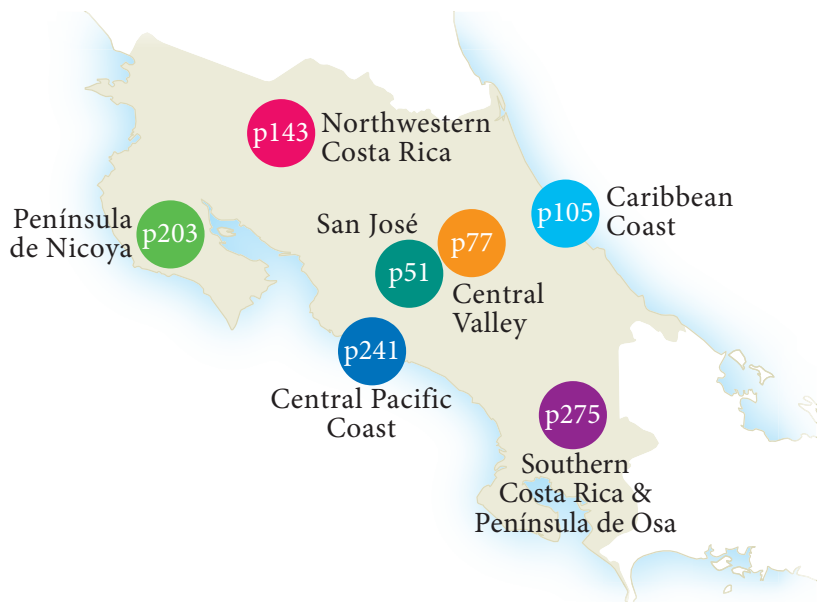




Discover **Costa Rica**

Experience the best
of Costa Rica

This edition written and researched by
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This is Costa Rica

If you have long sought a piece of tropical paradise, take a deep breath: you've found it. The perfect balance of adrenaline-charged adventure destination and unplugged tropical getaway, Costa Rica is a land of dormant volcanoes, desolate beaches and dense jungle. The canopies rustle with riotous troupes of white-faced monkeys, hillsides echo with the squawk of scarlet macaws and the trees along the trail are overburdened with the day's lunch of ripe star fruit. It might seem like a wondrous tropical fantasy land, but this is Costa Rica.

Adventure is as abundant as the tropical fruit here. Learn to surf in warm water and hike above the clouds; rush down white-water rivers and then hoist yourself up to a zip line to sail over jungle canopies. Sound good? That's only the beginning. Costa Rica is the preeminent eco- and adventure-tourism capital of Central America.

Costa Rica walks the walk when it comes to being green. Its government has managed to protect more than 25% of this rich land as national conservation zones. With an estimated 5% of the planet's biodiversity in a compact landmass the size of West Virginia, this verdant, vibrant landscape naturally attracts birders, hikers, and eco-conscious seekers of all types. Even visitors without preexisting interest in avian life or hiking can't help but be enticed by the promise of glimpsing an iridescent-green quetzal, or finding that local waterfall and swimming hole at the end of a trail.

Then there are the people. Costa Ricans, or Ticos as they call themselves, are largely proud of their little slice of paradise. They welcome guests into the easygoing rhythms of *pura vida* – the pure life – that is as much a catchy motto as it is an enduring mantra.

“
It might
seem like a
wondrous
tropical
fantasy
land, but
this is
Costa Rica.
”



Costa Rica





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Top Highlights

- 1 Monteverde Cloud Forest
- 2 Hot Springs Around La Fortuna
- 3 Parque Nacional Manuel Antonio
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25 Costa Rica's Top Highlights



Monteverde Cloud Forest

A pristine expanse of virginal forest, Monteverde Cloud Forest (p180) owes much of its impressive natural beauty to Quaker expats, who left the US in the 1950s to protest the Korean War and helped foster conservationist principles with Ticos of the region. But as fascinating as the history is, the real romance of Monteverde is in nature itself: a mysterious Neverland dripping with mist, dangling with mossy vines, sprouting with ferns and bromeliads, gushing with creeks and blooming with life.

1





Parque Nacional Carara

Carara (p250) is where two of Costa Rica's most wildlife-rich climate zones collide in an explosion of color, sound and life, and one of the best places in the country outside of the remote Peninsula de Osa to spot the country's iconic macaws. The best part is that this park requires minimal effort: just off the Interamericana, Carara's trail heads are just a few steps from the parking lot and easy for all abilities. *Scarlet macaws*