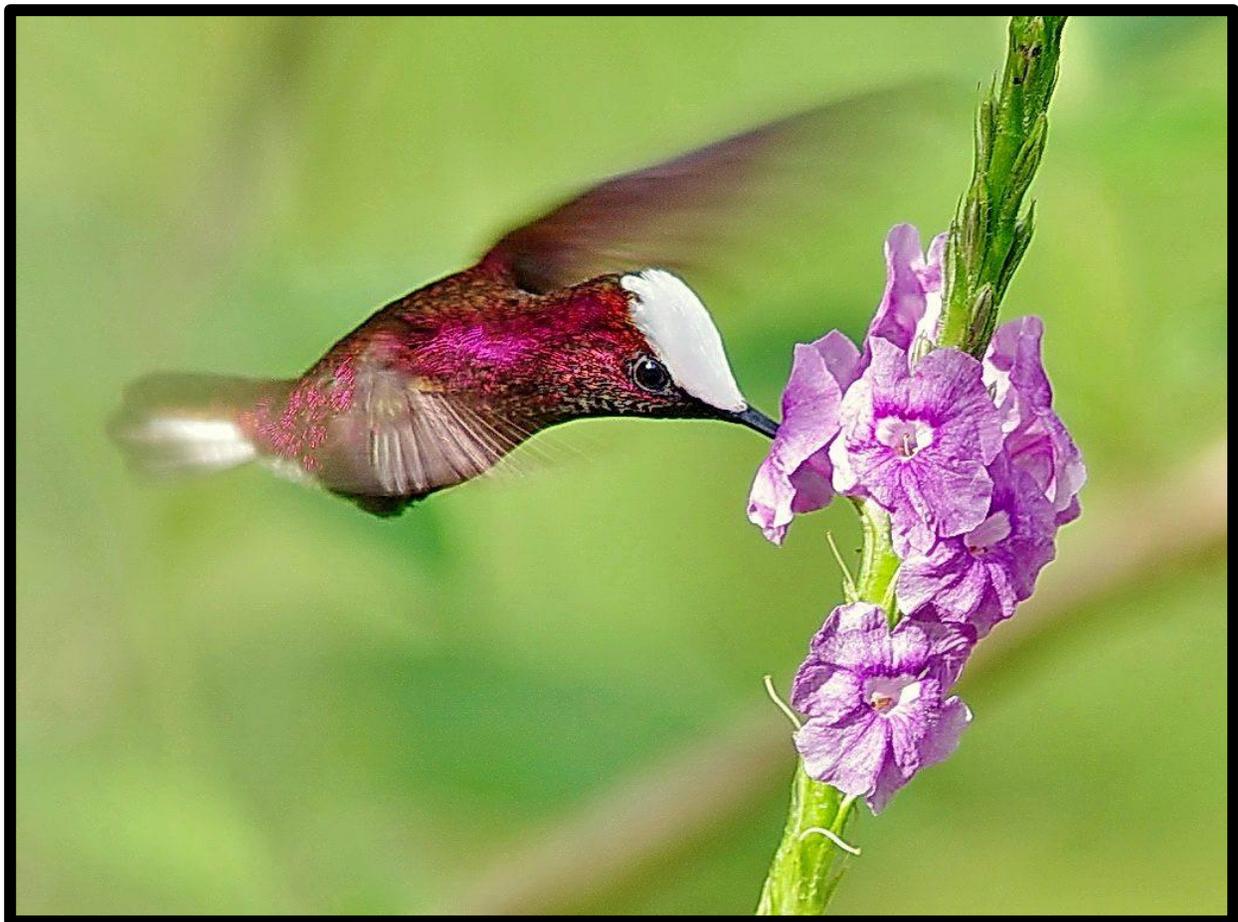




**BIRDING TOURS COSTA RICA:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



Health Issues: There are no vaccination requirements to enter Costa Rica, although some are recommended. Please kindly refer to <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/costa-rica> for detailed information.

While the two areas where Malaria has occurred in the past are near Los Chiles in the Central North on the border of Nicaragua and also an area in the Central Caribbean just inland from Limon, neither of which we visit on our standard itineraries, we advise treating malaria as a very serious disease.

Dengue Fever is also spread by mosquitoes and sometimes occurs after floods in certain areas.

Hepatitis A and B are listed on most websites, although seemingly rare in Costa Rica.

A tetanus booster may be the most worthwhile vaccination you can get.

Having said that, you should know that Costa Rica has one of the highest standards of health care and hygiene in Latin America, and the vast majority of people visiting Costa Rica do not experience any problems at all. But we of course strongly recommend you take note of the advice given by the CDC (above link), a travel clinic, or your family doctor.

Chiggers: These are small mites that burrow into your skin and cause redness and itching (sometimes extremely bad itching that can last for days on end!). They are frequently encountered in the southern USA, although residents of the UK and other countries may not be familiar with them. They are relatively harmless but can be a real nuisance and are abundant in the cattle pastures of Costa Rica, especially in the lowlands. Spraying your trousers, socks, shoes, and waste line with a repellent containing Deet (N, N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide) is a good deterrent. Anti-itch cream is about all you can do for them once the redness and itching begin, although a swim in saltwater may also calm these effects.

Safety and Theft: Like in any country common sense will go a long way in Costa Rica regarding safety and theft. Make sure that you lock your rooms when leaving, do not leave valuables exposed in your car while you are in the field, lock your rental car at all times, do not leave your camera and binoculars at the lunch table, keep an eye on your luggage in exposed areas such as at the airport, etc.

Many hotels provide a lockable safe in the room or at the front desk, usually at an added expense, where you can store valuables safely. It is probably wise to carry your important documents and money with you, even in the field.

Regarding your arrival in Costa Rica, if you will be taking a taxi from the airport to your hotel or lodge you should purchase your ticket at the Airport Taxi booth located after leaving customs and before entering the awaiting, sectioned-off crowd. Their taxis are orange and are safe, reliable, and with competitive prices. There will no doubt be independent taxi drivers once you enter the crowd who will try to secure a fare from you, but this is not always a good idea even if it does save you a buck or two. A good rule to follow is not to hire a taxi driver who is pushy and in a hurry to get your fare.

While in the field remember that, although rarely encountered, there are poisonous snakes, not to mention the more numerous ants, wasps, etc. Do not walk in sandals into the forest or secondary growth, especially at night, and take a flashlight along at night if you cannot see where you are stepping.

Water: While tap water is safe at many lodges, it's best not to risk Delhi belly, and bottled water is readily available at the lodges and in stores throughout Costa Rica (but we provide an unlimited supply in the vehicle – more expensive bottled water in restaurants is for your own account). Salads are usually considered safe to eat in all of our recommended lodges but should be avoided in local roadside restaurants to be on the safe side, no matter how clean the restaurant looks. Giardia is the most frequently encountered intestinal parasite. The local pharmacy (farmacia) can supply you with the necessary medicine if you explain your symptoms.

Electricity: 120V, plugs are [ITA Type A/B](#). Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances unless you come from the United States.

What to bring:

- **Passport:** To enter Costa Rica you will need a valid passport that will not expire before 90 days upon arrival in Costa Rica. However, some international flights require a passport that is valid for at least six months from your departure to Costa Rica. It would be best to follow the latter to be on the safe side. Visas are not required for citizens of the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, etc. It is always a good idea to make a copy of your passport and put it somewhere separate from your actual passport. This copy will make securing a new passport at the US Embassy in San Jose easier in case you should lose your passport. We will assist you in securing a new passport should this happen.
- **Binoculars**
- **Bird Book:** please see the recommended-field-guides blog at <https://www.birdingecotours.com/field-guides-to-the-neotropics-what-to-take-into-the-field/> in which we make recommendations of which field guide to use.
- **Camera:** Beware of humidity problems with cameras and video equipment in the tropics. You may want to bring a compact hair dryer to remove this humidity. This should be done gently and over a period of time in order to not damage your equipment. Do bring a waterproof camera bag to carry with you in the field in case we get caught in a sudden downpour.
- **Clothing:** Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are best to deter any insects and minor scratches from the vegetation. The new, lightweight outdoor variety is very comfortable and dries quickly. Shorts and T-shirts can also be useful. A lightweight jacket will be welcomed in the middle elevations, a fleece or medium-weight jacket for visiting the highlands such as Savegre Mountain Lodge. Laundry can be done at most of the lodges for those wanting to travel light.
- **Shoes:** Light-weight hiking boots will be invaluable, preferably waterproof Gortex boots. Sandals are useful around the lodges and beach but should not be worn on the forest trails. Rubber boots are always an option but typically do not provide sufficient support for hiking.

- **Rain gear:** Umbrella or Poncho, whichever you feel is more practical. Rain suits can be quite uncomfortable in the lowlands where it is hot and humid, but please note that Costa Rica is a rainy country (although we run our trips in the “dry” season).
- **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, lip balm, etc.
- **Mosquito repellent:** Although mosquitoes are not usually a problem in most of the areas we visit in Costa Rica it is still nice to have your own supply on hand when they are encountered. Repellent containing Deet works best. Deet is mildly poisonous, but if used modestly and as instructed it should pose no real threat. It is not necessary to spray profuse amounts before going into the field, unless you are hiking in chigger-infested areas. You should protect all rubberized or plastic areas of binoculars, scopes, watches, etc., before spraying, as repellents have a tendency to partially melt rubber and plastics. Insect repellent can be purchased in nearly all of the more modern supermarket types in Costa Rica such as Mega-Super and Mas-x-Menos.
- **Toiletries:** It’s best to bring these with you, but supermarkets in Costa Rica do carry a wide variety.
- **Medications:** Bring your prescription items. Pharmacies and supermarkets have a wide variety of over-the-counter medicines that are quite effective. We and our local ground operator in Costa Rica will also assist you in securing any medical needs you may require while touring Costa Rica with our agency.