

# essential<sup>®</sup> COSTA RICA



**Costa Rica Culinary Press Trip**  
RECAP | April 1-7, 2019

**NJF**  
AN MMGYGLOBAL COMPANY

# Agenda

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**3. Key Learnings & Recommendations**

**4. Clippings**

# Executive Summary

## Dates Traveled:

- April 1-7, 2019

## Locations:

- San Jose
- Zona de los Santos, Cartago
- Limon
- Heredia
- Alajuela

## Journalists:

- Alisha Prakash - Oyster
- Amanda Sadlowski - Fodor's Travel
- Alev Aktar - Family Traveller
- Ann Ruppenstein - Canada Travel Press
- Chelsea Davis - Fox Travel & Forbes

## ICT Participants/Partners:

- Vinicio Viquez, tour guide
- Chef Jose Pablo Gonzalez
- Emilio Zuñiga

## NJF Participant:

- Amalia Arguello

## Overview:

- This press trip was coordinated with the intent to showcase Costa Rica's diverse gastronomy, and sustainable agricultural practices to prominent journalists from North America. The media was invited to enjoy Costa Rica's capital city of San Jose, along with various surrounding regions that included Cartago, Limon, Heredia and Alajuela. These regions showcased the country's agriculture, beautiful countryside and natural landmarks.
- NJF identified appropriate key media and confirmed their trip attendance.
- The agency also provided insight and supported the ICT with all press trip logistics including flights, accommodations and activities.
- The ICT provided lodging, itinerary, local transportation, food and activities for the North American journalists and NJF representative.

## Anticipated Coverage:

NJF will send all coverage related to this trip on an ongoing basis as stories are published.

## Next Steps:

- NJF will continue conversations with press trip attendees to provide assistance in story development, providing images and more background information as needed.
- Results related to this press trip will be reported on a monthly basis via the agency's monthly report.

# Activities Outline

## DAY 1 - April 1, 2019

### San Jose:

- NJF representative Amalia Arguello and journalist Alisha Prakash arrived at the San Jose International Airport in the morning, and were transferred to the Hotel Tryp Sabana by expert guide Vinicio Vaquez.
- Journalists Chelsea Davis, Alev Aktar and Amanda Sadlowski arrived at various times throughout the afternoon and were transferred to the Hotel Tryp Sabana for check in by expert guides Vinicio Vaquez and Emilio Zuñiga.
- Upon arrival at the Hotel Tryp Sabana, media attendees received a welcome “Save the Americans” or “Save the Canadians” bag with various Costa Rica branded items inside including a water bottle, map and more.
- The group met for dinner at the Tryp Hotel Sabana and enjoyed traditional Costa Rican dishes.
- Canadian journalist, Ann Ruppenstein had a late arrival into San Jose and met the group the following morning.

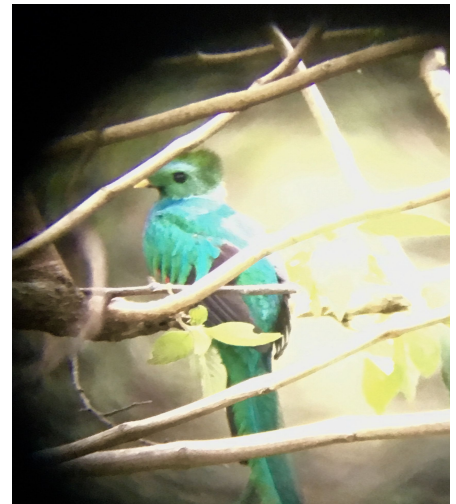


# Activities Outline

## DAY 2 - April 2, 2019

### San Jose/Cartago:

- The group started the day with a welcome breakfast at local soda Restaurante Chelles in San Jose. It was the first time in Costa Rica for four out of the five journalists. They were excited to start the culinary press trip by trying some of Costa Rica's traditional breakfast eats.
- The group then set out on the road towards Cartago stopping along the way to learn about various natural landmarks and offerings from Chef Jose Pablo Gonzalez and expert guide, Vinicio Viquez.
- The group spent the afternoon at Cedrales Lodge, where they received a tour of the surrounding avocado farm and forest. The group stopped along the way to learn about other crops and produce grown on the farm, trying various fruits and vegetables at each stop.
- Lunch was served at the Cedrales Lodge and consisted of fresh blackberry juice, an avocado tasting of the three types of avocados grown on the farm, avocado toast, trout tartare and avocado ice cream.
- Following the Cedrales Lodge, the group headed to nearby Finca Maria where two expert birdwatchers took them in search of Quetzales. After patiently waiting for 1.5 hours, the beautiful and rare bird was spotted coming out of its nest. Media attendees were ecstatic about the sighting and immediately took numerous photos and videos of the quetzal.
- After the afternoon spent birdwatching the group headed back to San Jose, where they had time to relax and refresh at the Hotel Tryp Sabana.
- The day was closed with a special group dinner at Restaurante Silvestre, where head chef and owner Santiago Benedetto met the group and treated them to a seven-course meal, complete with wine pairings. The group was joined by ICT representatives Freddy Lizano and Rocio Guido.



# Activities Outline

## DAY 3 - April 3, 2019

### San Jose / Limon:

- The group had an early morning departure from the Hotel Tryp Sabana for the two hour drive towards Limon. The group drove through the Parque Nacional Braulio Carrillo, where they unexpectedly were stuck in traffic for a few hours.
- Once traffic broke, the group arrived in Guapiles where they enjoyed a big breakfast at El Yugo.
- Following breakfast the group quickly jumped back into the car and headed off towards EARTH University, where they were met by university professors and students. The group received a tour of the university grounds, and also enjoyed a small tasting of student-made products such as chocolate, yogurt and cheese.
- The group then headed to Finca La Chiquita, where they enjoyed a home-cooked meal made by the farm's owner and family. Highlights of the meal included a sampling of the family's homemade Hibiscus liqueur.
- After lunch the group received a brief tour of the grounds, and were delighted by a surprise sloth sighting.
- After enjoying desert with the family at Finca La Chiquita, the group headed back towards San Jose where they had a few hours to relax at the Hotel Tryp Sabana.
- Dinner this evening was hosted at Sikwa, where Chef Pablo Bonilla served up a sampling of his indigenous-inspired dishes. The group was again joined for dinner by ICT representatives Freddy Lizano and Rocio Guido.



# Activities Outline

## DAY 4 - April 4, 2019 San Jose / Heredia:

- The group started their morning by checking out of the Hotel Tryp Sabana, and storing their luggage that was later picked up by Emilio Zuñiga.
- Breakfast was enjoyed at leisure at the Hotel Tryp Sabana before departure towards Heredia.
- An hour drive outside of San Jose, the group ended up in Heredia where they spent the afternoon at Finca Rosa Blanca.
- At Finca Rosa Blanca the group enjoyed a guided tour of the surrounding coffee farm, a coffee tasting and a delicious lunch at the farm's local on-site restaurant El Tigre Vestido.
- Teresa Osman, owner of Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort joined the group for lunch; which included a delicious spread of locally sourced, coffee-infused dishes.
- Following lunch the group headed back to San Jose, where they spent the afternoon walking around the Bulevar de los Peatones and San Jose's Mercado Central - a stop into Soda La Conquista within the market was spent enjoying a selection of fresh smoothies, horchata and snacks.
- The group made an impromptu stop into the Teatro Nacional de San Jose, where expert guide Vinicio Viquez shared more about the country's history and the group enjoyed taking photos.
- Following the afternoon stroll in San Jose, the group headed to Hotel Grano de Oro where they checked in and enjoyed a relaxing afternoon.
- Dinner this evening was at Cantina Sin Corbata, where the group enjoyed craft beers and a variety of gallos, tacos and empanadas.



# Activities Outline

## DAY 5 - April 5, 2019 San Jose / Alajuela

- The group enjoyed breakfast at leisure at Hotel Grano de Oro and then headed out of San Jose for a day of exploration in Alajuela.
- The group stopped along the way to purchase Doka coffee and treats from a local shop.
- The early afternoon was then spent at the Parque Nacional Volcan Poas, where the group enjoyed wonderful views of the active volcano and took many pictures.
- The group then got back on the road and took in the views on their way to lunch, which was enjoyed at a local soda in Cinchona - while there the group enjoyed running around, taking pictures of the many birds flying around and the stunning views of the nearby waterfalls.
- Following lunch, the group headed to the La Paz Waterfall Gardens where they spent the afternoon enjoying the wildlife sanctuary, along with a walking tour of the La Paz Waterfalls.
- After a long afternoon at the waterfalls and taking in the natural surroundings, the group headed back to San Jose where they enjoyed a quiet afternoon at Hotel Grano de Oro.
- Dinner this evening was served at Chef Jose Pablo Gonzalez's restaurant El Mercat. ICT representatives Freddy Lizano and Rocio Guido once again met the group for dinner this evening.



# Activities Outline

## DAY 6 - April 6, 2019

### San Jose:

- The group spent the morning checking out of Hotel Grano de Oro, and storing their luggage that was later picked up by ICT representative Emilio Zuñiga.
- Four of the five media attendees spent the morning touring the Mercado Guadalupe and enjoying breakfast at local eatery Pupuseria Salvadoreña.
- One journalist, Alisha Prakash started feeling sick during the morning's activities and was taken back to the Holiday Inn hotel where she checked in and spent the afternoon relaxing.
- Journalist Alev Aktar enjoyed breakfast at leisure at Hotel Grano de Oro and was then picked up by expert guide Juvenal Acuña for a family focused tour to a local bird sanctuary and crocodile reserve outside of San Jose.
- The remaining three journalists and NJF representative Amalia Arguello spent the afternoon touring Finca el Mercat with owner and Jose Pablo Gonzalez, and enjoyed a true farm-to-table lunch on the farm.
- After lunch the group headed back into the city where they spent the afternoon walking around Barrio Escalante. Chef Jose Pablo shared insights on urban foraging throughout the neighborhood, and took the group to Merado Escalante where they enjoyed coffee, cookies and were surprised by a fun birthday party for the market's resident dog, Paco.
- The afternoon was also spent taking photos of Barrio Escalante's many wall murals.
- Following the city exploration the group was taken to the Holiday Inn where they checked in and spent the afternoon relaxing.
- A farewell dinner was enjoyed at Apotecario in Barrio Escalante, where the group enjoyed tasty cocktails, local beers and delicious dishes.



# Activities Outline

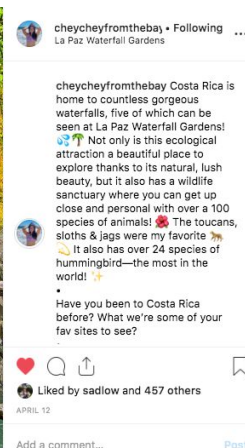
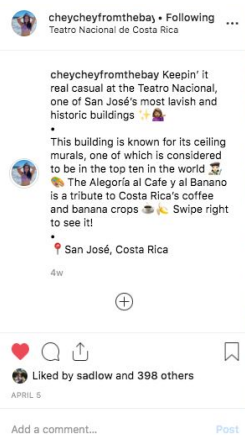
- The journalists had a chance to experience a variety of Costa Rica's cuisine, from the fine dining found in the center of San Jose, to fresh farm-to-table offerings and the many local eateries and sodas along the way.
- Everyone was extremely impressed with the freshness and variety of ingredients and produce found in Costa Rican cuisine. One of the most popular being the fresh fruit juices that were enjoyed daily at almost every meal.
- The media appreciated the opportunity to take in the local area along the way each day, especially the day that was spent fully enjoying Costa Rica's beauty at the Volcan Poas and the La Paz Waterfall Gardens.
- Attendees enjoyed the flexibility in our itinerary that allowed for us to stop along the way each day to enjoy and experience more of the local offerings - stop into a coffee shop on the way to Volcan Poas where they were able to purchase Costa Rica's best Coffee Cafe Doka, lunch in Cinchona at local restaurant that served up the most delicious home-style meal and the quick entree into the Teatro Nacional in San Jose, among others.
- Though it was not originally planned, media attendee Alev Aktar also appreciated the team's willingness to arrange a separate, more family-friendly experience for her on the last day to assist with her article research. Expert guide Juvenal Acuña picked her up and took her to a bird sanctuary and then a crocodile, river reserve outside of San Jose.
- Media attendees enjoyed having expert guide Vinicio Viquez as well as Chef Jose Pablo, who were always there to answer questions and provide context for the areas that were visited and the country's history.



# Key Learnings & Recommendations

- **Itinerary** - To ensure a seamless process for media and the agency representative leading the trip, NJF recommends providing the most detailed itinerary possible in advance of the trip and communicating if there are any changes after it has been shared. Upon arrival in San Jose, the agency representative learned the itinerary that had been shared with the media was not the same one that our expert guide Vinicio Viquez was provided by the ICT. This caused some confusion at the beginning of the trip and made it so the agency representative did not have the correct information when media attendees were asking questions.
- **Hotels** - Only one of the hotels chosen on the itinerary was to the media's liking - the Hotel Grano de Oro. One journalist advised that she would not be able to include Hotel Tryp Sabana and the Holiday Inn in her story, as readers of her various publications prefer higher-level accommodations. Although the trip was focused on experiencing Costa Rica's gastronomy, it was also about showcasing the country's offerings to travelers overall and accommodations are a part of that experience. With this in mind, the agency recommends the ICT be considerate when choosing hotels for future group press trips, and showcase accommodations that highlight the best of Costa Rica.
- **Leisure Time** - The agency recommends continuing to add leisure time for journalists each day. Though some days on the trip included back-to-back activities, the journalists were thankful they had leisure time to enjoy the properties, as well as down time to get other work done.

# Clippings: Social Media



Media Attendee: Chelsea Davis  
Instagram: @cheycheyfromthebay  
Followers: 14.4K

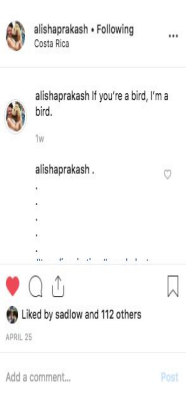
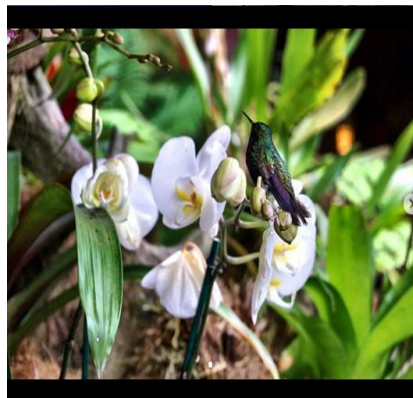
# Clippings: Social Media



Media Attendee: Chelsea Davis  
Instagram: @cheycheyfromthebay  
Followers: 14.4K

Estimated Ad-Value: \$86.40 per post, totalling \$864 for 10 posts

# Clippings: Social Media



Media Attendee: Alisha Prakash

Instagram: @alishaprakash

Followers: 3,574

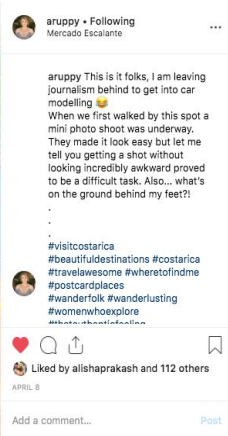
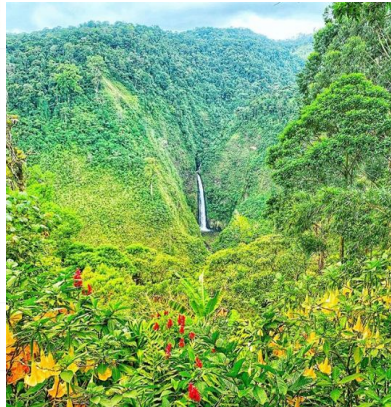
Estimated Ad-Value: \$21.53 per post, totally \$64.58 for 3 posts

# Clippings: Social Media



Media Attendee: Ann Ruppenstein  
Instagram: @aruppy  
Followers: 795

# Clippings: Social Media



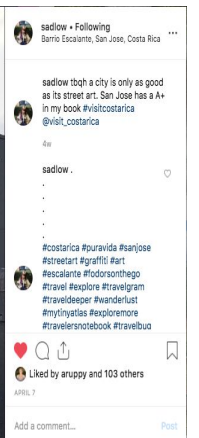
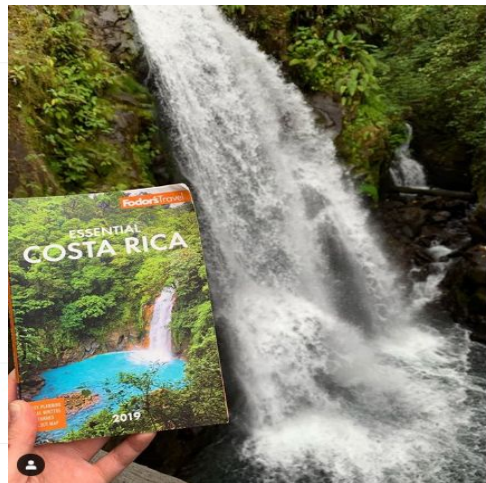
Media Attendee: Ann Ruppenstein

Instagram: @aruppy

Followers: 795

Estimated Ad-Value: \$5.31 per post, totalling \$47.79 for 9 posts

# Clippings: Social Media



Media Attendee: Amanda Sadlowski

Instagram: @sadlow

Followers: 441

Estimated Ad-Value: \$2.6 per post, totalling \$13.08 for 5 posts