



Northwestern Costa Rica

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Café Caburé (p206)
- ➔ Café Liberia (p226)
- ➔ Hummingbird Café (p218)
- ➔ Monteverde Cheese Factory (p200)
- ➔ Orchid Coffee (p205)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Casitas Tenorio (p217)
- ➔ Capulín Cabins & Farm (p202)
- ➔ Celeste Mountain Lodge (p217)
- ➔ Hotel Belmar (p204)

Why Go?

What did you come to Costa Rica for? To lounge on pristine beaches and ride glorious waves? To hike up volcanoes and soak in geothermal springs? To spy on birds and monkeys and get lost among ancient trees? The northwestern corner of Costa Rica packs in all this and more. Unlike any other part of Costa Rica, Guanacaste – in the far northwest – is a wide, flat expanse of grasslands and dry tropical forest, where savanna vistas are broken only by windblown trees. Further east, the Cordillera de Guanacaste rises majestically out of the plains in a line of sputtering, steaming volcanic peaks that beg exploration. Further south, higher altitudes create a misty, mystical cloud forest, teeming with life. What did you come to Costa Rica for? Here it is...

When to Go

- ➔ Guanacaste is Costa Rica's driest province, getting very little rain from November to April, when the winds bless (and blast) Bahía Salinas.
- ➔ By contrast, the 'green' season is very, very green in the cloud forest.
- ➔ From May to November, there are much fewer tourists and prices for accommodation are reduced.
- ➔ Humpback whales migrate up the coast in September and October.
- ➔ Other seasonal events to watch out for are the blooming of the yellow cortezes in March and the *fiestas Guanacastecas* that occur throughout the year.



Northwestern Costa Rica Highlights

- 1 Spotting the resplendent quetzal through the mist at one of the reserves near **Monteverde** (p193).
- 2 Making like a monkey by zipping and swinging on the **Cloud forest canopy tour** (p198).
- 3 Checking off your bird list at **Parque Nacional Palo Verde**

- 4 Hiking along the raging Río Celeste at the **Parque Nacional Volcán Tenorio** (p218), and marveling at her cerulean-blue waters.
- 5 Cooling off with a refreshing waterfall shower and bath at **Llanos de Cortés** (p223).

- 6 Trekking past waterfalls, thermal pools and volcanic vents at **Parque Nacional Rincón de la Vieja** (p228).
- 7 Surfing the legendary Witch's Rock at **Playa Naranjo** (p235).
- 8 Satisfying your need for speed with a kitesurfing course at **Bahía Salinas** (p238).