



Southern Costa Rica & Península de Osa

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Best Ec lodges

- Danta Corcovado Lodge (p441)
- El Remanso Lodge (p448)
- Esquinas Rainforest Lodge (p434)
- Luna Lodge (p448)

Best Off-the-Beaten Track

- Isla del Coco (p439)
- Parque Internacional La Amistad (p430)
- Santa María & Valle de Dota (p411)
- Playas San Josecito, Nicuesa & Cativo (p435)

Why Go?

From the chilly heights of Cerro Chirripó (3820m) to the steamy coastal jungles of the Península de Osa, this sector of Costa Rica encompasses some of the country's least-explored and least-developed land. Vast tracts of wilderness remain untouched in Parque Internacional La Amistad, and the country's most visible indigenous groups – the Bribri, Cabécar, Brunka and Ngöbe – maintain traditional ways of living in their remote territories.

Quetzal sightings around San Gerardo de Dota are not unusual, and scarlet macaw appearances throughout the coastal region are the norm. Besides the easily spotted birds, and monkeys, sloths and coatis roaming the region's abundant parks and reserves, in Parque Nacional Corcovado there's also the rare chance to spy on slumbering tapir. Meanwhile, the rugged coasts of the Golfo Dulce and Península de Osa captivate travelers with abandoned wilderness beaches, world-class surf and opportunities for rugged exploration. This is the land for intrepid travelers yearning for something truly wild.

When to Go

- While the rainforests are always wet, it absolutely pours between October and December. Wet weather in the Osa can make roads impassable and logistics challenging, so if you're planning a Corcovado trek, aim for the 'dry' season (late December through March). For surfers, the upside to rainy season is that it's the best time of year for swells.
- Southern Costa Rica gets as much rain as much of the coast, and at higher elevations it can get very chilly at night. The best time for serious bird-watching (particularly for quetzal sightings) is between November and May. The week leading up to Easter and the Christmas period are both super-high season, when many Ticos flee to the beaches or cooler mountain climes.

Southern Costa Rica & Península de Osa Highlights

- 1 Hiking the remote coast and rich rainforest of **Parque Nacional Corcovado** (p458), the country's premier wilderness experience.
- 2 Shivering atop atop Costa Rica's tallest peak to watch the sunrise from **Cerro Chirripó** (p419).
- 3 Communing with hammerhead sharks and colorful reef fish in the waters of **Reserva Biológica Isla del Caño** (p457).
- 4 Catching a ride on one of the world's longest left breaks at the slow-paced surfing paradise of **Pavones** (p437).
- 5 Looking for resplendently feathered quetzal in the cool highlands of **San Gerardo de Dota** (p440).
- 6 Celebrating the vibrant **Fiesta de los Diablitos** (p423) at the Reserva Indígena Boruca.
- 7 Watching the sun rise over the Golfo Dulce and set over the Pacific from the deserted beaches on **Cabo Matapalo** (p446).

