

welcome to Costa Rica



The Tropics in Technicolor

Whether you're following the metallic shimmer of a blue butterfly from palm to palm, staring into the yawning mouth of a deep purple orchid or watching wisps of fog roll in to soften the jagged edge of mountains, Costa Rica's vivid colors last a lifetime. The canopies rustle with riotous troupes of white-faced monkeys, hillsides echo with the squawks of scarlet macaws and you can reach up to the trees and pick your day's lunch: a ripe starfruit. It might seem at times like some kind of wondrous tropical fantasy land, but this is Costa Rica.

Outdoor Adventures

Rainforest hikes and brisk high-altitude trails, rushing white-water rapids and world-class surfing: there is a dizzying suite of outdoor adventures. They come in every shape and size – from the squeal-inducing rush of a canopy zip line, to a sun-dazed afternoon at the beach. The country's national parks allow visitors to glimpse the seething life of the tropical rainforest, its simmering volcanoes and cloud forests offer otherworldly vistas and its reliable surf breaks are suited to beginners and experts alike. Can't decide? Don't worry, you won't have to. Given its diminutive size, it's possible to plan a relatively short trip that includes all of the above.

In Costa Rica trails lead to rushing waterfalls, mist-covered volcanoes and deserted beaches. Regardless of which you choose, this tropical playland is a feast for the senses.

(left) Costa Rica's iconic blue morpho butterfly (p516)
(below) An empty beach in Parque Nacional Corcovado (p382)



The Peaceful Soul of Central America

As the preeminent eco- and adventure-tourism capital of Central America, Costa Rica has earned a rightful place in the cubicle daydreams of travelers around the world. With a world-class infrastructure, visionary sustainability initiatives and no standing army, Costa Rica is a green, peaceful jewel of the region. Taking into account that more than a third of the country enjoys some form of environmental protection and there's greater biodiversity than the USA and Europe combined, it's a country that earns the superlative descriptions.

The Pure Life

And then you have the people. Costa Ricans (or Ticos as they refer to themselves) are very proud of their little slice of paradise, and are ever eager to welcome guests to sink into the easygoing rhythms of *pura vida* – the pure life – every bit as much of a catchy motto as it is an enduring mantra. With the highest quality of life in Central America and a fantastic tourism infrastructure, all the perfect waves, perfect sunsets and perfect beaches seem like the pure life indeed.