

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a small country, full with beautiful landscapes and natural wealth, where the standard living and the kindness of Costa Rican come together to make more visitors feel at home. In the length of 51.100 square km, represents the 0.3% of the planet's total surface, houses 6% of the world's biodiversity. It holds more bird species than USA and Canada together and has greater variety of butterflies than all Africa, 24.6% of Costa Rican Territory is mainly protected areas and National Parks. No other country has dedicated so much of its territory to the protection of the environment.

Our country has an excellent geographical location in the center of the continent, in that earth fringe by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, a bridge among the two Americas. The reduced territory bound to the biodiversity, allows us to offer a wide range of attractions to our visitors and investors. Costa Rica is much more than sun and beach we have volcanoes, some active that produce relaxing thermal waters, 21 national Parks, 12 forest reserves, and 24 protected areas. Waterfalls are a refreshing place to visit.

Some Attractions you may find while traveling around are, Canopy sites along Costa Rica, white water rafting, Bungee jumping, mountain biking, or simply relax visiting the volcanoes, the waterfalls and the beaches.

Our tradition of Peace and democracy, more than 50 years ago December 1948, the government abolished their army and invested their resources not in weapons but in education for the people and health. This enables us to have 93% of literacy, since 1917 the country has been applying the public school system, free and mandatory.

Getting In

Citizens of the U.S. and Canada need only valid passports or birth certificates and photo ID's, such as driver's license, non passport holders must also buy \$ 2.00 tourist cards; no visas are required. All Europeans need valid passports, but only Greek citizens are required to have visas. All Europeans may stay as long as 90 days. In Central America, only Nicaragua need consular visas to enter Costa Rica. All Central Americans must present valid passports.

Language

The official language is Spanish, although the tourist will find that English is widely spoken particularly in places such as hotels, travel agencies, banks, rental car companies, restaurants, etc.

Time

From October to April: Costa Rica is one hour behind Eastern Standard Time.

From April to October: Costa Rica is two hours behind Eastern Standard Time.

Electricity

Same as the U.S. 110 volts., 60 cycles.

Credit Cards

All major credit cards are accepted in almost all hotels (especially the ones located in San Jose), stores, restaurants and car rental agencies. Outside San Jose and in some places the tourist should be prepared to pay in local currency; especially if the store, hotel, etc. is planning to include a service charge fee for the use of the credit card.

Bank Hours

State Banks Weekdays: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Closed Saturdays and Sundays. State Banks

Private Banks: 8:00 am – 7 pm open Saturday and Sunday San Pedro Mall

Shopping Hours

Weekdays & Saturdays: 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Sundays: almost all stores are closed, especially those located in downtown San Jose or any major city.

Most of the souvenir shops will be open on Sundays and during some Holidays.

Can I drink Costa Rica water?

Yes, the tap water in Costa Rica, that comes from the wells and/or treatment plants of the "Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados" (A y A) or in English, the Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers, is perfectly safe to drink. Most of the drinking water in Costa Rica is the responsibility of the "A y A."

The "A y A"’s water is used from two different type sources to supply cities, sub-surface water and surface water. Sub-surface water is mostly drawn from deep wells. These sub-surface waters are very pure from the point of disease transmission but an application of chlorine is made as a preventive measure against possible contamination in the distribution system. When river water is utilized, the water is first passed thru water treatment plants. In the plants is passed thru a series of filters, then, when crystal clear, it is chlorinated. Naturally, if given water from a private water supply, perhaps on a farm, you should be careful!!!

Bringing your pets

It is possible and relatively easy to bring pets especially cats and dogs, into the country. All Pets must remain caged during the duration of the flight. Cages are for sale at the pets shops, should be big enough for the animal to stand up and should have absorbent paper on the floor.