

Costa Rica Overview

Geography

Location

- Central America

Area

- 51,100 square kilometers
 - Land: 51,060 square kilometers
 - Water: 40 square kilometers

Borders

- Caribbean Sea
- Pacific Ocean
- 1,290km of coastline
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- 661km of land borders

Climate

- tropical and subtropical
 - Dry season (December to April)
 - Rainy season (May to November)
 - Cooler in highlands

Terrain

- Coastal plains separated by rugged mountains including over 100 volcanic cones
- Natural Resources used
- Hydropower

Land Use

- Agricultural: 37.1%
 - Ploughed Land: 4.9%
 - Permanent Crops: 6.7%
 - Permanent Pasture: 25.5%
- Forest: 51.5%
- Other: 11.4%

Natural Hazards

- Earthquakes
- Hurricanes along the Atlantic Coast
- Flooding of lowlands that is often accompanied by landslides during the rainy season
- Active Volcanoes
 - Arenal
 - Irazu
 - Miravalles
 - Poas
 - Rincon de la vieja
 - Turrialba

Environment

Current Issues

- Deforestation and land use change, largely a result of the clearing of land for cattle ranching and agriculture
 - Soil erosion
 - Coastal marine pollution
 - Fisheries protection
 - Solid waste management
 - Air pollution
- International Agreements
- Biodiversity,
 - Climate Change,
 - Desertification, Protection of Endangered Species,
 - Environmental Modification,
 - Hazardous Wastes,
 - Law of the Sea,
 - Marine Dumping,
 - Ozone Layer Protection,
 - Protecting wetlands,
 - Whaling

People and Society

Population

- 4,930,258 people as of 2017
 - 123rd largest country in the world
- Roughly half of the nation's population resides in urban areas
- The capital of San José is the largest city and home to one-fifth of the population

Ethnic Groups

- White or Mestizo: 83.6%
- Mulatto: 6.7%
- Indigenous: 2.4%
- Black: 1.1%
- Other: 1.1%
- Unspecified: 2.2%

Languages

- Spanish (Official Language)
- English

Religious Breakdown

- Roman Catholic: 71.8%
- Evangelical and Pentecostal: 12.3%
- Protestant: 2.6%
- Jehovah's Witness: 0.5%
- Other: 2.4%
- None: 10.4%

Government: Presidential Republic

Branches

Executive

- Chief of State: President Carlos Alvarado
- First Vice President: Epsy Campbell
- Second Vice President: Marvin Rodriguez
- Cabinet: selected by the president
- Elections and Appointments: President and Vice President are elected, from the same ballot, for a four year term

Legislative

- Description: Unicameral Legislative Assembly
- Elections: every four years, held in February

Judicial

- Highest Court: Supreme Court of Justice
- Subordinate Court: appellate and trial courts

Economy

GDP

- Purchasing Power Parity: \$83.85 billion
- Official Exchange Rate: \$58.06 billion
- Real Growth Rate: 3.2%
- Per Capita: \$16,900
- Sectors:
 - Agriculture: 5.5%
 - Industry: 21%
 - Public Services: 73.5%
 - Labor
- Labor Force: 2.229 million people
 - Agriculture: 14%
 - Industry: 22%
 - Public Services: 64%
- Unemployment rate: 8.1%

Military and Security

Branches

- Costa Rica does not have a regular military force
- Ministry of Public Security
- Government
- Police

Transnational Issues

International disputes

- Costa Rica and Nicaragua regularly file border dispute cases over the delimitations of the San Juan River and the northern tip of Calero Island to the International Court of Justice

Refugees and Internationally Displaced Persons

- Refugees: 11,528 Venezuelans

- Stateless Persons: 71

Trafficking

- Costa Rica is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor
- Tier 2 Watch List – Costa Rica does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, though they are working towards meeting these standards

Drugs

- Shipment and consumption cocaine and heroin
- Production and consumption of cannabis
- Consumption of amphetamines