

2010-11-07



**La Bokaina**  
p o s a d a

## **[GOOD TO KNOW WHEN COMING TO VENEZUELA]**

A few pages with information on things that can be good to think about when coming to La Bokaina, Choróni & Venezuela. All in order to make the best and the most out of your trip...

## Content

1)	Information about La Bokaina .....	4
	a) Accommodations & services .....	4
	b) Arriving to la Bokaina .....	5
	c) Check in & Check out .....	6
	d) Rules of the hotel .....	6
2)	Information about Choroní and surroundings .....	7
	a) Eating out .....	7
	b) Internet & Telephone.....	7
	c) Climate .....	7
	d) Money exchange .....	8
	e) Shopping .....	8
	f) Safety .....	8
	g) Local medical treatment .....	8
	h) Things to bring... ..	8
3)	Information about Venezuela .....	9
	a) Flights to and from Venezuela .....	9
	b) Car hire.....	9
	c) Tips/Service Charges .....	10
	d) Personal Responsibility and safety.....	10
	e) Language .....	10
	g) Time Zone .....	11
	h) Country code.....	11
	i) Driving .....	11
	j) Electricity.....	11
	k) Currency and Money exchange.....	11
	l) Internet & Telephone.....	11
	m) Vaccination and healthcare .....	11
4)	Links for more information .....	12

## Good to know when coming to Venezuela!

*If you decided to come to Venezuela we first of all would like congratulate you, because it truly is an amazing country and we hope that you soon will feel the same. To make your trip as pleasant as possible we have collected information and put together a document answering a lot of the questions that we receive constantly from our guests. We don't claim this document to be complete and information in it can be incorrect (due to updates, changes and other reasons). It is, in other words, always good to double check things to be sure. If you find something that is not right or if you have any information that you think should be added –please tell us.*

*Staff of La Bokaina*



## 1) Information about La Bokaina


---



### a) Accommodations & services

- i) **Car Parking:** La Bokaina has a safe private parking lot that is lit up during night time. There are enough parking lots to cover the needs of the posada.
- ii) **Cash and credit cards:** La Bokaina accepts cash and Venezuelan debit card payments with Visa, Master Card, Maestro and Visa Electron. All tours are paid in cash. To reserve a room a 50% advance payment is made.

#### iii) Electricity

- (1) The electricity is 120 Volts, 60Hz and if you travel to Venezuela with a device that does not accept 120 Volts at 60 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. We do not have these at the hotel. The general plug in Venezuela is a flat blade type (the same type as in the US). At La Bokaina some of the rooms also have a European style plug with two round pins.
- (2) La Bokaina has an electric plant that is used whenever there are power cuts. This means that we will have light, water, A/C etc even though the power is out.

- iv) **Insects:** Venezuela is a tropical country and just as there are lots of plants and birds there are quite a few insects. If they bother you, a good way to keep them out is to keep lights at a minimum and of course keep the door

open as little as possible. For the mosquitoes it is a good idea to bring a repellent. The number of mosquitoes depends on the weather. More rain, more mosquitoes.

- v) **Internet:** La Bokaina offers you free Wifi on the best connection available in Choroni. Please ask at the reception for the password.
- vi) **Our tours:** We always try to help you book your trip or tour with companies that we, from experience, believe offer the best services. We cannot guarantee availability, and the fulfillment of the services is outside the control and the responsibility of La Bokaina. However, we will gladly hear your opinion after the trip. We also reserve the right to make changes in the tour offers as well as their content. So to be sure to have the latest information always contact us.
- vii) **Personal Responsibility & Safety:** Please note that we do not take any responsibility for valuables and/or personal belongings in the rooms so please take normal safety measures.
- viii) **Taxi service:** The hotel has a taxi service that can arrange for airport pickups and travels to pretty much the whole of Venezuela. Contact us for more information and prices.
- ix) **Washing:** We have a washing service where we wash your clothes for, at the time of writing, 25 BsF per load, maximum 5 kg.
- x) **Water**
  - (1) All the rooms carry hot water and La Bokaina has, like most places in Venezuela, a local storage tank so please do not overuse the hot water as it can run out.
  - (2) We don't recommend that you drink the water right from the tap, instead we provide water, free of charge in a water dispenser with both hot and cold water.

## b) Arriving to la Bokaina

Most of our international guests that don't have a vehicle, take a taxi from the airport or other destinations in Venezuela. We recommend you to use taxis and can help you book one you can trust.

- i) **By Bus:** If you wish to use other less expensive alternatives, you can take a taxi at the bus terminal in Maracay and only pay for your seat or take the public bus from the same terminal.
- ii) **By Car:** If you are driving, follow the signs to Choroni from Maracay and once you get to the entrance of the National Park Henri Pittier, drive for about two hours. Make sure to watch the speed as the road is quite narrow in some places, blow the horn in every curve and make change of lights if driving during the night.

Once you get to Choróní, follow the road to the main square (Plaza Bolívar) and take a left turn after it (following the signs Puerto Colombia-Playa Grande). Take the next possible right turn and follow the road crossing two bridges. You will find a third bridge that you won't cross, take instead the road to the left. Follow that road (passing Posada Las García and El Portete on your right hand side) immediately after El Portete, make a right turn and follow the dirt road for about 5 minutes until you get to La Bokaina. Follow the parking signs and you have arrived!

- iii) **Distances to main sites from La Bokaina:** Once in La Bokaina, you can walk to most of the sites and attractions in the area. The beach promenade where you take boats to the beaches on the coast is only 5 minutes away and the main beach "Playa Grande" is at 10 minutes walking distance from us.

### c) Check in & Check out

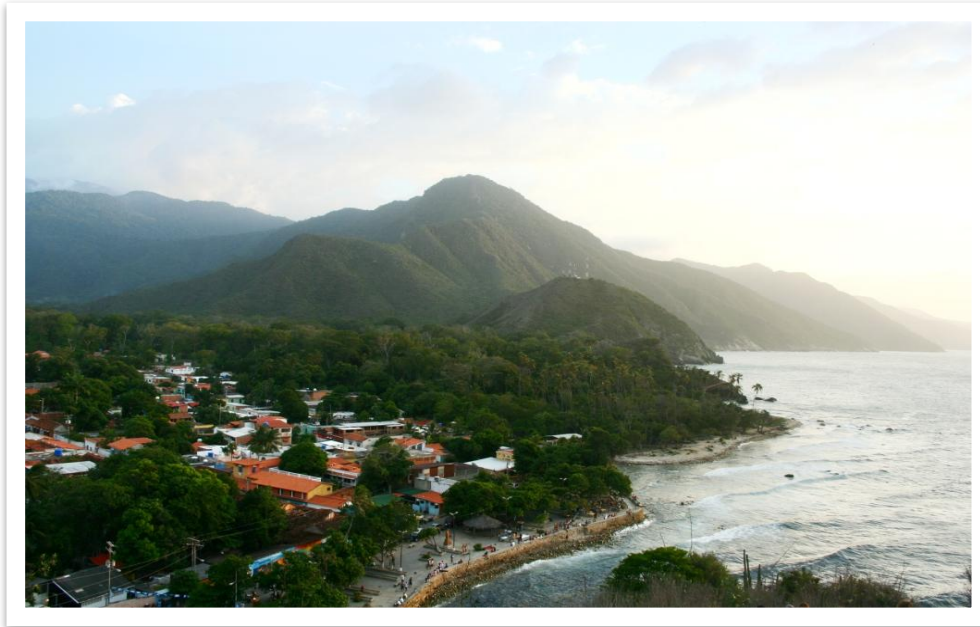
Check in is at 2:00 pm. Check out is at 1:00 pm. If you wish to get here earlier or leave later, you can leave your belongings at the reception desk while your room is ready or you get back from the beach. We have a guest bathroom at your disposition.

### d) Rules of the hotel

- i) **No pets:** Under no circumstances it is permitted to bring pets to La Bokaina.
- ii) **No external guests:** It is not allowed to bring guests that are not staying at La Bokaina into the rooms.
- iii) **Do not steal decoration and furniture:** All furniture and decorating elements in the rooms are property of La Bokaina. This also includes towels and clothes hangers. Please do not take them out of the room. All rooms will be checked during check out and any missing item will be paid for by the guest.

## 2) Information about Choroní and surroundings

---



### a) Eating out

We have close connections to many good restaurants in the area -everything from Pizza to Gourmet. Ask us and we can give recommendations and make reservations.

### b) Internet & Telephone

- i) **Internet:** If you don't have a computer and hence cannot use our Wifi connection there are several internet cafés in Puerto Colombia.
- ii) **Telephone:** There is also a Movistar (one of Venezuela's mobile telephone companies) store in Puerto Colombia where you can make national and international calls.

### c) Climate

The temperature in Choroní is very stable and averages around 28-29 degrees Celsius during daytime. Water temperatures are usually around 25-27 degrees Celsius.

There are 2 seasons that are rather indistinct. The dry season lasts from December to April, the wet one from May to November. It is important to point out that rainy season very seldom means days of rain. Rather it normally rains for a few hours on occasional days.

Venezuela and Choroní do not lay in the hurricane belt. Thus hurricanes are very rare here.

#### **d) Money exchange**

Choroní has only one bank and limited access to ATM machines. In some restaurants you can pay with debit and credit cards.

#### **e) Shopping**

In Choroní there is quite good commercial activity but it is not developed in the way that it carries large supermarkets. Rather there are small stores and stands that sell most things you need. There are several stores that sell groceries but the offer is rather limited. Liquor, wine and beer are sold in several stores and there are also a few stores that sell nice beach wear.

For great shopping with a massive offer with local and international brands, Maracay, 1,5 h away is the best choice. Maracay, which is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city of Venezuela with its 1.9 million inhabitants, has many really good malls.

#### **f) Safety**

There are seldom problems with crime in Choroní and it is generally safe during both day and night time. However it is always good to take normal safety measures when at the beach or in the towns.

The sea can be very rough at times and unfortunately incidents do occur. We only work with experienced boatmen that also say no when the weather conditions are bad even though it can be tempting to earn an extra buck. Also be careful when swimming since the currents can be quite strong at times. If this is a worry it can be a good options to choose Valle Seco, that is protected by reefs which disables the currents or Playa Grande that have life guards from 8 am to 4 pm every day.

#### **g) Local medical treatment**

There are two public health centers in the region, one in Puerto Colombia and one in Choroní. They are however limited and for serious injuries Maracay is to prefer where there are many public and private clinics. Don't forget to have a good healthcare insurance and bring a copy of the insurance to show in the clinics.

#### **h) Things to bring...**

- i) **Beach Towels:** The towels at the hotel is only for use at the hotel. There are however stores in Puerto Colombia where you can buy towels.



- ii) **Beach wear and casual clothing:** it is very seldom anybody dresses up in Choroní.
- iii) **Binoculars:** if you are at all interested in birds and a bird book if you are a serious bird watcher.
- iv) **Books** if you like to read. There are no book stores in Choroní
- v) **Snorkelling gear:** there are also gear to buy in Puerto Colombia.
- vi) **Mosquito repellent:** there can be quite a few mosquitoes at times so bring repellent.
- vii) **High factor sun block:** the sun is fierce here
- viii) **Sun glasses:** you will need them
- ix) **A torch** can come in handy during night and possible power cuts.
- x) **An open attitude** and a great smile. ☺ Even though things do not always turn out as planned most people seem to love Choroní. Just leave your tough city demands at home and you will too...

### 3) Information about Venezuela

---

#### *Formula of happiness*

*Caribbean + Amazonas + Andes = Venezuela*

#### a) Flights to and from Venezuela

- i) Here you can read about which airlines fly to and from Simón Bolívar International Airport (Maiquetía-Caracas)  
[http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeropuerto\\_Internacional\\_de\\_Maiquet%C3%A9\\_Da\\_Sim%C3%B3n\\_Bol%C3%ADvar#Europa](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeropuerto_Internacional_de_Maiquet%C3%A9_Da_Sim%C3%B3n_Bol%C3%ADvar#Europa) (external link in Spanish)
- ii) Here is the official web page of Simón Bolívar International Airport  
<http://aeropuerto-maiquetia.com.ve/Default.aspx> (external link in Spanish)
- iii) The airport tax when leaving Venezuela is, at the time of writing, BS.F. 137,50 (\$63,96 official rate)

#### b) Car hire

- i) There are plenty of Car rentals in Venezuela and we list a few well known here
  - (1) [www.budget.com.ve](http://www.budget.com.ve)
  - (2) [www.hertz.com.ve](http://www.hertz.com.ve)
  - (3) [www.avis.com.ve](http://www.avis.com.ve)
- ii) **Please observe**
  - (1) There are no car rentals in the Choroní area. The closest is in Maracay.

- (2) The traffic is quite dense and driving style aggressive so be careful when renting a car in Venezuela. We do not recommend renting a car for driving in Caracas if you don't know the area well. Caracas has massive traffic jams and is dangerous.
- (3) If you decide to rent a car you will be positively surprised by the price of gas. Price is the cheapest in the world and you can fill your car up for less than 10 BsF.

### c) Tips/Service Charges

In some restaurants a service tax will be included, usually 10%.

Apart from that tips for different kinds of services are like anywhere else -give what you feel is appropriate.

### d) Personal Responsibility and safety

Venezuela can unfortunately be very dangerous in some areas. Our general recommendation is to be careful at the airport since robberies do occur and people are scammed for money when exchanging on the black market. We also recommend avoiding Caracas. In all honesty this is not where the treasures of the beautiful Venezuela lay but if you really want to go there -be careful and choose official taxis which are among the safest ways of getting around in Caracas and they are fairly cheap as well. Make sure to agree on price before the trip as there are no taximeters. See to stripping yourself on valuables before going out and also make sure that you know where you are going. Also other cities can be dangerous, however not to the extent Caracas is, so take as a rule to be careful and carry minimal valuables when going out.

### e) Language

- i) As in most of South America, Spanish is the predominant language here. Even though some speak good English it is more the exception than the rule. So bring your Spanish dictionary and get into practicing your Spanish. If not you might be amazed of how far you can get using your arms and hands!
- ii) Restaurants often have menus in English. This is also holds for the better restaurants in the Choroní area.

### f) Visa Requirements

Here you can read about which nationalities need Visa and you can also download a list with contact details to the embassies and consulates in Venezuela. <http://aeropuerto-maiquetia.com.ve//VIAJEROS/pasaj1f.aspx>. To be certain we also recommend talking to Venezuelan embassy in your country since sometimes even official web pages are not fully updated.

### **g) Time Zone**

Time zone is UTC (London Mean Time) -4.30 and do not observe daylight savings time.

### **h) Country code**

The telephone country code of Venezuela is 58.

### **i) Driving**

You drive on the right side of the road

### **j) Electricity**

The electricity is 120 Volts, 60Hz and if you travel to Venezuela with a device that does not accept 120 Volts at 60 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. The general plug in Venezuela is a flat blade type (the same type as in the US)

### **k) Currency and Money exchange**

- i) The currency in Venezuela is Bolivar Fuerte (BsF) which is the new currency imposed a few years ago. What happened then was that three zeros were cut as compared to the old Bolivar. Many people however still use the old way of expressing prices so at times things can seem very expensive.
- ii) The official exchange rate is 4.30 BsF to the USD. Since this rate is fixed and the supply of USD in Venezuela is restricted by the authorities, a black market has emerged with other exchange rates than the official.

### **l) Internet & Telephone**

You will find Internet cafes in cities and in tourist areas. Many mobile phones do not work here in Venezuela (check with your operator at home to find out) but there are many places where you can make cheap national and international calls. Among them is Simón Bolívar International Airport.

### **m) Vaccination and healthcare**

- i) There is no one way that is recommended on how to vaccinate before coming to Venezuela. We recommend that you advise a doctor or vaccination clinic at home.
- ii) The healthcare system in Venezuela is among the best developed in Latin America. Generally speaking the private clinics are better but they are also more expensive. Don't forget to have a good healthcare insurance and bring a copy of the insurance to show in the clinics.

#### 4) Links for more information

---

a) Venezuelan Embassy in the US

<http://www.embavenez-us.org>

b) Lonely planet on Venezuela

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela>

c) Tripadvisor on Venezuela

<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g294324-Venezuela-Vacations.html>

d) Wikipedia on Venezuela

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venezuela>

**Have a great journey!**

