



San José

POP OVER 1.5 MILLION / AREA 2366 SQ KM / ELEV 1170M

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Park Café (p88)
- ➔ La Esquina de Buenos Aires (p87)
- ➔ Sofía Mediterráneo (p89)
- ➔ Saúl Bistro (p90)
- ➔ Café de los Deseos (p83)

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Club Vertigo (p92)
- ➔ 8ctavo Rooftop (p94)
- ➔ Hoxton Pub (p92)
- ➔ Stiefel (p91)
- ➔ Calle la Amargura (p92)

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 such as 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.

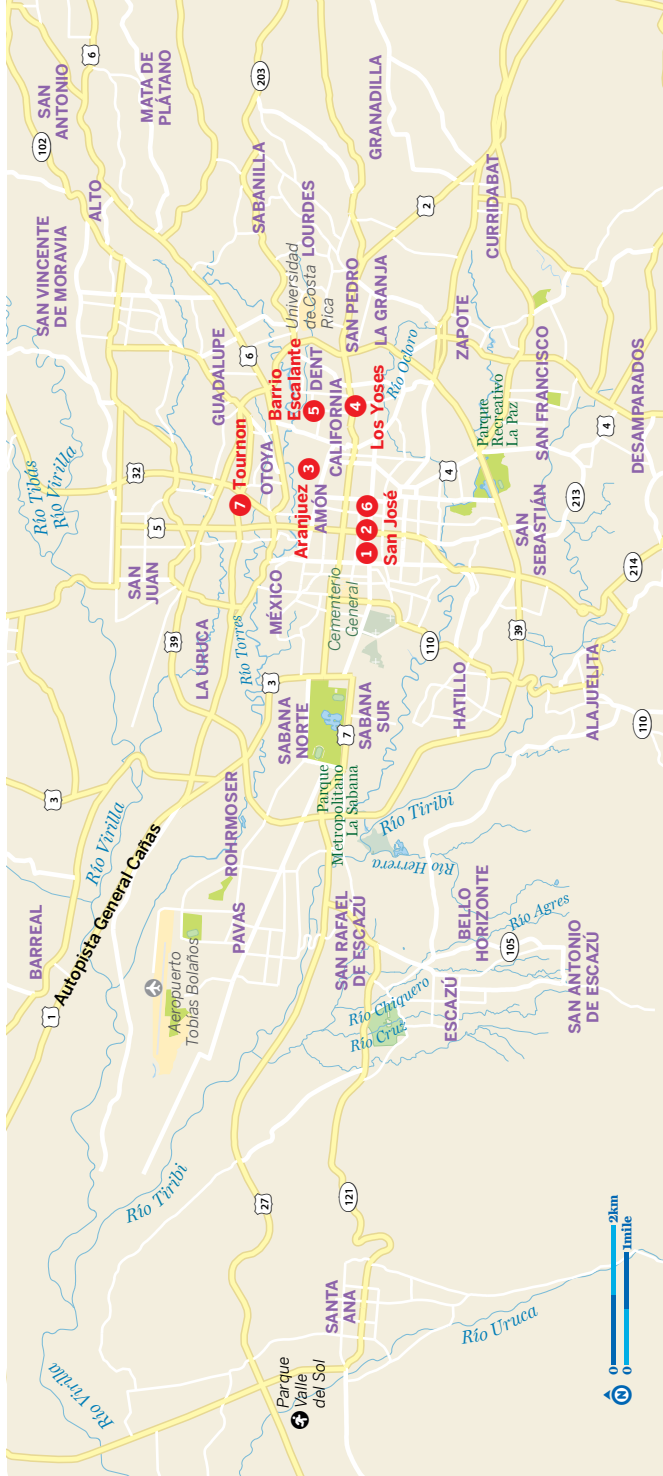
When to Go

➔ Rainy season usually lasts from mid-April through December, and is therefore a great time to look for deals and beat the crowds. Beware of October, which usually sees heavy rains for days at a time.

➔ 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' festive cheer reaches its height with the Festival de la Luz and Las Fiestas de Zapote.

➔ Any season is good for exploring the capital's cultural attractions.



San José Highlights

- 1 Admiring Costa Rica's artistic traditions, past and present at the **Museo de Oro** (p64).
- 2 Savoring classical music and dance performances amid

the beaux-arts interior of the **Teatro Nacional** (p94).

3 Poking around the lively **Feria Verde de Aranjuez** (p95) farmer's market in search of

- locally grown and gourmet treats.
- 4 Grooving to live bands and DJs at **Hoxton Pub** (p92).
 - 5 Indulging your taste buds at the fun bars and fine

eateries of **Barrio Escalante** (p88).

- 6 Exploring the vast universe of carved stone and ceramic treasures at the **Museo de Jade** (p65).

- 7 Learning about the struggles of less fortunate city residents on a respectful and engaging tour of a slum with **Really Experience Community** (p73).