

# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GUESTS

**\*PLEASE PRINT THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND BRING THEM WITH YOU\***

Playa Lapa and the Carate area is best enjoyed and most convenient in a rental car, which can be picked up in San Jose or in Puerto Jimenez. These arrangements can be made for you at Osa Corcovado Tour and Travel in Puerto Jimenez [info@soldeosa.com](mailto:info@soldeosa.com).

## STAFF OF PLAYA LAPA

**Marijana Brown**, the manager of Osa Corcovado Tour and Travel in Jimenez, has arranged your stay at Playa Lapa, and will be the first person to contact when any need may arise. Her e-mail address is: [marijana@soldeosa.com](mailto:marijana@soldeosa.com); IM: [marijanabrown@hotmail.com](mailto:marijanabrown@hotmail.com); and Skype: marijana.brown. Her cell phone number is (506) 863-8150.

**Paul Collar**, our project manager, also resides in Jimenez. You can reach him by e-mail at [pdcollar@racsa.co.cr](mailto:pdcollar@racsa.co.cr) or by telephone at 2735-5702.

**Manuel Mora** is the caretaker at Playa Lapa, who lives in the Cuidador's Cabina that you will see first on the driveway to the main house. Manuel will be available to assist you in an emergency with the casa, such as changing the gas tank. He does not speak English.

**Supplies** All guests are responsible for bringing their own food and supplies with them to Playa Lapa—these can be purchased in Jimenez at the BM Corcovado grocery store after you pick up the keys. Please bring everything you normally use, including shampoo, soap and paper products. You are welcome to use any supplies we may leave in our home, but plan on picking up everything you will need on this first trip, as there are no other stores beyond Jimenez, and the ride to Carate is more than an hour.

If you will need ice for cold beverages, you should purchase a small Styrofoam cooler at the grocery store (~\$10) and a bag of ice. The cooler with the ice in it can be placed in the bottom of the chest refrigerator at Playa Lapa—it will stay frozen for several days like this. Please do not put bagged ice directly into the refrigerator, as the melting liquid will drain onto the kitchen floor. A chest refrigerator does not have freezing capacity, but is coldest near the floor, and often will form ice down there.



*Playa Lapa bananas ripening in kitchen*



*Heliconia*

Refrigeration at Playa Lapa depends directly on solar power availability, *and guest consumption of the power stored in the batteries.* Do not depend solely on perishable food—buy some dry, canned and bottled food as well which won't require refrigeration. All food should be stored in the plastic food boxes (provided) and spilled food and liquids should be cleaned up immediately to prevent the ants.

If you find that you have an emergency need of something from the grocery store or drugstore, items can be sent out on the afternoon *Collectivo*; billing for such services carry a 15% surcharge. Contact Marijana or Paul. The **COLLECTIVO** is the taxi service from Jimenez, which passes by the gate of Playa Lapa at approximately 8:30 AM, and again at approximately 3:30—4:00 PM.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Please take a few minutes to locate some items before dark, in the event of a power outage:  
**FLASH LIGHTS**—Please remember to bring flashlights! Due to previous experience with candles as fire hazards, we prefer that you do not use candles.

**POWER CENTRAL CLOSET**—first closet to the left of the spiral staircase

**2 WAY RADIO**—Power central closet

**INTERNET HOOK UP TO SATELLITE**—this is a wireless connection available at Playa Lapa; linksys is the name of the connection. It is located in the master bedroom closet. Be sure that the satellite modem and the wireless router are plugged in. It takes 15 minutes after turning on the modem for the satellite signal to engage. In the unusual event that all four green lights are not on after waiting fifteen minutes, there may be a problem with the Internet connection, and you will need to go to Terrapin or Lookout Lodge to use their Internet (for a fee), and contact Marijana in Jimenez to trouble shoot the problem with the Internet service provider.

**FIRST AID**— Please bring a personal first aid kit with you, including band aids, bandages, tape, cotton, gauze, antiseptic, insect repellent and sun screen. Our personal first aid kit is located in the bathroom on the first floor for emergency use; please replace any supplies that you use. There are first aid instructions available at the following website:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness\\_first\\_aid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness_first_aid). Please be familiar with basic first aid in advance of your trip, especially if traveling with children.



**WATER CONSUMPTION** It is safe to drink the water from all faucets in Playa Lapa, as an ultraviolet filtration system is in place for your safety. All house water passes through this system.

**SECURITY** All doors and windows are fitted with steel security grills—this is in keeping with traditional Spanish architecture, as well as for protection of our valuables. Please lock the doors *whenever* you leave the house.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**THE MARINE RADIO** is located in the power central closet, as well as a laminated list of call numbers for local neighbors who also have marine radios. This is a sketchy system at best, but in an emergency, you may be able to contact help first by this route—but be advised that not all operators speak English.

**THERE IS AN INTERNET SATELLITE** with wireless capability in the casa. This is the best system for communication, as there is no phone line in Carate; this is also how you will contact Paul or Katiana, if you have an emergency. You will need to bring a laptop computer with wireless capacity to connect to “linksys”. The modem is located in the master bedroom closet. The internet signal is occasionally unavailable due to dense cloud cover. We cannot be responsible for natural events interfering with internet communication. If you have an emergency when the internet is down, you can take your laptop and access the Internet at Terrapin lodge, about 1/2 mile before Playa Lapa on the Carate road, for a small fee per time used. Please enjoy cold beverages while you are there, and consider making reservations (by noon) for an excellent dinner at a reasonable price. If you do not have your own laptop, you may be able to negotiate use of the lodge’s computer as a patron, however if there are guests at the lodge, it may not be readily available for your use. Your own personal computer is an indispensable communication tool throughout your travels in Costa Rica.

## POWER CLOSET

The battery bank is located in this closet, therefore

**NO SMOKING, FIRE OR FLAME IN THIS AREA.**

Playa Lapa functions in harmony with the environment, without noisy, polluting gasoline engines to supply our power. Energy is harvested from the sun, which supplies most of the power needed to support fans, lights and appliances at Playa Lapa. There is a *finite* amount of power that is generated everyday and stored in batteries beneath the house; it must be used conscientiously during the day in order to provide electricity at night when



*Charge controller and power “on-off” switch in power central closet.*

there is no solar energy. Never leave lights or fans on that are not in use. Do not use any heat producing appliances such as coffee makers, toasters, hair dryers or curling irons. There is a coffee filter and thermal pot for coffee (instructions below.) Also, you must time your laundry needs to coincide with peak power generation potential during the day and never do laundry on overcast days or in the evening hours. **Remember that this is an “off grid” destination, and we cannot be responsible for power outages, as this system is at the mercy of the elements. Sometimes the best efforts cannot provide continuous power here in the jungle.**

You can monitor your available power on the charge controller located on the left wall inside the power closet. By touching any of the four white buttons the LED lighting will come on. The number that is most relevant is the **voltage**. The power system will work until the batteries drop to a voltage of 10.3 volts, at which point the inverter will shut off. If this happens during daylight hours, you are using up the power faster than it can be generated. Please turn off any appliance in use, as well as lights and fans and wait an hour, or until you see that the voltage has been sufficiently restored. There is a light switch on the left side of the charge controller that will manually turn the inverter back on. If the power should go off after sundown, the system has been depleted and cannot be restored until the next day.



*Collared Anteater near the foot bridge*

However there is a reserve of about 5 minutes of power left—you can switch it on manually to gain 5 more minutes of light only— during which time you must power flashlights and prepare for darkness till 5:30 AM. Be warned that if this happens, your refrigeration will be off till mid morning on the next day. Always check the voltage by mid afternoon, and conserve power as needed for activities after dark, such as watching DVD's on your laptop. Keeping lights off after dark will not only conserve power, but will avoid attracting insects.

Under optimal operating conditions the battery voltage will fluctuate between 11.5 and 12.5 volts. When the system is fully charged, the battery voltage should be around 14.6 volts, but it will quickly drop from this initial reading to the operational range of 11.5-12.5 volts during system usage.

A Pelton Wheel has been installed to generate current from our other natural resource, water. It is powered by the same flow of water that supplies the house, and is only a small source of energy charging the batteries after dark, as well as on rainy days. Needless to say, during the dry season this is not a realistic source of power; however during rainy weather when the solar panels are producing very little, the Pelton will supply enough power for basic needs (but not the washing machine.)

To summarize, the best way to ensure that you have power is to not use electrical power that you do not need, and check the voltage frequently. Do not use lights during the day and never leave any light or fan on that is not being used. If you will not be using the Internet, then you should unplug both the modem and wireless router. The refrigerator is 12 Volt and will remain operational for a short time after the inverter can no longer sustain other appliances; however it too will fail if power is not conserved during the day. Plan on doing no more than one load of laundry per day; it must be limited to the morning hours on a sunny day.



### **HOT WATER**

The sun is hottest during the hours of 10:00AM to 3:00PM on a bright sunny day—this is the best time for a hot shower, via the solar hot water system built into the roof. The water will cool as the sun goes down, becoming tepid to very cool just after sunset. It will not heat up again until 2-3 hours after sunrise the next morning. Please understand that hot water will not be available during overcast weather, or at night, and plan accordingly. It cannot be emphasized enough that hot water, like electricity, must be guarded and conserved; please use cool water only in the sink and the washing machine, and conserve hot water for bathing.

## CARE OF CASA PLAYA LAPA

**This is a very remote destination and there is no fire department!! Therefore NO SMOKING is ever permitted inside the house!!**

**Please Use extreme caution when operating the gas stove!!**

If it is necessary to smoke during your stay, please limit it to outside of the house, on the decks, and dispose of cigarette butts. Please review the instruction for operating the stove, at the end of this section. Be aware that the breeze from the ocean can be strong through the kitchen window, and avoid clutter near the open flame on the stove while cooking.



### **“NO ZAPATOS POR FAVOR”**

(The sign on each door) means “no shoes, please”. The house is a no shoes area, to protect the floors and furniture from damage by dirt and sand which accumulates on our footwear. You will find that the local lodges also request that you remove your shoes before entering. Please do not wear outdoor footwear into the house. There is a water hose located on the back deck near the stairs to rinse feet upon returning from hiking or the beach. Flip flops are provided (above the laundry center) for your use. We will greatly appreciate your cooperation in the care of our floors and furniture.

**TRASH/GARBAGE/WASTE** In keeping with the Eco-friendly effort on the Osa Peninsula, Playa Lapa maintains a “low impact” attitude toward the environment. Disposal of trash and garbage is, therefore, a sensitive matter. ALL trash must be collected in tied plastic bags (provided), and will be disposed of by the caretaker. Organic garbage must be deposited daily in the compost pit beyond the banana grove, in front of the wood shed. Garbage left unattended outside WILL attract vultures and rats. Please do not toss organic waste near the casa, as it will attract rats into the house.

The gray water from the house (sinks and showers) is diverted directly into the irrigation trough behind the back deck. Please do not dispose of oil or grease into the kitchen drain, as it can melt the drain pipe, clog the system and kill the plants around the house.



*Loft area, facing spiral staircase*

In a further attempt to protect the environment, please do not flush toilets unnecessarily, and never add any chemicals or dispose of sanitary products in the toilet. Please deposit facial tissue and toilet paper in the trash cans provided.

#### **Unwanted houseguests**

(Scorpions and other vermin) will not be a problem if the floors are kept clear and dry—avoid piling things in corners, as the humidity will make these areas attractive to

intruders of various sorts. Do not ever put on shoes or clothing left on the floor without shaking them and inspecting for scorpions. Peg racks can be found in both bedrooms to hang clothing off the floor. There are no insects or spiders that have life threatening bites or stings, however a scorpion sting is painful, so be watchful, particularly when handling damp clothing. You may use personal insect repellent only—surface spraying with insecticides is not permitted. Keeping the house clean and dry and the floors clear of clutter is the best way to discourage intruders.

## **DINING OPTIONS**

**FISH** is commonly available from local fishermen, and both red snapper and snook are frequently caught in the vicinity. You may be able to purchase a catch from Ticos working hand lines on the beach; however many local lodges depend on this source of fish as well, so there is often competition and you may need to be persuasive to secure the fresh catch of the day for your own table.

**DINNER AT LOCAL LODGES** will require advanced reservations and can be secured by e-mailing or visiting the lodges personally, usually by the morning before. The e-mail address for Terrapin Lodge is [info@terrapinlodge.com](mailto:info@terrapinlodge.com) Lookout Lodge is [terryconroy@yahoo.com](mailto:terryconroy@yahoo.com). Meals are expensive by most standards, but reflect the difficulty of transporting food and restaurant supplies into this remote area. The menus are often available only a day ahead, as determined by demand and supplies



on hand. Most lodges do not have a la carte meals, but have a single meal that they serve to all their guests. Still, lodge meals are usually haute cuisine and well worth the price.



**COOKING AT HOME** is the most popular option, with a well supplied kitchen for food preparation. All food supplies must be brought with you to Playa Lapa; however feel free to use any of the staples that are stored in the pantry closet. Be sure to put all food into zip lock bags to guard against ant infestation; do not leave any food on counters or table, and wipe up spills immediately

*Enjoying dinner at Playa Lapa*

## ENTERTAINMENT

**SWIMMING** The undertow on Playa Lapa's beach can be strong, and in most cases non-swimmers and small children should NOT attempt it. Always swim with a partner or a group. The most dangerous time to wander out into the surf is at high tide; low tide is conversely the safest time, and also the best time for beach combing.

### BEACH AMENITIES

**Beach chairs** may be taken to the beach for your use. Please do not leave chairs unattended on the beach; rinse them after use and return them to the back deck.

**Beach towels** The large striped towels may be used on the beach with care. Please hang them up to dry and thoroughly shake the sand out before laundering.

**Flip flops** are provided and may be worn inside the house, or used on the beach, if rinsed and dried before returning to the house.



*Newly hatched baby olive ridley sea turtles on Playa Lapa's beach*

## **TOURS**

A large variety of tours can be arranged by contacting Osa Corcovado Tour and Travel in Puerto Jimenez, which is a full service agency. It is their business to help people make these arrangements, as well as air ticketing, rental cars, and just general information. The following popular tours are available: kayak fishing in the lagoon; in-shore and deep sea fishing in the ocean or the Gulf; hiking by the day or hour in Corcovado National park; local waterfall excursions; kayaking on the lagoon; motorboat tours of the Gulf; horseback riding; bird watching; night turtle watching on the beach, and crocodile counting on the lagoon. If you prefer any other activity requiring a guide, please make your request early with Marijana.

## **TURTLE WATCHING**

**Baby sea turtles** are most likely to be seen on the beach at dawn, struggling to cross the treacherous expanse of sand from their nest in the dunes to the protection of the surf. Hawks and vultures will be watching for these tasty morsels as well; where you observe birds congregating, look for a nest of hatchlings. More than half of the babies are eaten during this first trip; those that hatch after daybreak have very little chance of surviving predation, so feel free to hand carry any you may come across down to the edge of the water. The vultures will not approach while you are near, so if you have the time to wait and watch the migration, it is a worthwhile experience. These late hatching are often the weakest and will only benefit from your attention. Do not forget to bring your camera!

**Adult sea turtles** can be seen late at night digging their nests near the dunes and laying the hundred or so eggs. Please turn off house lights after dark to prevent illuminating the beach, as lights disturb sea turtles and disorient hatchlings. Do not use a flashlight at night on the beach; it will cause female turtles to abandon their nesting process, and it discourages other turtles from coming ashore to nest. It goes without saying that you must never use a flash camera while observing the turtles at night.

**The roseate spoonbill** has been sighted most frequently at the near end of the lagoon by the mouth of the slough, again very early in the morning. It is a spectacular sight to watch her rise in flight, as the feathers beneath her wings are quite a dramatic flash of rose. Plan to walk the beach at dawn toward the lagoon for a spectacular sunrise event, as well as sightings of these natural treasures.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPERATING APPLIANCES**

**LAUNDRY FACILITIES** The washing machine and dryer as well as a wash line are for your personal laundry only (clothes). Please vigorously shake all garments and swimwear before washing, and turn the pockets to remove all sand and small stones. The washing machine draws a large amount of electricity to operate. In order to have enough power for lights and small appliance after dark, the washer should be used during daylight hours on sunny days only, when the solar power is at its peak production, between the hours of 10AM and 2PM. The wash line is available on the lower deck.



*Baby Iguana in hibiscus tree near porch*

**STOVE and OVEN** This is a gas powered appliance—the burners are lit by turning on the burner, and immediately pushing the ignition button. This makes a spark which lights the gas. In the event of a power outage, the stove must be lit by hand: strike a long match or light the lighter **FIRST**, then turn on the burner and light it immediately. Be very careful not to flood the area with gas before your fire source is lit, and stand clear of the stove while lighting it. The oven door must be handled very carefully, as it has already sustained damage from the continuous salt air. Please open and close it gently.

There is a spare tank of gas in the downstairs restroom in the event that you run out of gas. You may ask Manuel, the caretaker, to hook up the spare tank, but if he is not immediately available and you need gas right away, here are instructions for changing the tank yourself: (it is very easy; I can do it myself and I'm small):

1. Take the spare tank (from power closet) out to the side of the building under the stove.
2. Set the tank on the concrete blocks to the right of the main tank cabinet.
3. Find the **GREEN VALVE** on the **RED HOSE** hanging just above the block.
4. Connect the **GREEN VALVE** to the top of the tank by pushing it down.
5. Open the **OFF-ON LEVER** on the side of the green valve.
6. Open the **RED BALL VALVE** at the end of the red hose.

**CHEST FREEZER/FRIDGE** This is for all practical purposes a refrigerator only, as it has only one temperature setting. **PLEASE** do not touch the dial or button on the front lower right of the chest. If you need freezing temperatures, or want to have ice available, a Styrofoam cooler full of ice chips in the bottom of the refrigerator will last for 2-3 days. The floor of the chest and against the wall will be close to freezing, so protect vegetables, and store freezable items in the lowest areas. Do not allow water to accumulate on the floor of the refrigerator, as it will interfere with the temperature control. There is a sponge provided to remove puddles.

**MAKING COFFEE** We cannot use a coffee maker because of the power demands of heating appliances, but have provided a coffee filter for making fresh coffee. You will need the coffee thermos, the filter and a measured amount of water to boil in a sauce pan or the kettle. Measure coffee into the filter, 1 tablespoon per cup; boil the water, then pour over the coffee as you hold it over the thermos. Use the mitt to prevent steam burns.

## FIRST AID

**FIRST AID IS YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY.** A good source of information for techniques and procedures (online) is: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness\\_first\\_aid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness_first_aid). **Insect repellent** should be used whenever you go outdoors. **Mosquito nets** (installed over each bed upstairs) can be used for sleeping, but there will be less of a problem with insects if you avoid turning on lights in the sleeping areas after dark. Bring a basic first aid kit with you and be familiar with how to use it for various emergencies. For serious injuries keep control of the situation and contact Marijana [marijana@soldeosa.com](mailto:marijana@soldeosa.com), or Paul [pdcollar@rasca.co.cr](mailto:pdcollar@rasca.co.cr) ; or your closest



neighbors, Terry and Katya Conroy at Lookout Lodge speak English [terryjconroy@yahoo.com](mailto:terryjconroy@yahoo.com).

Paul, Marijana and I communicate by Instant Messenger daily, and it would be very helpful to download MSN Instant Messenger and be in the loop with us for the duration of your visit to assist you with tours, supplies, emergencies and general support. [marijanabrown@hotmail.com](mailto:marijanabrown@hotmail.com)

*Sunrise over the lagoon*

## BIENVENIDOS!