

# 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
  - 123<sup>rd</sup> 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
- 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