



Costa Rica



Introduction **Costa Rica**

Background: Costa Rica is a Central American success story: since the late 19th century, only two brief periods of violence have marred its democratic development. Although still a largely agricultural country, it has expanded its economy to include strong technology and tourism sectors. The standard of living is relatively high. Land ownership is widespread.

Geography **Costa Rica**

Location: Central America, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean, between Nicaragua and Panama

Geographic coordinates: 10 00 N, 84 00 W

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area: *total:* 51,100 sq km
water: 440 sq km
note: includes Isla del Coco
land: 50,660 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than West Virginia

Land total: 639 km

boundaries: *border countries:* Nicaragua 309 km, Panama 330 km

Coastline: 1,290 km

Maritime claims - as described in UNCLOS 1982 (see Notes and Definitions): *territorial sea:* 12 NM
exclusive economic zone: 200 NM
continental shelf: 200 NM

Climate: tropical and subtropical; dry season (December to April); rainy season (May to November); cooler in highlands

Terrain: coastal plains separated by rugged mountains including over 100 volcanic cones, of which several are major volcanoes

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Pacific Ocean 0 m
highest point: Cerro Chirripo 3,810 m

Natural resources: hydropower

Land use: *arable land:* 4.41%
permanent crops: 5.48%
other: 90.11% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 1,260 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: occasional earthquakes, hurricanes along Atlantic coast; frequent flooding of lowlands at onset of rainy season and landslides; active volcanoes

Environment - current issues: deforestation and land use change, largely a result of the clearing of land for cattle ranching and agriculture; soil erosion; coastal marine pollution; fisheries protection; solid waste management; air pollution

Environment - international agreements: *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Wetlands, Whaling
signed, but not ratified: Marine Life Conservation

Geography - note: four volcanoes, two of them active, rise near the capital of San Jose in the center of the country; one of the volcanoes, Irazu, erupted destructively in 1963-65

People **Costa Rica**

Population: 3,956,507 (July 2004 est.)

Age structure: *0-14 years:* 29.5% (male 597,332; female 570,008)
15-64 years: 65% (male 1,300,206; female 1,271,010)
65 years and over: 5.5% (male 101,270; female 116,681) (2004 est.)

Median age: *total:* 25.7 years
male: 25.2 years
female: 26.2 years (2004 est.)

Population growth rate:	1.52% (2004 est.)
Birth rate:	18.99 births/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Death rate:	4.32 deaths/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Net migration rate:	0.51 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.87 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female (2004 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total:</i> 10.26 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 9.3 deaths/1,000 live births (2004 est.) <i>male:</i> 11.17 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population:</i> 76.63 years <i>male:</i> 74.07 years <i>female:</i> 79.33 years (2004 est.)
Total fertility rate:	2.33 children born/woman (2004 est.)
HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:	0.6% (2001 est.)
HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:	11,000 (2001 est.)
HIV/AIDS - deaths:	890 (2001 est.)
Nationality:	<i>noun:</i> Costa Rican(s) <i>adjective:</i> Costa Rican
Ethnic groups:	white (including mestizo) 94%, black 3%, Amerindian 1%, Chinese 1%, other 1%
Religions:	Roman Catholic 76.3%, Evangelical 13.7%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.3%, other Protestant 0.7%, other 4.8%, none 3.2%
Languages:	Spanish (official), English
Literacy:	<i>definition:</i> age 15 and over can read and write <i>total population:</i> 96% <i>male:</i> 95.9% <i>female:</i> 96.1% (2003 est.)
Government	Costa Rica
Country name:	<i>conventional long form:</i> Republic of Costa Rica <i>conventional short form:</i> Costa Rica <i>local short form:</i> Costa Rica <i>local long form:</i> Republica de Costa Rica

Government type: democratic republic

Capital: San Jose

Administrative divisions: 7 provinces (provincias, singular - provincia); Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limon, Puntarenas, San Jose

Independence: 15 September 1821 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 September (1821)

Constitution: 7 November 1949

Legal system: based on Spanish civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; has accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive branch: *chief of state:* President Abel PACHECO (since 8 May 2002); First Vice President Lineth SABORIO (since NA May 2002); Second Vice President Luis FISHMAN (since NA May 2002); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
head of government: President Abel PACHECO (since 8 May 2002); First Vice President Lineth SABORIO (since NA May 2002); Second Vice President Luis FISHMAN (since NA May 2002); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
cabinet: Cabinet selected by the president
elections: president and vice presidents elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms; election last held 3 February 2002; run-off election held 7 April 2002 (next to be held NA February 2006)
election results: Abel PACHECO elected president; percent of vote - Abel PACHECO (PUSC) 58%; Rolando ARAYA (PLN) 42%

Legislative branch: unicameral Legislative Assembly or Asamblea Legislativa (57 seats; members are elected by direct, popular vote to serve four-year terms)
elections: last held 3 February 2002 (next to be held 3 February 2006)
election results: percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - PUSC 19, PLN 17, PAC 14, PML 6, PRC 1

Judicial branch: Supreme Court or Corte Suprema (22 justices are elected for eight-year terms by the Legislative Assembly)

Political parties and leaders: Agricultural Labor Action or PALA [Carlos Alberto SOLIS Blanco]; Citizen Action Party or PAC [Otton SOLIS]; Costa Rican Renovation Party or PRC [Justo OROZCO]; Democratic Force Party or PFD [Jose M. NUNEZ]; Libertarian Movement Party or PML [Otto GUEVARA Guth]; National Christian Alliance Party or ANC [Alejandro MADRIGAL]; National Independent Party or PNI [Jorge GONZALEZ Marten]; National Integration Party or PIN [Walter MUNOZ Cespedes]; National Liberation Party or PLN [Sonia PICADO]; Social Christian Unity Party or PUSC [Luis Manuel CHACON]
note: mainly a two-party system - PUSC and PLN - until the 3 February 2002 election in which the PAC captured a significant percentage, forcing a run-off in April 2002

Political pressure groups and leaders: Authentic Confederation of Democratic Workers or CATD (Communist Party affiliate); Chamber of Coffee Growers; Confederated Union of Workers or CUT (Communist Party affiliate); Costa Rican Confederation of Democratic Workers or CCTD (Liberation Party affiliate); Federation of Public Service Workers or FTSP; National Association for Economic Development or ANFE; National Association of Educators or ANDE; Rerum Novarum or CTRN (PLN affiliate) [Gilbert Brown]

International organization participation: BCIE, CACM, FAO, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCt, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, LAES, LAIA (observer), NAM (observer), OAS, OPANAL, OPCW, PCA, RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTrO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Jaime DAREMBLUM Rosenstein
chancery: 2114 S Street NW, Washington, DC 20008
consulate(s) general: Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Durham (North Carolina), Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Francisco, St. Paul, and Tampa
consulate(s): Austin
FAX: [1] (202) 265-4795
telephone: [1] (202) 234-2945

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador John J. DANILOVICH
embassy: Calle 120 Avenida O, Pavas, San Jose
mailing address: APO AA 34020
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Flag description: five horizontal bands of blue (top), white, red (double width), white, and blue, with the coat of arms in a white elliptical disk on the hoist side of the red band; above the coat of arms a light blue ribbon contains the words, AMERICA CENTRAL, and just below it near the top of the coat of arms is a white ribbon with the words, REPUBLICA COSTA RICA

Economy **Costa Rica**

Economy - overview: Costa Rica's basically stable economy depends on tourism, agriculture, and electronics exports. Poverty has been substantially reduced over the past 15 years, and a strong social safety net has been put into place. Foreign investors remain attracted by the country's political stability and high education levels, and tourism continues to bring in foreign exchange. Low prices for coffee and bananas have hurt the agricultural sector. The government continues to grapple with its large deficit and massive internal debt. The reduction of inflation remains a difficult problem because of rises in the price of imports, labor market rigidities, and fiscal deficits. Costa Rica recently concluded negotiations to participate in the US - Central American Free Trade Agreement, which, if ratified by the Costa Rican Legislature, would result in economic reforms and an improved investment climate.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$35.16 billion (2003 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 5.2% (2003 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$9,000 (2003 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture:* 9%
industry: 30%
services: 61% (2002 est.)

Population below poverty line: 20.6% (2002 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share: *lowest 10%:* 1.1%
highest 10%: 36.8% (2002)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 45.9 (1997)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 9.4% (2003 est.)

Labor force: 1.8 million (July 2003)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 20%, industry 22%, services 58% (1999 est.)

Unemployment rate: 6.7% (July 2003 est.)

Budget: *revenues:* \$2.17 billion
expenditures: \$2.84 billion, including capital expenditures of \$NA (2002 est.)

Industries: microprocessors, food processing, textiles and clothing, construction materials, fertilizer, plastic products

Industrial production growth rate: 8.6% (2003 est.)

Electricity - production: 6.839 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source: *fossil fuel:* 1.5%
hydro: 81.9%
other: 16.6% (2001)
nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption: 6.109 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 379 million kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 128 million kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 37,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports: NA

Oil - imports: NA

Agriculture - products: coffee, pineapples, bananas, sugar, corn, rice, beans, potatoes; beef; timber

Exports: \$6.176 billion (2003 est.)

Exports - commodities: coffee, bananas, sugar; pineapples; textiles, electronic components, medical equipment

Exports - partners: US 29.1%, Netherlands 8.2%, UK 4.2%, Mexico 4% (2002)

Imports: \$7.057 billion (2003 est.)

Imports - commodities: raw materials, consumer goods, capital equipment, petroleum

Imports - partners: US 35.4%, Japan 4.3%, Mexico 3.9% (2002)

Debt - external: \$3.654 billion (September 2003 est.)

Currency: Costa Rican colon (CRC)

Currency code: CRC

Exchange rates: Costa Rican colones per US dollar - 398.66 (2003), 359.82 (2002), 328.87 (2001), 308.19 (2000), 285.69 (1999)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Costa Rica

Telephones - main lines in use: 1.132 million (2002)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 528,047 (2002)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* good domestic telephone service in terms of breadth of coverage; restricted cellular telephone service
domestic: point-to-point and point-to-multi-point microwave, fiber-optic, and coaxial cable link rural areas; Internet service is available
international: country code - 506; connected to Central American Microwave System; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean); two submarine cables (1999)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 65, FM 51, shortwave 19 (2002)

Radios: 980,000 (1997)

Television broadcast stations: 20 (plus 43 repeaters) (2002)

Televisions: 525,000 (1997)

Internet country code: .cr

Internet hosts: 7,725 (2002)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 3 (of which only one is legal) (2000)

Internet users: 800,000 (2002)

Transportation Costa Rica

Railways: *total:* 950 km
narrow gauge: 950 km 1.067-m gauge (260 km electrified) (2002)

Highways: *total:* 35,892 km
paved: 7,896 km
unpaved: 27,996 km (2000)

Waterways: 730 km (seasonally navigable)

Pipelines: refined products 421 km (2003)

Ports and harbors: Caldera, Golfito, Moin, Puerto Limon, Puerto Quepos, Puntarenas

Merchant marine: *total:* 1 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 1,716 GRT/ DWT
by type: passenger 1
registered in other countries: 1 (2003 est.)

Airports: 149 (2003 est.)

Airports - with paved runways: *total:* 30
2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
1,524 to 2,437 m: 2
914 to 1,523 m: 18
under 914 m: 8 (2003 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total:* 119
914 to 1,523 m: 24
under 914 m: 95 (2003 est.)

Military Costa Rica

Military branches: no regular military forces; Ministry of Public Security

Military manpower - military age: 18 years of age (2004 est.)

Military manpower - availability: *males age 15-49:* 1,101,887 (2004 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service: *males age 15-49: 736,007 (2004 est.)*

Military manpower - reaching military age annually: *males: 41,709 (2004 est.)*

Military expenditures - dollar figure: \$64 million (2003)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 0.4% (2003)

Transnational Issues **Costa Rica**

Disputes - international: legal dispute over navigational rights of Rio San Juan on the border with Nicaragua remains unsolved

Illicit drugs: transshipment country for cocaine and heroin from South America; illicit production of cannabis on small, scattered plots; domestic cocaine consumption is rising, particularly crack cocaine