



The Republic of Costa Rica

(GMT - 6 hours)

Geographic Overview: Costa Rica located between Nicaragua, Panama and bordering the Pacific ocean and Caribbean sea has stood out for its stability and has benefited from one of the most developed welfare systems in the region. Its citizens enjoy one of the highest life expectancy levels in the Western hemisphere.

Area: 51,032 sq km; 19,652 sq miles

Capital City: San Jose

Language: The official language is Spanish

People: The population in Costa Rica is mainly white (94% - including mestizos). Only 1% of the population is of indigenous extraction. Costa Rica's character is rooted in distinct local cultures, from the Afro-Caribbean province of Limon, to the traditional *Ladino* values embodied by the *sabaneros* (cowboys) of Guanacaste.

Religion(s): Roman Catholic 74%; Evangelical Protestant 15%; Others 3%; None 8%

Currency: Costa Rican Colon (CRC)

Major Political Parties: The main political parties in the country since the introduction of the welfare system have been the National Liberation Party (PLN) and the Christian Democrats - Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC). There are also the following parties; Partido Accion Ciudadana (PAC) and Movimiento Libertario (ML).

Government: Democratically elected representative system with a strong executive

International Direct Dialling Codes

Costa Rica 00 506

Fixed Date National Holidays

1 January, 19 March, 11 April, 1 May, 29 June, 25 July, 2 August, 15 August, 15 September, 12 October, 8 December, 25 December

Variable Date National Holidays

Easter, Corpus Christi

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Tel: 020 7215 4013
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Anglo-Central American Society

Tel: 0207 242 0082
Fax: 0207 731 6249

Costa Rica Newspapers

<http://www.lanacion.com> - La Nacion
<http://www.ticotimes.net> - The Tico Times
<http://www.aldia.co.cr/hoy/> - Al Dia
<http://www.amcostarica.com/> - AM Costa Rica
<http://www.diarioextra.com/> - Diario Extra
<http://www.larepublica.co.cr/> - La Republica
<http://www.elfinancierocr.com/edactual/> - El Financiero
<http://www.prensalibre.co.cr/index.shtml> - La Prensa Libre

Costa Rica - other useful contacts

<http://www.comex.go.cr> - Ministry of Foreign Trade
<http://www.cinde.or.cr> - Costa Rican Investment Board
<http://www.inec.go.cr/> - National Institute of Statistics and Census