



An introduction to Costa Rica

We have put together this guide to introduce Costa Rica to you knowing that is very easy to get bamboozled by too much information. We hope this short guide will be enough to set you on the right course, without being too detailed. As such it is not meant to be definitive - for further details we strongly recommend that you look at southamericaodyssey.com/costa-rica or get in touch as we would be delighted to talk to you all about Costa Rica.

Costa Rica Country summary

Costa Rica is a small and compact country about the same size as Switzerland in Europe. Visiting this carbon neutral and eco-friendly country is all about the outdoors. Whether you are relaxing by the beach in a cool surfery town, trekking through pristine rainforest in search of jaguar or twitching in the cloud forest you are sure to fall in love with this beautiful Central American country. Costa Rica is tranquil, fun loving and a perfect getaway for those searching tranquillity, nature experiences, adventure and fantastic hospitality.



Highlights of the Costa Rica

The following locations have proven very popular with those that have travelled with South America Odyssey to Costa Rica. We know the pros and cons of each destination and if you have any further questions about these locations, as well as other destinations, please do get in touch as we would love to speak to you about them.



San Jose

San Jose is the capital of Costa Rica and the majority of international flights fly into the Juan Santamaría International Airport. Flights normally arrive at night and we suggest one night in San Jose is about right before venturing deeper into the country. If you want to avoid the traffic then stay at one of the Costa Rica is all about the great outdoors, so instead of stopping overnight in the city, we think it is worth staying on the outskirts at a beautiful coffee hacienda like [Xandari](#). For those that like city life and want to see the centre of the city then the best hotel is [Grano de Oro](#).



Tortuguero

Tortuguero is an excellent introduction into the biodiversity and wildlife of Costa Rica. Days are spent exploring the flooded waterways of this exotic Caribbean jungle. During the months of July to October sea turtles come in their thousands and lay their eggs on the beaches of Tortuguero at night- a spectacle not to be missed if you are lucky enough to be there during these months. The lodges here are simple and family friendly. [Manatus](#) is the smallest hotel that is relatively luxurious. Other good alternatives are; [Mawamba Lodge](#) or [Aninga](#).

Arenal

Staying at Arenal National Park means picturesque views of Arenal Volcano, hanging bridges over dramatic waterfalls, heated springs and an abundance of adventure activities from zip wiring to abseiling and river rafting. There is a wealth of accommodation options here your stay depends on your preference; an intimate, tranquil experience in [Lost Iguana](#) which is remotely located to the multi award winning and centrally located [Nayara](#) or an more basic, yet good option such as [Lomas del Volcan](#). During peak seasons Arenal can get busy as international tourists come to experience the world class infrastructure and activities of this exciting tourist hub. During these months there is a really fun and exciting vibe. Perfect for families.

Monteverde

A perfect example of a cloud forest, Monteverde is ram-packed with life and a birders dream. A huge attraction here is the environment itself which is incomparable to anything else and feels truly timeless. Experience this park from the comfort of [Belmar](#), a remote boutique family hotel.

North Pacific Coast- The Nicoya Peninsula

There are three areas here, all with very different styles and accommodation. In the north is Peninsula Papagayo, where you can find accommodation similar to our favourite, [El Mangroove](#) - a big hotel in close proximity of luscious sunbathing beaches. Further south find Tamarindo; a cool surfery bustling province with nightlife and long beaches. Our favourite accommodation is [Capitan Suzio](#), a boutique hotel right on the beach or the relaxed Cala Luna (15 minutes drive away). South again, and you get to the gorgeous Santa Teresa Beach with our favourite romantic hideaway [Flor Blanca](#), the barefoot luxury option of [Latitude 10](#) or the larger [Punta Islitta](#) that has panoramic ocean views.

The Osa Peninsula

Nestled in the remote corner of Costa Rica, the Osa Peninsula is truly the jewel in the crown of Costa Rica in terms of biodiversity. The National geographic proclaimed it one of the world's most biologically diverse places on earth. There are fewer lodges in this heavily protected national park, and the lodges do tend to get booked up far in advance. Most of the lodges operate a full board program with small group tours included in the price. [Lapa Rios](#) and [Playa Cativo](#) are the most luxurious eco lodges in majestic settings that we absolutely love. [El Remanso](#) is a little more economical and is also a superb option.



Costa Rica FAQ's

When is the best time to visit Costa Rica? The best time to visit Costa Rica is from December to April when it is dry and hot in most places. A typical day would have temperature averages of 27° Celsius. During the “green season” that runs from April to November it rains most afternoons and at times you will need to put a poncho on. The rewards are that there are fewer tourists, the forests are lush and green, and if you head to the coast you can watch turtles laying their eggs.

Do I need a visa to visit Costa Rica? US and European citizens do not require a visa to enter Costa Rica; other nationalities should make their own enquiries with the nearest embassy. Travellers require a full valid passport with at least 2 clear pages, valid for at least 6 months beyond your date of departure.

How much does a trip to Costa Rica cost? There is no easy answer to this one as all of our itineraries are designed from scratch to suit your interest and budget. As an idea, the itinerary below would cost roughly \$4,800/£3,555 per person. See

<http://digital.africaodyssey.com/Itinerary/Map/85f31121-af6d-45e3-a400-e0cb4ee57209> for more details.

How long do you suggest for a Costa Rica holiday? Speaking from experience we suggest that 10-14 days is perfect. But it really depends on what your interests are and how quick you like to travel.

What is the currency in Costa Rica? Cash withdrawal of Colón Notes is easy as many ATMs are credit/debit card friendly and can be found in most towns. Contact your bank first and tell them that you are going to Costa Rica. US dollars can be exchanged in banks and are also widely accepted.

What language do Cost Ricans speak? Spanish is the main language. English is widely spoken by those working in tourism.

What is the time difference? GMT -5 hours/EST +2 hours

How do I get to Costa Rica? There are direct flights from London Gatwick to San José on Saturday, Tuesday and Thursdays (11 hour flight). There are also daily flights via the main European hubs. If you are flying from the US then there are multiple options.

We are thinking of also visiting another Latin America country whilst we are that side of the world. Where combines well with Costa Rica?

Combining Costa Rica with a cruise in the [Galapagos](#) makes for the ultimate wildlife experience. Mexico is also a country that combines history, art, pristine beaches and delicious food. You could fly over to [Cuba](#) for a unique experience in a fascinating and quickly evolving country. Please speak to us about all the exciting possibilities.



Why South America Odyssey?

First and foremost, the team here at Odyssey Travel love South America and have spent many years exploring and working in the continent in a variety of capacities. We have stayed at the hotels we work with, we have built loyal relationships with the best guides in their respective fields, and we now use our love and first-hand knowledge to craft individual tailor made itineraries. It is our intimate knowledge of the continent, combined with our relationships that help us continually deliver exceptional and authentic holidays to the continent. Our promise to you is first class service, unrivalled country knowledge and value for money.

✓ First class service ✓ Super knowledgeable itinerary designers ✓ Fantastic value for money

Our price promise

Booking through us will cost no more - and often considerably less - than booking the same trip with all the individual suppliers directly. We are able to negotiate excellent rates with suppliers, which results in savings for you. In the very unlikely event that you get a cheaper quote for the same trip from a reputable UK bonded tour operator, we will match that quote.

We are ATOL bonded (ATOL 5397) so whatever might happen to us, your money is protected.

No surcharge for currency fluctuations Once your itinerary is confirmed and your deposit has been paid, we guarantee that we will make no surcharge for currency fluctuations, whatever happens to exchange rates before you actually travel.

In summary, we are able to package a holiday for less than you will be able to arrange directly, without any exchange risk, and you will benefit from our decades of experience in arranging similar trips, our impartial opinions, and the financial security that our ATOL bond offers!