



7. Security and Safety

Background

Costa Rica is a safe and friendly country, but because it continues to be a developing Latin American country, conditions will be different than elsewhere in the world. Costa Rica lies between the biggest drug producing country (Colombia) and biggest drug consuming country (USA) in the Americas; therefore, a steady flow of drugs from South to North through Latin America does exist, but majority of trafficking in vicinity of Costa Rica is done offshore via maritime vessels and other methods.

Opportunistic theft and drug related crime are the most popular types of crime, especially in the more populated areas, such as San Jose and the party coast town, Jaco. Remaining alert and vigilance is crucial at all times. The below are general universal guidelines and measures that should be considered when traveling abroad:

Travel Guidelines and Best Practices

- It's very clear that apart from cash, items like iPhones, iPods, cell phones, credit cards, laptops, cameras, jewelry and passports are the "hot" items. Carry as little as possible and leave your valuables at home or in a safe where you are staying.
- During periods of darkness, consider taking a taxi vice walking or bicycling.
- Getting drunk or buying drugs will attract unwanted attention. Understand, anybody purchasing drugs is part of the problem!
- Don't buy drugs and if drugs are offered, avoid further engagement with the person - walk away to a safe and secure location.
- Don't carry too much money on you and if you feel you must, keep only a small portion in your pocket and put the main amount somewhere hidden.
- Avoid walking around with your expensive iPhone or cell phone or iPod or your camera hanging around your neck. This practices opens yourself to be an easy target.
- Leave your passport in your safe, carry a copy.
 - You do require a copy of the page with your photo and a copy of the page with the entry stamp
 - Take a photograph of these pages and save to your mobile device and also email yourself an electronic version for backup purposes
- Don't take anything valuable to the beach, choose a spot where you can get someone you trust to look after your belongings when going into the water.
- Avoid leaving valuables unattended in your car, not even in the trunk.
- A common decoy tactic is to puncture a car tire and when you pull over, some people will come and "offer help". They then try and divert your attention and one of them takes off with your belongings. Better to keep driving if possible and to stop where there are more people around, ideally a gas station or police station or a restaurant.
- A similar ruse is to bump slightly into the back of your car, don't stop and drive on to a safe place.
- If threatened, don't resist, give them what they want and get help. This may depend on the situation.
- Being drunk makes you an easy victim.
- It is much better to be in a group than alone; travel in pairs



- If you do become a victim, ask for help and take the help that is offered and report; every correctly made report will help make this a better destination.
- For a mobile phone, make sure you get the IMEI code, which gives you the possibility to make your phone useless for a thief.
- AVOID logging into sensitive accounts in public wifi areas. Cyber hackers prey on tourists and acquisition of sensitive information over unsecured networks are simple to perform.

Helpful Tips

- Be RESPECTFUL to everyone. This includes being considerate, kind, helpful, friendly
- Avoid being RUDE. You are a direct reflection of where you come from and “what you project is what you reflect...”
- Be PATIENT.
- Remain VIGILANT at all times.
- Keep valuable items in a secure location on your body