



## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is Pura Vida?** It means Pure Life in Spanish. The Costa Rican's use this as a greeting and as a saying in their daily life when expressing how wonderful and enjoyable the simple pleasures of life are. Pura Vida is the essence of living in the moment.

**Should I drive after dark?** Not to your next location. But, if you drive to Fortuna in the day, you should be able to find your way back after dark. It can be foggy, watch for people and cattle in the road. Do not come up the GREEN route from Fortuna at night or cross the bridge if there is water running over the top.

**Do I really need a guide?** If you can afford a guide, it is best to have a guide. It is the difference between hiking with your eyes open or your eyes closed. At least hire a guide for your first hike, that way you will be more in tune to your surroundings on subsequent hikes if you venture out alone.

**Is the cow I'm milking a boy or a girl? Does it hurt?** Only girl cows give milk. It does not hurt the cow.

**Which hot spring do you recommend?** See the comparison sheet we created. Most people spend 2 hours maximum at any given hot spring, then they are hot. Many guests will opt for the free hot river. The location is on our area map. The only one that requires reservations is Eco Termales. Do not make reservations or pay in advance for other ones, they will not give a refund nor limit the number of guests, so reservations are not necessary. This includes Tabacon.

**I have ants in my cabin; can you take care of that?** Don't leave any food out. It is the tropics. If we used enough chemicals to get rid of the ants you would also be dead.

**Why don't you have Internet, TV or A/C in the rooms?** We are a retreat; in keeping with that atmosphere we opted to minimize the interference from the outside world. Take some time to read, play board games, talk to each other, take a nap, day dream...reconnect with one another and nature. Look up, Listen, feel, and absorb your surroundings see the 360 degree view.

**Is the water safe to drink?** Yes, it comes from a mountain spring and is our public water system and tested for quality on a regular basis.

**What is the best way to get there?** See the LOCATION tab on our website. 80% of our guests rent a car. If you don't want to rent a car, we can provide the transportation service. Cars and gas in Costa Rica are expensive, transportation expenses will be a big part of your travel budget.

**Are the roads safe to drive on?** Yes, they are safe. But, you have to drive differently, take your time. Know that you can only go about 30 miles in a hour and that's ok.

**How far are you from the nearest town?** Our little town of Monterrey is 3 km away. La Fortuna is 8 km away on a gravel/rock road.

**Do I need to plan my activities in advance?** If you want guide service (for whatever reason), horseback riding, Proyecto Asis, Tico Farm or Cowboy for a Day we like to know in advance, if possible, so we can plan resources accordingly. Commercial tours (zipline, rafting, canyoning) can be arranged once you get here. It is best **not** to reserve those in advance, it is difficult to cancel and get a refund. People commonly change their minds and the weather may play a factor. Please do not plan your day down to the 15 minute mark, you will just be frustrated. Allow time to sit on your porch, play in the river and take a nap.

**How far are you from the nearest store?** There is a small market within walking distance. 500 meters. They do not have beer or liquor. Duty free at the SJO or LIR airport are good places to pick up liquor.

**What foods do you produce on the property?** Chicken, eggs, some pork, some beef, some cheese, milk, buttermilk, butter, ice cream, some fruits, some vegetables. Our main supplier of fruit and vegetables goes to the farmers market for us and delivers the produce here.

**Meals** All of the food served at the Lava Lizard, is made to order. We need to know what you would like in advance if you want a choice of what to eat, otherwise we will serve you Option #1 on the daily menu by default. Once you make your choice, we ask that you not change your mind at the dinner table.

**Where is the nearest ATM?** In Monterrey. It gives USD or Colones. It is around 500 colones to \$1.

**Do I need to change money?** No. Get out some colones from an ATM once you get here. Most places take USD and give change in colones.

**Laundry:** We can do laundry for you for \$10/load.

**How far are you from the nearest off site restaurant?** 3km.

**Tippling:** We mention this only because we are always asked this question. Most people will tip \$10/\$20/guide/family for day trips or horseback riding. Drivers \$10-\$20/day. For guides, masseurs, drivers pay at the point of service, if possible. Staff tips at Leaves and Lizards are pooled. Administrative services, Housekeeping, restaurant staff, grounds keepers, barn managers all share a portion of the tips. So, even the behind the scenes people are recognized for doing a good job. We recommend 20% of your restaurant bill to cover all the staff. Please pay cash for tips at check out.

**What are the dogs names:** Golden Retriever is Sam he is 7-10 years old, Will Smith 'Willie' is 2 and Tootsie, she was born July 2015.

**How did you FIND this place?** It found us. Friends of our showed us the farm and we just knew it was the place. We bought it the same day in April 2006. It was a working dairy farm. 26 acres divided into 30 pastures. We planted over 4000 trees and built it up from scratch.

**How long have you been here?** We opened in Jan. 2007.

**Where did you come from?** Steve grew up in Florida and Alabama and Debbie grew up in Minnesota. We moved here from Sarasota, Florida in Feb. 2006.

**What is Eponicity?** Eponicity is a division of Leaves and Lizards Arenal Volcano Cabin Retreat dedicated to Eponaquest equine assisted learning retreats. Eponicity combines the words 'EQUINE' 'SYNCHRONICITY' and 'INFINITY'. It symbolizes the synchronicity of our hearts and what we can learn about ourselves from our horses is infinite.

**How did you get the name Leaves and Lizards?** LEAVES is a combination of both of our last names, and LIZARDS come from a Jimmy Buffet song called 'Off to See the Lizard' and that is a song about following your dreams even if people think you are crazy.

**What are the things at Leaves and Lizards that are a must do?** We are known for our horseback riding experiences. We operate Eponaquest Equine Facilitated Learning workshops for individuals, corporate groups and families. Our horses have special training in natural horsemanship. We take time before your first ride to introduce you to your horse- sometimes your horse chooses you! They don't speak 'Spanish' or 'English', but they speak 'Horse', and we help you connect with your horse on a meaningful level. Many people have profound experiences when they discover what their horse thinks about them!

- Cultural Experiences are especially memorable, spending the day with our friends at their farm are ways to immerse yourself in the culture.
- Our private guides services. Including expert birding guides.
- The ziplines and canyoning in this area are excellent.
- Cano Negro Jungle River Trip
- Hiking at the base of the Arenal Volcano.
- What we call 'Bucket List' hikes in the area are Cerro Chato and Rio Celeste at Tenorio National Park.

**Can I go rafting, ziplining, horseback riding and the hot springs in one day?** No. The biggest mistake people make is over planning and trying to fit 5 days' of activities in one or two days. Enjoy the moments of each day. That is the essence of Pura Vida.

**What should I wear horseback riding?** Long pants and closed toed shoes.

**Wow! That is a bumpy road!** Yes, it is. It is better in the rainy season, softer. It keeps out the riff raff.

**What made you decide to move to Costa Rica?** Why not? We could always go back and do what we did before. Steve as a mechanic and in the Air Force for 12 years and Debbie was a NICU Nurse for many years. 'Life is either a daring adventure, or it is nothing'. – Helen Keller.

**Do your kids come to visit often?** Once or twice a year.

**How often do you go to the States?** Once or twice a year.

**What do you miss about living in the USA?** At first we did miss a few things, like bagels and grits. But now, nothing.

**Where do you go on vacation?** Various places, during our slow season. Our management staff is here when we are gone. We take minimal reservations during that time.

