



Costa Rica

Volcanoes, cloud forests, two coastlines, sloths in the trees and a country that gave up its army.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

San José

POPULATION

About 5 million (the 2022 census counted 5,044,197 people)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Spanish, set in the constitution by an amendment of 1975. Several Indigenous languages, such as Bribri and Cabécar, are also spoken

CURRENCY

Costa Rican colón (CRC), named after Christopher Columbus

AREA

About 51,180 km², a little smaller than Bosnia and Herzegovina

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic of seven provinces (constitution of 1949), with no army

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Cerro Chirripó, about 3,820 m, in the Cordillera de Talamanca

LARGEST RIVER

The Río Grande de Térraba, about 160 km long, in the south; its basin covers a tenth of the country

NEIGHBOURS

Nicaragua and Panama by land. At sea it also borders Colombia and Ecuador, far out in the Pacific around Cocos Island

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+506

A 45-minute trip to Costa Rica

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Costa Rica together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 1000 BC: People settle at Guayabo; 1890: The railway to Limón is completed; 2026: A second woman is elected president. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Gallo pinto and Casado. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "¡Pura vida!" (Pure life! Hello, thanks, all good), "Buenos días" (Good morning, hello), "Buenas tardes" (Good afternoon). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/costa-rica/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Costa Rica and its cities



- San José (San José Province): The National Theatre, The National Museum of Costa Rica, La Sabana Metropolitan Park
- Cartago (Cartago Province): The Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, Pilgrims from all over the country, The nearby Irazú Volcano
- Alajuela (Alajuela Province): Juan Santamaría, the national hero, The main international airport nearby, Mild weather all year
- Heredia (Heredia Province): The National University of Costa Rica, The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Coffee farms on the hills around it
- Liberia (Guanacaste Province): The nickname 'the white city', Giant guanacaste trees, which gave the province its name, The gateway to northern beaches and parks
- Puntarenas (Puntarenas Province): Its port, one of the oldest in the country, Ferries to the

Nicoya Peninsula, Beaches popular with surfers

- Limón (Limón Province): Afro-Caribbean culture and food, The country's main port, Its carnival in the week of 12 October
- Puerto Viejo de Talamanca (Limón Province): Beaches such as Playa Chiquita and Punta Uva, The Salsa Brava wave, The nearby Cahuita National Park
- Quepos (Puntarenas Province): Manuel Antonio National Park, Sport fishing for sailfish, Pacific beaches
- Nicoya (Guanacaste Province): The Blue Zone of long lives, Chorotega heritage, Beaches of the Nicoya Peninsula
- La Fortuna (Alajuela Province): Views of the Arenal Volcano, Hot springs, Waterfalls and hanging bridges
- Monteverde (Puntarenas Province): The Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Its Quaker founders, Cool, misty weather

A short history of Costa Rica

Costa Rica was home to many Indigenous peoples long before the Spanish came. It spent about two and a half quiet centuries as a poor corner of the Spanish Empire, became independent in 1821, grew rich on coffee, fought off an American adventurer in 1856 and, after a short civil war in 1948, became the peaceful democracy without an army that it is today.

1000 BC **People settle at Guayabo**

From about 1000 BC, people lived at Guayabo, on the slopes of the Turrialba Volcano. At its height it may have had about 10,000 residents, with stone roads, mounds and aqueducts. It was abandoned around AD 1400, a century before the Spanish arrived, and nobody knows why.

1502 **Columbus reaches the Caribbean coast**

In September 1502, on his fourth and last voyage, Christopher Columbus anchored off the Caribbean coast near today's Limón. By some accounts the name 'la costa rica', the rich coast, comes from the gold jewellery the local people wore.

1563 **Juan Vázquez de Coronado founds Cartago**

The Spanish conquistador Juan Vázquez de Coronado founded Cartago, the first lasting Spanish town in Costa Rica. It served as the colonial capital for more than two and a half centuries.

1719 **A governor calls it the poorest colony**

Far from Guatemala and without gold or silver, Costa Rica stayed small and poor. In 1719 a Spanish governor described it as 'the poorest and most miserable Spanish colony in all America'. Most settlers had to farm their own land.

1821 **Central America declares independence**

On 15 September 1821, the authorities in Guatemala declared the independence of all of Central America from Spain. Costa Rica never had to fight for it, and 15 September is still its Independence Day.

1823 **The capital moves to San José**

Costa Ricans could not agree whether to join the Mexican Empire. At the Battle of Ochomogo in April 1823, the republicans of San José and

Alajuela beat the imperialists of Cartago, and the capital moved from Cartago to San José.

1856 **Juan Santamaría dies at Rivas**

In 1856 the American adventurer William Walker, who had seized power in Nicaragua, threatened Costa Rica. Costa Rican troops beat his men at Santa Rosa and then at Rivas, in Nicaragua, where the young drummer Juan Santamaría died setting fire to the enemy's stronghold on 11 April. He is the national hero, and the main airport bears his name.

1890 **The railway to Limón is completed**

To get coffee to Europe more easily, the government hired the American businessman Minor C. Keith to build a railway from San José to the Caribbean port of Limón. Many workers came from Jamaica, and after years of hardship and disease the line was finished in 1890. Bananas grown along it soon rivalled coffee.

1897 **The National Theatre opens**

Paid for with a tax on coffee, the grand National Theatre in San José opened on 21 October 1897 with a performance of Faust. It is still the finest historic building in the capital.

1948 **Costa Rica abolishes its army**

After a disputed election, José Figueres led an uprising that became a 44-day civil war, with more than 2,000 dead. On 1 December 1948 he abolished the army, symbolically breaking a wall of the old barracks with a mallet.

1949 **The present constitution is approved**

On 7 November 1949, an elected assembly approved the constitution that is still in force. It gave the vote to all adults, guaranteed free schooling and social rights, and its Article 12 abolished the army as a permanent institution.

1968 **Arenal Volcano erupts**

Arenal, long thought to be asleep, erupted without warning on 29 July 1968. It buried the small villages of Tabacón, Pueblo Nuevo and San Luís and killed more than 80 people. It then stayed active until 2010, one of the longest eruptions on Earth since 1750.

1987

Óscar Arias wins the Nobel Peace Prize

President Óscar Arias received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 for his plan to end the wars in Central America through negotiation. He served as president twice, from 1986 to 1990 and from 2006 to 2010.

2010

Laura Chinchilla becomes the first woman president

In February 2010, Laura Chinchilla won the presidential election with almost 47 percent of the vote. She served from 2010 to 2014 as the first woman president of Costa Rica.

2026

A second woman is elected president

In the election of 1 February 2026, Costa Ricans chose a woman as president for the second time, sixteen years after Laura Chinchilla. As of September 2026 she is in office; she was sworn in on 8 May 2026.

What people eat in Costa Rica

Costa Rican food is mild, fresh and filling, and it rests on rice and beans, which can appear at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The day starts with gallo pinto, eggs and strong coffee. Lunch, the main meal for many, is often a casado: rice, beans, meat or fish, salad and fried plantain on one plate. People eat simply at small family restaurants called sodas, snack on 'bocas' with a beer in the evening, and keep a bottle of the tangy brown Salsa Lizano on the table. On the Caribbean coast, Afro-Caribbean cooking adds coconut milk, hot peppers and slow stews.

Gallo pinto

All of Costa Rica, the national dish

Rice and black beans fried together with onion, sweet pepper and coriander (cilantro), often seasoned with Salsa Lizano. It is served at breakfast with eggs, fried plantain, tortillas, cheese or sour cream. At home it is usually made with the rice and beans left over from the day before.

Casado

All of Costa Rica, the classic lunch

A full lunch on one plate: white rice and beans served side by side, not mixed, with meat, chicken or fish, a small salad, and often fried plantain, a slice of white cheese or a corn tortilla. Almost every soda has one on the menu.

Olla de carne

All of Costa Rica

A big pot of beef soup full of vegetables: cassava (yuca), potato, chayote, corn on the cob, green plantain, squash, carrot and other roots. It is a complete midday meal, often eaten with white rice and tortillas.

Sopa negra (Sopa negra de frijoles)

All of Costa Rica

A dark black bean soup flavoured with onion, garlic, sweet pepper and coriander, served with a hard-boiled egg in the bowl. It is a warming, cheap and very Costa Rican way to use beans.

Chifrijo

The bars of San José, now served everywhere

A bowl of beans with a little broth, rice, crispy fried pork (chicharrón) and a fresh tomato and onion salsa, served with fried corn tortilla chips. It is a favourite bar snack with a

cold beer.

Ceviche

The Pacific coast, especially Puntarenas

Raw white fish, such as sea bass (corvina), tilapia or mahi-mahi, cut small and marinated in lime juice with onion, coriander and finely chopped sweet pepper. It is often served in a glass with soda crackers on the side. Lime 'cooks' the fish in taste and texture, but the fish is still raw, so pregnant women, older people and anyone with a weak immune system should choose a cooked dish instead.

Arroz con pollo

All of Costa Rica, for family gatherings

Rice cooked with chicken, vegetables such as carrots, peas and sweet pepper, mild spices and a splash of Salsa Lizano. It is the dish families make for birthdays, parties and big get-togethers.

Tamales (Tamal)

All of Costa Rica, above all at Christmas

A soft corn dough made with lard and spices, filled with meat, rice and vegetables, wrapped in banana or plantain leaves and steamed. Tamales are made above all for Christmas, when families gather to make them together, and also for Holy Week.

Empanadas

All of Costa Rica, sold at sodas and markets

Half-moon corn turnovers filled with minced beef, chicken, cheese or a sweet fruit filling. Small snack stands and shops called sodas sell them through the day.

Rice and beans

Limón and the Caribbean coast

Rice and red beans cooked together in coconut milk, with a hot pepper for aroma. It is usually served with fish and fried plantain. It keeps its English name on the Caribbean coast, home of the Afro-Costa Rican community, most of whose families came from Jamaica.

Picadillo

All of Costa Rica, with Spanish roots

Finely chopped vegetables, such as potato, chayote or green beans, cooked with spices and achiote, often with a little minced beef. It is eaten as a side dish with a casado, or spooned onto a warm corn tortilla to make a 'gallito'.

Chorreadas

The countryside, especially Guanacaste

Sweet pancakes made from fresh corn, cooked on a griddle and eaten for breakfast with a spoonful of sour cream. They are not as common as they once were, which makes them a treat.

Pejibaye

All of Costa Rica, from a native palm

The orange fruit of the peach palm, boiled in salted water, peeled and eaten warm with a little mayonnaise. The texture is like a firm sweet potato and the taste has been compared to roasted chestnut. It must be cooked, because the raw fruit contains irritating crystals.

Tres leches

Popular across Latin America and all of Costa Rica

A light sponge cake soaked in three kinds of milk: evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk and whole milk or cream, often topped with whipped cream and cinnamon. It stays airy, not soggy, and is a favourite after lunch or dinner.

Café chorreado

The Central Valley, the heart of coffee country

Coffee made the traditional way in a chorreador: a wooden stand holding a small cloth bag. Ground coffee goes in the bag, hot water is poured slowly over it, and the coffee drips into the cup or pot below. Costa Ricans drink coffee at breakfast and again in the afternoon.

Guaro sour

All of Costa Rica

Guaro is a clear spirit distilled from sugar cane, a little sweeter than vodka and not as strong. Costa Ricans usually drink it in a cocktail called a guaro sour, or as a quick shot. Buy it only in shops, bars and restaurants, because counterfeit guaro has caused methanol poisoning.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Rice and beans come with almost every meal. At breakfast they are fried together as gallo pinto; at lunch they sit side by side on your plate as part of a casado.
- Lunch is a proper meal for many Costa Ricans, and a casado at a small local

soda is a filling meal at a fair price.

- Salsa Lizano, a tangy brown sauce, stands on many tables. Try a little on your gallo pinto or eggs.
- In the evening, bars serve 'bocas', small plates such as chifrijo or fried plantain, to go with a drink.
- Menu prices in restaurants usually already include 13 percent sales tax and a 10 percent service charge, so there is no need to add a big tip. A little extra for very good service is always welcome.
- Coffee comes with breakfast, again in the afternoon and sometimes after dinner. It is usually strong, served black or with milk (café con leche).

Gallo pinto

Rice and black beans fried together with onion, sweet pepper and coriander (cilantro), often seasoned with Salsa Lizano. It is served at breakfast with eggs, fried plantain, tortillas, cheese or sour cream. At home it is usually made with the rice and beans left over from the day before.

Ingredients

- 500 g cooked white rice, cold, ideally cooked the day before
- 400 g cooked black beans (1 tin), drained, with 4 tablespoons of their liquid kept
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- Half a red sweet pepper, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 2 to 3 tablespoons Salsa Lizano (or 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce)
- A small handful of fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
- Salt to taste

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion, sweet pepper and garlic for about 5 minutes, until soft.
2. Add the beans and their liquid and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until the liquid has mostly gone and the beans are glossy.
3. Add the cold rice and gently fold it into the beans until it turns evenly speckled, about 5 minutes. Do not mash it.
4. Stir in the Salsa Lizano and coriander, taste and add salt if needed.
5. Serve hot with fried or scrambled eggs, fried plantain and a spoonful of sour cream. If you keep cooked rice for the next day, cool it quickly and store it in the fridge.

Sopa negra

A dark black bean soup flavoured with onion, garlic, sweet pepper and coriander, served with a hard-boiled egg in the bowl. It is a warming, cheap and very Costa Rican way to use beans.

Ingredients

- 2 tins black beans (400 g each), with their liquid
- 1 litre vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- Half a red sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 celery stick, chopped
- A small handful of fresh coriander (cilantro)
- 4 eggs
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Put the eggs in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Cool them in cold water, peel and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onion, garlic, sweet pepper and celery for about 5 minutes, until soft.
3. Add the beans with their liquid and the stock. Simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Blend about half of the soup until smooth and stir it back in, so the soup is thick but still has whole beans. Season with salt, pepper and chopped coriander.
5. Ladle into bowls and add a halved hard-boiled egg to each one.

Arroz con pollo

Rice cooked with chicken, vegetables such as carrots, peas and sweet pepper, mild spices and a splash of Salsa Lizano. It is the dish families make for birthdays, parties and big get-togethers.

Ingredients

- 500 g boneless chicken thighs
- 300 g long-grain white rice
- 750 ml chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 red sweet pepper, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 100 g frozen peas
- 1 teaspoon achiote (annatto) paste or sweet paprika, for colour
- 2 tablespoons Salsa Lizano (or 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce)
- A handful of fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
- Salt

Method

1. Simmer the chicken in the stock for about 20 minutes, until cooked through with no pink inside. Lift it out, shred it with two forks and keep the stock.
2. Heat the oil in a wide pan and fry the onion, garlic, sweet pepper and carrot for 5 minutes. Stir in the achiote or paprika and the rice and fry for 2 minutes.
3. Pour in 600 ml of the hot stock, add a pinch of salt, bring to the boil, then cover and cook on a very low heat for 18 minutes.
4. Stir in the shredded chicken, peas and Salsa Lizano, cover again and leave for 5 minutes, until the peas are hot. Add a little more stock if the rice looks dry.

5. Fork through the coriander and serve with salad or potato chips, as many Costa Rican families do.

Rice and beans

Rice and red beans cooked together in coconut milk, with a hot pepper for aroma. It is usually served with fish and fried plantain. It keeps its English name on the Caribbean coast, home of the Afro-Costa Rican community, most of whose families came from Jamaica.

Ingredients

- 300 g long-grain white rice, rinsed
- 400 g tin red kidney beans, drained
- 400 ml tin coconut milk
- 250 ml water
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 whole Scotch bonnet or other hot pepper (optional, left whole)
- 1 teaspoon salt

Method

1. Put the coconut milk, water, onion, garlic, thyme and salt in a heavy pan and bring to a simmer.
2. Add the beans and the rice and stir once. Lay the whole hot pepper on top, if using. Do not cut it, or the rice will be very hot.
3. Bring back to the boil, then cover tightly and cook on the lowest heat for about 20 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender.
4. Turn off the heat and leave covered for 5 minutes. Carefully lift out the pepper and the thyme stalks.
5. Fluff the rice with a fork and serve with fried fish or chicken and fried ripe plantain.

Picadillo

Finely chopped vegetables, such as potato, chayote or green beans, cooked with spices and achiote, often with a little minced beef. It is eaten as a side dish with a casado, or spooned onto a warm corn tortilla to make a 'gallito'.

Ingredients

- 500 g potatoes, peeled and cut into small cubes
- 200 g minced beef (optional)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- Half a red sweet pepper, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- Half a teaspoon achiote (annatto) paste or sweet paprika
- A handful of fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
- Salt and pepper
- Warm corn tortillas, to serve

Method

1. Boil the potato cubes in salted water for about 6 minutes, until just tender. Drain.
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion, sweet pepper and garlic for 5 minutes.
3. If using beef, add it and cook, breaking it up, until browned all through, about 8 minutes. Stir in the achiote or paprika.
4. Add the potatoes and a splash of water and cook gently for 5 minutes, stirring now and then, until everything is soft. Season with salt, pepper and coriander.
5. Serve as a side dish, or spoon onto warm tortillas and fold them to make gallitos.

Useful phrases

¡Pura vida!

POO-rah BEE-dah · Pure life! Hello, thanks, all good

Buenos días

BWEH-nohs DEE-ahs · Good morning, hello

Buenas tardes

BWEH-nahs TAR-dehs · Good afternoon

Buenas noches

BWEH-nahs NOH-chehs · Good evening, good night

¿Cómo está usted?

KOH-moh ehs-TAH oos-TEHD · How are you? (polite)

Mucho gusto

MOO-choh GOOS-toh · Pleased to meet you

Con permiso

kohn pehr-MEE-soh · Excuse me (may I pass?)

Disculpe

dees-KOOL-peh · Excuse me, sorry

¿Cuánto cuesta?

KWAHN-toh KWEHS-tah · How much does it cost?

¿Acepta dólares?

ah-SEHP-tah DOH-lah-rehs · Do you accept dollars?

La cuenta, por favor

lah KWEHN-tah por fah-VOR · The bill, please

Un casado, por favor

oon kah-SAH-doh por fah-VOR · A casado (set lunch), please

Agua con gas

AH-gwah kohn GAHS · Sparkling water

¿Dónde está el baño?

DOHN-deh ehs-TAH ehl BAH-nyoh · Where is the toilet?

No entiendo

noh ehn-TYEHN-doh · I don't understand

¿Habla inglés?

AH-blah een-GLEHS · Do you speak English?

¡Qué tuanis!

keh TWAH-nees · How cool! Great!

Hasta luego

AHS-tah LWEH-goh · See you later, goodbye

Things you might not know

1. Costa Rica has had no army since 1 December 1948. To mark the moment, José Figueres broke a wall of the old barracks with a mallet, and the building now houses the National Museum.
2. Costa Rica covers only about 0.03 percent of the world's land, yet it holds about 5 percent of the world's plant and animal species.
3. As of 2026, about a quarter of Costa Rica's land is protected in national parks and other protected areas.
4. In 2019, Costa Rica made 99.62 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, mostly water power, and ran only on renewable electricity for 300 days in a row.
5. The colón, Costa Rica's money, is named after Christopher Columbus, who is called Cristóbal Colón in Spanish. It replaced the peso in 1896.
6. Brightly painted wooden oxcarts once carried coffee from the highlands to the Pacific port. In 2005 UNESCO recognised Costa Rica's oxherding and oxcart traditions as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and the town of Sarchí still makes them.
7. The national bird is not a colourful parrot or toucan but the plain brown clay-colored thrush, called the yigüirro. Its song is said to announce the start of the rainy season.
8. More than 300 ancient stone spheres have been found in the south of the country, some over 2 m across and weighing up to 15 tonnes. Nobody knows for certain what they meant. Their settlements became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014.
9. Cocos Island, about 550 km out in the Pacific, belongs to Costa Rica. It takes 36 to 48 hours to reach by boat, it has no permanent residents, and legends of buried pirate treasure have drawn hunters there for centuries.
10. In 1951, Quaker families from Alabama moved to the mountains of Costa Rica partly because it had abolished its army. They named their settlement Monteverde, 'green mountain', and helped protect the cloud forest around it.
11. In 2006, researchers named the Nicoya area one of the world's 'Blue Zones', where many people live to a great age. Later studies have

questioned how special Nicoya really is.

12. From the summit of Cerro Chirripó, the highest peak, you can see both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea on a clear day. The coldest temperature ever recorded in Costa Rica, minus 9 °C, was measured there.
13. As of 2026, Costa Rica is the only country in the Americas where Catholicism is the official state religion, set in the constitution of 1949, which also guarantees freedom of religion.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Costa Rica, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Gallo pinto or Casado? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Arenal Volcano erupts (1968). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Óscar Arias wins the Nobel Peace Prize (1987). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen National Theatre of Costa Rica, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Costa Rica, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Costa Rica?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. When is the rainy season in most of Costa Rica?

- A) June to August only
- B) May to November
- C) December to April
- D) January to March

2. Costa Rica abolished its army in 1948, after a short civil war.

- A) True
- B) False

3. Which of these places is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site?

- A) Manuel Antonio National Park
- B) Santa Rosa National Park
- C) Poás Volcano
- D) The National Theatre

4. What is a 'tico'?

- A) A Costa Rican person
- B) A cup of coffee
- C) A small monkey
- D) A type of volcano

5. Which explorer reached Costa Rica's Caribbean coast in 1502, on his fourth voyage?

- A) Hernán Cortés
- B) Christopher Columbus
- C) Francisco Pizarro
- D) Ferdinand Magellan

6. Which part of Costa Rica was named a 'Blue Zone', where people often live to a great age?

- A) Nicoya
- B) Limón
- C) Cartago
- D) Monteverde

7. Costa Rica covers only about 0.03 percent of the world's land. About what share of the world's species live there?

- A) About 50 percent
- B) About 0.5 percent
- C) About 25 percent
- D) About 5 percent

8. What is a 'carreta'?

- A) A coffee filter
- B) A corn pancake
- C) A car
- D) An oxcart

9. How was the building of the National Theatre in San José paid for?

- A) With money from the Panama Canal
- B) With gold from Spanish mines
- C) With a tax on coffee
- D) With a gift from the King of Spain

10. What is Costa Rica's national bird?

- A) The scarlet macaw
- B) The clay-colored thrush
- C) The resplendent quetzal
- D) The keel-billed toucan

11. Laguna Caliente, the lake in the crater of Poás Volcano, is one of the most acidic lakes in the world.

- A) True
- B) False

12. In Costa Rica, what is a chorreador?

- A) A cloth coffee filter on a wooden stand
- B) A painted oxcart
- C) A sweet corn pancake
- D) A sugar cane spirit

Quiz answers

1. B) May to November

The rainy season, called invierno, runs from May to November. The dry season, verano, runs from December to April.

2. True

True. José Figueres abolished the army on 1 December 1948, and Article 12 of the 1949 constitution abolished it as a permanent institution.

3. B) Santa Rosa National Park

Santa Rosa National Park is part of the Area de Conservación Guanacaste, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999. Manuel Antonio, Poás and the National Theatre are not on the list.

4. A) A Costa Rican person

Tico (tica for a woman) is a Costa Rican person. The name comes from the Costa Rican habit of making words small with the ending -ico, as in momentico.

5. B) Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus anchored near today's Limón in September 1502, on his fourth and last voyage. Cortés conquered Mexico, Pizarro conquered Peru, and Magellan's expedition sailed around the world.

6. A) Nicoya

In 2006 researchers named the Nicoya area a Blue Zone, although later studies have questioned how special it really is.

7. D) About 5 percent

About 5 percent of the world's biodiversity lives in Costa Rica, a huge share for such a small country.

8. D) An oxcart

A carreta is an oxcart. Brightly painted carretas are a national symbol, and the town of Sarchí is famous for making them.

9. C) With a tax on coffee

The theatre was paid for with a tax on coffee, the country's main export at the time. It opened on 21 October 1897.

10. B) The clay-colored thrush

The national bird is the clay-colored thrush, the plain brown yigüirro. Its song is said to announce the start of the rainy season.

11. True

True. Its pH can fall almost to zero, and only specially adapted bacteria can live in it.

12. A) A cloth coffee filter on a wooden stand

A chorreador is a cloth coffee filter on a wooden stand: hot water is poured over the grounds in a small cloth bag and drips into the cup. Be careful: a chorreada, with an a, is a sweet corn pancake.

Costa Rica visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____
Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____

Play the interactive version, collect a stamp in your passport:

<https://worldstroll.com/countries/costa-rica>