

From San Jose to La Pavona

Which dock we use depends on the water level of the rivers. This depends on the rains, and can change even at the last moment. You should be sure to call our operations department in order to determine which dock is in operation on your travel day. Those phone numbers are below.

CRE Phone Numbers:

Office hours (5:30am ~ 8:00pm)

Tel. [\(+506\) 2257-0766](tel:+50622570766)

Tel. [\(+506\) 2521-6099](tel:+50625216099)

After hours, Operations Staff

Mobile. [\(+506\) 8707-5212](tel:+50687075212)

Director of Operations & Lodges, Diego Blanco

Mob. [\(+506\) 8879-3821](tel:+50688793821)

By far the easiest way to get to Tortuguero is to have us take you there. Talk to your travel planner about arranging transportation or buy a complete package that includes round trip transportation, lodging, excursions and meals. If you are interested in booking a complete package, please click here, [Complete Packages](#) or look on www.tortugalodge.com .

If you are driving on your own to the La Pavona dock en route to Tortuguero, driving instructions are below. Even with these directions, there is a good chance you will get lost if you do not have a GPS. By far the best is EZ Find. There are no addresses in Costa Rica. The GPS operates by points of interest. Go to the Points of Interest on the menu and put in where you want to go. For example, “La Pavona”.

Driving instructions are below, please print them out and after you’ve used them, let us know how it went. We’d love to make it easier for the next guest to follow these instructions.

Note: Road signs and directions in Costa Rica go by kilometers and not miles. One kilometer is just over half a mile. Some benchmarks for doing quick and dirty conversions are below:

1 km = 0.6 mi

3 km = 1.8 mi

5 km = 3 mi

10 km = 6 mi

Total Driving Time: 3 hours depending on traffic

Type of Vehicle: Best done in a 4x4 vehicle

Recommended Time to Drive: Early morning

Fuel: Leave San Jose with a full tank, there are several places where you will be able to fill up on the next leg of your trip.

Driving Recommendations: When on Route 32 you will be driving on a highway that is one of the major points of transit for heavy trucks going back and forth from the Limon dock. Drive carefully and expect large trucks to be traveling at high speed either in oncoming lanes or behind you.

When you leave Route 32 (step 16), you will be on an isolated road, we recommend that you do not stop for hitch hikers or any other people on the side of the road.

Watch for people walking or riding their bikes on the side of the road. Also watch for tractors with trailers turning onto the road with a load of pineapple, oranges or sugar cane.

Driving Instructions:

1. Leave San Jose on route 32, heading towards Limon, this is the main highway that accesses the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. There is a gas station on the right hand side of the road 0.8 KMS after the four way intersection. This is a good place to refuel if you haven't already.
2. Drive 13 KMS on this road until you get to the first and only toll booth that you will pass on this drive. You will need to pay ₡250 colons.
3. After passing the toll, continue 5.6 KMS and you will arrive at the Zurqui tunnel.
4. Continue on this same highway for another 29.3 KMS, at this point you will have crossed the Continental Divide and arrived at the Atlantic lowlands. At this point you will arrive at an intersection, with the restaurant Rancho Robertos on your left. This is a good place to stop and use the bathrooms, eat some lunch or have a cup of coffee.
5. After the restaurant continue on this same highway for another 11.6 KMS. Watch for people walking on the sides of the road or riding their bikes and also for tractors and trailers turning onto the road with a loads of pineapple, oranges or sugar cane. You will see the entrance to the town of Guapiles on your left.
6. Continue on highway 32 for 0.8 KMS, and you will see a gas station, the Servicentro Santa Clara, on your left.
7. Turn left at the gas station, at this point you will leave route 32. You will see signs for the towns of Roxana and Cariari, drive down this road for 7.1 KMS and you will see the gas station Cervicentro La Rita.
8. Continue on this road for 0.6 KMS and you will come to an intersection with a Train Crossing.

9. Turn left and drive 0.5 KMS, on this stretch you will see the train line on your right. You will cross a bridge without guard rails, where you should yield to oncoming traffic.
10. Arrive at an intersection, where you will see a hardware store (ferreteria) named Surtido Jordan.
11. Turn right and cross the train line. Drive on for another 10 KMS.
12. Cross a large metal bridge, you are now in the town of Cariari.
13. Continue on 0.3 KMS and you will see a gas station called Cervicentro Cariari, on your right. This is the last gas station you will encounter on this trip, so you will need enough gas to continue the approximately 29 KMS to the dock, and to arrive back here on your return journey.
14. When driving through the town, stay alert for people walking along the road, or crossing it without warning.
15. Drive on without stopping or turning for 6.6 KMS. You will begin to see banana plantations.
16. You will come to an intersection, where you will see a small bus stop with a ceramic roof, as well as a farm (finca) entrance flanked by brick columns.
17. Turn right and drive 1.2 KMS through banana plantations on both sides to arrive at the small town of Campo Dos.
18. You will arrive at an intersection with a soccer field on your left and signs for the towns of Cuatro Esquinas and Palacio.
19. Turn to the left and drive down the paved road for 6.1 KMS.
20. You will pass the Police Post for the small town of Cuatro Esquinas on your left and a few meters past that point the road will change from paved to gravel.
21. Continue for 8KMS without turning and with increased caution, as there are now various bridges without guardrails. On the gravel it is recommended to not exceed 30 KPH.
22. Arrive at the hamlet of Palacio, marked by a small general store called Pulpería Palacio.
23. At the general store turn left, and drive on 5.2 KMS, passing cattle farms and banana plantations, to arrive at an intersection, with stable on your right and a small farm house on your left. The house will have "Welcome To La Pavona" written on the wall.
24. Turn left and continue 1.2 KMS to arrive at a booth, where they will give directions about where to park your vehicle. The cost for parking is 5,000 colones, the equivalent of roughly 10 US Dollars.
25. In front of you should be the landing's facilities, which include a restaurant and bathrooms, and expansive parking space with a roof. Park your car where directed. Do not leave any luggage or belongings in your car, and take all of your things to Tortuguero with you. This will decrease the chances of having your car broken into. Look for your uniformed Tortuga Lodge & Gardens Boat Captain, he will be happy to assist you.

Total Distance: 108.7 Kilometers

Total Driving Time: 3 hours