

Costa Rica Update



A supplement to the travel guide Explore Costa Rica.

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<http://www.savethemanatee.com/CR/CRsale.shtml>

New phone numbers

From March 20, 2008, all Costa Rican phone numbers will have an extra digit added, as the nation transitions from seven-digit phone numbers. The change, adding a “2” before every fixed line phone number in the country and an “8” to cellular phone numbers, is an effort by the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE) to meet the growing need for new phone numbers. ICE has opted for the eight-digit number instead of adding another area code. (This will be only a temporary fix).

Park Entrance Fees

Entrance fees to the national parks have been raised to US\$10–\$15 per day for foreigners.

Other news

The environmentally disastrous gold mine at Bellavista, located near the town of Miramar de Montes de Oro in Puntarenas Province, has closed.

<http://ithinkmining.blog.infomine.com>

Closures

Mighty Rivers Cafe (p. 198)

Balcon de Uvita (p. 470)

Flights (p. 111)

Delta Airlines now flies from NYC. Frontier has a flight which arrives in San José at 9:30 AM.

Politics (p 67)

The national referendum concerning the CAFTA treaty passed in 2007 by a narrow margin. The Arias administration conducted a well-funded campaign in favor of the treaty.

The US has agreed to exchange \$12.6 million of Costa Rica’s \$93.1 million debt in exchange for its protecting the environment.

A controversial dam is planned for the Río Savegre. Opponents charge that it will damage tourism in the area and that it makes no sense to build such a structure in an earthquake zone.

GPS

GPS rental has arrived via Rutas Satelitales whose store is in front of the Hampton Inn.

<http://www.rsgps.net>

Tours (p. 113)

Railbike Adventures (233-3300) takes visitors on a special tour (US\$85/half-day) where you “railbike” along the rail tracks.

<http://www.railbike.com>

Lava Tours (888-862-2424) offers mountain biking tours

<http://www.lava-tours.com>

Boyero Tours offers a set of unique tours:
<http://www.boyerotours.com/aboutus.html>

Volunteering (p. 147)

Nature Kids is looking for volunteer tutors as well as books.
gterry@natureair.com

WorldTeach (800-483-2240) offers one-year programs in Costa Rica.
<http://www.worldteach.org>

Parks

Entry to most parks is now price US\$10. Chirippo now charges US\$15. Prices for Costa Rican citizens remain significantly lower.

San José (p. 171)

A 25-ton statue of the Pope Paul II now stands in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral. The marble sculpture stirred controversy because the Catholic Church spent US\$220,000 on it; critics maintain these funds would have more appropriately been used for social programs.

A new walking tour shows you San José from the local's POV. Tico Walks (283-8281, 234-8575) operates these scheduled walks and arranges these tours.

<http://www.ticowalks.com>

This comes courtesy of reader Dr. Sharon Kugelmass:

"I saw the information on Cinco Hormigas Rojas (p. 194) in your beautiful guide. Thank you for directing me to this unique and crazy place. Mayra is an "originale" and very talented. Now, I wish to give you an update on your information, which is very good and helpful, and a bit of advice. Mayra has a new telephone number. It is 011 (506-2553412. The website is: www.cincohormigasrojas.com. Email Mayra at info@cincohormigasrojas.com. And, don't call her 'Senora'!

The Melía Cariari has changed hands and is now the Doubletree Cariari by Hilton.

Bells Homestay Hospitality now has a website:
<http://www.homestay.thebells.org>

Crokante (258-1017), Barrio Otoya (in an old house opposite Hotel La Amistad) serves gourmet food (fusion cuisine with a Peruvian accent) and has live trova music on weekends. Dishes include Salmon Carpaccio with horseradish mayonaise and pita bread, Caprese Salad, and Pasta Primavera with chicken on the side. As elsewhere, watch your handbag: don't hang it on the back of your chair.

Green Mountain Tours (215-2544) offers The Urban Canopy, a zipline which takes visitors across part of the Sabana. It costs US\$7 for Ticos and US\$20 for foreigners.

Galerías Metallo (225-1570) is a jewelry academy and showroom in Barrio Escalante.
<http://www.studiometallo.com>

Galería Amón (223-9725) is an American-run art gallery 250 m N of the Morazán Park kiosk.
<http://www.amon937.com>

Calzado Giovanni (221-9715), Ave. 10, C. 2/C. 4, produces quality leather shoes to order from US\$25/pair.
 Papelería Santa Rosa, Av. 8 and C. 18, sells homemade banana paper.

Canadian chain "Made in Japan Teriyaki Experience" has opened a branch on Paseo Colón in San José.

Canyon House (249-3722) is an attractive B&B under new management and near Santa Ana and Ciudad Colón. Vegetarian and vegan meals are available. Sounds like a great place!
<http://www.thecanyonhouse.com>

In Sabana Norte (100 m N of RostiPollos), the intimate Park Café (290-6324) serves gourmet French food in an old colonial-style house. This one-of-a-kind restaurant is named after the park it borders, Plates include Japanese sushi tuna rolls with tempura shrimp, wild-mushroom-stuffed ravioli with young asparagus in basil sauce, brochette of shrimp with deep-fried squid and mango salad, and some 16 other choices. Exquisite desserts.

<http://www.richardneat.blogspot.com>

Ciudad Colón

Finca Bonanza (249-1185) is a gourmet restaurant with outdoor seating which is wheelchair accessible.

<http://www.fincabonanza.com>

Zapote

Stan's Irish Pub (253-4360) has opened. It's 125 m W of the Casa Presidencial.

Escazú (p. 225)

Saga, a trendy restaurant, is renowned for the quality of its food, its presentation, and its ambiance. International dishes range from Chicken in Peanut Sauce served with chutney to sesame crusted salmon. The deep fried calamari are a great starter. Also features a gourmet bakery and great desserts including a delicious rice pudding served with fresh strawberries.

Bacchus is housed in a refurbished 100-year-old home, this bistro, which has modern art on its walls and outdoor seating, serves French and Italian dishes such as baked mushroom-and-polenta ragout and wood-oven fired pizzas. Their wine list is extensive, and the presentation and desserts are both wonderful.

Restaurante Sebastian (289-9468, 393-9043) serves Italian, Peruvian, and Asian fusion dishes at gourmet prices. It's 600 m S of El Cruce in San Rafael de Escazú.

Taj Mahal, the nation's sole Indian restaurant, serves *biryani*s, *tandoor* dishes, *tikka masala*, *naan* (flat-bread), and other authentic North Indian specialties. Vegetarians and meat eaters will be well satisfied with food cooked to your order of "heat".

Lo Spago (582-2121) is a new gourmet Italian restaurant in Santa Ana.

Casa 76 (282-8619), on the old road to Santa Ana from Escazú, is a charming home transformed into a restaurant with a garden setting. Enormous salads, hot and cold appetizers, 22 varieties of pizza, 11 different pasta dishes, and great desserts complete the picture. There's no corkage fee. It's open Tues. to Thurs., noon-9:30 ; Friday to Sat., noon-11; Sunday, noon-9; closed Mondays.

Other Escazú reviews can be found here:

http://newsletter.escazunews.com/index.php?pr=Restaurants_Reviews

San Pedro

Hoja de Aire (234-0427), a family owned restaurant in an old home 100 m E of the San Pedro Church, is a pleasant place to sample above-average Tico dishes.

El Candil (371-8486) next door also serves *casados* (\$5). *Comida para Sentir* (224-1163), north of the park, serves wonderful vegetarian dishes such as eggplant Parmesan.

Alajuela (p. 234)

Alajuela has a new Municipal Theater (436-2362) in an old, renovated building. It's a block from the Parque Central and across from the Santamaría Plaza.

The Jardin Tropical, run by a Costa Rican woman and near the airport, is a welcome new edition.

<http://www.jardintropicalbandb.com>

Orosi (p. 276)

Montaña Linda (533-3640) is an affordable guesthouse and language school set 250 m W of La Primavera bar in Orosi.

<http://www.montanalinda.com>

Pensión Doña Mayela (533-1848), 100 m N and 75 m E of the Coto Restaurant in Orosi, is a three-bedroom homestay run by the Zúñigas, a friendly and vivacious local family. Rates are around US\$7 pp. Breakfasts and dinners are available upon request. Staying here sounds as if it would be a great experience!
melania_m_z@hotmail.com

Atenas (p. 243)

Artist Mercedes Solano has painted rural scenes on boulders along the road between La Garita and Atenas. Watch for them. To visit her home gallery call 446-5754 or 834-1675.

Else Kientzler Botanical Garden (p. 247)

Lisa Helberg and Stefany Cruz write:

“Dear Harry S. Pariser,

“I read parts of your *Explore Costa Rica* travel guide and I liked it a lot. Here is some information about our botanical garden Else Kientzler in Sarchí Norte, Province Alajuela [This garden is already in the guide.] The garden with an area of 7 hectares offers a series of footpaths which approximate route lasts from 1 hour minimum to a maximum time of 2.5 hours for those people who wish to explore each trail. Within the attraction we offer hibiscus collections, a heliconia garden, succulents, garden, bromeliads collections, nursery, fruit trees, woodlands (arboretum), rest areas, lake, foot bridges, a play children area with water games and a small canopy, altogether a variety of more than 2000 plants from all over the world.

“In the near future there will be a garden for blind as well as an Orchids garden. Furthermore we provide a guide service offered in English, German and Spanish as well as an informative brochure for free. We also offer a visitor's center equipped with basic services: parking area, reception, restrooms, a small store of souvenirs, ecological books and tourist information. Approximately 40% of the paths are designed for all type access, with cement surfaces and inclines for wheelchairs. The remaining 60% have certain restrictions for people with physical disabilities. All our footpaths meet detailed standards of non-slip material, terraces, railing and banisters for protection. This project is not just a tourist attraction but also a project to conserve the plants variety of our world. Our company is certified with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, we count on strict controls for quality and protection of the environment, which promotes higher confidence in our service.

“This opportunity is nice to combine with the Volcan Poás, the La Paz Waterfall gardens or to take a rest on your way from the north of the country to the south. The town Sarchí is the artisan birthplace of Costa Rica, therefore you find loads of beautiful souvenirs over here, the famous Costa Rican oxcarts as well as the well known waterfall Bajos del Toro. Furthermore it is close to Grecia, Naranjo, Palmares and Alajuela; it is less than a one-hour-ride to the international airport Juan Santamaría. We are open every day from 08.00 to 16.00 and offer guided tours by reservation. Do not hesitate to ask for more information: (00506) 454-2070/454-4956 or via fax: 454-2070. We also invite you to a virtual walk through our garden on our website.”

<http://www.elsegarden.com>

Vista del Valle (p 249)

Co-owner Johanna Bresnan writes: “We now have three Nature Villa Condo's (six Condo Villa suites), plus we've got several Vacation Residences at the Vista Del Valle Resort Community for longer term stays and for larger groups and families.” *She writes:*

“**Regarding our new restaurant:** We're still polishing it up but it was officially open the first of '07. We have been working with local people to learn my recipes which are a combo of California cuisine blended with some of my *Moosewood Cookbook* favorites. We are all into “Heart healthy” foods, and diets, so we have an assortment of healthy options. We work with the guests to give them what they're hankering for, and we try to help with their dietary needs. We buy Fresh from the local farmers, Organic as much as possible, so there's a lot of creative innovation in our kitchen. It's a matter of what's in season.

“We just had a huge Turkey Dinner with all the traditional goodies, and they still insisted in offering Pot Roast with all the trimmings. The Tropical Waldorf Salad was most impressive.

“**Breakfast (which is included with stay):** Fruit, juice, Granola, then the guests can order: Eggs to order, or Banana Macadamia Pancakes. My favorite is the Breakfast Burrito (egg, Avocado, Cheese, Pico De Gallo, wrapped in a fresh flour *Tortilla*, topped with a dollop of *Natilla*, and *Pico De Gallo*).

“**Health nuts:** Mike and I start the day with Carrot juice, Flax seed Tea, and/or some type of Tico Grain drink like Horchata, and some kind of a fruit smoothie.

“**Lunch items:** *Quesadillas* are dynamite, Tuna Melt took us years to perfect but it's one of the favorites, Jo's Nachos (full of crunchy veggies along with our homemade chips, our special homemade Salsa, and of course Cheese), also an assortment of Great Tico plates (*Casadas*). I love to include my favorite drink: fresh Ginger Lemonade.

“**Dinner:** Wow! We're always working on things Chicken, Fish, Steak, and an assortment of Vegetarian dishes that we're improving all the time. I happen to love Mara's Stir Fry (Vegetarian or with Chicken). Tenderloin topped with chimichuri sauce is very popular. The fish with Passion fruit sauce is wonderful. When Mangos are in season the Mango Chicken is to die for.

“We have a full Bar in the restaurant, and the new Banana Bar by the pool. Alfonso is great at creative drinks, and his *Ceviche* is incredible. Many times the guests give us great ideas and we go from there. Roger's Grandmother's Sangria is...well if one's not enough, you don't dare have more than two.

Route of the Saints (p. 271) and San Gerardo de Dota

An expanded review of Dantica and information on a new forest reserve and national park follow below.

Reserva Forestal Los Santos (60,542 ha), the Los Santos forest reserve, is a protected area extending from Santa Maria de Dota to the Cerro de la Muerte on the western side of the Panamerican Highway. The easiest access is through Dantica Lodge & Gallery which is inside the boundaries of the Los Santos forest reserve, its four km of trails (no access charge) run through primary cloud forest. Peccaries, deer, tapir, otters, ocelots, and pumas have been sighted on these trails.

Bordering the Panamerican highway between km 70 and 80 Ruta 2, km 76. and 8 km from Dantica, The Los Quetzales National Park (no facilities) was inaugurated in late 2007. Its entrance is opposite the Los Chesperitos Restaurant on the Panamerican Highway.

Dantica Lodge & Gallery

Dantica's (740-1067, 740-1069) three-room indigenous art gallery shows jewelry and Precolumbian jewelry reproductions, textiles, ceramics, statues and masks from such nations as Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia, as well as masks and natural-dye cotton bags produced by Southern Costa Rica's Boruca indigenous group. For information on their deluxe rooms, visit the website:

<http://www.dantica.com>

San Gerardo de Dota

In Providencia, the cooperative school El Gimnasio de la Mente (352-0597) offers climbing, tree climbs, and cloud forest hikes. You may stay in a cabin (US\$15 pp with breakfast) or in a treehouse (US\$250 pn; minimum two-night stay). The community-involved operation is run by Canadian Eric Allen, his wife Ying, and their daughter Sierra, a champion rock climber.

yukonwildthings@yahoo.com

Irazú (p. 274)

The Nochebuena Museum (US\$5 pp), open daily, is set in a restaurant five km before the national park entrance. It gives visitors an introduction to the volcano and the area, and they have a cabin for rent.

Your ad could be here! Contact <internetmail@savethemanatee.com> for information

Poás (p. 251)

The national park has a new cafeteria, artisan shop, and cafeteria in its visitor's center.

Barva (p. 263)

Barva has the maskmaking studio of Francisco Montero (237-5426, 340-5164) and of Luis Fernando "Bombillo" Vargas. Prices run from US\$60–\$300. (Make a reservation in advance).

Puerto Lindo area north of Guápiles (p. 267) and Cariari

El Progreso Farm offers tours. Co-owner Nuria Chaves is an environmentalist who is operating a sustainable farm which serves as a "living classroom." Visits are by reservation only.

<http://www.ampalec.com>

Guayabo Lodge (p. 284)

Reader Dr. Sharon P. Kugelmass offers an update:

"Guayabo Lodge (p. 284) is a 21-room B&B owned and operated by Rosanna Lok, a long-time resident and anthropologist. The lodge is bright and tasteful with colorful rooms and public areas — yellow walls, blue and white and terracotta tile floors — cheering up a rainy afternoon, even during *la bruma* (fog in the rainy season). The woodworking is especially handsome with rich tropical wood doorframes and molding, lattice-work ceilings and green marble bathrooms. Each room has been lovingly appointed with gaily-painted armoires, iron bed frames and attractive homemade curtains. The rooms depict most of the countries of Central and South America as well as native North American gods from the American Southwest and Mexico. These are reflected in charming sculptures and artwork in the interior and carved stone and wooden tables and planters in the gardens. The gardens are lush, rich in colors, textures and varieties, with more or less friendly goats and dogs on the grounds. All are tethered, but I don't recommend you pet them.

The lodge specializes in not-your-everyday tours and excursions. These vary from canyoneering, water rafting and volcano-hopping to tropical garden and plantation tours, featuring elegant and typical Tico restaurants, due in large part to the proprietor's knowledge and love of the region, and a connection to CATIE, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, a short distance away (See pp. 288-9). I highly recommend this hotel-lodge, which I have used as my base for the past three weeks. It is the best I've seen in Costa Rica, especially for those who prefer an adventurous and authentic experience, with unsurpassed natural beauty and friendliness."

Siquirres (p. 289)

Finca Las Tilapias (398-1517, 768-8636, 768-9293) offers a show (US\$2) on Sundays at 4 PM when owner Gilberto Sheedan jumps into a pond with Poncho, a one-eyed crocodile. Ask locals for the "Chito y Poncho" show. Cabinas (US\$65 pn, pp) include three meals and boat tour.

Finca Maquenque (206-5355) offers guesthouses (around US\$180 d with breakfast), Jacuzzi, trails, a suspension bridge, and horseback rides. It's in Alegría (near Siquirres).

<http://www.fincamaquenguefalls.com>

fincamaquenque@aol.com

Puerto Viejo Area (p. 291)

Finca Corsicana (820-6489, 820-5081), 3 km west of Llano Grande in La Virgen, offers tours of its pineapple plantation. \$22 adults, US\$18 students. US\$12 children.

Tilaran (p. 318)

The La Carreta Hotel has been refurbished and revitalized under new (American expat) management.

Pueblo Antiguo lodge has opened. It is 24 km S of Cañas in La Sierra de Abangares. They have rustic rooms, a spa, pools, trails, a river, and restaurant.

<http://www.puebloantiguo.com>

La Fortuna (p. 326)

Arenal Bungee (479-7440) operates in the center of town. Activities vary and rates range from US\$24–40

<http://www.arenalbungee.com>

A letter published in the Tico Times complained about the rude service, overpricing, and party atmosphere at Baldi Hot Springs.

A group of women (479-7062) from Santa Fe de Guatuso are offering some special tours.

<http://www.costaricaruraltours.com>

San Carlos Area (p. 332)

Debbie Legg sends this info about her new lodge, Leaves and Lizards Arenal Volcano Cabin Retreat:

“This secluded resort is located on 26 acres in the rolling hills above La Fortuna with spectacular viewing of the Arenal Volcano's lava flow. Three private cabins, perched on teak posts, are whimsically decorated with beautiful hand painted murals by the owner/artist Steve Legg. Enjoy the panoramic vista of Arenal, Cerro Chato, San Carlos, and Monteverde from a hammock on your private porch or from your comfortable, orthopedic, queen sized bed fitted with 800 count Egyptian cotton sheets. The cabins have phone service, high speed internet, mini-fridge, TV/ DVD player, coffee maker, fan and shower with hot water. The romantic Volcano Cabin has a private, outdoor soaking tub and is perfect for honeymooners. The Monkey and Toucan cabins have bunk beds. The Toucan cabin is handicapped accessible. Steve and Debbie Legg, owners of this little piece of paradise moved to Costa Rica in 2006. Guests at Leaves and Lizards learn about the Meso-American Biological Corridor, the consequences of deforestation and can observe their progress as they reforest this former dairy farm. The Leggs offer an ‘Orientation to Life in Costa Rica’ package that provides information about moving or buying land in Costa Rica. Packages include lodging, meals, and tours. Meals are served in the cabins and prepared using locally grown ingredients. Tasty, hearty meals combine the best of Costa Rican cooking with a continental flare. Homemade snacks and bag lunches are provided for off site tours. The vision at Leaves and Lizards is to create the perfect blend of adventure, discovery and tranquility for each guest. Adventure tours include: Canopy Tour/Zip Lines, Fishing Lake Arenal, Sunset Horseback Ride to View Lava Flow, Rafting the Rio Pacuare, and Rappelling. Discovery tours include: Cerro Chato Trek, Guide for a Day, Rio Celeste, Tico Dairy Farm, Venado Caverns, Hike in Primary Rainforest, Arenal National Park and Tour of ICE geothermal electrical plant. Tranquility tours include: Bird watching, Rejuvenation Day, River Fishing Rio Arenal, and Horseback riding to La Fortuna Waterfall. This family friendly resort has horses, pigs and various other animals on site delivering a real, hands-on, interactive, educational vacation experience.

“Rates: Package: 3 days/2 nights/2 tours \$320 per person - Children (less than 17) \$160, 4 days/3 nights/3 tours \$475 per person – Children \$240. Nightly rates: \$150 per cabin for 2, \$10 extra per person. Weekly Rates: \$700 for 2 \$70 extra per person. Transportation can be arranged. Costa Rica Tourist Tax is not included in these rates.

“Please see website for more information. Call: 1-888-828-9245 , 011-506-478-0023.”

<http://www.leavesandlizards.com>

leavesandlizards@gmail.com

Playas del Coco (p. 364)

The Pato Loco Inn (670-0145) is run by an American woman and her 74-year-old mother. It has four rooms (US\$60 d w/o a/c; US\$70 with a/c d). Every evening sees a new international special in its restaurant.

<http://www.costa-rica-beach-hotel-patoloco.com>

Conleur Café Fine French Cuisine is a new restaurant at Playas del Coco.

Tamarindo (p. 377)

The Tamarindo Reserve, a condo project, has engendered considerable controversy here.

Los Altos de Eros (786-866-7039 in the US; Costa Rica: 850-4222, 850-4203), set in a hill in Cañafistula, to the south of Tamarindo (a 20 min. drive on a bad road) offers luxury accommodation, a collection of erotic art, yoga classes, and meals most nights: on others a free shuttle service to Tamarindo is offered.

<http://www.losaltosdeeros.com>

Arco Iris (p. 381) has changed hands. Remodeled rooms now have a/c. A pool and new dojo are planned. The restaurant, when reopened in April 2008, will change its menu.

Mal País (p. 422)

The band Malpaís, the Costa Rican band named after the town, has released its latest CD.
<http://www.malpais.com>

Puntarenas (p. 425)

The Fiesta Resort is now the Doubletree Puntarenas by Hilton.

Jacó (p. 434)

School of the World (643-2462) is a school for art, photography, and surfing run by Zach McDuffie in Jacó.
<http://www.schooloftheworld.org>

Playa Hermosa (p. 440)

Residents and local hotels are fighting off the prospect of “Diamond Beach Towers,” an ugly set of planned highrise towers.

La Cangreja (p. 442)

Parque Nacional La Cangreja, one of Costa Rica’s newest national parks, offers a variety of opportunities for exploration. It’s in the rough vicinity of Santiago de Puriscal. WWOOF Costa Rica coordinates volunteers in the area. Hotel Paraiso Carlisa (778-1112, 778-1190) offers a restaurant. Cabinas Siempre Verde offers very basic cabins with dirt floors. It has a Spanish school and accepts WWOOF volunteers.

<http://www.woofcostarica.com>

<http://www.hotelparaisocarlisa.com>

<http://www.cabanasiempreverde.com>

Playa Esterillos Este (p. 443)

Luxurious Xandari by the Pacific, a sister hotel of the luxury Central Valley hotel, has opened.

<http://www.xandari.com>

Quepos/Manuel Antonio (p. 444)

Arenas del Mar is a new hotel

<http://www.arenasdelmar.com>

Tsunami Sushi has opened in Quepos.

Artesanía La Amistad is a gift shop set next to the Panalera near the INVU in Quepos.

San Isidro de El General (p. 477)

Tamara Newton of Finca Tres Semillas writes:

“ROOMS: Finca Tres Semillas has two rooms available with three single beds in one room, and one double and one single bed in the other room. Each room can sleep up to three people per room (extra beds can be made available for larger groups). RATES INCLUDE LODGING & 3 ORGANIC MEALS & FREE ACTIVITIES: 14 yrs. old and up - \$45 per person / per night - We will happily arrange transportation to the Inn from San Isidro de General. 8 - 13 yrs. - \$ 25 per person / per night. 3 - 7 yrs. \$15 per person / per night. 2 and under - FREE. Volunteers - \$20 per person / per night. Students - \$25 per person / per night.

“PACKAGES: 2 NIGHTS, 3 DAYS: Includes meals,snacks,lodging,1 guided activity, and self-guided activities. We will happily arrange transportation for you to and from San Isidro de El General.1 PAX: \$150; 2 PAX: \$130 per person; 3 PAX: \$105 per person; 4 PAX+: \$98 per person. 3 NIGHTS, 4 DAYS: Includes meals, snacks, lodging, 2 guided activities, and self-guided activities. We will happily arrange transportation for you to and from San Isidro de El General.: 1 PAX: \$185, 2 PAX: \$165 per person, 3 PAX: \$150 per person, 4 PAX+: \$145 per person. Above rates include: Three great organic meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), yummy snacks and hiking around without a guide to the twonearby waterfalls and to River Division. To make a reservation, please contact Tamara Newton at 011-506-884-6560.”

<http://finca3semillas.com/>
<http://finca3semillas.com/rates/index.html>
reservations@finca3semillas.com

Bosque del Tolomunco (847-7207) is an attractive set of Cabins (US\$60 d) near Hortensia to the north of San Isidro. Their trails are popular with birders who have identified more than 160 species (including a quetzal). Hearty, delicious breakfasts and dinners are available.

<http://www.bosquedeltolomuco.com>

Osa Peninsula (p. 505)

Sierra Goodman writes:

“We would like to express our strong objection the proposed Osa Pointe Development of Puerto Jiménez on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica. The Osa Peninsula is home to both primary and secondary rainforests and to plant and animal species found nowhere else on earth. A mega resort project such as this will damage and destroy delicate eco systems both on land, in the Golfo Dulce and beyond to the Pacific ocean. It will adversely affect the humpback whales that come to the area from both North and South America to have their babies and breed, as well as many species of dolphins and endangered seaturtles.

“While progress in general is inevitable, there are some places on this earth that just should not and cannot be subjected to this sort of development, and the Osa Peninsula is one of them. This is an area suited to sustainable eco tourism that allows people to experience nature in its natural and wild state, while causing little or no harm. It is a very special place that needs to be protected and conserved, not developed and overpopulated with condos, large marinas and planned communities. Please, let's not destroy one of the most, if not the most, biologically intense places on earth both on land and at sea!

“There is a very strong coalition of environmental and conservation organizations working together to protect the Osa Peninsula, and a project such as this will become priority for us to stop if this development should continue. We respectfully request that developers reconsider plans to build The Osa Pointe resort on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica, which hosts endemic and endangered species and biological importance to the health of the planet. — Sierra Goodman, President, Vida Marina Foundation

Isla del Coco (p. 530)

Isla del Coco has been named the nation's most wonderful natural site in a recent La Nación poll.

Tortuguero (p. 543)

On May 5, 2007, Reuters reported: “Thirteen-year-old Breydi Escorcía in Costa Rica was bathing with his brother in a lagoon in San Francisco de Tortuguero when a crocodile attacked him and dragged him into deeper water. Witnesses maintained the boy screamed that the crocodile had bitten his leg before the reptile dragged him underwater. The teenager re-emerged just long enough to shout 'Adios, Pablito' before being dragged under for a second and final time. Police searched for him until a late afternoon high tide made the water too choppy to continue.”

Cahueta (p. 564)

Set three km before the village, Suizo Loco Lodge (755-0349) offers attractive rooms from around US\$80 d. It has a pool and breakfast is included as is wireless internet.

<http://www.suizoloco.com>

Puerto Viejo (p. 573)

Kekoldi Reserve now has a website:

<http://www.kekoldi.org>

The Magic Buzz, 50 m S of Rockin' Js, offers reggae and atmosphere.

Comidas Baby Rasta is a new restaurant serving Caribbean-style dishes. It's 50 m behind Terraventuras.

Coco Cielo, a new restaurant and lounge, is run by three women and serves coffee (espresso!), vegan, and vegetarian dishes. It's open for three meals from Thurs. through Tuesday. DJ music (hip hop, reggae, elec-

tronica, etc.) hold forth in the lounge at night.

Set on the backside of “El Chino” and across from the new Catholic church, Jammin Juice and Jerk Joint is a great new place to eat.

Cocles (p. 580)

La Gatta Ci Cova (750-0730) is a new trattoria run by the owner and chef of La Pecora Negra.

Concluding Remarks

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