is probably the best time to experience a true rain forest.

#### *How early do I need to book the space at Blue Osa?*

Rooms here at Blue Osa tend to fill up two to six months in advance, sometimes even earlier. If you know the dates you would like to stay at Blue Osa, we suggest that you inquire now to ensure space availability, and to make your reservation as soon as possible to guarantee the dates you want. Also, we would like all of our prospective guests and clients to know that we do not recommend staying for less than five nights here if you are leaving or arriving by plane. From our experience, a minimum of five nights is needed in order to experience all that there is to do and see while staying at Blue Osa.

*Do you accept large groups?*

Yes we do. Please email us and tell us about the nature of your group and how many people you would like to bring, and when.

We offer a special discount to those who would like to bring a group of 10 or more, and can happily send you our group information package.

*Are children allowed at Blue Osa?*

Although Blue Osa is an ideal location for a family vacation, we discourage you from bringing children less than five years of age along with you as we do not have any babysitting services on property, nor do we provide any child or day care. With that being said, however, we accept children of all ages and welcome families of all sizes.

*What are your cancellations and refunds policy?*

Prepayment. All reservations must be paid in full 30 days before arrival. Most people use credit cards. Also, a first night guarantee deposit is due immediately, once your reservation is confirmed. A cancellation within 30 days forfeits your balance.

*What kind of credit cards and ATM cards are accepted?*

Visa, Mastercard and Discover cards are accepted at Blue Osa. Should you be in need of cash, the Banco Nacional in Puerto Jimenez does have an ATM cash machine, however it is often in need of servicing. We recommend bringing whatever money you need with you, as all of our rooms are equipped with secure safes for your valuables. Canadians should also be aware that the ATM at the Banco Nacional in Jimenez does not recognize Canadian debit cards.

*What time is check-in and check-out?*

Check-in time is: 2:00 PM

Check-out time is: 10:00 AM

For guests leaving later than 10:00 AM, or arriving earlier than the 3 PM check-in time, we are more than happy to keep your luggage secure and safe for you as you wait for your room to be ready, leaving you free to explore the grounds unencumbered.

*What happens in the case of an emergency in the middle of the rainforest?*

There is a 24-hour medical clinic located in Puerto Jimenez, only 20 minutes away from Blue Osa. We always have a vehicle on property in case emergency transport is necessary. Additionally, Puerto Jimenez has a 24-hour flight service that transports patients to the nearby hospital in Golfito (an eight minute flight) or to San Jose (a fifty minute flight). And, in case of an extreme emergency, a helicopter can be ordered from San Jose and land in a nearby field.

Medical care in Costa Rica is very high quality and considered to be the best in Central America. San Jose especially has excellent hospitals, medical facilities and doctors that attend almost exclusively to foreign residents and travelers.

*Is there laundry service at Blue Osa?*

Laundry service is available at Blue Osa. The cost for this service is \$20/load. Please expect them to be returned within 24 - 48 hours.

*Do I need to tip?*

Tips for services rendered are always welcome and are very much appreciated by Blue Osa's hardworking staff. At the end of the week, you may either leave a cash tip in an envelope provided or have it charged to your credit card. All tips will be pooled and divided evenly among the kitchen, garden, and housekeeping staff. As a guide, may we suggest a tip of \$10-\$40/day.

If you would like to tip individually, you may do so personally or you can indicate how much you would like to tip for each person upon checking out. Likewise, tips for individually booked eco-tours are left to your discretion.

*What kind of food do you serve?*

At Blue Osa we believe that nutritious, wholesome food is not only the foundation for a productive and useful life, but is also essential for a happy one. And food not only needs to be healthy, it needs to be tasty and delicious too! Blue Osa is devoted to serving the freshest food possible that is delivered daily to our kitchen. Our guests are then invited to share in the rituals before dinner wherein our chef shares stories of both the ingredients and their preparation in order to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of our food.

While the Blue Osa staff can make some adjustments in the menu to accommodate some requests, we are unable to accommodate individual orders. Blue Osa does not provide Kosher Meals.

### *Wine, Beer, Cocktails and other Beverages at Blue Osa Blue Osa*

Because of the difficulties in maintaining a minibar service at Blue Osa, we are unable to provide for the consumption of outside drinks or alcohol. We do provide from our bar a selection of beer, wine, and other specialty drinks which we are happy to offer to our guests at specific times of the day.

### *Is there air conditioning at Blue Osa?*

Blue Osa does not have air conditioning. We are a low impact, beachfront eco-hotel, and we work rigorously to reduce our carbon footprint and our impact on the surrounding environment. Thus, each of our rooms is equipped with a ceiling fan, and the architectural design of Blue Osa allows for the constant flow of air through screen walls, creating a fresh and breezy environment. So while it may come as a shock to some that Blue Osa does NOT have air-conditioning, we have found that the vast majority of our guests are always quite comfortable.

### *Are there TV's in the rooms?*

At Blue Osa, we focus more on rest & relaxation and peace & tranquility; with communing with nature and getting back in touch with ones inner self. Thus, we do NOT have TV at Blue Osa. We do, however, feature movie nights in the main eating area on the big screen.

### *Are there hair dryers in the rooms?*

There are no hair dryers at Blue Osa available. Blue Osa is operated by solar power and as such, we have minimal power usage. Thus hair dryers are **NOT** allowed at Blue Osa.

Blue Osa does have standard North American power outlets, so you may recharge your camera battery, etc.

### *Are there phones in the rooms?*

While there are no phones in the rooms, guests are more than welcome to make calls at our office.

*Do you have Internet or phone access?*

International Cell Phone service here on the Osa can be sketchy, at best. Sometimes some phones will work, sometimes they won't. We would inquire of your service provider and make sure to ask them specifically about service in Costa Rica.

While Wi-Fi service is available at Blue Osa, we do not have any computers available for use. Blue Osa does provide a phone service for \$2.00 a minute.

We do invite you to leave your cell phones and lap tops at home and “unplug” from your life while you are on your vacation or retreat. One of our aims is to take full advantage of this isolation to concentrate on the peace and wilderness experience as it can (and should!) be appreciated.

Come, disconnect and decompress!

*Is Blue Osa near the ocean?*

Blue Osa is situated right on the beach, with tropical rainforest surrounding us on every other side.

*Can I swim in the ocean? What is the ocean and beach like?*

Our property is situated right on the beach with the ocean being less than 100 meters from your lodging, making it easy for guests to wake up in the morning at sun rise, and stroll down to the ocean for a morning swim as the jungle awakens. The beach is normally quite deserted, very scenic and serene, and offers some wonderful walking and exploring. Happily too, where Blue Osa is situated there are no rip tides or undercurrents, which makes for some excellent swimming.

*Can I sunbath nude on your beach?*

The beach is very quiet and normally quite deserted. You will see the occasional fisherman or family strolling by, usually on Sundays or holidays. If you do decide to sunbathe nude, we ask that you be sensitive to anyone that walks by, and to respect the local Catholic customs of the country. We ask any guests wanting to sunbathe nude to practice “conscious nudity”.

### *Can I Surf?*

We have world-class surfing right in front our property. We provide surfboards for rental, and can even arrange for you to take surf lessons for those interested in learning. We also provide Kayaks for rental as well.

### *Ecotourism: What is it?*

Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to natural places, which conserves the environment and sustains the well being of the local people. Blue Osa practices sustainable tourism through recycling, water conservation, low impact tourism, organic gardening and education to our guests through awareness on and off the property. We ask all guests who come to visit Blue Osa and the Osa Peninsula to help us in keeping this beautiful environment pristine.

### *What is the "Osa" in Blue Osa?*

The "Osa" comes from the name of the Peninsula that we are situated on- the Osa Peninsula. Osa in Spanish means "bear."

### *What does the phrase "pura vida" mean?*

Pura Vida (POO-rah VEE-dah), used by Costa Ricans since 1956, literally translated means "Pure Life." Contextually, it means "full of life," "purified life," "this is living!" "going great" It is used as a greeting, a farewell, and to express satisfaction.

The phrase has become widely known in the United States and Europe. Some foreigners view the phrase as an expression of a leisurely lifestyle, of disregard for time and wanton friendliness. However, Costa Ricans use the phrase to express a philosophy of strong community, perseverance, good spirits, enjoying life slowly, celebrating good fortune, whether small or large.

Pura Vida also means "I am doing alright", "I am doing perfect" and "thank you".

Expats who adopt the expression properly get a big smile in return. It is an acknowledgment of the Costa Rican attitude towards life.

The Hawaiian equivalent of Pura Vida is "Aloha!"

*What animals will I typically see during my visit?*

\* Various mammals & birds:

monkeys: howler, squirrel, spider, white face monkey, kinkajou  
kinkajou  
coatimundi  
peccary  
3 toed sloth  
bats - insect and fruit eating, tent making  
scarlet macaw  
chestnut mandible toucan and aracaris  
scarlet rumped tanager  
black-cheeked ant-tanager (only found on the Osa)

\* Lizards

basilisk (Jesus Christ)  
green iguana  
anoli  
ameba (macroteniid)  
garrobo (Ctenosaur)  
gecos  
skink

\* Frogs

poison dart frogs (black with orange and green with black)  
tink  
tree  
nocturnals  
smoky frog

\* Insects - beetles

wasps and bees  
forest cockroaches  
butterflies - morphos, heliconias, swallow tails, "owl" butterflies (moths)  
grasshoppers  
"sundown" cicada  
giant walking stick  
leaf cutter and army ants  
bush katydid

\* Spiders, tarantula, amblipigidas

\* Snakes (numerous)

\* Marine species - 4 land crab species

blue crayfish - river  
star fish  
blue fish  
barnacles  
sea slug  
clams

## Some Costa Rican Facts

- \* The capital of Costa Rica is San José located in the Central Valley.
- \* The currency used is the Colón.
- \* Costa Rica borders Panama to the south and Nicaragua to the north.
- \* The population is about 4 million inhabitants.
- \* There are 7 provinces, 81 counties and 463 districts.
- \* Costa Rica covers about 51,000 km<sup>2</sup>.
- \* 38% of the country is in protected areas or National Parks.
- \* Costa Rica has no army, choosing to use these funds for education and culture.
- \* The national flower is an orchid called GuariaMorada (Guariantheskinneri).
- \* The national Tree is the Guanacaste (Enterolobiumcyclocarpum).
- \* The national bird is the Yigüirro (Turdusgrayi), or clay-colored robin.