



Tico Info



- **Banking:** Banks are open from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and do not close for lunch. Some banks are open until 5:00 pm.
- **Businesses Hours:** Government offices are open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Commercial offices are open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Store and other businesses from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- **Churches:** Like all Latin American countries, Costa Rica is predominantly Catholic, but other denominations are found throughout the country.
- **Climate:** Costa Rica is a tropical country and experiences only two seasons: wet and dry. The dry season is generally between December and May and the wet season lasts the rest of the year. The Caribbean coast tends to be wet all year. Temperatures vary little between seasons; the main influence on temperature is altitude. The coasts are very hot and humid, with the Caribbean averaging 69 degrees Fahrenheit at night and over 86 degrees Fahrenheit during the day; the Pacific is a few degrees warmer still.
- **Clothing :** Pack light for your travels. The highland areas can be very cold, so pack a sweater if you are going there. For the lowland areas light loose-fitting shirts and pants are essential. A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses are recommended for the beach. See our travel tips page at the end of each section for more information.
- **Communications:** Direct-dial telephone service, facsimile, telex, radio, Internet service and cable television are all available. Bilingual operator assistance for: International calls is – 116, Local information – 113, Long distance information – 124.
- **Credit Cards and Travelers' Checks:** Most major credit cards are accepted throughout the country, but VISA seems to be the most commonly seen. Some smaller businesses will only accept cash. Travelers' checks are not recommended, seldom accepted. \$100 bills are also difficult to use.
- **Currency Exchange:** The official currency is the Colon and is easier to use than dollars, although US dollars are accepted throughout the country. Currency can be exchanged at banks, although they often require your passport. You can also exchange money at the International Airport.
- **Customs:** Arrivals are allowed 500 cigarettes plus five liters of wine or spirits duty free.
- **Departure Tax:** The average rate is US \$26.00 to depart by air and is the responsibility of each individual. Land and sea exits are not charged.
- **Electricity:** 110-volt AC is found nationwide. A few outlying areas use their own power source so check ahead before traveling. However, three-pronged outlets can be scarce, so it's helpful to bring along an adapter.
- **Entry Requirements:** Citizens from Canada and the US require a valid passport to enter, valid for six months beyond travel date.
- **Government:** Costa Rica is a democratic republic. Elections are held every four years.
- **Hospitals:** Health care in Costa Rica is very good and sanitary standards are high. First class hospitals are found throughout San Jose and some of the other largely populated areas.
- **Language:** Spanish is the official language. English is spoken in tourist areas throughout the country.
- **Populations:** Costa Rica has a population of 4 million people. Over 30% live in the Central Valley, which comprises only 4% of the entire country.
- **Taxes:** There is a 13% sales tax at hotels, restaurants, and most service industries and an additional 3% tourist tax at hotels.
- **Telephone:** Direct dial service is efficient and there are more telephones per capita than in any other Latin American country. Many international long distance services are available. Check with your hotel front desk for more information.
- **Time Zone:** Costa Rica is the same as US Central Standard Time but does not observe daylight savings time (GMT-6:00).
- **Topography:** Costa Rica is bordered to the north by Nicaragua and to the south by Panama. It has both a Caribbean and a Pacific coast. A series of volcanic mountain chains runs from Nicaraguan border in the northwest to the Panamanian border in the southeast, splitting the country in two. In the center of these ranges is a high-altitude plain, with coastal lowlands on either side. Over half the population lives on this plain, which has fertile volcanic soils. The Caribbean coast is 132 miles long and the Pacific coast is 635 miles long.
- **Water:** Unless specified otherwise, the water is safe to drink in all areas of the country.

Temperatures and rainfall for selected Costa Rican locations

	AVG	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEAR
Alajuela	Highs	81	83	85	85	82	81	81	81	80	80	80	81	81
	Lows	62	62	63	63	64	64	64	63	63	63	63	63	63
	Rain	0.3"	0.5"	0.6"	3.3"	10.8"	10.8"	7.2"	10.3"	13.9"	13.6"	19.9"	1.2"	92"
Golfito	Highs	91	92	92	91	90	89	89	90	89	89	89	90	90
	Lows	71	72	73	73	73	72	71	71	71	71	71	71	72
	Rain	6.3"	5.8"	8.2"	11.2"	19.2"	17.8"	18.4"	22.3"	28.1"	28.1"	22.6"	11.8"	200"
Cahuita	Highs	86	86	87	87	87	87	86	86	87	87	86	86	86
	Lows	68	68	69	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	69	69	69
	Rain	12.7"	8.4"	8.2"	11.0"	11.3"	11.8"	17.1"	12.5"	5.8"	8.2"	15.6"	17.8"	140"
Nicoya	Highs	91	93	95	96	91	89	89	89	87	87	87	89	87
	Lows	69	71	71	73	73	71	71	71	71	71	69	69	71
	Rain	.02"	0.4"	1.0"	2.8"	11.0"	13.0"	9.8"	12.2"	16.0"	16.3"	4.6"	1.0"	88"
Manuel Antonio	Highs	87	87	89	89	89	87	87	87	86	86	86	86	87
	Lows	69	69	71	71	71	71	69	69	71	71	71	69	71
	Rain	2.9"	1.4"	2.4"	7.0"	15.7"	17.3"	18.4"	19.1"	21.1"	25.8"	15.5"	6.8"	153"
San Jose	Highs	73	75	77	78	78	78	77	77	78	77	75	77	77
	Lows	59	59	60	60	62	62	67	62	60	60	60	59	62
	Rain	0.4"	0.2"	0.5"	1.8"	9.0"	11.5"	8.6"	10.0"	13.3"	13.3"	5.7"	1.6"	75"