

**Welcome to Norma's!**

**A Very Quick Guide Around!**

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- II. Getting to Alajuela
- III. Getting to San Jose
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## **I. Around La Garita**

### **Zoo Ave:**

In La Garita, there are many viveros and Zoo Ave is also a hit with visitors! Make a right out of Norma's and travel straight to see viveros and Zoo Ave.

Visit them online here: <https://www.facebook.com/zooave>

Zoo Ave's number: 2-433 8989

### **Pizza Delivery:**

La Estacion in Turrucares, open from 11-11

Number: 2-487 7021

Tell them to come to Villas Norma.

### **Taxi:**

Jorge: 88147575

**Fiesta Casino across from the airport is happening on Saturdays and ladies drink free Mondays!**

### **Personal Yoga classes:**

Tamara Chavarria Alvarez

8338 3003

Anusara, Iyengar, Asthanga and Hatha

## **Living here permanently? Need a Real Estate Agent?**

We have a relationship with Mercedes Castro of First Realty:

Cell: 506-8374-5050

Email: [Mercedes@firstrealtyCR.com](mailto:Mercedes@firstrealtyCR.com)

### **Bus:**

Walk out the gate or make a right and walk to the bus stop in front of the soccer field. If you take one of the smaller buses (they look a bit like schoolbuses), they are the Turrucares local buses. They run from Alajuela to Turrucares.

## II. Getting to Alajuela

### Bus:

Walk out the gate, make a right (the direction towards the airport) and walk to the bus stop in front of the soccer field. If you take one of the smaller buses (they look a bit like schoolbuses), they are the Turrucares local buses. They run from Alajuela to Turrucares.

Turrucares buses have a little map on the side of them.

You can also take the larger COOPETRANSATENAS buses to Alajuela. They are the larger, more modern looking buses with COOPETRANSATENAS on the side. These will cost more. Look at the front to see if the bus is going to Alajuela or San Jose. You want the one that goes to Alajuela. The buses run about every hour.

For the most up to date bus schedules, check out this site:

<http://thebusschedule.com/cr/>

### **III. Getting to San Jose**

You can wait in front of the soccer field for the San Jose buses, too! They also say COOPETRANSATENAS on the side, and the front will say SAN JOSE. The ride is about 40 minutes. You will probably want to take the bus to the last stop, to the Coca Cola (major bus terminal). You will know when you're in the Coca Cola when you see SAN JUAN DE DIOS hospital. It's a large, yellow building that will be on your right when you turn into San Jose.

When you get out at the last stop (everyone will get off), you will be in the major bus terminal. There's a market and lots to buy! The ride costs almost 1000 colones as of 7/2014.

From the Coca Cola, it's a short walk to any of these awesome places, but you can also take a red taxi.

#### **Short Walk in San Jose:**

National Theatre: <http://www.teatronacional.go.cr/>

Museum of Gold: <http://www.museosdelbancocentral.org/esp/>

Chinatown

La Sabana (Central Park of San Jose):

El Museo de Arte Costarricense (native art): <http://www.musarco.go.cr/>

## **A little far to walk, but good for a taxi ride:**

Libros Duluoz, independent bookstore selling only indie Spanish authors:

<https://www.facebook.com/libros.duluoz>

San Pedro, a town outside of San Jose --- Since the University is there, there's a lot of food, art, and shopping!

## **Returning to Norma's from San Jose:**

If you're in San Jose, you can take the bus to Atenas and it will drop you off in front of the La Garita soccer field. Tip: when you come back from San Jose, sit on the left side of the bus. This will make it easy to look out the window and see the soccer field. Get ready to get off once you see the church!

For bus schedules:

<http://thebusschedule.com/cr/>

## IV. Bus Travel in Costa Rica

Buses in Costa Rica charge based on **distance**. When you're on the bus that comes from Atenas and goes to Alajuela, it's going to charge you as though you're coming all the way from Atenas. That's why it's cheaper to take the local bus. However, if you're going all the way to San Jose, it makes sense to take that Atenas bus.

You'll notice some buses are very cheap, and that's because they're not going very far. For example, to take a bus from the Coca Cola to San Pedro (University of Costa Rica) is very inexpensive.

Costa Rican bus terminals **are not usually marked with large signs, so be sure to ask the bus driver**. Also, if you see little **black bars on the sides of the stairs**, be sure to stay outside of those until you're sure you want to get on the bus. Those bars count the number of people who come on the bus, so once you get on, the driver will ask you to pay. If you don't, the driver has to make up the difference. **Ask from outside the bus!**

Buses in Costa Rica are run by the towns that the bus services. For this reason, some buses are nicer than others . . . it solely depends on how much money that company has invested in seating, maps, schedules, etc. There is not one universal bus company. The bus will give



you change! You don't need exact change. Keep any tickets they give you.

Some of the bus companies:

**BUSES HEREDIANAS** - Heredia buses, orange and red

**TUASA** - Alajuela buses, going to San Jose, Alajuela, Heredia. White and red.

**PULMITAN** - Servicing Playa del Coco, Liberia, Canas, Tileran (Volvan Arenal area)

**SANTA ANA** - Blue buses (dark and light blue) servicing Santa Ana

**ESCAZU** - Usually yellow, but the Santa Ana buses also pass through Escazu.

**COOPETRANSATENAS** - Servicing Atenas, San Jose, and Alajuela

**CARIBE** - Buses to Limon (Carribean side) leave from El Caribe. Like the Coca Cola, it's a major bus stop. The Coca Cola services central Costa Rica and the West coast, usually. The CARIBE services the Carribean side.

When in doubt, **ASK ASK ASK. Do not be shy!**

**If you can't find the button to stop the bus, just shout PARADA.** And they will stop.

For bus schedules:

<http://thebusschedule.com/cr/>

## V. Getting to Liberia

Liberia, Canas, and Tileran are popular destinations! They are up North. It's hotter up there, and there are beautiful beaches! It's also where you can see Volcan Arenal.

By bus:

1. Take a bus to the Coca Cola.
2. From the Coca, you want the PULMITAN buses. You can walk there, but it's far easier to ask a taxi. Ask him to take you to buses PULMITAN.
3. From there, you can buy your ticket. You will need to buy a ticket BEFORE getting on the bus.
4. Enjoy! Also, when in doubt, ask. Most of these buses will stop for a rest along the way. Ask how long the bus is stopping for.

Canas has a beautiful church, filled with mosaics!

In Tileran, you can swim in Lake Arenal. So peaceful!

Liberia is a very modern city close to the beach, Playa del Coco. Playa del Coco and Playa Hermosa are very nice.

## VI. Getting to Tortuguero

Costa Rica is famous for the turtles in Tortuguero! They lay their eggs from April - September, about. That's the high season! Tortuguero is a tiny peninsula, and you can't even take a car there! If you want to see the turtles, here's how to get there by bus:

1. Go to San Jose (Coca Cola). You can take the Atenas bus. I recommend the 6:30 a.m. bus if you want to get to Tortuguero.
2. Take a taxi from the Coca Cola to El Caribe bus terminal.
3. Ask for the bus to Cariari. Make sure it's a direct bus . . . sometimes you have to change buses in Guapiles. You can do that just fine, it just takes longer.
4. From Cariari, you need the bus to La Pavona. The La Pavona bus will come to the bus terminal where the Cariari bus drops you off. You don't need to walk. Don't be confused, though, when you get on the bus and you immediately go to another bus terminal. Just stay on. There are two bus terminals...The bus to La Pavona goes to both, and then heads on its way!
5. When you get to La Pavona (last stop, takes about an hour), you'll be ushered onto the canoe to Tortuguero. This is the only way to get there. La Pavona has parking spaces if you want to drive, but it's not advised since the road is very bumpy and hard to navigate, since it's not on any map as of yet.

6. The canoe will take you to Tortuguero! I stayed at Cabinas Beyetty, and had a good time. It's cheap, clean, and you get your own bathroom. It's not a fancy hotel, but it's better than a hostel, and Beyetty gave us a turtle tour and her husband gave us a canal tour the next morning. They even went clubbing with us! Here's her info:

Betty Estrada E.

506-8501-8209

Email: [Beyetty@hotmail.com](mailto:Beyetty@hotmail.com)

Tell them Lisa from Norma's in La Garita sent you! They do all kinds of tours. She speaks great English!

There are lots of places to stay in Tortuguero, though!

**YOU NEED TO GET TO LA PAVONA BEFORE 3:30 PM OR THE CANOES STOP RUNNING AND YOU'LL NEED TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY. Go early!**

## VII. Getting to Nicaragua

Many buses, like TransNica or NicaExpreso, will take you from San Jose to Nicaragua! It's a nice trip!

Before you go, make sure you bring your ticket out of Costa Rica. Why? When you come back to Costa Rica from Nicaragua, they will ask you for your ticket out. Foreigners cannot enter CR without proof that they are leaving, even when they enter by bus!

Bring money (cash) for the taxes. \$7 CR tax, \$14 Nicaragua tax. There aren't ATMs.

When you're on the border, many people will try to get you to exchange your money for cordos. If you have dollars, this isn't necessary, as most places take dollars. If you have colones, it might be worth it to change your money to cordos.

When you arrive in Managua, you can take a taxi. I recommend Jose. He was very nice to me:

### **81994573 Jose in Managua, Nicaragua**

To Granada: Granada is a beautiful city and very old-fashioned! To get there, take a taxi from the bus terminal to la UCA (la oo-kah) or the University of Central America. There, the buses to Granada leave. It's an hour ride and

costs a dollar. The cab will be very expensive so the bus is worth it!

When in Granada, I recommend Carlos. He was nice and even waited for me to get inside and lock the door to my room:

**86887853 Carlos, taxi in Granada**

I also recommend eating at **Expressionista**! All their food is local, organic, and it's a fusion of Nicaraguan and German food! It's divine and off the beaten path. It's not in the tourist trap area.

Address is: a calle real Xalteva 609, en Granada

[espresonistacoffee@gmail.com](mailto:espresonistacoffee@gmail.com)

505 2552 4325

Also, if you want something delicious and cheap, there's a street BBQ place located 1 cuadro y media al oeste de puente papa Q. You get chicken and plantains wrapped in a big leaf, in a bag, with a side of coleslaw. Delicious and only \$3.50 dollars!