

Costa Rica

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C O S T A R I C A

Costa Rica is located in Central America, occupying an area of 51,100 km² (19,730 sq. mi.), bordering Nicaragua to the North and Panamá to the South. Being roughly the size of Denmark, Costa Rica boasts in having one of the largest natural protected areas in the world, with approximately 25% of its territory preserved in land and marine national parks, biological reserves, and other wilderness areas.

Costa Rica offers wellness and health tourism in harmony with nature. There are plenty of recreational and sports activities that may definitely improve your mental and spiritual state. There are also alternative practices such as yoga, meditation, healthy and conscious eating, as well as other wellness therapies like spas, thermal springs, forest bathing, sweat lodges and forest therapy.

A wide variety of wellness alternatives are offered in many places throughout the country – in the northern region, along the entire Pacific Coast, and in parts of the Caribbean.

Among the most outstanding alternative therapies in Costa Rica, you can find:

Yoga, Shinrin-yoku, Earthing and Spas & thermal springs in addition to holistic & healthy eating and Wellness - outdoors.

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YOGA



Yoga contributes to improving health in many aspects: strength, endurance, flexibility and energy – for physical benefits. For mental health, you receive tangible benefits like improved concentration, emotional stability and peace. It helps you to rest better during the night, and leads you to achieve the necessary balance for a better quality of life.



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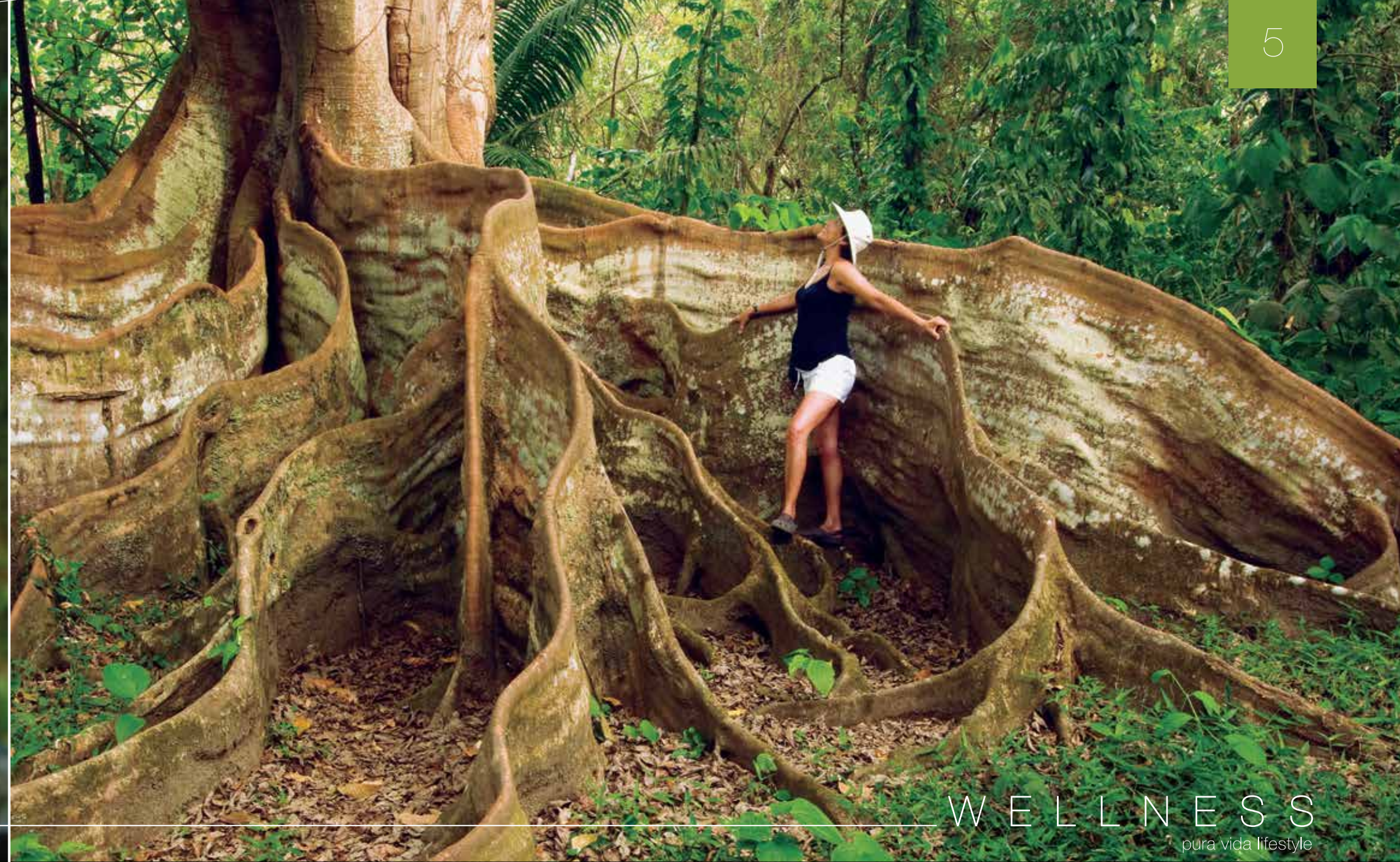
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SHINRIN - YOKU

Let yourself be captivated by Costa Rica's forests. A conscious form of forest therapy includes long walks and hugging trees in the forest (following ancient Buddhist practices). This practice of "Shinrin-yoku" allows you to feel nature and breathe in the pure air emanating from the tree barks.

Benefits:

- 12.4% reduction in levels of the stress hormone cortisol
- 1.4% decrease in blood pressure levels.
- 5.8% less incidence of heart attacks



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EARTHING

This practice involves walking through the forest, on the beach, or in any natural area without the use of footwear. Having your shoes on interferes with the release of free radicals, as well as charges that alter the body's electrical stability, which can cause joint inflammation or even some allergies.

This alternative therapy significantly contributes to improving:

- Quality of sleep
- Reducing anxiety, stress, muscle tension and headaches.



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In addition to alternative therapies, it is also important to include other services that can provide great value to the clients' experience, such as:

SPAS & THERMAL SPRINGS

Spa centers offer a combination of therapies and treatments that are given both indoors and in thermal springs. These can be found in spas in city hotels, as well as in beach and mountain hotels. If designed well, thermal springs can offer a transformative experience, since thermal and mineral waters have several healing effects for people.

Benefits include:

- Skin care
- Digestion improvement
- Alleviation of rheumatic and respiratory disease symptoms

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H O L I S T I C & H E A L T H Y E A T I N G

Healthy eating is not just about eating what is necessary and not exceeding the proper amount of calories, fats and sugars. It is about eating well and being linked to a healthy lifestyle. Food itself must be healthy, but if we also add the holistic aspects of being conscious, organic and sustainable, we will have the perfect combination.

- Benefits:**
- Costa Rica has agricultural products locally grown in its regions.
 - Costa Rica's traditional dishes are healthy and high in protein and vitamins.



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Costa Rica offers a wide variety of recreational activities that improve life quality, and combine wonderfully with the concept of wellness in tourism.

- **Hiking** in national parks and private reserves.
- **Trekking:** hiking with greater physical demand. This can be done in any of the beautiful landscapes of our national parks.
- **Water activities:** Snorkeling, kayaking, boat tours, river rafting, surfing, etc.
- **Other recreational activities:** horseback riding, cycling, visits to farms, zip lining, etc. combine excellently with relaxation activities offered by wellness services.

All of these different activities can be found throughout Costa Rica, a land of magic, mysticism, friendliness, and above all, an enormous biological diversity.

WELLNESS OUTDOORS

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Route # 1



San José / Guanacaste – Rincón de la Vieja –
Gulf of Papagayo – Santa Cruz or Nosara –
Guanacaste / San José

GUANACASTE

- **RINCON DE LA VIEJA:** Hot springs, volcanic mud baths, spa services, trails in the Rincón de la Vieja National Park (hiking and physical activity).
- **PAPAGAYO REGION:** Panama Beach: yoga, benefits of the sea and sand.
- **NICOYA BLUE ZONE:** Discover what makes people live longer and healthier. Blue Zone: Carrillo, Nandayure, Nicoya, Santa Cruz and Hojancha.

- * Yoga
- * Stand-up paddling & yoga
- * Surfing
- * Observation of sea turtles nesting

PRINCIPAL ROUTES

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Route # 2



San José - Arenal - Sarapiquí - Puerto Viejo/
Cahuita - Turrialba - San José

DESTINATIONS

- **ARENAL:** hiking, bird watching and nature.
* Hanging bridges walking tour
* Excursion to Arenal Volcano
* Yoga - Bird watching, wildlife viewing,
adventure, nature - Thermal springs
* Cycling around Lake Arenal - Mountain biking
* Horseback riding - Zip lining or rappelling
- **SARAPIQUÍ:** Pineapple plantations, walking in
reserves, chocolate tour, rafting and nature.
Recommend 2 nights here.
- **SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN:** Beach, rest, rela-
xation, spa, surfing, snorkeling in the Cahuita
National Park.
- **TURRIALBA:** Nature, hiking.



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Route # 3



San José – Atenas – Manuel Antonio – Osa/Uvita – Puerto Jiménez or Carate – San Gerardo de Dota – San José

DESTINATIONS

- **San José:** Get to know the capital and its museums, theaters, Central Market, and gastronomy.
- The route continues to the **CENTRAL PACIFIC**, passing through the town of **ATENAS**, which has the best climate in the world, until you reach **MANUEL ANTONIO**: Nature, adventure, sailing, spas, yoga and healthy eating.
- **OSA/UVITA:** Visit the Ballena National Marine Park, spas, yoga, whale watching.
- **SAN GERARDO DE DOTA:** Bird watching, hiking, horseback riding.



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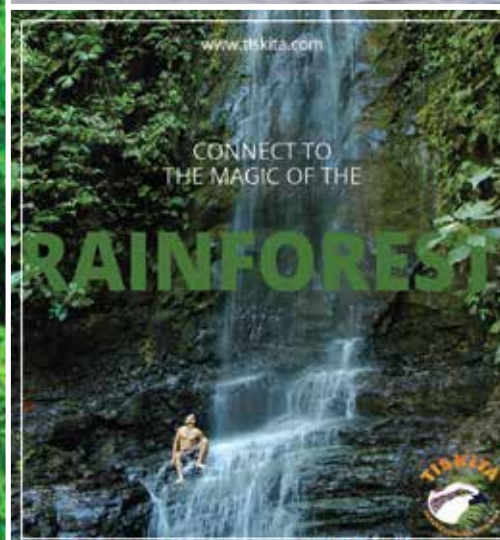
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COSTA RICA'S BLUE ZONE



"Blue Zone" are the so-called areas where focused nutrition is based on the intake of minerals through the consumption of vegetables and "hard" waters, with high calcium and magnesium contents. There are only 5 "blue zones" in the world, Costa Rica has the privilege of having a Blue Zone in the Nicoya Peninsula, Guanacaste. Residents of these places produce a high rate of centenarians, suffer a fraction of the diseases that commonly kill people in other parts of the developed world, and enjoy more years of good health.

Six shared characteristics among the Blue Zone residents are:

- Family – put ahead of other concerns.
- Less smoking
- Semi-vegetarianism – the majority of food consumed is derived from plants.
- Constant moderate physical activity – an inseparable part of life.
- Social engagement – people of all ages are socially active and integrated into their communities.
- Legumes – commonly consumed.



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Barceló San José	www.barcelo.com
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Hotel Leyenda	www.hotelleyenda.com
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Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Costa Rica	www.planethollywoodhotels.com/property/costa-rica
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Arenal Observatory Lodge	www.arenalobservatorylodge.com
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Lomas del Volcán	www.lomasdelvolcan.com
Los Heroes	www.pequenahelvecia.com
Río Celeste Hideaway Hotel	www.riocelestehideaway.com
Tabacon Resort	www.tabacon.com
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Sarapiquí	
Selva Verde Lodge & Rainforest Reserve	www.selvaverde.com
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GENERAL INFORMATION OF COSTA RICA



- **Capital:** San José
- **Currency:** Colón
- **Country Code:** (506)
- **Borders:** Bordered to the east and northeast by the Caribbean Sea; to the west and south by the Pacific Ocean; to the southeast by Panama; and to the north by Nicaragua.
- **Land Area:** 51,100 km² (19,730 sq. mi.)
- **Maximum length:** 464 km (288 miles) from the Sapoá River to Burica Point.
- **Minimum length:** 119 km (74 miles) from Tuba to the mouth of the Colorado River.
- **Maximum width:** 259 km (161 miles) from Cape Santa Elena to the mouth of the Colorado River.
- **Highest mountain:** Mt. Chirripó (altitude 3,820 m - 12,530 feet - above sea level).
- **Widest volcanic crater:** Poás Volcano (one of the largest craters in the world at 1 km - 0.62 miles - in diameter).
- **National Flower:** Purple orchid (Guarianthe skinneri)
- **National Tree:** Guanacaste or Elephant Ear Tree (Enterolobium cyclocarpurri).
- **National Bird:** Clay-coloured thrush or robin (Tardus grayii).
- **Climate:** Tropical with two annual seasons - Dry, or summer (December - April), and Rainy, or winter (May-November).
- **Population:** 6,000,000 inhabitants.
- **Provinces:** Seven (San José, Cartago, Heredia, Alajuela, Puntarenas, Guanacaste, Limón).
- **Electricity:** 110 volts

HISTORY

Human settlement in Costa Rica dates back to at least the year 5000 B.C., but in comparison with the great pre-Hispanic civilizations in the Americas, the indigenous people of Costa Rica were not numerous, nor did they achieve great development.

The current Constitution of November 7, 1949, defines Costa Rica as a Democratic Republic. With the abolition of the army in 1948, Costa Rica has consolidated its commitment to peace and democracy. National forces are its only security. Instead of spending on troops and weapons, Costa Rica has invested those resources in health and education. This landmark decision has created a peaceful and pacifist country.

CLIMATE

Costa Rica is a tropical country located between two oceans, with a complex geography that gives rise to varied climatic conditions and diverse ecosystems, ranging from tropical dry forest to rainforest and cloud forest. In the Central Valley, temperatures stay generally between 14 and 22 degrees Celsius (57-72 degrees Fahrenheit). While the country has no defined seasons, and regional climates stay relatively stable throughout the year, there are changes between "summer" (dry season) and "winter" (rainy season). Summer season is usually December to April, and "winter" is from May to November.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Costa Rica is a Spanish-speaking country, although a high percentage of the population speaks English.

PROTECTED AREAS - FLORA AND FAUNA

In its little more than 51,000 square kilometres (19,730 sq. mi.), representing 0.03 percent of the planet's surface, here lives about 5 percent of the world's biodiversity. Costa Rica is home to five different climatic regions - dry forest, rainforest, temperate, cloud forest, and wetlands. These different environments result in multiple ecological systems that shelter numerous species of flora and fauna.

In addition to those species, wilderness areas host approximately 13,000 kinds of plants, more than 2,000 species of butterflies, 4,500 night moths, 175 types of amphibians, 225 kinds of reptiles, 250 mammals, 1,600 species of freshwater and saltwater fish, and more than 900 different birds. Tens of thousands of insect species live in Costa Rica, and new species are continually being discovered.

TRIP TIPS

Airports

Juan Santamaría International Airport is the main airport of Costa Rica. It is located in the province of Alajuela, 18 km from the capital city of San Jose. This terminal has won several awards including: Third Best Airport in its

category and fourth best airport overall in the Americas.

The Daniel Oduber Quiros International Airport, also known as Liberia International Airport, is the second largest airport in Costa Rica. Located in Liberia, Guanacaste, the Liberia International Airport is about 217 km (135 miles) northwest of the capital city of San Jose. It functions mainly as a hub to serve the growing number of tourists who come to enjoy the great sunny weather and spectacular beaches of Guanacaste and the Nicoya Peninsula. Arriving at Liberia International Airport is the fastest way to get to places like Tamarindo, Playas del Coco, the Papagayo Gulf, Playa Flamingo, Playa Samara and the Las Baulas (Leatherback sea turtles) Marine National Park.

- Taxis Airport - San José: US\$15-\$20
- Buses Alajuela - San José (5 a.m. - 10 p.m.), stop at the airport every 30 minutes.
- Departure tax: US\$29.00 per person
- Flight Connections

Direct flights from Europe:

British Airways:	Two direct weekly flights San José - London Gatwick
Thomson Airways:	One direct weekly flight San José - London Gatwick
Iberia:	One direct daily flight San José - Madrid
Condor:	Two direct weekly flights San José - Frankfurt
Air France:	Two direct weekly flights San José - Paris
Edelweiss Air:	Two direct weekly flights San José - Zurich
Lufthansa:	Two direct weekly flights San José - Frankfurt

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Additionally, there are many connecting flights to San Jose via the United States (Newark, Atlanta, Miami, Houston and Dallas). There is easy domestic flight service between San Jose and Daniel Oduber International Airport in Liberia, among many other points around the country.

IMMIGRATION

To enter Costa Rica, European citizens require a passport with a validity of at least six months after their arrival in the country. Maximum stay authorized without a visa is 90 days. Also, if you travel via the United States, regulations for that country should be taken into consideration.

The main requirements to enter Costa Rica are:

- Passport valid for six months upon entry
- Entrance and departure ticket
- No European country, except Russia, requires a visa to enter Costa Rica.

SECURITY

Costa Rica is a relatively safe country. However, in recent years there has been an increase in the number of assaults and robberies, so it is advisable to use general safety precautions. Leave expensive jewellery at home. Use hotel safes for your valuables. Do not leave valuables visible in a car. Be aware when walking around. Use taxis at night rather than walk.

MONEY

The Costa Rican Colon is the official currency of the country and can be exchanged at banks for USD, and

vice versa. Exchanging Euros is only possible in a few bank branches; for this reason, it is important to bring USD in cash when you travel to Costa Rica. In ATMs networked with Cirrus and Master, you can get cash with the Eurocard; these are especially found in San Jose and the larger cities. The exchange rate for Colones at the airport is less favourable than in banks. Regarding tips, there is no need to tip in restaurants, because the bills automatically include a 10% service charge, plus sales tax of 13%. It is advisable to leave a tip of about 0,50 Euros to hotel bellmen and the cleaning staff and between 1 and 5 Euros per day per person to tour guides.

CULTURE

The city of San José (the country's capital) has a lot of traffic and congestion, however, we recommend visiting these sites: the National Theatre, the Cultural Plaza, the museums of the Central Bank, the National Museum, and the Jade Museum.

BEST TIME TO VISIT COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is a destination to which you can travel virtually year-round since it has several climatic micro-zones. The mountain ranges spanning the country from the northwest to the southeast form a barrier that divides the country into two larger climatic zones, the Pacific and the Caribbean. The amazing thing is that the climate is nearly the complete opposite from one zone to the other. The country differentiates between a dry season and a rainy season, also known as green season. It is not often, however, that rains fall for several days consecutively, except between May and November.

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August to November is the best period of the birding migration to visit Costa Rica with birdwatching purposes.

WHAT IS ADVISABLE TO PACK?

We recommend travelling with two pieces of luggage - a main suitcase and a sports bag for short trips of one or more days. On some excursions, or for boat transfers and domestic flights, there are luggage limitations of 12 kg per person. Your main suitcase can be stored safely in your hotel in San Jose at no additional cost. It is common on a trip to Costa Rica to use various means of transportation, such as boats, buses or airplanes. To facilitate passenger mobility, it is helpful to carry luggage of a reasonable size and weight. In addition to personal items, it is recommended to pack:

- Sturdy shoes or good sports shoes
- A jacket or a warm pullover to visit the volcanoes and higher elevation areas
- Long pants and a light pullover or long-sleeved shirt for hikes in the forest
- Light summer clothing
- Swimsuit
- Hat or cap
- Pair of sandals that are good for walking and beach
- A raincoat or rain poncho
- Flashlight or torch
- Anti-mosquito repellent
- Sun block or sun cream
- Binoculars
- Camera



Win a trip to Costa Rica!!

Answer these questions from the catalog through this link:
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Wellness information
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 Photography: Courtesy by Río Perdido Hotel
 Graphic design-diagramming: Esteban Soto Vargas

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A group of four people (three women and one man) are practicing yoga in a lush green field. They are all in a side plank position, with one arm on the ground and the other reaching up. They are on purple and blue yoga mats. In the background, there is a stone ruin, possibly a church or monastery, surrounded by trees and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The scene is bright and sunny.

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COUNTRY
WITH A HUGE
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