

COSTA RICA The National Parks

No Artificial Ingredients

The National Parks are among the most popular tourist attractions in Costa Rica. The system of parks protects “samples” of almost all the ecosystems of the country and they are the habitat of an extraordinary number of plants and birds, concentrated in small areas.

The National Parks occupy 13% of the national territory and include not only rainforests and dry tropics, but also active volcanoes, waterfalls, coral reefs, caves, pre-Columbian ruins, mangrove swamps and beaches.

Scientists, biologists, and researchers come from all over the world to study and classify the flora and the fauna of Costa Rica. This is all carried out under the continuous control of Costa Rican experts.

The Parks have been created for the conservation of the ambient and the various species present, not for tourism, even though this brings a good number of ecological visitors and desirable foreign exchange.

Other than the Parks, there are also **Biological Reserves** (primarily interesting to researchers) and Fauna Reserves (Reserva Biologica y Refugio Nacional de vida Silvestre o de fauna Silvestre), created to protect the wild species of plants and animals. Taken as a whole, the protected territory of Costa Rica covers about 25% of the whole.

Among the principal Parks in the north of the country one can list Santa Rosa, Guanacaste and Rincon de la Vieja. In the centre we find Braulio Carrillo, the Monumenta Nacional Guayabo, the Tortuguero. To the south there is the Amistad and then Cahuita, Gandoca Manzanillo, Corcovado, Manuel Antonio, Peninsula de Osa and many others. In the Pacific Ocean lies the island of Coco, which safeguards marine life and many endemic species of reptiles and birds. One can disembark on Coco, but not stay the night, and one must always be accompanied by a Park Ranger.



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