

PURA VIDA – 2012 CAMP INFORMATION

CAMP PHILOSOPHY:

Contradancing in an exotic location and so much more! Being outdoors, sharing adventures and connecting with the cultures of the Tico and Cabeza communities are as integral to the experience as the dancing. The warmth of the Sotos, our hosts; the instant sense of community; the beautiful rhythms of Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, Peter Davis, Harry Aceto, and special guest Andrew VanNorstrand; the dancing with bilingual caller Kathy Anderson; the hiking, all together make it an amazing, never-to-be-forgotten vacation.

TRAVEL INFORMATION:

AIRPORT/BEST FLIGHT PLANS:

We will be flying into San Jose's Juan Santamaria International Airport on Friday, February 24, 2012. The airport code is SJO. Please watch the fares in your area to catch the best ones. Be careful to watch the dates of availability that the low fares cover. Each person is responsible for his / her own flight costs.

A good way to track fares in your area is to use one of the web-based travel services -- travelocity.com, expedia.com, hotwire.com, orbitz.com, cheaptickets.com, sidestep.com. Travelocity has a farewatcher option which notifies you by e-mail when the fares are going up or down. You can also check with the individual airlines' websites from your city.

Costa Rica requires passports for entering the country. If you have any questions about what you can travel with, contact the Transportation Security Administration at 1-866-289-9673 or www.tsa.gov.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE LET BEVERLY LAZAR DAVIS KNOW YOUR FLIGHT NUMBER AND ARRIVAL TIME INTO SAN JOSE ON THE 24th OF FEBRUARY, AND YOUR FLIGHT NUMBER AND DEPARTURE TIME LEAVING SAN JOSE ON THE 2nd OF MARCH.

If you are arriving earlier and leaving later, please let us know as well. Thank you.

EXIT TAX:

MAKE SURE AND SAVE \$26.00 FOR EXIT TAX (paid in colones, dollars, check or credit card) TO BE PAID INSIDE THE AIRPORT UPON LEAVING THE COUNTRY. DO NOT BUY THE EXIT TAX OUTSIDE OF THE AIRPORT, AS IT WILL BE FRAUDULENT.

ARRIVAL:

At least one of the staff and/or host family will meet you at the airport. Look for our Pura Vida Dance Camp sign. We will direct you to transportation to the Hotel La Guaria Inn and Suites. If for some reason we miss you (it can happen despite all our good planning), be forewarned that some of the Costa Rican taxi drivers are very aggressive in recruiting, and may overcharge you. Be very clear about the charges before you get in to the cab. Hotel La Guaria Inn and Suites is so close to the airport that we are told a taxi should not cost more than \$3.00-for automobile (1-3 people) and \$4-6.00 for minibus (4-10 people).

If for some reason you come and no one from the staff is waiting for you, follow these directions: Go out of the airport after customs, turn left and go to the TAXI window. Ask for a ticket for ___# of people to Hotel La Guaria Inn and Suites in Alajuela. (They should charge you the rates stated above.) They will give you a slip and you walk outside to the curb and wait for your taxi. People will rush to take your bags for you and will expect a tip; you can refuse and put your own bags in the taxi. The driver does appreciate a tip (\$1.00) or 500 colones when he drops you at the Inn.

MONEY:

The unit of currency in Costa Rica is the colon. As of May 2, 2011 there were approximately 496.500 to one American dollar, but because the colon has been in a constant state of devaluation, you can expect this rate to change. To check the very latest exchange rates before you leave home, go to www.xe.com/ucc/full.shtml and use the universal currency converter.

The colon is divided into 100 centimos. There are currently two types of coins in circulation. The older and larger nickel-alloy coins come in denominations of 10, 25 and 50 centimos and 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20 paper colones. However, because of their evaporating value, you will rarely see or have to handle centimos. In 1997, the government introduced new gold-hued 5-, 10-, 25-, 50- and 100- colon coins. They are smaller and heavier than the older coins, and they will slowly phase out the other currency.

Exchanging Money:

It is good to bring many one-dollar bills (\$20.00 worth) or some colones for tipping when you arrive in Costa Rica. Most travelers have found that using traveler's checks is outdated since the availability of ATM's and the use of credit cards have become more widespread. All state-owned and private banks will exchange money. **A currency exchange desk and an ATM are available at the airport.** Make sure that you have some colones before you leave the airport or Alajuela, as the ATMs are less available as you head out to more remote destinations of the country. Credit cards are invaluable when traveling. The rates that you pay depend on the card that you carry, the bank that issues the card and the merchant's policies. They all can have varying rates, so the actual cost to you is some combination of those three different aspects. They are a safe way to carry money and provide a convenient record of all your expenses. You can get a cash advance at an ATM if you know your PIN. In Alajuela, there are ATM's at the Banco de Costa Rica and Scotiabank. Commissions vary. It is said that using a debit card to get cash from an ATM is better since the fees are generally a lot lower. *You need to check it out with your bank and make sure that they have partnerships with other banks internationally.* You may also want to unlink your debit card from other accounts that you won't want access to while you are away. It is said to be important to notify your credit and debit card companies before you travel so they don't trigger a fraud alert and leave you without the use of your credit card.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE EXTRA DOLLARS OR COLONES TO PAY FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CASHBAR AT THE RANCH. CREDIT CARDS AND PERSONAL CHECKS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

PASSPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended, yet not required, that you have 6 months left on your passport after you enter Costa Rica. You may check with www.travel.state.gov or 1-888-407-4747 for updated entry or exit requirements.

As of May 2, 2011, this website states:

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS:

For entry into Costa Rica, U.S. citizens must present valid passports that will not expire for at least thirty days after arrival, and a roundtrip/outbound ticket. Some U.S. airlines may not permit passengers to board flights to Costa Rica without such a ticket. Passports should be in good condition; Costa Rican immigration will deny entry if the passport is damaged in any way. Costa Rican authorities generally permit U.S. citizens to stay up to ninety days; to stay beyond the period granted, travelers must submit an application for an extension to the Office of Temporary Permits in the Costa Rican Department of Immigration. Tourist visas are usually not extended except under special circumstances, and extension requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. There is a departure tax for short-term visitors. Tourists who stay over ninety days may experience a delay at the airport when departing. Persons who overstayed previously may be denied entry to Costa Rica.

Persons traveling to Costa Rica from some countries in South America and Sub-Saharan Africa must provide evidence of a valid yellow fever vaccination prior to entry. The South American countries include Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. (See "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES" for information on requirements to carry documentation within Costa Rica and on travel by dual national minors.)

The most authoritative and up-to-date information on Costa Rican entry and exit requirements may be obtained from the Consular Section of the Embassy of Costa Rica at 2114 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 234-2945/46, fax (202) 265-4795, e-mail: consulate@costarica-embassy.org, web site: <http://www.costarica-embassy.org>, or from the Costa Rican consulates in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Juan (Puerto Rico), San Francisco, and Tampa. The Costa Rican immigration agency web site is <http://www.migracion.go.cr>. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Costa Rica in Washington or one of Costa Rica's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements before shipping any items. (Visit the Embassy of Costa Rica web site at <http://www.costarica-embassy.org> for the most current visa information.) Information about dual nationality or the prevention of international child abduction can be found on our web site. For further information about customs regulations, please read our Customs Information sheet.

During your stay in Costa Rica, your passport is often requested, i.e. while exchanging travelers' checks, during hotel stays, car rentals, etc. We suggest that you make a photocopy of your passport and travel with the copy, leaving your original, your airline tickets and some extra cash in your hotel safe. Leave another set at home. It is not necessary to drive with your passport, simply make a copy of your photo page and the page indicating when you entered the country. Law enforcement officials have no legal right to give you a ticket for driving without a passport. More likely than not they are looking for a bribe. Consulates also recommend that you carry an expired passport or an official copy of your birth certificate in a part of your baggage separate from other documents.

HEALTH / VACCINATIONS:

Epidemic diseases have mostly been wiped out in Costa Rica and the country requires no proof of vaccination upon entry. According to U.S. Centers of Disease Control, travel to Costa Rica poses some risk of malaria, hepatitis A and B, dengue

fever, typhoid, rabies, tetanus, polio, Chagas' disease and E. coli. Even though there are no required inoculations for entry, the Hep A and Typhoid are recommended for travelers over 2 years old and should be taken at least two weeks, preferably four weeks, before departure. The CDC recommends getting vaccines for hepatitis A and Typhoid fever, especially if you are going to be in remote areas or plan to stay for more than six weeks. There is some controversy over how people feel about being inoculated for the trip to Costa Rica. You will find that some of us chose not to have any shots. Others chose to have a Typhoid fever injection #1, Hepatitis A, and the regimen for protection against Malaria. Children traveling to Central America should have current inoculations against measles, mumps, rubella and polio. If you are prone to getting diarrhea when you are traveling in a foreign country, please bring your individual remedies with you. We recommend that you drink bottled water.

As this is a personal decision, **we recommend that you review the information provided by the Center for Disease Control.** Go to their general site, www.cdc.gov, and the one specific to Central America, www.cdc.gov/travel/camerica.htm or contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, 1-800-311-2425. **Please refer to the CDC website for the most updated information** as you are preparing for and before you leave for your trip.

Malaria is not a problem here except in the remote regions of Talamanca. (Please see map of areas where malaria is a problem.) Cholera is not generally a problem either, but away from hotels and restaurants it is perhaps wise to avoid ice and unpeeled fruit. There have been some instances of dengue fever which is carried by mosquitoes -- take adequate precautions to avoid being bitten, especially in lowland urban areas such as Liberia and Puerto Limon. In 2003, there were two incidents of malaria found near Jaco on Playa Herradera on the west coast. In 2004, one camper was told upon returning home that she could not give blood right away as she had been on the Rio Reventazon. This river was apparently flagged for malaria. Other rivers in the area were not listed. Feel free to call and talk with us about vaccination pros and cons.

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ACCOMMODATIONS:

HOTEL LA GUARIA INN AND SUITES

(First and last nights):

Telephone: 506-440-2948

Fax: 506-441-9573

Address: Alajuela, Avenue 2, Street 1 and 3.

Email: laguariahotel@netscape.net

Reservations: P.O. Box 113-4060 Mall Internacional

Each suite has individual/double beds, a hot water bathroom, TV with cable, and ventilators. The Inn offers a swimming pool for the relaxation of its guests. Internet, telephone and laundry services are available. Continental breakfast is served in the morning in the main dining room (coffee, tea, chocolate milk, orange juice, salty and sweet breads, fruits and jams). Pura Vida Dance Camp reserves La Guaria Hotel for the first and last evenings of the camp (Friday, February 24th, and Thursday, March 1st, 2012). Sometimes campers wish to change their arrival and departure dates to accommodate travel plans before or after the camp. La Guaria Hotel has been gracious to allow campers to change their reservations. Please note that no changes to lodging plans can be made after February 12th, 2012.

ABOUT ALAJUELA:

Alajuela is a colonial-era city that lies at the base of Volcan Poas. It was founded in 1782 with the name of Villa Hermosa (Beautiful Village). Life is unhurried here. The city of Alajuela is in close proximity to Juan Santamaria International Airport (1 mile north) and it is very convenient to spend our first and last nights here. The beauty of the countryside also persuades some to stay longer. Alajuela is the third most populated city with 50,000 inhabitants. It is located 30 minutes (13 miles or 21 kilometers) from the capital San Jose and has a decidedly provincial air. However, this city's biggest claim to fame is that it is the hometown of the country's national hero Juan Santamaria, a drummer boy, who sacrificed his life to save his country during the battle of the Hacienda Santa Rosa, in 1856, against the forces of William Walker.

Activities in Alajuela:

Many people have asked about activities around the area of Alajuela. A walk through of the PARQUE CENTRAL with its Royal Palms and massive mango trees, lovely fountain imported from Glasgow, and concrete benches where locals gather to chat is a must. The large nearby neoclassic CATEDRAL (CATHEDRAL) has interesting local agricultural motifs and a striking red dome. MUSEO CULTURAL Y HISTORICO JUAN SANTAMARIA is housed in the old jail. The orchid collection is impressive. They are presently remodeling PARQUE JUAN SANTAMARIA where his statue is located. Don't forget the COLORFUL CENTRAL MARKET (MERCADO CENTRAL) that takes up a full city block. In April the town

springs to life with an ambitious CULTURAL FESTIVAL and in July a CRAFT FAIR is held under the name of FIESTA DE LOS MANGOS.

Daytrips from Alajuela:

ZOO-AVE -- The zoo, the best in Costa Rica runs a breeding project for rare and endangered birds, all of which are destined for release. There are large cages holding toucans, hawks, parrots, two quetzals, macaws, aracari, eagles, ostriches, crocodiles, turtles, monkeys and wild cats. There is an impressive mural in the back of the facility that has all 850 species of birds painted to scale.

THE BUTTERFLY FARM (LA FINCA DE MARIPOSAS) is located in the suburb of La Guacima. There are 40 species of local butterflies. Visit on a sunny day when they are best active. Local artists have painted buildings in the area that are fun to see.

DOKA ESTATE -- a working coffee plantation for over 70 years gives a comprehensive tour including a chance to taste the local brew.

A lovely area called LA GARITA features many great restaurants for folks who really appreciate corn dishes. Local Costa Ricans frequent these restaurants on weekends and holidays.

PARQUE NACIONAL VOLCAN POAS -- is shrouded by moss, palms, orchids and dangling bromeliads. It is located 55 kilometers away. It has a "steam-belching" crater at the top. Inside the massive crater is a turquoise acid pool and fumaroles, vents in the earth's crust that release the steam.

MARBELLA TRAVEL AND TOURS offers a day trip (7 a.m. to 6 pm.) for \$80.00-\$100/person, which includes guide, transportation, entrance fees, breakfast, lunch and boat ride to POAS VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK, LA PAZ WATERFALL (Tons of wild birds seen here), HUMMINGBIRD GARDEN AND BUTTERFLY FARM, SARAPIQUI RIVER BOAT RIDE and BRAULIO CARRILLO NATIONAL PARK

IF YOU VISIT SAN JOSE -- We have felt safe walking around San Jose and have never had any problems, though it is probably wise to be attentive to some of these safety precautions:

- Don't wear valuable jewelry
- Carry only the amount of money that you will need for each day.
- Guard valuable items you are carrying, cameras, video cameras, wallet (put in front pocket) and purse (carry it crosswise).

A great restaurant in San Jose that we have frequented is Machu Picchu (Peruvian Cuisine).

TRAVELING TO THE RANCH:

Your first morning with us in Alajuela will include a welcome breakfast and brief orientation. While we are having breakfast, your luggage will be loaded onto a separate truck for transportation to the Ranch. Carry anything you may want for the day in a separate daypack. On the way to the Ranch on February 25th, 2012, we will stop for a bathroom break and lunch at La Hulera Restarante in Turrialba.

TRAVELING BACK TO ALAJUELA ON March 1st, 2012:

On the way back to Alajuela on the last day at the ranch, the first 28 people signed up for the River Rafting Trip will board the bus after an early morning breakfast. They will take what they need for the rafting day and the rest of their luggage will be brought to Alajuela on the luggage truck. After the rafting experience, the rafters will return to Alajuela on the last night. The other bus will leave after the rafters and will stop in Turrialba for the Botanical Garden Tour of CATIE- Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigacion y Ensenanza. Those campers that choose not to go river rafting and not to go to CATIE may spend time exploring the town and market area of Turrialba, or take a leisurely walk through the grounds of CATIE until the bus is ready to leave once again for Alajuela.

ALBERGUE HACIENDA (SHELTER RANCH):

The ranch is located in a hidden valley about 25 miles east of Turrialba, 3000 feet above sea level, on the edge of the cloud forest. The nearest village is Grano de Oro (Grain of Gold referring to coffee). On the way, we drive through the towns of La Suiza, Tuis, Jicotea, Tayutic and Turrialba, and cross a hanging bridge (built by the English in the early 1900's) over the Pacuare River. The valley is surrounded by the Cabeza Indian Reserve, which can be easily visited from our base at the Hacienda. Check out: www.haciendamoravia.com.

As there is no Internet at the Ranch, in case of an emergency, you can call the new Ranch phone: 506-2531-6060, or call the office: 506-2225-5128 or 506-2280-7842, or fax to the office: 506-2280-7839, and they will fax information to the ranch directly, or call Ana's cell phone 506-8865-1215.

Telephone: (Use prefix 011 when calling from USA)

Ana Soto: (011) 506-8865-1215

Johnny Soto: (011) 506-8384-0556

Ana Elena Soto: (011) 506-8307-8444

Hacienda Moravia Ranch (cell): (011) 506-8384-2999

Hacienda Moravia Office: (011) 506-2531-6060

San Jose Office Numbers - 506-2225-5128, 506-2280-7842

Fax: 506-2280-7839 (Office Work Hours 8a.m.-4p.m.)

Emails: cabecar@haciendamoravia.com or cabecar@racsa.co.cr

Website: <http://www.haciendamoravia.com>

RANCH LODGING:

Four dormitory-style bunk rooms (up to 4 people per room) with shared hot water bathrooms; six bunk rooms (up to 6 people per room) with private hot water bathrooms; a big balcony with beautiful views of the fields, mountains, and forest; a large dining room with traditional meals served buffet style; and a swimming pool! Rooms are cleaned daily with fresh towels provided. Camping on the lawn immediately outside is also available. Foam mattresses, linens, as well as the use of inside and outside bathrooms are provided to campers. People who prefer to tent will also have access to an indoor bunk for personal use. We will do our best to accommodate people's preferences of the above room choices on a first-come, first-serve basis. **The rooms at the Hacienda are not soundproofed; bring earplugs if you think you'll need them. The electrical outlets are the same as in the USA. Please follow special toilet paper instructions at Albergue Hacienda. Ask about special hot shower instructions. You may place your money and documents in a security envelope in the safe at the main desk.** MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE EXTRA DOLLARS OR COLONES TO PAY FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CASHBAR AT THE RANCH. CREDIT CARDS AND PERSONAL CHECKS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

We will offer private rooms for campers on a first come, first reserved basis. There will be an additional charge of \$80 for the deluxe private room and \$60 for a dormitory style private room. Private rooms may or may not be offered as their availability is dependent on the number of campers and the configuration of campers (individuals, couples, families, etc). We will do our best to honor those who make early requests for private accommodations.

FOOD:

Meals are served in a large dining room where Ana Soto and her skillful crew present three wonderfully healthy traditional Costa Rican meals every day. The meals, full of regional fresh fruits and vegetables, are served buffet style. Albergue Hacienda also has a Tilapia fish hatchery on its grounds. Coffee and tea are always available. Soda, bottled water, and beer are available at your expense at the cashbar/cantina both daily and nightly. We will provide a snack after the dance each night. Be sure to delineate special food requests on your registration form. Each of us keeps a tab for the week and settles up with the Ranch for bottled drinks and guided daytime activities at the end of our stay.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE EXTRA DOLLARS OR COLONES TO PAY FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CASHBAR AT THE RANCH. CREDIT CARDS AND PERSONAL CHECKS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Tips at the end of the stay for housekeeping, ranch guides and drivers are typically given.

LINENS AND LAUNDRY:

Bedding and towels are provided. Bring your own toiletries. You may do your own hand washing or you may pay for the ranch to do your laundry. It is helpful to bring a clothesline and clothespins if you plan to do your own wash.

CELL PHONES:

If you need to bring a cell phone with you, please check in to the reception/transmission issues specific to your cell phone company. Ana, our host, has a cell phone that she uses successfully from the Ranch, but we don't have details on what may be required to use your phone there.

ITEMS TO BRING ALONG:

- Hat
- Socks -- thin socks to wear under polypropylene socks for quick drying; you might want high socks to fold over the rubber boot.
- Raincoat or poncho
- Long sleeve tops, pullovers, light fleece for cooler weather, evenings and/or for river rafting

- Mid-calf rubber boots that you can comfortably hike in (we will have a chance to stop in Turrialba and get rubber boots) or a good pair of lightweight hiking boots that you do not mind getting muddy and washing off, with or without gaiters.
- Teva/waterproof sandals, water shoes, or reef shoes
- Dance shoes/dance wear
- Flashlight for walking at night
- Batteries for flashlights AND cameras
- Mud pants -- bring at least one pair of pants that you will hike or horseback ride in and that will remain muddy for most of the week
- Musical Instruments (we encourage you to do so)
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, bug repellent
- Binoculars
- Overnight Hike Participants (optional activity) -- tent, sleeping bag, flashlight, extra socks, power/energy bars
- 20-30 One-dollar bills for tipping (ranch housekeeping and naturalist staff, drivers, taxi)
- Dollars, Colones to pay for optional activities and cashbar/cantina during your stay. Credit cards and personal checks are not accepted at the Ranch.

A NOTE ON RUBBER BOOTS:

Hiking in the rain forest can be pretty damp and muddy, even during the dry season. Calf-high rubber boots are recommended. **Please bring your rubber boots from home.** Make sure they have a reliable grip hiking sole. Some hikers have found that wearing high socks with the boots helps to protect your shin from getting chafed. Many campers have worn sneakers or hiking boots that they do not mind getting wet and muddy. We have the opportunity to leave our boots at the Ranch for the Cabeca Indian people as a donation at the end of our stay. By doing so your luggage will be lighter on the way home!

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DANCING / ADVENTURING / CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

EVENING DANCES / MUSICAL EXPERIENCES:

Dancing to the beautiful beat of Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, Peter Davis and Harry Aceto, with special guest Andrew Van Norstrand, begins each evening at 7 p.m. The contradances are called in Spanish and in English by Kathy Anderson so that the Ticos (Costa Ricans' term to describe themselves) can join with us. Jay, Molly, Peter, Harry and Andrew, will also tuck in some Swing, Western Swing, Waltzes and a taste of Cajun and Country to broaden the dancing repertoire.

You might catch a Costa Rican Cultural Dance performance presentation at the Grano de Oro School. This year we will be scouting around for a traditional Latin music group to perform. Multiple opportunities exist for impromptu jamming, workshops, singing, extra squares and a waltz session. Depending on the composition of the group, other classes can be offered in ukulele, making a camper band, and other mini-lessons can be offered. A grand community concert will end our stay at the Ranch in La Galeria, where both campers and our very own musicians will perform. All of the above contribute to make the week a great spontaneous musical/dance experience.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES:

You are welcome to relax and enjoy the peaceful setting of the Ranch. However, aside from the nightly dancing, there are daily optional activities, all guided by our capable Costa Rican hosts and their crew. Ana and Johnny keep a weekly tab on each camper's costs (activities, drinks, etc.), which is tallied at the end of the week before leaving camp. Dollars and Colones are the preferred payment methods. Please do not plan to pay with credit card or personal checks.

- River rafting for the day is \$95.00/person. (This price is subject to change in 2012). River rafting on the Rio Pacuare will be available for the first 28 people on Thursday, March 1st, 2012.
- Horseback riding in the pastures, through the forest or into town
- Hiking along the Indian trails (2, 3, 4 hour and overnight hikes) with naturalist guides.
- Swimming in the nearby stream or Ranch pool
- Bird Watching
- Naturalist Guided Tours of the Ranch
- Mountain Biking
- CATIE Botanical Garden Tour will be available for the first 28 people on Thursday, March 1st, 2012.

BIRD WATCHING

We have a new ornithologist with more than 20 years of experience in birding in and out of Costa Rica to guide you in 2012. There are many opportunities to see and hear a variety of local and migratory birds while you are visiting the Ranch and the surrounding areas, as stated by one trip participant on her 2007 trip:

MY BIRDING EXPERIENCE AT PURA VIDA DANCE CAMP 2007

-- As seen by Kathy Stagl

Multiple bird songs woke me in the dark on my first morning at Alberugue Hacienda Moravia de Chirripo. I ventured outside to a misty morning with low visibility. The mist lifted rapidly and I wandered the grounds to find GOLDEN-HOODED ORIOLES, CLAY-COLORED ROBINS, BLUEGRAY TANAGERS, YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUITS, RUFOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRDS and several Warbler species among other birds. SOCIAL and COMMON TODDY FLYCATCHERS were plentiful. After that first morning it became my habit to get up early and search for the birds. It was a spiritual experience with the quiet only interrupted by birdsongs--no traffic or other human generated noise.

Ana Soto had been helpful in locating a local birding guide who came one evening and filled me in on which birds I could expect to see. He was very talented at mimicking birdcalls and located the birds by their songs and chip notes. He pointed out that some of our North American species were down in Costa Rica on vacation. His English was limited making communication difficult for this non-Spanish speaking American. His knowledge of the local birds and ability to locate them compensated for our language incompatibility. We were able to communicate in the language of birders.

On Friday I rose early to join Bernardo and a group of interested participants for a hike up to the rainforest passing the pastures where he pointed out many species of birds. At the edge of the forest we heard the loud snapping sounds of the WHITE-COLLARED MANAKINS but were not able to see this petite elusive bird. We did see several OROPENDULAS and BROWN JAYS. It was nice to hear the EASTERN MEADOWLARKS singing in the pastures.

A late afternoon walk took us through a different part of the forest. German, who knew the trails as well as the birds, joined us on the afternoon walk. While the hiking was muddy and at times strenuous, the experience was well worth it. Due to the density of the rainforest at times it was difficult to see some of the birds Bernardo located.

On my own I took several early morning walks. I scanned the close pastures and pond as well taking some walks down the road toward town. I was rewarded with a number of species, including a sneak preview of our some of North American warbler migrants.

My only disappointments were not having time to do more birding and the fact that it was such a long trek to get to the forest. This beautiful area is an excellent place to explore for anyone interested birding the Central Valley. Bernardo will be doing a bird survey of the Hacienda so future participants may have an even better birding experience.

RIVER RAFTING TRIP ON THE RIO PACUARE:

The first 28 participants to sign up for River Rafting may experience the lovely Rio Pacuare. The daylong trip includes transportation and a superb lunch on the river and costs \$95.00 per person (subject to change in 2012). You can pay with credit card or you can be prepared to have exact cash for the trip. The Rio Pacuare, is situated near Turrialba, and is one of the world's best river rafting centers. With Class II-IV rapids, mostly class III; you will experience the natural beauty and breathtaking scenery, water life and flora of the Rio Pacuare. Prepare to paddle through the spectacular gorge with amazing rapids, waterfalls, bird life, butterflies and flowers extraordinaire. River Rafterers will leave the Ranch the morning of March 1st and will return to Alajuela for our final evening together. Campers from previous years suggested that the river rafterers return to Alajuela on the last night to lessen the extra transport back to the Ranch. Rafterers' luggage will be taken back to Alajuela for them.

In previous years there has been a minimum number of river rafterers needed for the trip to happen. **Please notify us of your interest in this day trip on your registration form.** The trip is open to everyone. We have an early morning goodbye breakfast on the last day at the Ranch, and river rafterers will be returned to Alajuela- Hotel La Guaria Inn and Suites at around 8 pm. Items you may want to pack for the rafting trip include a copy of passport, waterproof camera, swimsuit or shorts, glasses-holder, T-shirt or long sleeve rafting shirt for sun protection (fleece/polypropylene), long

shorts, water shoes or water sandals (tevas), sunscreen lotion for face only, towel, extra dry clothes for the way back, light sweater or jacket, socks, pair of dry shoes. For more information, go to <http://www.rainforesttours.com/pacuare.htm>

OTHER POSSIBLE DAYTIME ACTIVITIES AT THE RANCH:

- Beading (with natural seeds, called “Lagrimas de San Pedro”- Tears of St. Peter)
- Spanish lessons
- Cooking lessons - learn how to make “queso blanco”
- Indian handcrafts
- Group puzzle
- An afternoon session of square dancing with Kathy, waltz and couple dancing
- Impromptu jam sessions and singing
- Relaxing with a book or chess game
- Casual walk to Grano de Oro
- Listening to a speaker on the traditions and customs of the Cabeca Indians.
- Mini lessons, ukulele classes, camper band

Campers can request activities of interest. The staff of Albergue Hacienda will try and accommodate your requests.

LEARNING ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS CABECA INDIAN COMMUNITY:

Connecting with the cultures of the Costa Ricans and the Cabeca communities is as integral to the experience as the dancing and the adventures of the natural world. We are privileged to know Ana and Johnny Soto who have been working to provide Cabeca Indian schools with educational and medical supplies and human services. We will have the opportunity to learn about the indigenous people, their customs, traditions, and their methods of curing and healing. We were delighted to have the privilege to hear a three-hour talk given by the local Shaman in 2008.

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT:

The social action project of the Pura Vida Dance Camp 2012 is a voluntary project. You are not obligated to participate. In previous years, campers have brought school supplies, art supplies, backpacks, clothing, sports equipment, environmental exploration boxes, musical instruments, Spanish picture books and dental supplies to the Cabeca community. Many campers leave their rubber boots for the Cabeca people.

This year, in 2012, the Costa Rican teachers for the Cabeca people suggested that we help the Indian School by bringing cloth backpacks and school supplies (primary paper with lines, plain paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, colored pencils, erasers, sharpeners, crayons, markers, watercolors, oil pastels, scissors, construction paper, etc.). Dry markers and chalk for their new chalkboards are also needed. Participants have helped by giving a donation to assist with building improvements for two Cabeca schools: Tsipiri-Nak, and the Grano de Oro School. Feel free to bring any of the above items or donate to the building fund at the trip's end. All will be most appreciated by the Cabeca people.

Each year we hike to the school and spend some time with the teachers and students. We give our gifts to them. We sing, dance and draw together. The students always appreciate a sweet treat from the campers. It is tradition to bring “dulces” (sweets). To remain healthy, we have brought granola bars, raisins and nuts in recent years to share. You can feel free to bring some of these “dulces” as well.

In 2007, we participated in an Art Exchange with the World Awareness Children’s Museum in Glens Falls, New York. The Cabeca children drew pictures that were brought back to the museum. Pictures from children in the United States were left for the Cabeca students. One year the students drew a large, detailed and descriptive picture of their day, from early morning to bedtime and gave it to us.

Some years we have the opportunity to visit a home of one of the Cabeca families. We hike to the Cabeca home and visit with the family. We learn about their customs and values. It has always been a very special experience to visit the Cabeca homes of Paco or Ricardo in past years.

ABOUT COSTA RICA

CLIMATE:

Costa Rica really has two seasons: a green or rainy season that runs from May to November and a dry season that begins in December and ends in April. Lighter mists or light rains --“pelo del gato”-- can and do occur in February and

March. The average temperature in the Central Valley is 72 degrees Fahrenheit, while on the coast and at the beaches it ranges from 70 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. At the ranch it can get cool in the evenings or after a light rain.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT COSTA RICA:

Population: 4 million
National Territory: 31,682 square miles
Capital: San Jose
Official language: Spanish
Money: Colon (named after Christopher Columbus)
Official Religion: Catholic (with freedom of expression of other beliefs)
Political System: Democracy
Electricity: 110 volts / 60 cycles / AC
National Bird: Yiguirro (Turdus grayi)
National Flower: Purple Guaria Orchid (Cattleya skinneri)
National Tree: Guanacaste (Enterolobium cyclocarpum)
Military: None

REGISTRATION / CANCELLATION POLICY:

Please print out a **separate form from our web site for each participant**. Fill in your information and enclose a check for \$275.00 deposit per person, **payable to Pura Vida Dance Camp**. Full fee of \$1050.00 per Adult and/or \$829.50/Child 12 and under, is **due by January 15, 2012**. Cancellation policy: \$100.00 is non-refundable after January 15, 2012; full fee is non-refundable after January 22, 2012. You may wish to consider obtaining Trip Cancellation Insurance to protect your investment in the event that you must cancel after January 22, 2012. When your deposit is received you will get a letter of confirmation in the mail. We recommend that you make a personal copy of the Camp Information document to refer to as needed.

Enclosed in the confirmation letter will be a brochure of Albergue Hacienda where we will be staying for 5 days and 5 nights; a card for Hotel La Guaria Inn and Suites -- the Inn we will be staying in during our time in Alajuela (the nights of Friday, February 24 and Thursday, March 1st); and postcards and posters. Please make the enclosed postcards and posters available to folks at your local dances.. We think that the Contradance Adventure in Costa Rica appeals to anyone interested in nature, culture and contradancing. We appreciate your help in spreading the word about this wonderful experience in Costa Rica. If you have other information that you feel is worthwhile for the group to have, please feel free to send it to me and I will distribute it to our group.

REMINDER LIST:

- 1) Make sure that you have a copy of the Camper Information and especially the emergency numbers while you travel to Costa Rica.
- 2) Review "Items to Bring."
- 3) Remember to bring dollar bills and cash or colones to pay for optional activities/cantina beverages, rafting, tips. River rafting is the only activity that you can pay for with a credit card.
- 4) Bring some snacks, power bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc.

Thank you,
Beverly Lazar Davis and Casey Carr

Contacts:

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