

## Rave Reviews for Explore Costa Rica

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- ♥ “ ...(differs) from the others in its naturalist-oriented considerations of outdoors activities and unusual offbeat adventures...mention of transportation challenges and unusual accommodations leads the visitor away from well-worn paths.”  
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- ♥ “ Geared towards the nature-conscious traveler, this guide is loaded with practical information and candid observations.”— *Trips*
- ♥ “ This is a guide written with much attention to the biology and botany of the rainforest. The book is a wonderful experience. Enjoy.”— *Lee Beliveau, Bard's Ink*
- ♥ “This book will be one you'll want in your library and to carry with you on your next trip to Costa Rica.... The...references are excellent and good reading. If you want to expand your knowledge about Costa Rica..then buy a copy of this book and read it! You'll enjoy the light writing style.”—*Shirley Miller, Costa Rica Outlook*
- ♥ “ Pariser's book may be the best-balanced, most comprehensive guide of the entire Tico bunch....This is the one to take with you on your next trip around Costa Rica.”  
— *Lan Sluder, Great Expeditions*



# Explore Costa Rica

Harry S. Pariser



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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	1	Visas, Services, and Health . . . . .	134
Geography . . . . .	1	Phone, Mail, Telephone . . . . .	136
Climate . . . . .	5	Internet Access . . . . .	136
Seasons and Zones . . . . .	6	Broadcasting and Media . . . . .	139
Earthquakes . . . . .	7	Health and Hygiene . . . . .	141
Flora and Fauna . . . . .	7	Money and Shopping . . . . .	143
Plant Life and Tropical Forests . . . . .	8	Customs . . . . .	145
Rainforest Ecosystems . . . . .	9	Life, Language, & Study . . . . .	146
Trees and Tropical Vegetation . . . . .	14	Conduct . . . . .	158
Animal Life . . . . .	20	Other Practicalities . . . . .	167
Mammals . . . . .	20	<b>San José</b> . . . . .	171
Reptiles and Amphibians . . . . .	27	San José Transport . . . . .	172
Birds . . . . .	31	Downtown Sights . . . . .	175
Insects . . . . .	36	Outlying Sights . . . . .	183
Sealife . . . . .	41	San José Accommodations . . . . .	185
The Coral Reef Ecosystem . . . . .	43	Budget Accommodations . . . . .	185
History . . . . .	46	Low-Budget Accommodations . . . . .	186
Government . . . . .	67	Gay And Lesbian Accommodation . . . . .	189
Economy . . . . .	69	Accommodation by Area . . . . .	189
Agriculture . . . . .	73	Barrio Escalante Accommodations . . . . .	189
The People (Los Costarricenses) . . . . .	82	Coca-Cola & Vicinity . . . . .	190
Minority Groups . . . . .	85	Parque Morázon Accommodations . . . . .	191
Religion . . . . .	91	National Museum/Barrio La California . . . . .	191
Food . . . . .	93	Barrio Amon Accommodations . . . . .	192
Other Food . . . . .	95	Barrios Otoya and Aranjuez . . . . .	193
Drinks and Beverages . . . . .	98	Accommodations . . . . .	193
Dining Practicalities . . . . .	99	Paseo de Colón Accommodations . . . . .	195
Sports and Recreation . . . . .	100	Sabana Accommodations . . . . .	196
Water Sports . . . . .	100	Los Yoses Accommodations . . . . .	196
Competitive Sports . . . . .	105	San Pedro Accommodations . . . . .	197
Other Sports . . . . .	107	San José to the Airport . . . . .	198
<b>Costa Rican Practicalities</b> . . . . .	109	Near San José . . . . .	198
Youth Hostels . . . . .	111	San José Dining and Food . . . . .	200
Arrival . . . . .	111	Outlying Food and Dining . . . . .	207
Tours . . . . .	113	San José Entertainment . . . . .	207
Internal Transport . . . . .	121	Other San José Practicalities . . . . .	212
Land Transport . . . . .	122	From San José . . . . .	219
Car Rental . . . . .	124	Vicinity of San José . . . . .	220
Accommodations . . . . .	127	Carpintera Reserve . . . . .	221
Entertainment . . . . .	132	Pueblo Antiguo . . . . .	221
		Parque del Este . . . . .	221

Moravia . . . . .	221	Irazú Volcano National Park . . . . .	274
Coronado . . . . .	222	Valle de Orosi (Orosi Valley) . . . . .	276
Aserrí . . . . .	223	Tapantí-Macizo National Park . . . . .	279
El Rodeo . . . . .	223	Palomo . . . . .	280
Nacientes Palmichal . . . . .	224	La Casa del Soñador . . . . .	280
Guaitil de Acosta . . . . .	224	Ujarrás . . . . .	281
Reserva Guayabo . . . . .	224	Turrialba . . . . .	282
Arbofilia . . . . .	225	Guayabo National Monument . . . . .	286
Los Juncos . . . . .	225	Other Attractions Near Turrialba . . . . .	287
Escazú . . . . .	225	Whitewater Rafting . . . . .	287
Pico Blanco Reserve . . . . .	230	CATIE . . . . .	288
<b>The Meseta Central . . . . .</b>	<b>233</b>	Parque Viburana . . . . .	289
Alajuela . . . . .	234	Siquirres . . . . .	289
Alajuela to San Ramón . . . . .	241	Parque Nacional Barbilla . . . . .	289
La Garita and Environs . . . . .	241	<b>The Northern Zone . . . . .</b>	<b>291</b>
Los Chorros . . . . .	242	The Sarapiquí Area . . . . .	291
Ojo de Agua . . . . .	242	Puerto Viejo De La Sarapiquí . . . . .	291
The Butterfly Farm . . . . .	243	Area Outdoor Adventure Activities . . . . .	293
Rancho San Miguel . . . . .	243	La Virgen . . . . .	293
Atenas . . . . .	243	Sarapiquí Outdoor Adventures . . . . .	294
Grecia . . . . .	245	Sarapiquí Nature Lodges . . . . .	294
Vicinity of Grecia . . . . .	246	Rara Avis . . . . .	294
Sarchí . . . . .	246	La Selva Biological Reserve . . . . .	295
Naranjo . . . . .	248	Selva Verde River Lodge . . . . .	296
Zarcelero . . . . .	248	La Quinta De Sarapiquí . . . . .	297
Bosque de Paz Rain/Cloud Forest . . . . .	249	Centro Neotrópico Sarapiquí . . . . .	297
Vista del Valle Plantation Inn . . . . .	249	El Gavilán Lodge . . . . .	297
Palmares . . . . .	249	Monteverde and Environs . . . . .	297
San Ramón de Alajuela . . . . .	250	Monteverde Sights and Activities . . . . .	301
Bosque Nuboso de Los Angeles . . . . .	251	Santa Elena Sights . . . . .	301
Valle Escondido Lodge . . . . .	251	Monteverde Attractions . . . . .	302
Poás Volcano National Park . . . . .	252	Monteverde Outdoor Adventures . . . . .	302
Heredia . . . . .	256	Monteverde Forest Reserves . . . . .	303
Vicinity of Heredia . . . . .	259	Monteverde Practicalities . . . . .	305
Monte de La Cruz . . . . .	261	Santa Elena . . . . .	309
Braulio Carrillo National Park . . . . .	262	Vicinity of Monteverde . . . . .	315
Rafting on the Pacuare . . . . .	264	Ecologde San Luis . . . . .	315
From Braulio Carrillo to Guápiles . . . . .	265	Catarata San Luis . . . . .	317
Casa Río Blanco Rainforest Lodge . . . . .	266	Cañitas . . . . .	317
Cartago . . . . .	268	Monte Los Olivos . . . . .	317
Vicinity of Cartago . . . . .	270	Parque Nacional Arenal and Vicinity . . . . .	317
Route of the Saints . . . . .	271	Tilarán . . . . .	318
San Gerardo de Dota . . . . .	273	Vicinity of Arenal . . . . .	324
San Pablo . . . . .	274	Arenal Volcano . . . . .	324

Tabacón Springs Resort & Spa . . . . .	326	Playa Tamarindo . . . . .	377
La Fortuna . . . . .	326	Vicinity of Tamarindo . . . . .	386
Ciudad Quesada (San Carlos) . . . . .	332	Playa Avellanas . . . . .	386
Laguna del Lagarto . . . . .	335	Playa Negra . . . . .	387
Maquenque National Park . . . . .	336	Playa Junquillal . . . . .	388
Caño Negro Refuge . . . . .	337	Playa Nosara . . . . .	389
South From San Carlos . . . . .	339	Playa Guiones Accomodation . . . . .	390
San Rafael de Guatuso . . . . .	339	Ostional National Accommodations . . . . .	392
Ujuminica . . . . .	340	Ostional National Wildlife Reserve . . . . .	394
Northwest (Guanacaste) . . . . .	341	Bahía Garza . . . . .	396
Guanacaste Practicalities . . . . .	343	Playa Sámara . . . . .	396
Transport Options . . . . .	344	Playa Carrillo . . . . .	400
Nicoya Peninsula . . . . .	345	Monte Alto Forest Reserve . . . . .	401
Cañas Area . . . . .	346	Playa Coyote . . . . .	401
Rafting on the Corobicí . . . . .	346	Punta Islita . . . . .	402
Las Pumas . . . . .	346	Playa San Miguel . . . . .	402
Las Juntas de Abangares . . . . .	347	Santa Cruz . . . . .	403
La Ensenada Lodge . . . . .	347	Nicoya . . . . .	404
Lomas Barbudal Biological Reserve . . . . .	347	Barra Honda National Park . . . . .	405
Miravalles Protected Zone . . . . .	349	Coopeortega . . . . .	407
Parque Nacional Tenorio . . . . .	350	Palo Verde National Park . . . . .	407
La Carolina Lodge . . . . .	350	Refugio Palo Verde . . . . .	408
Heliconias Lodge and Rainforest . . . . .	350	The Southern Nicoya Peninsula . . . . .	409
Liberia . . . . .	350	Cerro Escondido . . . . .	409
Rincón de la Vieja National Park . . . . .	354	Playa Naranjo . . . . .	410
Buena Vista Lodge . . . . .	357	Paquera . . . . .	410
Sector Santa Rosa . . . . .	358	Curú National Wildlife Refuge . . . . .	410
Guanacaste Conservation Area . . . . .	361	Bahía Ballena/Tambor . . . . .	412
La Cruz . . . . .	362	Tango Mar Resort and Club . . . . .	412
Isla de Boñanos Wildlife Refuge . . . . .	363	Playa Montezuma . . . . .	413
Heading for Nicaragua . . . . .	363	Cabo Blanco . . . . .	417
Northern Nicoya Peninsula Beaches . . . . .	364	Playa Santa Teresa . . . . .	419
Playas del Coco . . . . .	364	Playa Carmen . . . . .	421
Playa Hermosa . . . . .	367	Playa Mal Pais . . . . .	422
Playa Panamá . . . . .	369	Playa Manzanillo . . . . .	423
The Papagayo Project . . . . .	369		
Heading South to Flamingo . . . . .	370		
Matapalo . . . . .	370		
Brasilito . . . . .	371		
Playa Conchal . . . . .	371		
Playa Flamingo . . . . .	372		
Playa Potrero . . . . .	373		
Playa Pan de Azucar . . . . .	375		
Parque Nacional . . . . .	375		
Las Baulas National Park . . . . .	375		
		<b>The Central Pacific . . . . .</b>	<b>425</b>
		Puntarenas . . . . .	425
		Vicinity of Puntarenas . . . . .	429
		The Offshore Islands . . . . .	429
		Islas de Tortuga . . . . .	429
		Isla Chira . . . . .	430
		Isla San Lucas . . . . .	430
		The Biological Preserves . . . . .	430
		Isla Gitana . . . . .	431

Carara National Park . . . . .	431	Golfito Sailfish Rancho . . . . .	497
Attractions Near Carara . . . . .	432	Cabinas Caña Blanca . . . . .	497
Pacific Coast Beach Towns . . . . .	433	South from Golfito (Punta Burica) . . . . .	497
Punta Leona . . . . .	433	Playa Zancudo . . . . .	497
Playa Herradura . . . . .	434	Pavones . . . . .	499
Tárcoles . . . . .	434	Tiskita Lodge . . . . .	500
Playa Jacó . . . . .	434	Casa Punta Banco . . . . .	501
Playa Hermosa . . . . .	440	Ciudad Neily/Villa Neily . . . . .	501
Parque Nacional La Cangreja . . . . .	442	Coto 47 . . . . .	502
Parrita . . . . .	442	Paso Canoas . . . . .	502
Playa Esterillos Este . . . . .	443	Wilson Botanical Gardens . . . . .	502
Playa Esterillos Centro . . . . .	443	San Vito de Java . . . . .	503
Playa Esterillos Oeste . . . . .	443	Osa Peninsula/Corcovado . . . . .	505
Playa Bejuco . . . . .	443	San Pedrillo Sector/Station . . . . .	509
Playa Bandera (Playa Palma) . . . . .	443	Sirena and Vicinity . . . . .	509
Quepos and Manuel Antonio . . . . .	444	Los Patos, La Palma, and Vicinity . . . . .	511
Manuel Antonio . . . . .	459	La Leona Sector . . . . .	512
Outdoor Activities . . . . .	459	Puerto Jiménez . . . . .	512
Activities near Quepos . . . . .	460	Playa Preciosa (Playa Planatares) . . . . .	517
Heading South from Quepos . . . . .	461	Enroute to Carate . . . . .	518
Silencio Community Ec lodge . . . . .	461	Lapa Ríos . . . . .	519
Matapalo . . . . .	462	Matapalo . . . . .	519
Parque Reptilandia . . . . .	463	Carate . . . . .	521
Finca Ipe . . . . .	463	Corcovado Lodge Tent Camp . . . . .	522
Hacienda Barú . . . . .	463	Drake Bay and Vicinity . . . . .	523
Playa Dominical . . . . .	464	Drake Bay Wilderness Camp . . . . .	524
Ballena Uvita National Marine Park . . . . .	470	Aguila de Osa . . . . .	524
South From Uvita . . . . .	472	Albergue Jinetes de Osa . . . . .	525
Ojochal/Playa Tortuga . . . . .	474	La Paloma Lodge . . . . .	525

## **The Southern Zone . . . . . 477**

San Isidro de El General . . . . .	477	Lodges S of Drake Bay . . . . .	526
Chirripó National Park . . . . .	481	Caño Island Biological Reserve . . . . .	528
Vicinity of Chirripó . . . . .	486	Isla del Coco National Park . . . . .	530
From San Isidro to Golfito . . . . .	487	La Amistad International Park . . . . .	532
Finca Anael/Dúrika . . . . .	487	Palmar Norte/Palmar Sur . . . . .	534
Piedras Blancas National Park . . . . .	487	Sierpe . . . . .	534
Golfito . . . . .	489	Boruca and Rey Curré . . . . .	536
Along the Golfo Dulce . . . . .	493		
Playa Cacao . . . . .	494		
Playa San Josecito/Casa Orquideas . . . . .	494		
The Golfito Animal Sanctuary . . . . .	495		
Dolphin Quest . . . . .	495		
Golfo Dulce Lodge . . . . .	495		
Playa Nicuesa Rainforest Lodge . . . . .	495		

## **The Caribbean Coast . . . . . 537**

Barra del Colorado . . . . .	539
Tortuguero National Park . . . . .	543
On Your Own . . . . .	545
Tour Operators . . . . .	546
On Your Own From Moín . . . . .	547

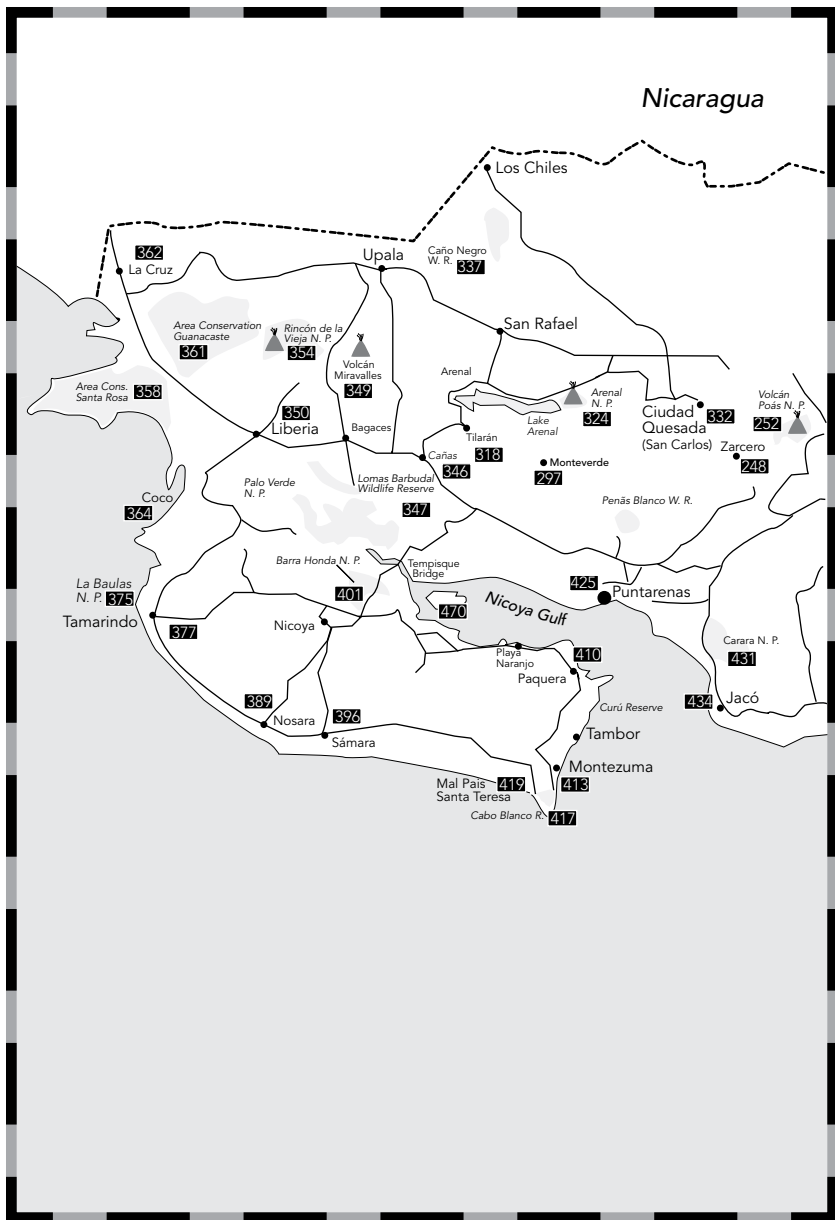
From Cariari and La Pavona . . . . .	548	Puerto Viejo Vicinity . . . . .	580
By Air . . . . .	550	Punta Cocles/Playa Cocles . . . . .	580
Lodges . . . . .	551	Punta Uva . . . . .	583
Tortuguero Village . . . . .	553	Manzanillo/Gandoca . . . . .	584
Tortuguero Activities . . . . .	554	Manzanillo Outdoor Activities . . . . .	586
Other Practicalities . . . . .	556	For Panama . . . . .	587
Parismina . . . . .	556		
Limón . . . . .	557		
Heading South from Limón . . . . .	563		
Selva Bananito Lodge . . . . .	563		
Aviarios del Caribe . . . . .	564		
Hitoy Cerere Biological Reserve . . . . .	564		
Cahuita National Park . . . . .	564		
Bribri . . . . .	573		
Puerto Viejo de Talamanca . . . . .	573		

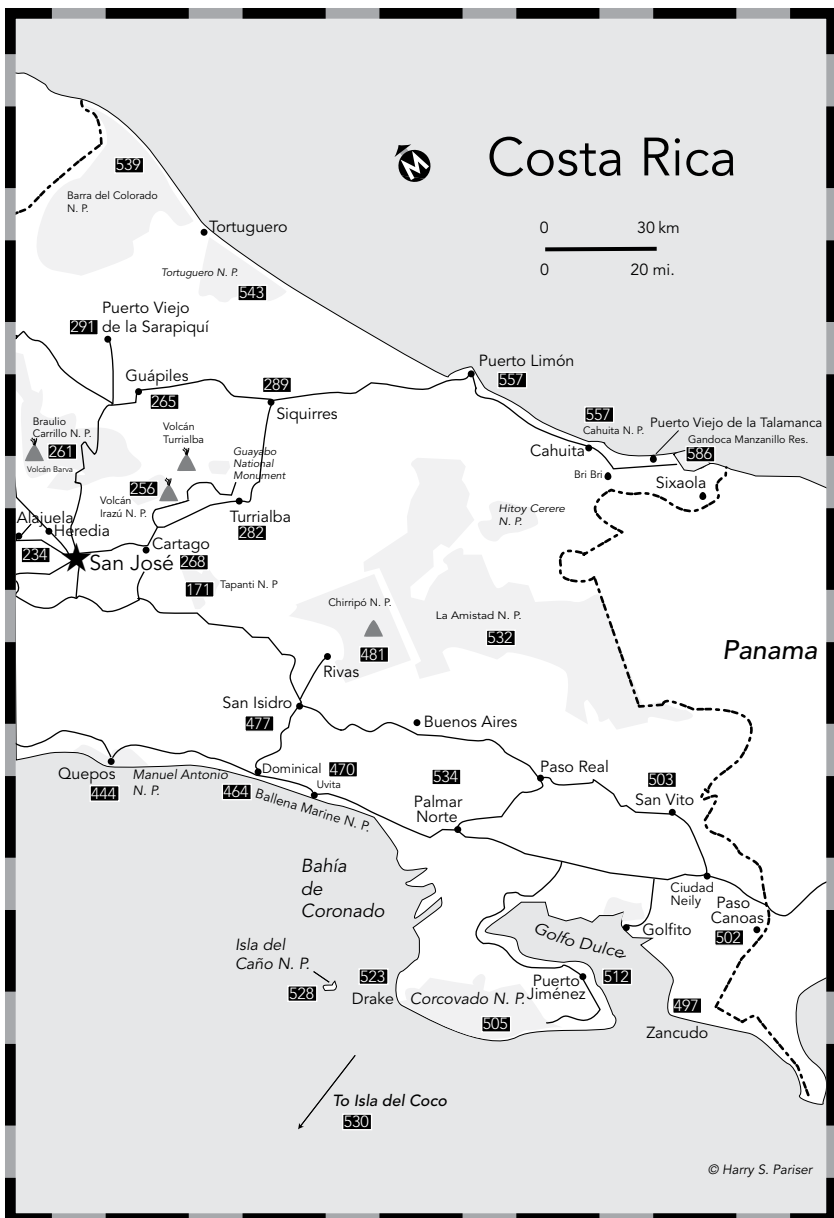
## Appendix

Spanish Vocabulary . . . . .	589
Glossary . . . . .	592
Booklist . . . . .	593
Costa Rica Bus Guide . . . . .	597
Index . . . . .	609

## Explore Costa Rica: List of Maps

Costa Rica . . . . .	2	Tamarindo . . . . .	378
Costa Rica Provinces . . . . .	68	Montezuma . . . . .	415
Costa Rica Beaches . . . . .	101	Cabo Blanco . . . . .	418
Downtown San José . . . . .	102	Puntarenas . . . . .	427
East of Cultural Plaza . . . . .	177	Manuel Antonio . . . . .	446
Paseo de Colón Area . . . . .	179	Quepos . . . . .	458
Near San José . . . . .	231	Dominical Area . . . . .	467
Central Alajuela . . . . .	234	Uvita . . . . .	475
The Meseta Central . . . . .	235	Chirripó National Park . . . . .	483
Cartago and Turrialba Area . . . . .	266	Golfito Area . . . . .	491
Irazú National Park . . . . .	275	Corcovado National Park . . . . .	504
Guayabo National Monument . . . . .	287	Sirena . . . . .	512
Monteverde . . . . .	300	Puerto Jiménez . . . . .	575
Downtown Santa Elena . . . . .	310	Carate . . . . .	520
Arenal and Monteverde Area . . . . .	314	The Caribbean Coast . . . . .	536
La Fortuna . . . . .	327	Tortuguero National Park . . . . .	542
Caño Negro Reserve . . . . .	338	Puerto Limón . . . . .	560
The Northwest (Guanacaste) . . . . .	342	Talamanca Region . . . . .	574
Lomas Barbudal Reserve . . . . .	348	Puerto Viejo . . . . .	575





539  
Barra del Colorado N. P.

Tortuguero

Tortuguero N. P.

291  
Puerto Viejo de la Sarapiquí

265  
Guápiles

289  
Siquirres

557  
Puerto Limón

261  
Volcán Barro  
Braulio Carrillo N. P.

256  
Volcán Turrialba

282  
Turrialba

557  
Cahuita N. P.

586  
Puerto Viejo de la Talamanca  
Gandoca Manzanillo Res.

234  
Alajuela

268  
Heredia

268  
Cartago

171  
San José

268  
Cartago

171  
Tapanti N. P.

Hitoy Cerere N. P.

481  
Chirripó N. P.

532  
La Amistad N. P.

**Panama**

477  
San Isidro

Buenos Aires

444  
Quepos

464  
Manuel Antonio N. P.

470  
Dominical Uvita

464  
Ballena Marine N. P.

534  
Palmar Norte

503  
Paso Real

503  
San Vito

Bahía de Coronado

523  
Isla del Caño N. P.

528  
Drake

512  
Golfo Dulce

505  
Corcovado N. P.

512  
Puerto Jiménez

Ciudad Neily

502  
Paso Canoas

497  
Zancudo

## ■ Symbols ■

↖	North	FAP	Full American Plan
☎	Phone	OW	one way
⚡	Warning	RT	round trip
i	authentic Italian cuisine	ha	hectare(s)
e	Community-run ecolodge	L	left
👨👩👧👦	Good with children	R	right
s	single	km	kilometer(s)
db	double	mi.	mile(s)
t	triple	ICT	C. R. Tourism Institute
C	<i>Calle or colones</i>	4WD	Four-wheel-drive

## ■ Abbreviations ■

N	North	t	triple
S	South	C	<i>Calle or colones</i>
E	East	OW	one way
W	West	RT	round trip
pd	per day	ha	hectare(s)
pw	per week	L	left
pm	per month	R	right
pp	per person	km	kilometer(s)
s	single	mi.	mile(s)
db	double	ICT	C. R. Tourism Institute

***check for internet updates***

## Explore Costa Rica: Fast Facts: A-Z

**Accommodation** — Every type of hotel in every price range is available as are some campgrounds. The nicest hotels and lodges tend to be small, intimate affairs.

**Area Code** — To dial Costa Rica from outside the country dial 1-506 and the number. Omit the area code when dialing within Costa Rica.

**Art and artists**— There are a number of fine artists and craftspeople in Costa Rica. The best places to visit studios are in the Monteverde and Escazú areas.

**Business Hours** — Generally from 8-noon and 1-5 or 2-5. Many close on Sun. as do restaurants. Banks are generally open Mon. to Fri. from 9-3.

**Camping**—There are few organized campsites. Tent-supplied “gourmet” camping is an up-and-coming phenomenon.

**Clothes** —Informal is the rule. You won’t need much if any in the way of warm clothing.

**Car rental** — Cars may be rented at the airport, in San José, and in select location such as Liberia (Guanacaste) and Quepos (Manuel Antonio).

**Credit Cards** — Generally accepted. However may be subject to a surcharge by hotels.

**Currency**—The Costa Rican *colón* is divided into 100 *centavos*. You will get around US\$1 = C 550, more or less. (The currency devalues around 7-10% each year). Cash is better than traveler’s checks in terms of rates, but the difference is small.

**Departure tax** — US\$26 (Can be paid with credit card).

**Driving** — Driving is on the same side as in the US. Valid drivers licenses are required. A credit card is required to rent a vehicle.

**Electricity** —110 Volts AC

**Internet** —Access is very widespread, including satellite access in remote locations. There are a number of cafes in San José and the Central Valley. Some hotels will allow you to send and receive e-mail messages. Some offer free wireless and/or internet access.

**Language** — Spanish is the official language. English is widely spoken at touristic spots, but Spanish is important for getting around. There are a large number of schools which teach Spanish.

**Laundry** — Laundromats are scarce. Most hotels will do laundry for a fee. Save by bringing some detergent and washing a few small items yourself.

**Liquor Laws** —Alcohol is available from any store. Dry laws are in effect for two days during Easter and two days before and after a presidential election.

**Mail** — Expect it to take at least a week to the States. Rates are cheap.

**Maps** — Good maps are hard to find. Obtain the ITMB (or other) map before arriving.

**Marriage** — Possible to do it here. Costa Ricans often live “common law,” thus depriving divorce lawyers of income.

**Newspapers**—*The Miami Herald* (US\$1.25) is available daily in tourist centers. The weekly tabloid *The Tico Times* (US\$1) is the only local English-language read.

**Pets**—Leave them at home if at all possible. Otherwise, you will require proof of rabies and distemper vaccinations.

**Radio/TV**—Many tourist hotels have satellite TV or cable. There are over a hundred AM and FM radio stations, but reception can be poor in the hinterlands.

**Restrooms/toilets**—Called *servicios* or *sanatorios*. “Caballeros” means men and “Damas” means women.

**Ruins**—Nothing outstanding. The most interesting archaeological site is at Guayabo National Monument. The Jade and Gold museums in San José have outstanding collections of artifacts. If in the area, the unusual stone spheres near Palmar Sur are worthy of a visit.

**Taxes**—Government tax of 16.39% is added to accommodation. Taxes and tips are added to food in all but the smallest of restaurants.

**Taxis**—Metered in San José. Rides in rural areas tend to be expensive for the distance.

**Telephones**—Service is good. Internal calls are inexpensive. Phone cards are available and may be used at phones marked “chip.” Pay phones are scarce. Dial 116 to reach an international operator. For calling card and collect calls reach AT&T at 0-800-011-4114, Sprint at 0-800-013-0213, and Canada Bell at 0-800-015-1162. To call Costa Rica from the US dial 1, then 506, then the local number.

**Theft**—Don’t walk around San José at night with valuables. Never leave anything of value in a vehicle, not even for a moment! Pickpockets frequent buses.

**Time**—Costa Rica operates on Central Standard Time (six hours behind GMT, Greenwich mean time).

**Tipping**—A 10% service charge is generally already added to restaurant bills so added tipping is not necessary. Bellhops receive around 200 *colónes* per bag. Taxi drivers are not tipped. Many hotels leave envelopes in the room with which to tip maids (\$1 pd). Guides are often tipped.

**Visas**—With a few exceptions, you will not need a visa. Entry permits are valid for 30 days.

**Water**—Generally safe to drink. The more cautious may prefer to stick to bottled water. If you are staying at a lodge, ask at the front desk about the safety of the water.