



San José

POP OVER 1.5 MILLION (GREATER METRO AREA) / ELEV 1170M / AREA 2366 SQ KM

Includes ➔

Sights	66
Activities	75
Courses	75
Tours	75
Festivals & Events	76
Sleeping	77
Eating	85
Drinking & Nightlife	92
Entertainment	95
Shopping	96

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Park Café (p88)
- ➔ La Esquina de Buenos Aires (p86)
- ➔ Sofía Restaurante Mediterráneo (p89)
- ➔ Café Mundo (p86)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Grano de Oro (p82)
- ➔ Hotel Aranjuez (p78)
- ➔ Casa de las Tías (p85)
- ➔ Hostel Bekuo (p82)
- ➔ Hostel Pangea (p77)

Why Go?

Chances are San José wasn't the top destination on your list when you started planning your Costa Rica trip, but give this city a chance and you just might be pleasantly surprised. It's true that Chepe – as San José is affectionately known – doesn't make a great first impression, with its unremarkable concrete structures and honking traffic, but it's well worth digging deeper to discover the city's charms.

Take your time poking around historic neighborhoods like Barrio Amón, where colonial mansions have been converted into contemporary art galleries, restaurants and boutique hotels. Stroll with Saturday shoppers at the farmers market, join the Sunday crowds in Parque La Sabana, dance the night away to live music at one of the city's vibrant clubs, or visit the museums of gold, jade, art and natural history, and you'll begin to understand the multidimensional appeal of Costa Rica's largest city and cultural capital.

When to Go

- ➔ Rainy season usually lasts from mid-April through December.
- ➔ The city's climate is considerably cooler than on the coasts, especially at night; daytime temps generally vary between 21°C and 27°C (70°F to 80°F).
- ➔ The best time to visit is around the Christmas holidays, when the Ticos' (Costa Ricans') festive cheer reaches its height, with the Festival de la Luz and Las Fiestas de Zapote being unmissable highlights. Otherwise, any season is good for exploring the capital's cultural attractions.

