DRAKE BAY

Getting to Drake Bay

The four ways in, with time, cost and the catch of each. Print it or keep it on your phone.

4 routes
boat, two 4x4 roads and a flight

1–1.5 h
boat ride Sierpe → Drake

≈ 50 min
flight from San José

4x4
required on both land roads

The four routes at a glance

ROUTE	FROM SAN JOSÉ	COST	BEST FOR
1. Boat from Sierpe	6–8 h (drive or bus + boat)	Boat US$20–30 per person	Most travelers; the mangrove ride
2. 4x4 via Rincón	6.5–7 h (more in rain)	4x4 rental + fuel	Confident drivers; the easier land road
3. 4x4 via the Sierpe ferry	7–8 h (more in rain)	4x4 + fuel + ferry ≈ ₡5,000 per car	Adventurous drivers, dry season
4. Domestic flight	≈ 50 min in the air	From ≈ US$160–170 one way	Short trips and light packers

Which one for you?

- **First time, no 4x4?** Take the boat (1) or fly (4).
- **Short on time?** Fly: about one hour instead of a full day.
- **Love driving, dry season?** Route 2 first; Route 3 only after asking in Sierpe.
- **Heavy rain?** The boat is the safest; never cross a swollen river.



Arrival at Drake Bay: the boats land on the beach and you step off into the water.

Route 1 in detail: the boat from Sierpe

- **Shared boats** leave Sierpe around **11:30 a.m.** and mid-afternoon (about 3:30–4 p.m.); the return from Drake is early (about 7:30 a.m.). Ride: 1–1.5 h.
- **To Sierpe:** 5–6 h by car from San José (Costanera Sur to Palmar Norte, then 25 min); about 1 h from Uvita. Tracopa bus: 6–7 h. Guarded parking near the docks costs a few dollars a day.
- **Wet landing:** Drake Bay has no dock. You step into knee-deep water: wear sandals and use a dry bag and a soft duffel.
- **The river mouth** can be rough from September to November; captains time the crossing with the tide.



BEFORE YOU GO

Driving, prices and packing

Driving: via Rincón or via the Sierpe ferry?

	VIA RINCÓN (ROUTE 2)	VIA SIERPE FERRY (ROUTE 3)
Starts at	Chacarita, Route 245, Rincón	Sierpe and the vehicle ferry
Road	Wider, well-packed dirt	Narrower, rougher, steeper hills
Rivers	A bridge over the Drake River and a few low fords in the dry season	No bridges: you ford the Guerra and Sábalo rivers and some streams
Time	From Chacarita: about 2 h dry, 3+ h in rain	From the ferry: 1.5–2 h to Drake
Best for	Most self-drivers	Dry season; ask in Sierpe first

Before you drive

- Fill the tank: no gas station in Drake Bay. Nearest: Palmar Sur and Chacarita.
- Engage 4x4 before the gravel starts. Expect steep hills and mud.
- Ask locally (boat operators in Sierpe or your lodge) whether the road is open today.
- Check your rental insurance: it often excludes river-crossing damage. Google Maps and Waze do not map the ferry road well.
- **Never cross a swollen river.** If in doubt, wait, or leave the car in Sierpe and take the boat.

Prices at a glance (October 2026)

WHAT	PRICE
Shared boat Sierpe → Drake (town)	US$20 one way
Shared boat to the Caletas sector	US$25 one way
Shared boat to the Corcovado sector	US$30 one way (≈ 95 min)
Flight San José → Drake (SANSA)	≈ US$160–170 one way
Vehicle ferry in Sierpe	≈ ₡5,000 per car
4x4 rental	≈ US$50–80 per day + fuel and insurance

When to go

MONTHS	EXPECT
Dec–Apr	Dry: calm seas, easiest roads. Book early.
May–Aug	Green: sunny mornings, afternoon rain.
Sep–Nov	Wettest: rough crossings, muddy roads, some lodges close.

Pack for the boat and the plane

- [ ] Dry bag for phone, passport and camera
- [ ] Sandals with a back strap
- [ ] Soft duffel: small planes have strict weight limits
- [ ] Cash: banking services in Drake are limited

Prices, schedules and roads change. Verified in October 2026 with operators and local drivers. Confirm the boat time, flight and road conditions with your lodge before you travel. The Sierpe ferry road is based on local knowledge.

SCAN FOR THE LIVE, UPDATED PAGE

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