

7 Tips for your Costa Rica Photo Tour

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1) Be ready for darker environments.

Tropical jungles are lush and full of life, but they can also be pretty dark. The high ISO capabilities of today's cameras go a long way towards addressing this; however, I advise you to be on good terms with your flash. Learn how to change your flash compensation. A flash extender and off camera flash bracket are good ideas also.

2) Grab your gimbal.

If weight's an issue and you're wondering which tripod head to pack, bring your gimbal rather than your ball head. Costa Rica's loaded with wildlife & ball heads just don't work as well with heavy, super-telephoto lenses.

3) Watch for the Steamy Camera Blues.

Some lodges in Costa Rica now have A/C. If your room does, keep in mind that when you go outside with your camera into the hot & steamy air, your lens may fog up inside. Keeping your gear in a bag and not setting the A/C too low helps avoid this.

4) Mind your macro.

The birds and monkeys in Costa Rica are a photographer's delight, but there is also a world of wonder at your feet. Poison dart frogs, red-eyed tree frogs, butterflies, flowers, bizarre & colorful insects -- the list goes on! Pack a macro lens or at least a close-focusing telephoto. such as the Canon 100-400mm Mk. II.

5) Prepare for rain.

Most of Costa Rica is rain forest or cloud forest. No matter when you go, there's a good chance you'll experience a sudden storm, possibly even when you're out in the field with your gear. For that reason, I always bring along black garbage bags. Rain covers for your gear work great, but for the price of one I can buy *lots* garbage bags. Besides, garbage bags are not only cheap, but you'll discover how many other uses for them – e.g., use your former rain cover (a.k.a. *garbage bag*) to pack home your muddy shoes.

6) Quick drying clothes are best.

Cotton might keep you cool, but in super-humid ambient air it won't dry for a day or two if you get caught in a rain storm or want to hand wash it. Today's quick-drying clothes ("wickable") make great choices for tropical travel. They're lightweight & dry speedy. This goes for socks & underwear, too.

7) Dont forget a light jacket.

Yes, Costa Rica is a tropical country; however, if you're after Resplendent Quetzales and other cloud-forest specialties it'll be chilly. Cloud forests are rarely sunny & the altitude can mean temps in the 50's. Add the dampness of the mist and you'll be glad you brought a light jacket to keep you warm! If you can find one that's also water resistant that's even better!

Award-winning photographer, Jeff Parker leads photo tours & workshops for the naturally curious. Explore in Focus with him in Costa Rica & throughout the rest of Latin America.

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