

Costa Rica - Step By Step Travel Info

This time around, I want to take you step by step through the process of getting from the airport to the resort and back again. So, we'll start with landing in San Jose (SJO).

When you depart from the plane (I hate that they call it de-planing), you'll end up in the customs/immigration area (nowhere else to accidentally go).

When we were there, it was about a 45-minute wait, but I understand that can vary considerably. Either way, just expect that it might take awhile.

The customs officers speak English (some better than others) and will ask you a few questions. As with any situation involving customs/immigration, just stick to short answers and don't try to start a conversation. It's quick and painless.

From there, the next area will be luggage - again, no need to worry about getting lost. It's off to the left and it's the only way you can go.

Once you've collected your luggage, you'll pass through another checkpoint for customs/immigration where they will x-ray your baggage. This step goes really quick, and I wouldn't expect any significant wait.

From there, just follow the corridor - it'll take you where you need to go. After a few turns, you'll emerge at a "pick up" area that will likely be swarming with people holding signs. **Look for the one with your name on it and Crocodile Bay** - the gentleman usually has a yellow shirt.

The gentleman with the sign will help you with your luggage and escort you to the van and driver. You'll probably want a tip at the ready for him after he loads your luggage into the van.

From the airport, the driver will take you to the DoubleTree Cariari hotel - I think it's usually just a 15~20-minute drive. When your driver drops you off, he'll let you know what time to be in the lobby for your flight the next morning. I'd recommend getting there at least 5-10 minutes before the time he tells you. Also, this is probably a good time to tip the driver.

Once you're at the Double Tree, a porter will meet you and take your luggage as you check in. The hotel staff speaks English, so no worries there. Check-in is easy, and once you're in, you can finally relax for the night. It's really an incredibly cool hotel and Rose and I were completely impressed. The staff will deliver your luggage to your room, so again, you'll probably need another tip on hand.

The next morning, you'll probably want to try to grab breakfast (included in your package) at the hotel restaurant if you have time. Just make sure you and your luggage are in the lobby at the time the driver told you the night before.

When your driver picks you up, you'll head back to the airport to the Sansa Air Terminal. When he drops you off, you'll probably want another tip handy.

You'll check in and they will weigh your bags. As mentioned in a previous article, **they may or may not charge you if the bags are over the specified weight.** We didn't pay any additional charges, despite our heavy camera backpacks, *but that doesn't mean it won't happen to you - or to us next time.* For more info, see the "getting your gear to the resort" article.

Once you have your boarding pass, you'll sit and wait for a short time. It's a small terminal (like really tiny) so no worries about getting lost. If you have to hit the bathroom, now's the time (it's to the front-left by the window).

You'll walk out onto the tarmac to board the plane and you'll probably even see them loading your luggage. The aircraft is a small, single prop 12 seater, so there's not an abundance of room. If you have a camera backpack, I'd suggest leaving it in the back of the passenger cabin (you'll see the area). However, you may want to get your camera out *before* boarding so you can snap some pics as you go. It's a very scenic flight.

It takes about an hour or so to get to the resort. (They say 45 minutes, but it's more like an hour.)

What's really cool is that the airstrip is right outside the resort, so once you land, you're basically there. Someone from the resort will be waiting for

you with a van. They'll load your luggage and a few minutes later, you'll be at the resort.

The driver will drop you off at the reception and check-in area where you'll get your keys. **Also, note that you will need to sign a liability release for both the resort and for Backcountry Gallery at that time.**

Next, you'll be given your room keys and taken to your room for the week. Congrats - you made it!

<Insert your incredible workshop experience here!>

Workshop complete, it's time to head home.

On the departure day, you'll head to reception and check-out. At this time, you can add any gratuities you would like for the resort personnel. You can also add tips for specific staff members you worked closely with if you like - just ask for the individual tip sheet. Note that you can use your credit card for the gratuities if you decide to tip.

Once check-out is complete, they will load your luggage and you'll have a quick trip back to the airport outside of the resort. From there, you'll be dropped off, check-in (easy - and the resort personal help facilitate the process) and wait for the plane. Once it arrives, they'll load everything and it's back to the main airport (San Jose).

When you arrive back at the terminal, you'll collect your luggage from the airline and you'll need to get to the international airport terminal. With Sansa, this is just next door. You literally walk out, turn right, and it's there! Plus, there will be someone there to help get you to the main terminal, so no worries about getting lost.

(Note - If you happen to be staying at the DoubleTree for one more night, there will be someone at the Sansa terminal to take you to the hotel.)

Enter the main terminal and get in line for your airline. You'll need to fill out one last immigration/customs form, and you'll be all set.

NOTES

Gratuities

As you may have noticed, there are more than a few mentions about tipping in this article. Many of the people you'll encounter are accustomed to receiving tips for their assistance. We failed to consider this on our first trip, and it ended up being a bit of a scramble (and almost embarrassing at one point). I wanted to make sure I mentioned it here in this article so you're more prepared than we were. Don't worry; they love any currency.

You may also want to tip at the resort. This is by no means required, but once you experience the quality of the staff, you'll probably want to set aside some cash for them. Again, you can use a credit card at the end of your stay if you prefer.

Myself, I neither require or expect a tip - that's why you paid the workshop fee.

San Jose International Airport

Another note I wanted to toss in was the airport itself. The San Jose airport is an international airport, but it's about the size of a large regional US airport. So, don't be intimidated about getting around on your flight days. It's small and easy.

Resort Contact

If you have any questions before your trip or during the process described above, you can contact Kerem at 011-506-8825-3195 (take that number with you when you travel).

Kerem is really the best person to answer any logistical questions, the limit of what I know is in this article :)

See you there!

Steve