



# Central Pacific Coast

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## Why Go?

Stretching from the rough-and-ready port of Puntarenas to the tiny town of Uvita, the central Pacific coast is home to both wet and dry tropical rainforests, sun-drenched sandy beaches and a healthy dose of wildlife. On shore, national parks protect endangered squirrel monkeys and scarlet macaws, while offshore waters are home to migrating whales and pods of dolphins.

With so much biodiversity packed into a small geographic area, it's no wonder the coastal region is often thought of as Costa Rica in miniature. Given its close proximity to San José and the Central Valley and highlands, and its well-developed system of paved roads, this part of the country is a favorite weekend getaway for domestic and international travelers.

While threats of unregulated growth and environmental damage are real, it's also important to see the bigger picture, namely the stunning nature that first put the central Pacific coast on the map.

## When to Go

- ➔ West of the Cordillera Central, rains fall heavily between April and November. The hillsides are particularly lush and green during this time
- ➔ In summer (December to March) little rain falls, leaving the countryside dry and barren looking.
- ➔ Festival fans will want to visit from around mid-January to late February, when music and art gatherings light up Jacó and Uvita.



## Central Pacific Coast Highlights

- 1** Watching troops of monkeys, lazy sloths and gliding brown pelicans at **Parque Nacional Manuel Antonio** (p389).
- 2** Surfing the beach breaks of **Jacó** (p362), **Playa Hermosa** (p370) and **Dominical** (p397) – or learning how.
- 3** Sampling some of the coast's most sophisticated cuisine in **Ojochal** (p405).
- 4** Listening for squawking pairs of scarlet macaws flying