

## **Introduction:**

Below you will find a general overview of the logistics you need to be aware of as you plan your travel to Costa Rica. Please note that the statements made herein about schedules and flows may change as specific logistics are confirmed closer to the start of the course. These updates, as well as 2009 specific logistical information regarding in-country flights, ground transportation, lodging before, during and after the course, etc. will be sent to you around the close of registration. At this time you will also receive a list of all course registrants so you can start communicating with each other about sharing rides and/or rooms to and from Costa Rica.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office at [workshops@biomimicryguild.com](mailto:workshops@biomimicryguild.com) or +1 406-495-1858.

## **By The Close of Registration**

Tuition must be paid in full by this date. Likewise, we will need your specific logistical information including your flight information, diet preferences, background information, etc. To gather this information, when you send in your \$500 deposit we will give you a form to fill out and submit.

## **Arriving in San Jose**

You are responsible for booking and paying for your flight into San Jose and all ground transportation before and after the official start of the course.

We recommend arriving sometime the day before the start of the course in order to have a night of rest before a week of activity. We will reserve a block of double occupancy rooms for the group at a local hotel in San Jose within close proximity to the airport. You are not required to stay at this hotel, but the cost is included in your registration. If you choose to stay elsewhere, or want a private room, it is an additional cost to you and you must let us know your intention as soon as possible.

## **First Day of the Course – Transport from San Jose to La Cusinga**

- For those staying at the group hotel or meeting us there, a hired bus will pick us up and transport us to the airport around 7:30 AM. If, for some reason, you miss the bus, you will need to take a taxi or hotel shuttle to the airport.
- Because of our group size, we have to reserve seats on multiple flights to Palmar Sur (in-country planes are very small!). You will receive detailed information about which flight you are on, as well as your

flight companions. It is your responsibility to make sure you get on the right plane at the right time.

- You will need a piece of ID, but the tickets are electronic so there's no need to worry about getting a pre-issued ticket. Because the planes are so small, there is a strict baggage policy of 27 lbs of luggage per person (including your carry-on). There is a charge of \$1.00 per extra pound (as of Fall, 2008), which is subject to space, so pack lightly. They are very strict! Also, if you weigh over 185 lbs **CONTACT THE COURSE ORGANIZER IMMEDIATELY** as special arrangements must be made.
- Vans will meet us at the airport in Palmar Sur and take us to La Cusinga Lodge, arriving there in the early afternoon.

### **La Cusinga**

- Lodging at La Cusinga will be double occupancy for most, except for those who requested a single room (a \$350 surcharge) and for students who will stay in the large bunk house—summer camp style! Each cabin (and bunkhouse) has its own bathroom and all linens are provided (except beach towels).
- All meals are included in your registration, as well as snacks of fruit between meals. Ice tea and lemonade are always available. The food is delicious, organic, locally-grown native Costa Rican fare. We have contracted with La Cusinga to provide a vegetarian option at every meal with no surcharge. Please let us know if you will be partaking in this option, so that enough vegetarian plates can be prepared for each meal. If you have dietary needs other than vegetarian (i.e. vegan, allergies, etc), we must inform the lodge right away and there is a \$10/day charge (total \$60) payable up front to the Biomimicry Guild.

### **Tours and Day Trips**

- As part of our course itinerary, we will enjoy a snorkel tour of a coral reef, a kayak tour of a mangrove, and a hike through the paramo cloud forest. The costs of these tours are included in the course fee and all equipment is provided.
- We will also take many day trips in the jungle around the Lodge including day hikes on area trails, intertidal exploration, and night walks.
- Note that these activities require moderate physical fitness and the ability to swim, walk moderate distances over uneven and sometimes steep terrain, and withstand periods of sun exposure (which we try to keep as short as possible). Personal flotation devices are always provided for water activities and uneven terrain is often due to roots, logs, rocks and other obstacles in pathways. Please inform us immediately if you do not feel physically apt for these activities

## Daily Itinerary

Please note that the following itinerary is tentative and will likely change between now and the course. However, it does provide a fairly accurate demonstration of daily activities and course load. Be aware that this is an intense, information dense course, especially in the first two and half days. We provide you with regular breaks and free time to help moderate the intensity and encourage you to take every opportunity to explore on your own, journal, nap, stretch, swim in the warm ocean water, and otherwise relax during free time.

		<b>MORNING (8:00 – 11:30)</b>		<b>AFTERNOON (1:00 – 4:00)</b>		<b>EVENING (7:30 – 9:00)</b>
Day 1	<b>SUNRISE 5:45 AM</b> <b>BREAKFAST 6:30 – 7:30</b>	Transport to La Cusinga Arrival, get settled and explore on own	<b>LUNCH 11:30 – 12:30</b>	Welcome, Introductions Course overview Getting Oriented to Place	<b>SUNSET 5:45 PM</b> <b>DINNER 6:00 – 7:30</b>	Slide Presentation: General Overview of Biomimicry
Day 2		Skills and Etiquette for Interacting with Nature <i>Quieting and Listening</i> Finding Teachers		Intro to Methodology: How does nature...? Biologizing Challenges Costa Rican Teachers		Night Walk (bring a flashlight!) (LED's are not suitable for the night walk)
Day 3		Snorkeling @ 7 am Kayaking @ 7 am		Identifying challenges— functions, habitat conditions		Intro to Group Challenges Intro to Life's Principles
Day 4		Nature's Intertidal Teachers Swimming, Free-time		Life's Principles Field Trip Group Work		The Nature of Things: Biomimicry CBC Broadcast, part I Feedback Loops Group Work
Day 5		Snorkeling @ 7 am Kayaking @ 7 am		Group Work Questions and Tangents		Group Work (optional) The Nature of Things: Part II
Day 6		Sunrise Bird Walk 5:30 AM Deepening the Design with Life's Principles Group Work		Quieting and Listening Revisited Guest Lectures Group Work		Biomimicry Community Resources
Day 7		Group Work		Project Presentations		Party
Day 8		Closing (7:00 – 7:30) Load Buses 7:30 Depart 8:00 for Cerro Cloud Forest		Feedback Loops Field trip at Cerro Cloud Forest, Arrival in San Jose around 6:30 PM		Dinner in San Jose

*Additional topics that often emerge throughout the course:*

- Shallow versus deep biomimicry
- Ethics
- Context
- Redesign versus new design
- Natural models applied to products
- Sustainability
- Ecosystem applications
- Bio~what?
- Bio~language
- Darwin's perspective versus others

### **Last Day of the Course – Transport from La Cusinga to San Jose**

- We will enjoy an early breakfast and closing ceremony then depart La Cusinga on a charter bus, stopping at Cerro de la Muerte Biological Station en route to San Jose.
- At Cerro de la Muerte Biological Station, we will eat lunch and go on a paramo hike. Note: the temperatures are cool at 12,000 feet elevation (50° F/10°C), so bring a jacket.
- We'll depart Cerro around 2:30-3:00 to arrive in San Jose around 6:00 pm.
- We will reserve another block of rooms at a local hotel, also included in the cost of registration.
- We will go out to dinner at a "real" restaurant in San Jose as final gathering. Please let me know if you DO NOT intend to join us for dinner so we can make an accurate reservation.
- If you have chosen to stay in Southern Costa Rica after the course, we will part ways after our closing following breakfast.

### **Additional Logistics**

- To call or fax to Costa Rica from the U.S., dial 011-506-###-####.
- To call the U.S. from Costa Rica, dial 001-area code-###-####.
- To call any location in Costa Rica from Costa Rica, just dial the number (###-####) without the country code (506).
- When you are in Costa Rica, you can dial: 911 for emergencies, 113 for information, and 175 to make international collect calls.
- The Guild will rent a cell phone for the week we are in Costa Rica for everyone on the course to use. The cost is about \$1/minute for international calls. You will be responsible for paying for the minutes you use on the phone based on an honor system. At this moment, La Cusinga does not have a landline for our use. There is also a pay phone in town (a 5 minute taxi ride), which will except international

calling cards as well as the Costa Rican per minute international cards (which seem to be the best option). These can be purchased in the Mercado next to the phone. In the same market area, there is an internet café with per minute rental of computers.

- There is no internet access at La Cusinga. Don't panic! You will have at least one opportunity to go to the internet café in town to check email and get your 'www' fix.
- We've budgeted in gratuity for all our activities and travels *except* services at La Cusinga. Consider bringing a little extra cash to donate to Geinier and his staff at the end of the course. Standard donations are \$20 - \$40 per person and we'll pass a hat at the end of the course.
- There is a \$26 USD departure tax when we leave Costa Rica (as of Sept 2008). You are responsible for paying this fee, which we suggest paying in **cash** (USD or colones) at the ticket counter in the San Juan International Airport. You may also pay with a credit card, but there is a surcharge.
- There are no mandatory vaccinations in order to travel to Costa Rica. There are some that the CDC recommends (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/camerica.htm>) for certain locations in Costa Rica. Costa Rica has a top-notch medical system, so anything that could come up can be treated there. Bacterial recolonization is a common occurrence for newcomers from the temperate zone. This just means a bit of diarrhea for a few days. The important thing is to communicate with us about what is going on with you so we make sure you are drinking enough water and electrolytes to compensate. There are two supplements that worked well for minor discomforts: Fast GI is a product that helps the gut re-establish bacterial balance (most any pro-biotic will do the trick) and Emergen-C is an electrolyte product that can help your equilibrium if you do happen to get a case of the runs. You can find these or similar products at a health food store.
- We will be right on the cusp of the dry season transitioning into the wet season. Expect hot and more dry than wet. However, be prepared for more wet than dry. The climate is unpredictable these days. If/when it rains, it will probably only be in the afternoons. But, of course, be flexible and plan for anything.
- The area we will be in is cash-based and most places do not accept credit cards or traveler's checks. If you plan to do any exploring on

your own, please keep this in mind. Also plan on having enough cash for gratuity (optional) and the departure tax.

- Electrical plug-ins are the same in Costa Rica as they are in the US. NOTE: La Cusinga is powered by the sun and the river, so they discourage hair-dryers because they are an intense draw on the system and can sometimes overload it. With the humidity, your hair's not going to be dry for long, anyway.
- Exchange money at the airport when you get off the plane. You can also change money at any bank if you get in during business hours; however, banks are not always open or convenient. Bank hours are usually M-F 9am-5pm and banks in San Jose are often open Saturdays 9am-12pm. You will need to show your passport. Also, note that the conversion rate is almost always better at a bank than the airport. The local currency is Colones.
- Book your flight into Costa Rica to the San Jose International Airport, code SJO (also known as Costa Rica International Airport Juan Santamaria). If you are a foreign national (even if you have been living in the US for many years), [click here](#) to determine whether or not you will need a visa to travel to Costa Rica. If you do, count on it taking a MINIMUM of 8-12 weeks to complete the process, probably more. We cannot stress enough how important it is to start the process early and to keep on top of it.

### **What to Bring (not a complete list, but a list of the not necessarily obvious!)**

- Make sure you have a current passport that does not expire before March 1st!! Also, if you are not a US citizen, you may need to get a VISA!
- International calling card.
- At least 2 flashlights. Ideally, one would be a headlamp for night walks. Note: LED flashlights are not recommended for night walks—they are usually not strong enough to detect the night-shine from animals' eyes.
- Your favorite drawing/sketching supplies. There will be an involved design exercise during the workshop and while we supply you with ample Crayola markers, you may enjoy having your favorite tools on hand.
- A journal—either a much loved and often used one or a special new one. We'll be facilitating your education as a naturalist throughout the course and you may feel inspired to take notes, make sketches, and maybe even write a poem.

- Umbrella. It rains a lot in the tropics, yet it is also warm and humid so it is uncomfortable to wear raingear as it often gets wetter on the inside because of sweat. Umbrellas are the weapon of choice for most outdoorsy people there.
- Empty water bottle (to get through security). La Cusinga will always have water and juice available, but managing cups and keeping track of one's own can be a hassle. Plus, it's nice to bring water along for field trips.
- Bug spray. There are mostly mosquitoes and black flies here, which come out at night and are active in the inner parts of the forest during the day.
- Sunscreen. You won't need it when we are in the forest because the canopy cover is dense, but for those times when we are on the beach, snorkeling, kayaking, or otherwise exposed to the sun, it is absolutely necessary—it only take a few minutes to burn in the tropics!
- Hat. One with a full brim is easiest for keeping the sun off your ears and neck as well.
- Swimsuit for swimming, plus a beach towel (the lodge does not provide these).
- Day pack for carrying around said flashlight, umbrella, journal, sun screen, etc.
- Field pants are nice for hiking because they keep the bushes and bugs off your legs. Synthetic material is better than cotton because it dries fast, breathes easier, and is more comfortable.
- One sweater and one pair of long pants in case it gets chilly (and it will in the paramo).
- Other clothes that are comfortable for you in hot (about 70-90 degrees F) humid (almost 100%) conditions. Tank tops, light shorts (synthetic), etc. Think light and airy casual clothes.
- Binoculars, if you have them, are advisable especially for observing the abundant birds (humpback whales will be migrating near La Cusinga during our stay and it's possible to see them if they come in the bay
- Lightweight hiking shoes or sturdy sneakers that you don't mind getting dirty. Closed-toed shoes are mandatory for the night walk!
- Shoes that can get wet for our tidal explorations (sturdy sandals would work well).
- Camera (with extra film if you haven't gone to digital!)
- Any medications/supplements you might need.

## Book and Internet Resources

*"Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature"* by Janine Benyus is required reading prior to the start of the course. Additional texts will be provided as needed. Likewise, there is a selection of field guides available for our use at the lodge, but if you would like to purchase your own guides, here is what we recommend.

### *General Natural History Field Guides*

- Field Guide to the Wildlife of Costa Rica, Carrol Henderson
- Travelers' Wildlife Guides: Costa Rica, Les Beletsky

### *Specific Field Guides*

- A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica, Gary Stiles and Alexander Skutch
- The Natural History of Costa Rican Mammals of Costa Rica, Mark Wainwright
- A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Costa Rica, Twan Leenders

### *General Reference for Tropical Rainforests*

- Tropical Nature, Adrian Forsyth and Ken Miyata (this is a good general read)
- Neotropical Companion, John Kricher (this one is a bit more technical)

### *General Travel Guides for Costa Rica*

- The New Key to Costa Rica, Beatrice Blake
- Lonely Planet Costa Rica, Carolina Miranda and Paige Penland
- Lonely Planet Costa Rica Spanish Phrasebook, Thomas Kohnstamm (for a really good laugh and some useful phrases in everyday situations)

### *General Websites with Costa Rica Information and Links*

- <http://www.1costaricalink.com>
- <http://www.dominical.biz/links>

