

Renting a Car in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is an easy place to drive yourself around. Roads are well-marked, people are helpful, and it's great to be able to just pull over and stop when you see interesting things. Renting a car can also be easy if you know the following.

There is MANDATORY liability insurance. Most of the websites where you reserve cars from here do NOT tell you that or if they do, they only give you a quote for collision (not required) and not liability, or a rough estimate of liability and don't provide any coverage details, e.g. what the deductible would be. Then you get ambushed when you go to pick up the car in Costa Rica with a huge insurance charge (that can be 5 times the car rate). The insurance rates vary widely. So you may think you got a great deal on the car (seriously, you can find cars for \$20 a week) but they'll extract more for the mandatory insurance when you get there. There is a way to avoid this though, they will not accept proof of US insurance nor credit card-provided insurance even though technically the law says you can bypass this requirement with proof your coverage extends to Costa Rica.

You can book the car through a website but you MUST then send the confirmation to the Liberia office of that car company and ask them for their insurance rates. There are multiple insurance options, liability only, collision with a big deductible, collision with no deductible (zero risk). Generally as of October of 2017 for an SUV you will pay at least \$40 a day for the zero risk package. If you can communicate by email (or phone) with the local office you can get these rates in advance and negotiate and compare. Finding some of the local email addresses can be tricky but some are listed below. Phone numbers are more readily available so you can call and ask for the email address or just get the quote over the phone (but have them send it to you).

We've rented from pretty much all of the Liberia companies and they're all the same in terms of service, etc. A couple of times our car has had a problem and both times they came and addressed it within an hour or so (but we weren't far from Liberia on both occasions). Once we had a flat tire but a local guy fixed it for \$1 (we didn't bother to tell the car company). BE SURE TO CHECK THE TIRES WHEN YOU PICK UP YOUR CAR.

So here are the rental car email addresses we've accumulated so far (please email us if you find others and we'll add them):

DOLLAR

Liberia Office: liberia@dollarcostarica.com Christopher Vargas

General Costa Rica: info@dollarcostarica.com

Ace Car Rental: sales@2gorentacar.com

Adobe Car Rental: online@adobecar.cr or
ventasqte@adobecar.com

Alamo Car Rental: alamocostarica@grupoanc.com

Budget Car rental: jvasquez@budget.co.cr (Liberia office but he can get you in touch with SJ office)

Thrifty Liberia Office: reservas10@thrifty.cr

Mapache Car Rental: jandrade@mapache.co.cr