



THE VILLA HERMOSA, COSTA RICA

Hot Springs in the La Fortuna Area

Many times we're asked about what the differences are in the hot springs in the area and which one is "better than the others"? So, I put together some info on this topic. Everybody is looking for something different and the price of admittance can play a big part on where you decide to go. We hope this helps you decide which of the local hot springs is right for you!

Tabacon Hot Springs & Spa

This is by far the nicest hot springs in the area and it's been around the longest as well. They have a resort but it is separate (up the road) from the hot springs area.

Positives: The setting is the most natural of all of the springs in the area. They have dark bottom pooled nestled amongst lush settings and large natural rocks. You truly feel like you're in the midst of the jungle while soaking in the hot waters. Also, this truly is a "natural" hot springs as the waters are heated naturally by the volcano coming out at about 122 degrees. Not all of the rest of the hot springs places in the area feel this "natural". They have packages where food is included and a swim up bar. Pool towels & lockers are available. The bottom line is if you can afford to go here do it!

Negatives: The price is the biggest negative for this property as an all day pass (10am-10pm) is \$75 per person! There are slightly less expensive options such as a morning pass (10-2:30pm at \$45) or an evening pass (6-10pm at \$35). The other negative that we've heard is that the service can be a bit slow but that could probably be said of all places in CR as we move at a slower pace here! Reservations are required, especially during busy times of the year.

The Springs Resort & Spa

This is a multi-million dollar hotel that is only a few years old and is absolutely gorgeous! They used a lot of local woods, mosaic & stained glass and wrought iron details that anyone can appreciate. This is one of our favorite places to go because it's only about 5 minutes from here, the food is good and the staff is so friendly!

Positives: The food, the atmosphere, the staff, the view of the volcano and the proximity to Villa Hermosa! No reservations are needed so you can go at the spur of the moment which we like as well. The property is very large and they only have about 40 rooms so even when it's "full" you can find many, many places where you feel like it's just you! They also have an animal rescue where they took animals that nobody else was willing to care for and they will take you down to see the beautiful pumas, ocelots, jaguarundis, monkeys and more. You just need to ask when you get to reception what time they are going down (usually @ 4pm)-this is included in your entry price. Pool towels and lockers are available-you need to pay \$5 for the locker at the reception area when you enter. Pool towels they sometimes ask you to leave a "deposit" so you make sure to return the towels....sometimes they don't ask but either way just go with the flow and they'll give you



your money back when you return the towels so don't worry. They sell you a 2-day pass for \$40 which is only \$20 a day so in comparison to others...it's not a bad price!

Negatives: You are not at the base of the volcano and although the view of the volcano is great, we don't believe the pools are actually heated by the volcano. They empty the pools nightly so sometimes (in cooler weather) there are some pools that are not as warm as you might like...especially the one at the swim-up bar! However, if the weather is nice, the sun usually heats them up fairly quickly so it's not a problem.

Hotel Los Lagos

We think this is one of the best bargains in town because you get a lot for your money. The current price is \$15 for adults and children under 8 are 50% off. We've sent many families here and everybody has always been happy-there's enough for both adults and kids to enjoy!

Positives: The price is great, you're at the base of the volcano, they have slides, hot and cold pools, swim-up bar, several small pools for privacy, pool towels & lockers are available. They also have on the property an enclosed butterfly area, a frog area, an ant farm and a caiman/crocodile area. No reservations are required.

Negatives: It can get a little crowded so you really never know how many people are going to be there when you go, the pools are man-made but they did a good job of making them look more natural, you can't eat at the swim up bar (which is one of our favorite things to do at the Springs).

Baldi Hot Springs Resort & Spa

They call this the "Disneyland" of hot springs because of several things, mostly the tourist buses of visitors that come to it on a daily basis during the busy season. Pools range from 93°F to 152°F. They just did a huge remodel at the end of 2011 so it's quite impressive as you drive by. Entrance costs are \$31 for adults and it's 50% off for children under 6.

Positives: They have some nice grounds to walk on, the pools they have are very large and spread out along a pathway so you have many choices of where to go, they say the pools are different temperatures (posted on signs) although we thought they were off...who knows? The waters here are definitely naturally heated by the volcano. We had the food that was at the restaurant located by the front entrance and the food was fairly good but definitely overpriced-although this seems to be a theme at all of the hot springs as you're a "captive" audience. They have three slides: 104' long, 122' long and 325' long. Pool towels and lockers are available.

This is "the" place to go if you're looking for a party atmosphere especially on a Saturday or Sunday....the could obviously be seen as a positive or a negative. ☺

Negatives: The amount of people can be overwhelming and sometimes the noise: the music-sometimes it's turned up way too loud and just from all the other people being loud too. We felt that all the pools were scorching hot and thus uncomfortable to sit in even for a few minutes, there is a cool pool in the middle of one of the hot pools but you have to walk through the searing hot



pool to get to it. Reservations are required. It can be tough to find a spot and you have to park on the side of the road and then cross the road to the entrance.

EcoTermales

This place is located just across the street from Baldi but is worlds different! The entrance fee is \$32 and \$22 for children under 10 years old. Pools range in temperature from 77°F up to 122°F. Times for reservations are: 10am-1pm, 1pm-5pm, 5pm-9pm. Costs with dinners varies on the type of dinner and you buy it with your entrance ticket. The food is all Costa Rican fare and has had great reviews! The prices are for adults including food (and depending on which menu you choose) are \$49, \$52 or \$57.

Positives: Very lush surroundings which you'll notice as soon as you go through the entrance gate you drive down a long driveway dense with foliage. You definitely get the feel of nature here and it's a very intimate setting. They limit the number of people so it never gets over-crowded. There is no hotel here, just springs so that's another advantage because it means less people & less noise. Private parking.

Negatives: No view of the volcano, there are only 4 small pools in a line really affords you no privacy. Reservations are required at all times (slow season or not) and they do fill up so if you want to go here, you'll need to reserve in advance.

Termales Los Laureles

This is where the locals go to have a nice day hanging out at the hot springs. The entrance is located just across from Hotel Los Lagos. The entrance fee is only \$8 for adults & \$4 for children and there are many benefits of going here: grills to BBQ on, covered picnic tables with an electrical outlet (to plug in your i-pod) & security box (you'll need to bring your own lock-we have several that our guests can borrow), great view of the volcano and all different pool temperatures. We go here often with a group of friends and because you can bring your own food & drink it really is a very economical place to go!

Positives: During the week this place is usually quite deserted so you can have a very peaceful, relaxing day laying in the sun and exploring all of the different pools to see which is your favorite! If you are traveling with children, this may be a great place for them to go and play with the local children on a Saturday or Sunday. There are 2 slides and they also have lockers/changing areas.

Negatives: We suggest you do not go here on a Sunday if you want peace & quiet as it gets pretty busy. You are not allowed to have any food or beverages (of any kinds) in the pools so having a "cold one" while sitting in the pool is not an option! They do have security walking around...they'll give you a warning first (in Spanish) but if they catch you again you're out...they're quite strict on this.

If you have any questions at all please don't hesitate to contact us at info@theVillaHermosa.com!