

Liberia and Guanacaste, Costa Rica



In the Northwest area of Guanacaste, you can swim in warm, tropical waters or soak up the sun on palm tree-lined beaches. Take an aerial tram tour of the rain forest, where lush vegetation and wildlife abound. Trek through one of the many national parks where you'll spot brightly colored birds and flowers. Witness large, leatherback turtles nesting on the beach. Visitors to the Arenal Volcano are often treated to the volcano's dazzling pyrotechnical display. Anglers will find some of the best blue water and inshore fishing in the world. If you're in search of a combination of history, culture, and natural beauty, look to the Guanacaste area.

You can combine your visit to the Guanacaste region with a stay in either the cosmopolitan city of San Jose or surrounded by the natural beauty of the Arenal Volcano/Monteverde area-or you can combine all 3 areas for a great Costa Rican adventure. If you'd like to visit 2 or 3 areas, contact a reservation agent for more information.

Package Includes:

- Choice of accommodations
- Hotel taxes
- Assistance of a local destination representative

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should go?

Honeymooners

Stroll along palm tree-lined beaches.

Families

Trek through a national park or visit a volcano.

Adventurers

Explore the rain forest, take a mountain hike, go kayaking, or propel through the rainforest.

What's the climate like?

| | Winter | Spring | Summer | Autumn |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Average High | 73° F | 72° F | 78° F | 77° F |
| Average Low | 59° F | 60° F | 62° F | 60° F |
| Average Rainfall | 0.4" | 0.5" | 11.3" | 13.1" |

Costa Rica's year-round average temperature is 76°F. Rainy season is June – October.

How do I get around town?

Transfers

Transfers are only included (beginning Jan 4, 2010) for guests staying at the Four Seasons Resort. For other select hotels, roundtrip transfers are available from us for purchase. Transfers between the Liberia airport and the hotels located in the Arenal/Monte Verde area are not available; a rental car is recommended.

Car

A rental car is a great way to see the countryside and explore on your own, if you aren't taking any tours. However, keep in mind that some of the roads are in poor condition with potholes, unpaved areas, and sharp turns, which make travel times longer than what you may expect. Due to the terrain and weather, it is best to rent a four-wheel drive vehicle. Make sure to check with your car insurance company about coverage in Costa Rica.

Taxi

A taxi is a great method of transportation for going out to dinner in the resort area of Guanacaste if you didn't rent a car. Make sure to only take metered taxis and/or agree on the price before you get in. Your hotel can help you determine what the taxi fare should be to your intended destination.

Bus

Bus travel is not recommended.

What kinds of dining and nightlife are available?

Specialties in Costa Rica include rice and beans cooked in delicious ways. Try chicken with rice, black bean soup, rice with black beans, and casados, a plate filled with rice, beans, fried plantains, salad, cheese, and fish or meat. Out on the Nicoya Peninsula and along the coast you'll find a wide variety of fish and seafood, mainly camarones (shrimp) and langostinos (a kind of lobster).

- **Dragonfly**
The owner hails from Napa Valley and the menu does, too, at this open-air restaurant. Playa Tamarindo.
- **Cantino Las Bristas**
A dive bar on the beach that serves delicious fish tacos. Playa Potrero, near Playa Flamingo.
- **Dan Rufino**
Great restaurant that is loved for its amazing ceviche appetizer. La Fortuna.
- **Gil's Place**
Delicious burritos and nachos. Highly recommended. Tamarindo.
- **Ginger**
A great tapas place along the road with highly regarded mojitos. Playa Hermosa.
- **Maria Bonita Restaurant**
A popular and intimate Latin-Caribbean restaurant serving up mouth-watering, perfectly spiced dishes. Reservations advised. Playa Langosta.
- **Marie's Restaurant**
Beloved restaurant for its large portions of reliably fresh and delicious seafood at reasonable prices. Great breakfasts, too. Flamingo.
- **Nogui's**
Considered by loyal fans as the most affordable seafood restaurant in town and it's practically on the beach. Save room for a piece of homemade pie. Tamarindo.
- **El Pescador**
Tasty fresh fish right on the beach, where the locals outnumber the tourists. Every entrée comes with a sample of ceviche. Playa Tamarindo.
- **Restaurante Puesta del Sol**
On the north end of the Pescado Loco road, it is well worth the extra money for its delicious Spanish paella and tapas. Playa Hermosa.

Nightlife in the Guanacaste area centers on the hotels with their in-house discos and lounges. If you're looking for fun outside of your hotel, best to head to the town of Tamarindo with its variety of restaurants and bars.

Where should I go shopping?

Costa Rica has yet to evolve into a shopping destination. For souvenirs, the shops in your hotel are the best bet, along with stores in Tamarindo. Things to look for are coffee, woodcarvings, wood salad bowls and platters, ceramics from central Guanacaste, wonderful reproductions of pre-Columbian jewelry, and crafts from Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Beside coffee, you can also purchase a coffee-creme liqueur called Café Rica; a line of salsas from Tipica Tropical Sauce; and a unique condiment, Salsa Lizano, that Costa Ricans use as steak sauce.

When are the local events?

Many of Costa Rica's holidays and celebrations revolve around the church. Here are some happenings throughout the year:

Fiestas of Santa Cruz

Mid-January. A religious celebration honoring the Black Christ of Esquipulas with dancing, music, and bullfights. Guanacaste.

Holy Week

Week before Easter. Religious processions are held in towns throughout the country.

Annexation of Guanacaste Day

July 25. Bullfights, folk dancing, horseback parades, rodeos, and other events celebrate the day when Guanacaste became part of Costa Rica. Liberia.

Independence Day

September 15. Celebrations everywhere, some with nighttime parades with children.

International Beach Clean-Up Day

Third Saturday in September. Pitch in and help clean up some of the many beaches.

All Soul's Day

November 2. Not as elaborate as Mexico's celebration, Costa Ricans take time this day to remember the deceased.

Las Posadas

December 15. Children and carolers go door to door seeking lodging in a reenactment of when Joseph and Mary did the same.

What are my golf and recreation options?

Golf

Because of its topography, fauna, flora, and weather, Costa Rica is a golf paradise. Test your skills at any of the eight golf courses found throughout the country.

Sportfishing

Billfish can be found along the Pacific coast. The area is home to almost 100 world-record catches, including blue marlin and Pacific sailfish. The town of Tamarindo will have charter fleets; your hotel may also be able to help. Fresh water fishing can be done on Lake Arenal.

Snorkeling + Scuba Diving

The main area for snorkeling and diving in the Guanacaste area is along the northern part of the Nicoya Peninsula. Visibility varies with the seasons, as heavy rainfall tends to muddy the waters, even offshore.

Surfing + Windsurfing

The country's selection of surf spots range from idyllic beach breaks, suitable for beginners, to coral platforms where the water leaps up and tubes like a miniature Pipeline.

White-Water Rafting

Costa Rica's mountainous topography and copious rainfall are both responsible for some of the best white-water river choices in the world.

Travel tidbits

Arenal Volcano Viewing

Cloud cover makes volcano viewing the luck of the draw, and no one can negotiate with Mother Nature. Early mornings and dry season give you the best chances for seeing it in action.

Alcohol

No alcohol is served the two days before Easter and the two days before and after a presidential election.

Beaches

There are almost a hundred beaches in Costa Rica that appear on better maps but there are over two hundred more that don't! Rent a car and find a beach of your own.

Upon Arrival

Brace yourself for long lines at immigration if you arrive in the evening along with all the other large flights from North America. Try to get a seat near the front of the plane and don't dawdle when disembarking.

Clothing

You wouldn't think of it, going to the tropics, but if planning to go to Monteverde Cloud Forest, it's advised to bring a jacket. The elevation is around 10,000 feet and it can get quite cool.

Cash vs. Travelers Checks

It is advised to bring cash, not travelers checks to Costa Rica. Some large hotels will refuse them or will only give you \$25 cash because the banks often take a month to pay on them. Smaller hotels and merchants won't touch them, so it's really not worth bringing them. Plus, lines at banks to cash them can also be quite long — not something you want to spend your time doing on vacation. Cash or credit cards work best.

Good to Know:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Airport Name: 3-letter Code: | Aeropuerto Internacional Daniel Oduber LIR |
| Best Weather: | November – May |
| Best Values: | June – October |
| Currency: | Costa Rican colón or colones (plural) |
| Language: | Spanish is the official language of Costa Rica, although many people speak English, especially in tourist areas. |
| Time Zone: | Costa Rica is in the Central Time Zone. Costa Rica does not adapt to Daylight Saving Time, so during that time (April – October) the time is one hour later than Central Time. |
| Proof of Citizenship: | Government legislation requires all people traveling via air to and from the United States and Canada to have a valid passport. For details on passports, visas, and health requirements, see Entry Requirements . |
| Tipping: | A 10% service charge is usually added to the bill (or included in the prices on the menu). If you aren't sure if it has been added, ask. Additional tipping is not expected, but if the service has been especially good, some people leave a little extra. |
| Dress: | Very casual in the beach areas; more formal in San José. Dress appropriately if visiting a church. |