

Important information before your trip to Costa Rica.



Entry and visa requirements:

A visa is not required to enter Costa Rica. Your passport must be valid until at least 1 day after the exit. You will also need to carry your entry and exit flight ticket which confirms your permanence in the country with a term of fewer than 90 days.

Insurance:

We recommend that you take out travel insurance and international medical insurance for your trip to Costa Rica.

Money

The national currency is colones. However, in tourist regions, you can also pay in dollars. Please note that only bills up to \$20 are accepted. Also, they will often give you the change in colones, so we recommend paying directly in colones. If you want to change money, use the banks of the city. At the airport, exchange rates are very high. Major credit cards are accepted in the whole country. There are also ATMs throughout the country.

Please note that before you travel, you may have to activate your credit card for Costa Rica.

Tip:

In Costa Rica, it is common for restaurant bills to include a service charge called tax of food and beverages (10%). This means that you are not expected to tip. If the service has been outstanding, an extra tip is appreciated. On the other hand, hotel cleaning staff, drivers, guides, porters... tip. But again, everything is voluntary and depends on the service.

Language:

The national language is Spanish. However, children start learning English in kindergarten. Therefore, you will be fine if you can speak English. However, a few words of Spanish are always an advantage.

Car rental:

If you are traveling by rental car, you will need your driving license issued by your country of residence. A credit card is also required to pay a security deposit which will be refundable once the rental ends. There are some roads with tolls along the way, so we recommend carrying cash in colones for payment correspondent. In Costa Rica there are no self-service pumps at gas stations. They will attend to you and you will only have indicate the type of fuel (gasoline/diesel) and how much you want to fill the vehicle.

The taxi:

The official taxis of Costa Rica are red. They also carry a yellow triangular mark on the vehicle and are equipped with a taximeter. Before the trip, you should ask how much it costs approximately. You should also make sure that the driver turns on the meter at the beginning of the journey. Also, in Costa Rica you can use transport services of the applications Uber (the most popular) and Didi. They are quite safe and at affordable prices.

Luggage:

Since you are doing a round trip, you will be traveling a lot and often will only spend 1-3 nights in one place. Therefore, we recommend that you keep your luggage manageable. It is also a good idea to use a bag with wheels or a backpack for easy handling in the trunk or during boat transfers.

Electricity:

In Costa Rica, the main voltage in the sockets is 110 volts. Appliances that require 220 volts work weaker. You will also need an adapter for the american flat contacts. We recommend bringing your own adapter.



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Safety:

Costa Rica is considered a very safe country in Central America. However, robberies can also happen here. Always have a healthy amount of suspicion. We recommend that you follow these tips to spend a safe vacation.

If you travel by car:

- Avoid driving after sunset or in the evenings
- Do not leave valuables in the car.
- Leave the car in official parking lots.

General recommendations:

- Carry only small amounts of money.
- Avoid wearing jewelry or visible valuables (especially in downtown San José).
- Leave at the hotel valuables that you are not going to use during your walk/activity of the day.
- Protect your valuables by carrying them in not visible places.
- Avoid problematic neighborhoods, you can find out at the hotel reception which places not to visit.

Climate and travel time:

Costa Rica is in the tropical climate zone. The average annual temperature is about 25° Celsius. However, in the mountains, it can get quite cold, so it is always advisable to bring a light jacket or a sweater. Costa Rica has a rainy season from May to November and a dry season from November to April.

In July there is a small break in the rainy season named “veranillo de San Juan” linked to the decrease in the trade winds.

During the rainy season, there are usually short, heavy showers in the afternoon, while the mornings are usually sunny and hot. The advantage of traveling in the rainy season is that prices are cheaper at this time of year. The beaches offer better waves for surfing and nature lovers also take benefit from money because during this season you will be able to observe the sea turtles nesting in Tortuguero or the humpback whales in the South Pacific.

Weather conditions in the Caribbean are different from the rest of the country. Here, especially the months: September, October, February and March are dry. The rest of the year is quite wet and unstable. The Caribbean offers lush and green vegetation throughout the year.

To keep up to date with the weather, we recommend visiting the website of the National Meteorological Institute: <https://www.imn.ac.cr/en/inicio>

Drinking water:

In most regions, tap water is safe to drink, even if it tastes a bit different from what you are used to. This is because chlorine is added to drinking water, thus guaranteeing its potability. In remote areas of the country, such as Corcovado, Tortuguero or parts of the Caribbean, tap water is not drinkable, so we recommend always carrying your bottle of water or purchasing bottled water.

Food:

People with sensitive stomachs should be careful when eating food from street vendors. Do not eat undercooked or raw food. If you eat fruit, check that they have been washed previously and do not consume ice from the street since we do not know how clean or drinkable the water is. Mejor ask for drinks without ice (sin hielo por favor!).



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