

# CENTAURI **ARTS**

## **Creative Writing Retreats in Costa Rica**

**Choose one or both of these retreats:**

**Las Cascadas Hotel, Quepos – Saturday 24th January-Saturday 31 January 2026**

**Arenal Observatory Lodge – Saturday 31 January-Saturday 7 February 2026**

(for writers attending both retreats transportation between lodges is offered free of charge)



*Imagine writing in the heart of lush rainforest where monkeys, toucans, macaws, sloths and hummingbirds are regular visitors. Picture yourself exploring a natural paradise in the company of other writers, as the 'real world' falls away.*

Each morning for a week – or two – you'll share in workshops designed to appeal to writers of all levels and genres. Our goal is to inspire you to continue writing on a regular basis once the retreat is over. In the afternoon, you'll choose whether to relax and enjoy the serenity of our surroundings while immersing yourself in your writing project, or take part in sightseeing adventures with members of the group. Every evening, we'll come together for great food and even greater conversation. Most of our writers attend solo, quickly becoming part of a like-minded group, but you are also welcome to bring a partner or friend. Our groups include beginning writers as well as those with published work and we regularly welcome poets, memoirists, short fiction writers, novelists and playwrights. People attend our retreats from across North America, Europe and further afield.

Nature, solitude, peace, creativity, companionship, laughter... our creative writing retreats are not only informative – they are **transformative**.

**Whether you have written for years or want to try something new, a writing retreat is the perfect way to relax and become the writer you always dreamed you could be.**



# Retreat One: Las Cascadas Hotel, Quepos

Saturday 24th January-Saturday 31 January 2026

Las Cascadas (The Falls) Boutique Hotel is surrounded by rainforest, close to beaches, the town of Quepos and Marina Pez Vela, 3 hours south of San Jose International Airport. There are scarlet macaws nesting in the grounds and monkeys and toucans are regular visitors. The hotel has a pretty pool, a bar with great cocktails and plenty of lovely spots in which to relax and write. Our group will share transportation from San Jose airport, or writers can choose to make their own way there.

## Accommodation and Food

At Las Cascadas, writers stay in pleasant 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom cottages, most with well-equipped kitchens and communal areas. The windows overlook tropical gardens or rainforest, there is AC and good Wifi, and all cottages have outdoor seating areas. Our 3-bedroom cottage is very large, and our morning writing workshops will take place there – either in the huge outdoor terrace or, when the weather is hot, around a large dining room table. Breakfast is offered free of charge by the hotel, and nearby Quepos provides excellent options for lunch and dinner. Writers may choose to cook meals in the cottages, making this a great option for travellers on a budget.

## Sightseeing

Hike to a 'secret' beach accessible only on foot. Take a trip on a sailboat to view dolphins and snorkel; visit Manuel Antonio National Park; enjoy hanging bridges and swim under waterfalls at Rainmaker Conservation Park. Plus, kayaking, swimming, bird watching and more. Or soak up the serenity of Las Cascadas... and write.

Since this is not a package tour, writers can select sightseeing options after they arrive.

Check out the hotel website at

<https://www.lascascadasthefalls.com>



# Retreat Two: Arenal Observatory Lodge

Saturday 31 January-Saturday 7 February 2026

Arenal Observatory Lodge is a large and gorgeous rainforest property 2.5 hours from Liberia International Airport. The Lodge is situated inside Arenal National Park and offers breath-taking views of Arenal volcano and lake. If the idea of serenity in pristine nature is appealing, you will LOVE this place! Its 352 hectares includes waterfalls, rivers, primary rainforest, tropical gardens, spectacular views and more than 500 species of birds.

## Accommodation and Food

For privacy and en suite facilities, you can select a private room with an outside deck. Alternately, choose a room in 'Casona', a 5-bedroom cottage with 2 shared bathrooms. Casona features a large communal room and outdoor seating area overlooking Lake Arenal, which is where our workshops take place. Watch out for the glorious sunsets! Arenal Observatory Lodge is a certified eco-lodge. There is no AC in the rooms, though weather is rarely hot enough to need it.

Breakfast is included. The restaurant at the lodge has a beautiful view over the volcano and lake as well as a bird watching platform.

## Sightseeing Options

AOL is located 20 minutes from the nearest village and 35 minutes from La Fortuna, but its isolation is part of its appeal, and sightseeing options are available on site. Choose from 11km of trails, 2 hanging bridges, waterfalls, viewing towers, birdwatching, free nature talks, a free tractor ride, tropical gardens, a small museum and coffee shop, pool, hot tub, spa and endless beautiful places to write. Additional adventures for purchase include horseback riding and a rainforest night hike. This is a truly immersive experience.

We'll head into La Fortuna midweek to visit the hot springs and enjoy dinner in a different restaurant. El Castillo is a 20-minute taxi ride away. There, you will find a fascinating butterfly refuge and a small restaurant.

Check out the lodge here:

<https://www.arenalobservatorylodge.com>

Check out reviews from previous participants, on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/centauriwritingretreats/reviews>



# Our Creative Writing Workshops

Our daily writing workshops are 2-3 hours long and feature prompts and techniques applicable to writers of novels, short fiction, poetry, memoir and plays. Writers of all levels are welcome; we accept only 10 writers on each retreat so we can adapt to individual needs. Every retreat features new content, so many writers join us year after year. Each week ends with a celebration in which writers are invited to share their work.



## About Your Writing Instructor



Photo by Victoria Grazioli

Julie Hartley has more than 20 years' experience as a writer and writing instructor and has hosted and taught 16 previous writing retreats. She is the author of a YA novel, *The Finding Place* (Red Deer Press), a poetry collection, *Deboning a Dragon* (Mansfield Press) and two historical novels released by Bookouture UK. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia. Julie is the co-director of Centauri Arts, which has brought together teens and adults for arts classes, retreats and camps for the past 25 years. Between leading retreats to Costa Rica, Mexico and England, Julie teaches virtual and in-person creative writing courses. You can read about those at

<https://www.centauriarts.com/academy/toronto/creative-writing-workshops-for-adults/>

To find out more about Julie and her publications go to [www.juliehartley.ca](http://www.juliehartley.ca) You are welcome to call her cell with questions about the retreats: +1 647 409 7124.

## How to Choose Between the Retreats!

### Choose Week One, Las Cascadas, for:

A choice of restaurants, cottages with kitchens, hot weather, beaches, a rainforest experience (but not remote), AC.

### Choose Week Two, Arenal Observatory Lodge, for:

Total immersion in rainforest, an eco-lodge experience, warm weather (with inevitable rain!), endless birdlife/animals, serenity and seclusion.

### These retreats may not be suitable for:

Writers with extreme mobility challenges or health needs. Las Cascadas is on a hill (though you can taxi into town). The accommodation at Arenal is spread out, and you may need to walk 10 minutes to the restaurant (or take the free shuttle).

### Choose both if:

You want to make the most of your trip to Costa Rica! Fly into San Jose and out of Liberia. We provide transportation between the 2 lodges free of charge.



# Prices

## Fee 1 – Deposit Payable on Registration

This fee is payable to Centauri Arts in Canadian funds at the time of booking. It secures your space and covers the 'creative writing retreat' features of your trip: writing workshops, a manual of prompts and information, group leader services, a trip manual and writing-related activities. This is the only fee paid directly to us.

Deposit Per Writer, Per Week: \$799 CDN (approx. \$540 USD)  
Non-Writer, same room: \$150 CDN  
(the non-writer fee includes social activities/group leader services only)



## Fee 2 – Accommodation Fee

### Las Cascadas, Quepos

Cost per room, 7 nights: \$1256.31USD

(includes 7 nights in a private bedroom in 2- or 3-bedroom cottages, Wifi, AC, pool, breakfast and taxes). Las Cascadas will invoice you directly, one week before our trip.



### Arenal Observatory Lodge

Cost for Standard Room, per night (on 7-night retreat): \$284.90 USD

Cost for room with shared facilities in Casona, per night: \$143.20 USD

(includes Wifi, breakfast, nature hike, tractor ride, museum, access to trails and hanging bridges, shuttle, pool, hot tub, taxes). The lodge will invoice you directly, 45 days before our trip.

You can reduce your costs still further by sharing a room. There is one room with twin beds in Las Cascadas, and one in Casona. Contact us for further details.

## Additional Services and Fees

This is not a package tour. Here is a guide to the additional fees:

### Airport Transfer

Writers attending Week 1 (Quepos) should fly in/out of San Jose airport. Writers attending Week 2 should fly in/out of Liberia. Budget \$35-50USD each way (depends on number of writers sharing the minibus).

Writers attending BOTH retreats should fly into San Jose and out of Liberia. The transfer between lodges will be covered by us.

### Lunches, Dinners, Beverages

Assume prices similar to the US. Budget about \$25 per dinner and \$20 per lunch (you may not want lunch as the breakfasts are big!). At Las Cascadas you have the option to cook.

### Sightseeing

This can be arranged when you arrive – or you may want to relax and write. Arenal Observatory Lodge offers sightseeing amenities included. However, the trade-off is that just one restaurant is available in the property.

### How to Reserve Your Space

Complete the application form here: <https://form.jotform.com/centauriarts/writing-retreat-application>  
Questions? Call Julie at +1 647 409 7124 or email [julie@centauriarts.com](mailto:julie@centauriarts.com)

***Limited space is available: we accept no more than 10 writers in each retreat.***

# Booking Terms & Conditions

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.

## Flights

The flight is not included; this is not a package tour and participants join us from all over the world. Provided your flight arrives before 2pm on the 1st day of your retreat and leaves after 12pm, at the end, you can share transportation to the lodge and back to the airport. It is your responsibility to provide accurate arrival and departure information no later than 14 days prior to the retreat. In the event of delayed or cancelled flights, neither Centauri nor our partner lodges 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 your lodge, 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 websites.

## 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 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 for any reason whatsoever.

## Itinerary

Centauri reserves the right to alter the itinerary as a result of 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 our retreats, but the retreats are not suitable for children.

# Booking Terms & Conditions Continued...

## 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 we are able to meet your needs. Both retreat locations may present challenges for people with mobility issues. Due to its remoteness, Arenal Observatory Lodge may not be suitable to travellers with health concerns. 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 this is not a 'package tour' and you understand accommodation, meals, sightseeing, airport transfers and other travel services will be purchased by you directly. 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 or Arenal Observation Lodge. It is the responsibility of retreat participants to visit the website for hotels and lodges to check their amenities and location suit your needs.

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 retreat.

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 your retreat, 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)

