

# CENTAURI **ARTS**

## **Creative Writing Retreat**

**offered in partnership with Las Cascadas Boutique Hotel, Quepos, Costa Rica**

**Sunday 19th to Sunday 26th January 2025**



*Imagine writing in a hammock overlooking pristine rainforest, with the Pacific Ocean sparkling below. Picture yourself taking workshops on a lovely veranda, surrounded by tropical gardens, or reading on a terrace where scarlet macaws nest and monkeys are regular visitors.*

**Welcome to our 11th Costa Rica Creative Writing Retreat, taking place at a brand new location: Las Cascadas Boutique Hotel, close to Manuel Antonio National Park.**

### **About Las Cascadas**

Las Cascadas (The Falls) Boutique Hotel is located in rainforest, just a 5 minute walk from the new Marina which has several restaurants and coffee shops for our writers. A further 5 minute walk takes you into Quepos, with more restaurants and gorgeous sunset views over the ocean. We are 10 minutes by bus or taxi from Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica's most famous National Park.

The hotel has a lovely pool, a bar that serves amazing cocktails and a small restaurant. Las Cascadas is family-owned, ensuring the friendly atmosphere that has become a valued feature of all our writing retreats. In addition to the pool area, the hotel offers writers other spectacular areas in which to relax or write, such as "The Hammock" terrace, where you can also watch the scarlet macaws that nest on the property.

Las Cascadas is visited regularly by squirrel monkeys, toucans, sloths and exotic tropical birds. You can read more about our hotel here:

<https://www.lascascadasthefalls.com/>



## Accommodation, Food and Transportation

At Las Cascadas, writers can choose between private or shared bedrooms with AC and Wifi. We are holding 2 private rooms for couples or male writers, as well as 2 x 2-bedroom cottages and 'Casa Cascadas', a spacious 3-bedroom cottage. All three of our cottages feature indoor and outdoor seating areas, newly renovated bathrooms, kitchens and lovely views over rainforest and tropical gardens. The 3-bedroom cottage is very large, and will be our shared base during writing periods, since it boasts both a huge outdoor terrace, and an indoor, air-conditioned dining area large enough for all of us. A modest breakfast is offered free of charge in the restaurant, or you can choose to cook for yourself. Lunch and dinner can be prepared by you in the well stocked kitchens, enjoyed in the on-site restaurant, or we can walk to the marina and town for endless options.

Las Cascadas is located a pleasant 2.5 hour drive south of the international airport at San Jose. Our group will meet at the airport at around 4pm on the first day, travelling by air-conditioned minibus to our hotel. We will depart together after breakfast on the final day. Since this writing retreat is not an all-inclusive package, writers can either take advantage of our airport transfer, sharing the costs with other writers, or make their own arrangements - something that will be attractive if this retreat is part of a longer holiday in Costa Rica.



## Come Solo, or with Family or Friends

Almost all our writers attend on their own, forming close bonds with other writers during our week. If you wish to share a room with another writer to half your costs, this can often be arranged. Writers attending with a partner will be housed in a private unit close to our 3-bedroom cottage. Please call to discuss options for accommodation, if you wish to attend with others.



## Creative Writing Workshops

Our writing workshops take place on the lovely terrace outside Casa Cascadas, and feature prompts and techniques applicable to writers interested in memoir, short fiction, plays, poetry and novels. Beginning writers are welcome, as well as writers with experience. We accept only a small number of participants (7-10 writers per retreat) so we can easily adapt to meet your needs. Each writing retreat includes 6 workshops of 2-3 hours in length, mostly held in the mornings. Workshops may focus on plot, character, sources of inspiration, descriptive writing, poetry, editing strategies and the business of writing. Workshops feature all-new content each time we run a retreat, so many writers join us year after year.

In addition to our writing workshops, your week will include informal critiquing sessions, evening social events and additional writing-related activities as requested by the group. Our retreats conclude with a celebratory evening during which writers are invited to share their work with the group.

For writers with a project in progress, solo consultations are available at an additional fee. Please contact us for details.



## Local Attractions

If you need a break from your writing, there is so much to do nearby! While most writing workshops take place in the morning, we will offer our class to the afternoon on one of our days, so writers have the option to depart very early with a nature guide for the nearby Manuel Antonio National Park. You'll be in the park shortly after dawn – the best time to view nature! Manuel Antonio is home to 3 species of monkeys as well as 2-toed sloths, iguanas, basilisks, and 184 species of birds! You may even see dolphins from the pristine beaches. At the end of your nature tour, you have the option of remaining in the park to enjoy the beaches or nature trails.

Other nearby attractions include the local town of Quepos, as well as kayaking in the mangroves, zip lining, bird watching, snorkelling, a waterfall walk and a sunset catamaran trip. All sightseeing can be arranged for you, by the hotel, and writers often save money by sharing the cost of taxis and tours..



# Your Trip Leader and Creative Writing Instructor

Julie Hartley has more than 20 years' experience as a writer and writing instructor, and has hosted 15+ creative writing retreats. She is the author of *The Finding Place*, a novel for young adults published by Red Deer Press, and *Deboning a Dragon*, a poetry collection released by Mansfield Press. An accomplished playwright and short story writer, Julie has been published in numerous literary magazines. Her textbook for drama teachers was published in 2019 by Theatrefolk, and is used all over the world. Julie has two historical novels forthcoming with Bookouture UK, and she has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia.

In her non-writing life, Julie is the co-director of Centauri Arts, which brings together creative teens and adults from all over the world for classes, camps and retreats. She teaches creative writing at conferences and retreats all over the world, and at her own centre – the Centauri Arts Academy in Toronto.



Photo by Victoria Grazioli



# Prices

## Fee 1 - Deposit Payable on Registration

This fee is payable to Centauri Arts in Canadian funds at the time of booking. This fee secures your space on the trip, and covers the writing workshops and group services provided by us

**Deposit, per Writer, per week** \$695CDN (approx. \$510 US)  
**Non-writer, same room:** \$150CDN (approx. \$100US)  
(Includes group leader support only/social activities only)

This fee includes:

6 writing workshops (minimum total contact time - 15 hours)  
A manual of writing prompts and techniques  
Writing-related activities  
Group leader services  
Information on Costa Rica and a trip manual.

### How to find out more:

Call us at 416-766-7124 or  
email [julie@centauriarts.com](mailto:julie@centauriarts.com)  
We would be happy to answer  
all of your questions

## Fee 2 – Lodge Fee, Payable 60 days Before Our Trip

This fee is payable directly to our lodge in Quepos, in US funds.

**Lodge fee, per room (single or double occupancy), 7 nights, \$1254 US**

Writers are welcome to bring along a partner, or share rooms with another writer.

**This fee includes:**

This fee includes:

Seven nights in a private bedroom in 2- or 3-bedroom cottages with garden or mountain views, WiFi and AC. Each bedroom locks separately, and has its own safe. We are also holding 2 x 1-bedroom units for couples, or male writers (these do not have kitchens).

Our writing workshops take place in the 3-bedroom cottage, in the large, air-conditioned dining room, or the rainforest-view patio

Las Cascadas offers a selection of 3 complimentary breakfasts in the restaurant each day.

## Additional Services & Fees

This is not a package tour. Writers are responsible for all additional costs on arrival, including transfers to the hotel, meals and sightseeing. As a guide...

**Airport Transfer:** Return transportation can be arranged for you by the hotel. The cost is approx. \$80 US per person, depending on no. of participants.

**Lunches, dinners and beverages** can be purchased on site or in the local town; allow \$10-25 per meal, or save money by cooking!

**Sightseeing** can be booked directly at our hotel - or choose simply to relax and write!

**Our fees do not include your flight to San Jose, nor medical insurance.**

## How to Reserve Your Space

Complete the application form here: <https://form.jotform.com/centauriarts/writing-retreat-application>

Questions? Call Julie at +1 416 766 7124 or email [julie@centauriarts.com](mailto:julie@centauriarts.com)

**Limited space is available!** We accept only 7-10 writers each week, to ensure the best experience.

For more information  
on Las Cascadas  
Lodge, go to:  
[www.lascascadasthefalls.com/](http://www.lascascadasthefalls.com/)

## Booking Terms & Conditions (The Small Print!)

Your electronic signature on the Application Form designates you accept and are willing to be bound by the following terms and conditions for the Costa Rica Tour offered by Centauri Summer Camp Inc. (hereafter referred to as "Centauri")



### Payment

A deposit is required at the time of booking, payable to Centauri and covering the writing services we offer. If you must cancel your trip up to 12 weeks before your retreat, we will refund your deposit/writing retreat fee, minus a \$350CDN cancellation fee. If you cancel within 12 weeks of your trip, no refund can be offered.

Your accommodation fee is payable directly to Las Cascadas 60 days before your retreat begins. Read about the hotel here, for full details of what is included: [www.lascascadasthefalls.com](http://www.lascascadasthefalls.com)

### Flights

The flight is not included; this is not a package tour and participants join us from all over the world. Provided you are able to fly into San Jose, Costa Rica by 4pm on the first day of the trip, and depart from San Jose on the afternoon or evening of the final day, an airport collection service is offered by the hotel and the cost split between participants. It is your responsibility to provide accurate arrival and departure information no later than 14 days prior to the tour. In the event of delayed or cancelled flights, neither Centauri nor Las Cascadas can accept responsibility for financial losses incurred, and refunds cannot be offered for our writing workshops, nor their accommodation.

A minimum of four writers is required to run each retreat. While we have always had more than 4 writers on all previous retreats, please ensure you check with us about the status of the retreat before booking your flights! In the event the retreat cannot operate, all monies paid to us will be refunded in full, but our liability shall then cease.

### Cancellation

We cannot reimburse travel costs nor accept financial liability for losses incurred by you in the event of cancellation either by us or you for any reason whatsoever. You are strongly advised to take out insurance to cover potential loss (such as flight costs) arising from cancellation or any other eventuality affecting your booking, including COVID-19. In the unlikely event that we must cancel this trip for any reason - including safety concerns related to COVID 19 – all participants will be offered a full refund of their deposit. Our liability shall then cease. If the trip must be cancelled – or if you must withdraw - after the final fee has been paid to Las Cascadas, reimbursement of fees must be negotiated directly with them as Centauri Arts is responsible for the group leader services and writing workshops only. For the hotel cancellation policies, please visit their website at [www.lascascadasthefalls.com](http://www.lascascadasthefalls.com)

### Travel Documents/Travel Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check the validity of your travel documents, and to enquire about visa requirements. Centauri can accept no liability for problems with travel documents (eg., passport) and if you cannot join us for this trip for whatever reason, a refund cannot be offered. Check your passport is in date 6 months beyond your return! In the case of vaccinations, it is your responsibility to ensure that you, your travel companions and children accompanying you have the recommended vaccinations. Please see your doctor or contact us for travel clinic and website suggestions if you need them. If Costa Rica still has travel requirements in place related to COVID-19, it is your responsibility to comply, and Centauri can accept no responsibility if a participant is denied entry to the country.

### Itinerary

Centauri reserves the right to alter the itinerary in situations beyond our control, or where we feel it is necessary to ensure the quality of the experience we offer or the safety of our clients. We will make every effort to ensure alternatives are comparable. 'Itinerary' includes accommodations, meal arrangements, writing instructor and other inclusions. Should a participant decide not to partake of any portion of this itinerary, no refund may be offered.

### Your Children

Partners, family and friends sharing your room are welcome on this retreat, but the retreat is not suitable for children.

# Booking Terms & Conditions (Con't...)

## Your Health

It is your responsibility to notify us at the time of booking of any medical needs you may have, and of any medical needs of other people in your group or family. If you have life-threatening allergies, please discuss this with us before you register. Centauri cannot accept liability in the case of accident or illness, howsoever caused. **Medical insurance is mandatory for this trip**, as it is for all overseas travel, and you should ensure that you purchase this before travelling. If you have mobility challenges, please call us before booking so we can ensure the hotel is able to meet your needs. Should Centauri or its staff incur any medical expenses on your behalf during this tour, your signature on the application form indicates that you agree to accept full financial responsibility and reimburse Centauri within 7 days of the conclusion of the trip.

## Liability Release & Assumption of Risks:

By signing the application form, you acknowledge that you understand accommodation, meals, sightseeing, airport transfers and other travel services will be purchased by you directly from Las Cascadas, Costa Rica, or other service providers as required. Centauri can assume no responsibility for and cannot be held liable for any negligent or wilful act or failure to act of any company other than its own (Centauri Summer Camp Inc.). You agree not to hold Centauri responsible for the acts, omissions and/or financial default of any other company, including Las Cascadas. Centauri cannot be held responsible for events or occurrences or delays due to any Force Majeure. 'Force Majeure' means any circumstances beyond the control of Centauri including (without limitation) strikes, terrorist activities, floods, tempests, fire, civil disturbance, sickness. In the case of a Force Majeure of any nature occurring prior to our trip, you accept it is in Centauri's sole and absolute discretion whether to proceed with the trip.

You acknowledge that all travel involves an element of risk, and that Centauri cannot be held responsible for any accident or illness that may occur during the trip, nor can Centauri accept responsibility for any dangers to which you may be exposed. Your signature on the application form denotes that you assume all responsibility, financial and otherwise, for your own personal welfare, and for those of minors in your care, during this trip. Your signature also indicates you have discussed these booking conditions with all persons included in this booking, and they agree to be bound by them.

Your signature on the application form indicates that you agree to release, discharge and hold harmless forever Centauri Summer Camp Inc., its owners, employees, shareholders, affiliated entities, employees, agents, representatives, officers, directors, associates, successors and assigns from and against any liability, actions, causes of actions, debts, suits, claims and demands of any and every kind and nature whatsoever which may hereafter arise out of or in connection with this writing retreat or participation in activities arranged by Centauri.

Any claims and/or lawsuits against Centauri, its directors, staff, volunteers, agents or assigns shall take place under the exclusive jurisdiction of the laws and regulations of Ontario, Canada, and the applicable law to be applied to any dispute shall be the laws of Ontario, Canada.

## Privacy

By booking, you agree that we may collect and store personal information about you and your interactions with Centauri, including your personal contact details and medical needs. We will use this information to communicate with you occasionally about other courses we offer. We never sell information about our participants with any third party. Your email address may be shared with other retreat participants (for example, to enable the sharing of Google Docs) unless you expressly request otherwise in writing. Your electronic signature on the application form indicates you understand photographs taken on this tour may be used for promotional purposes.

## Contact Information:

**Tel.: 416 766 7124**

**email: [julie@centauriarts.com](mailto:julie@centauriarts.com)**

**[www.centauriarts.com](http://www.centauriarts.com)**

