

TRAVEL SAFETY

Juan Santamaría International
Airport Security Guide

Costa Rica

2025

Juan Santamaría International Airport
- SJO



Visitors

With about 1.6 million inhabitants in its metropolitan area, San José is the political, economic, and cultural center of the country. In 2024, San José received over 2.6 million visitors, with projections of up to 2.9 million tourists in 2025.



General information

Located in the Canton of Alajuela, approximately 17 km west of downtown San José.

San José, the capital and urban heart of Costa Rica, is in the Central Valley of the country, surrounded by green mountains and volcanoes. At an altitude of 1,170 meters above sea level, it has a temperate tropical climate



The airport

- 1.It has a main runway measuring 3,012 meters in length. On exceptional occasions, it may be used by state aircraft, but it is not designated for military use.
- 2.There are two main terminals: The international terminal, with 13 boarding bridges and the domestic terminal.
- 3.The Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería oversees the entry and exit of travelers, conducting passport checks, visa verification (if applicable), and biometric data screening. It also includes special procedures for minors and transit passengers.
- 4.Customs control is conducted by the Customs Authority, with random inspections and targeted checks on restricted or prohibited items (such as cash, food, natural products, etc.). There are separate lanes for passengers with and without goods to declare.
- 5.Airport Police, private security companies, and specialized units ensure constant surveillance, using X-ray scanners, metal detectors, and canine units at control points. Biosecurity inspectors have also been introduced to strengthen health measures.



The emergency contacts you might need are:

Police	+506 2291-0945 or +506 2226-6635
Ambulance	911 or +506 2528-0000
Emergency	911
Firefighters	+506 2547-3700



Some requirements Costa Rica has for travelers are:

- Valid passport
- Visa (required for some nationalities, e.g., Colombian citizens)
- Proof of onward or return ticket
- Yellow fever vaccination certificate (for travelers arriving from high-risk countries as defined by international regulations)
- Recommended vaccinations: Typhoid fever and Hepatitis A
- Proof of financial solvency



Travels

Routes and travel times from the airport to the main hotel and financial areas:



Traffic

Rush hour traffic in San José: 6:00 AM – 10:00 AM 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

1. Downtown San José: Take Autopista General Cañas (Route 1) southeast continue along Paseo Colón connect with Avenida Central, 25–50 minutes depending on traffic.
2. Escazú / Santa Ana: Take Autopista General Cañas exit to Ciudad Colón / Autopista Próspero Fernández (CR-27) continue to Escazú, 30–60 minutes.
3. Heredia: Take Route 3 (Carretera a Heredia) directly from Alajuela, 15–30 minutes.
4. Financial District (Sabana Norte): Take Autopista General Cañas exit at Rotonda de la Bandera take Paseo Colón to La Sabana, 20–45 minutes.
5. Free Trade Zones (UltraPark, Lindora): Take Autopista General Cañas continue onto Autopista Próspero Fernández exit to Lindora, 40–70 minutes.



Weather conditions



rainy (May–November, average 19°C).



dry (December–April, average 24°C).



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Do not lose sight of your personal items, especially in waiting areas and bathrooms
2. Use only authorized transport platforms inside the airport or official taxis.
3. Do not carry or take care of objects from strangers.
4. Be sure to pack your own luggage.
5. Arrive at the airport on time to avoid mishaps and possible blockages.
6. Do not use free WiFi zones, better use a VPN or an E-Sim with mobile data.
7. In case of renting a car make sure that they are well-known companies (Adobe, Budget, etc.)
8. Check that your luggage has not been opened before moving away from the claim strips.
9. Carry your devices with a data encryption for your sensitive documents.
10. The airport's executive assistance service (+506 2437-2400) can assist you with express procedures.

