

Villa Escaleras

506-787-8064

How to get here by car

The Villa is located a few [kilometers](#) south of Playa Dominical. There are two routes from San Jose to Dominical by car:

- From downtown San Jose, the easiest driving route to Dominical is via the mountainous Inter-American Highway south to San Isidro de El General and then west to the Pacific Coast.
- From the Juan Santamaria International airport, the coast road route via Jaco and Quepos is a good alternative.

This drive is several hours long, normally 3-5 depending on the route. It is a beautiful drive and most of the roads are in good condition (see below for exceptions). However, we do strongly recommend you make these drives in the morning when there is plenty of light and little fog in the mountains.

Alternatively, if you wish to avoid a long drive you may consider a Sansa or NatureAir flight from San Jose to Quepos, arranging in advance to be met by a car rental agency at the Quepos Airport. The drive from Quepos is about an hour.

DRIVING THE INTER-AMERICAN HIGHWAY ROUTE.

The route is approximately 170 kilometers and takes about 4 hours. It is often rainy and foggy in the afternoons, so it is best to start your journey from San Jose in the morning.

- San Jose - Cartago. Travel south from San Jose, following the "Route 2" signs toward Cartago. After the toll station (60 colones); follow the sign "Tres Rios-Cartago-Panama" through a multiple highway intersection. As you near the town of Cartago, watch for a modern 24-hour Shell gas station on your right. Keep to the right after you pass the gas station. (If you bear left, you will end up in the city of Cartago and have to backtrack.)
- Cartago - San Isidro. You will then pass through pasture land dotted with pine woods and the Centro Industrial-Cartago. After a few miles you begin to climb into the mountains. The climate, flora and fauna are diverse and the views stunning. The highway climbs to an altitude of nearly 12,000 feet, before descending into the town of San Isidro de El General (about 3 hours). As you enter San Isidro de El General, watch for the sign to Dominical. Turn right at the sign and continue through the town.
- San Isidro de El General - Dominical. The paved road becomes a beautiful rural road that winds up through the coastal mountain range and then down toward the Pacific Ocean and Dominical (about 1 hour).
- The coast highway. The San Isidro road ends at the Costanera Sur or coast highway. At that intersection, check the reading on your odometer and turn left (south), onto the coast highway. You will immediately cross a concrete bridge over the Rio Baru, continuing past the side road to Dominical (about .4 kilometers on the right), then the Plaza Pacifica shopping center (on the left).
- The San Martin Road. After traveling 8 kilometers from the San Isidro Road/coast highway intersection, you will see a "Villa Escaleras" sign on the right side of the road directing you to turn left and proceed up the San Martin Road for the final 2 kilometers to

the Villa. At this point you need to engage your 4-wheel drive (low gear). After approximately 2 kilometers, the San Martin Road reaches a crossroads. Follow the "Villa Escaleras" sign and turn right at the crossroads and continue about ½ a kilometer to the Villa (driveway intersects from right).

DRIVING THE COAST ROAD ROUTE.

From the airport, this route is a faster alternative because you avoid San Jose traffic. It is also not as pretty a drive. Saying that, the route does provide incredible mountain and ocean views. However, it includes an early stretch of narrow and winding mountain roads and ends with a 40-kilometer section of gravel road, punctuated by a number of narrow rural bridges, many without guardrails. This route is recommended only to confident drivers. If you are traveling during the wet season (June - November), email us just before you travel to get a road condition report.

1. From the Airport to Orotina. Travel northwest on Route 1 for a little over 10 kilometers and then follow the signs for "Route 27", "Jaco" and "Orotina." Soon the road (Route 27) will climb out of the Central Valley. The road is two-laned and filled with twists, turns and switchbacks. There are few opportunities to pass slower traffic. However, the scenery is a series of breathtaking mountain vistas, punctuated by coffee plantations on hills so steep you will wonder how cultivation can occur. This mountainous section continues for about 30 km until you descend into the town of Orotina.
2. Orotina - Quepos. Continue your descent, in a southwesterly direction, following signs to "Jaco", "Jaco Beaches" and "Carara Biological Reserve." The narrow mountain roads are behind you as you approach the coast. Drive carefully across a long, narrow bridge over the Rio Tarcoles, because it is often filled with pedestrians trying to catch a glimpse of the American crocodiles that inhabit the river and the red macaws that fly over the area. Continue through the Jaco resort area, keeping the Pacific coast to your right as you travel to the town of Quepos.
3. Quepos-Dominical. Passing through the town of Quepos, leave the coast area and travel east, following signs to "Dominical" and "Airport." At the Quepos Airport, the pavement ends and this portion of the coastal road (about 38 kilometers) is gravel surfaced until the intersection with the San Isidro Road, just north of Playa Domatical. Considerable caution should be used when crossing over the many bridges in this stretch of road, because they are all more narrow and rickety than any bridge you encounter in the United States. Many do not have any form of guardrails. All are being replaced as this road is being paved.
4. Just before this stretch ends, you will pass a 24-hour gas station on the right, shortly followed by the intersection of the coast highway and the road to San Isidro de El General. From this point, the coast highway is again paved. Take an odometer reading at this intersection and then continue, crossing the bridge over the Rio Baru, past the road to Domatical and the Plaza Pacifica shopping center.
5. The San Martin Road. After traveling 8 kilometers from the San Isidro Road/coast highway intersection, you will see a "Villa Escaleras" sign on the right side of the road directing you to turn left and proceed up the San Martin Road for the final 2 kilometers to the Villa. At this point you need to engage your 4-wheel drive (low gear). After approximately 2 kilometers, the San Martin Road reaches a crossroads. Follow the "Villa Escaleras" sign and turn right at the crossroads and continue about ½ a kilometer to the Villa (driveway intersects from right).