



## COSTA RICA PARTICIPANT FAQs

**Flight Arrangements:** In most cases, EcoTeach reserves group seats for your trip. However, you're welcome to make your own flight arrangements and pay EcoTeach only for the land portion of the trip. You can opt out of the group flights generally up to 4 months prior to departure.

Airlines frequently change schedules and flight numbers. It is your responsibility to contact the airlines 48 to 72 hours in advance to confirm the flight number and departure times.

**Frequent Flyer Miles:** If you would like to use Frequent Flier miles, you will need to check with the airlines directly to see if you can use your miles to book a seat on the same flights as the group flight. You will also need to check with your trip leader to make sure that there are no other problems or issues you should consider.

To collect frequent flyer miles on our group flights, call the airlines after tickets are issued and give them the flight info and your frequent flier number. You can also sign up for a frequent flyer number over the phone. This can be done during check-in, but we recommend doing it prior to departure.

**Important Information on Flight Costs:** For groups booking flights through EcoTeach, please be aware that taxes and fees (fuel surcharges, security costs, etc) imposed by the airlines can change until tickets are issued approximately 2 months prior to your departure date. When tickets are issued, any additional fees will be added to your account and are due with the final payment. Thanks for your understanding of this matter!

**Food & Flights:** Some airlines still serve a meal, others have food to purchase, and others offer nothing more than a bag of peanuts or pretzels. We encourage you to buy a meal on the plane or bring something to eat before you board your final flight to Costa Rica.

**Money:** We recommend that each participant bring \$250 in cash for tipping and spending money. U.S. bills of \$20 and less are widely accepted in Costa Rica (with change given in dollars or Costa Rican colones). Many shop owners are wary of accepting torn or "old-looking" bills – so please bring crisp newer bills if possible! Small bills (\$1's and \$5's) are useful at the turtle projects where there are no banks and people have a harder time finding change for larger bills.

**Safes:** When there is a safe at a hotel, we recommend using it (just as a precaution).

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**Tipping:** Tipping guides isn't mandatory, but it is customary (like tipping waitress here in the states). We recommend tipping \$8 to \$10 dollars per day per participant to divide between your guide(s) and driver. (That would be \$70 to \$100 per participant depending on the length of the trip).

Participants will not need to tip anyone else along the way.

**Phoning Home/Internet Access/Cell Phones:** Calling home from Costa Rica can be expensive. We've found that the cheapest and easiest way to call home is with international phone cards purchased in Costa Rica. EcoTeach guides can help you purchase these cards. (They cost about \$10, and you can talk for 10-15 minutes). For email, you may be able to find an internet café along the way, but you should not rely on, or expect to be able to, get onto email while on the trip.

Cell phones from the states or Canada often do not work in Costa Rica. If you plan to bring a cell phone please check with your provider about coverage and cost.

**Electricity:** The voltage in Costa Rica is the same as the states. However, most outlets are 2-prong instead of 3-prong, so if you are bringing something that needs 3 prongs you need to bring an adapter. And remember, depending on which turtle project you go to, there may only be solar power, and no outlets will be available during those days.

**ATMs:** Although there are ATMs in Costa Rica, much of the time you will be in places where they are not available. And in places where they do have ATMs, they don't always work. The bottom line – while you may be able to get cash from ATMs, don't count on it.

**Medication:** If you plan to bring personal medicine to Costa Rica, please consider the following:

- Carry just the necessary quantity, which is the quantity normally used by a person having your health problem.
- Bring a prescription or a written statement from your doctor, specifying that the medicine is being used under his/her control and that you need it for your physical health.
- Have the medicines labeled or properly identified.

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