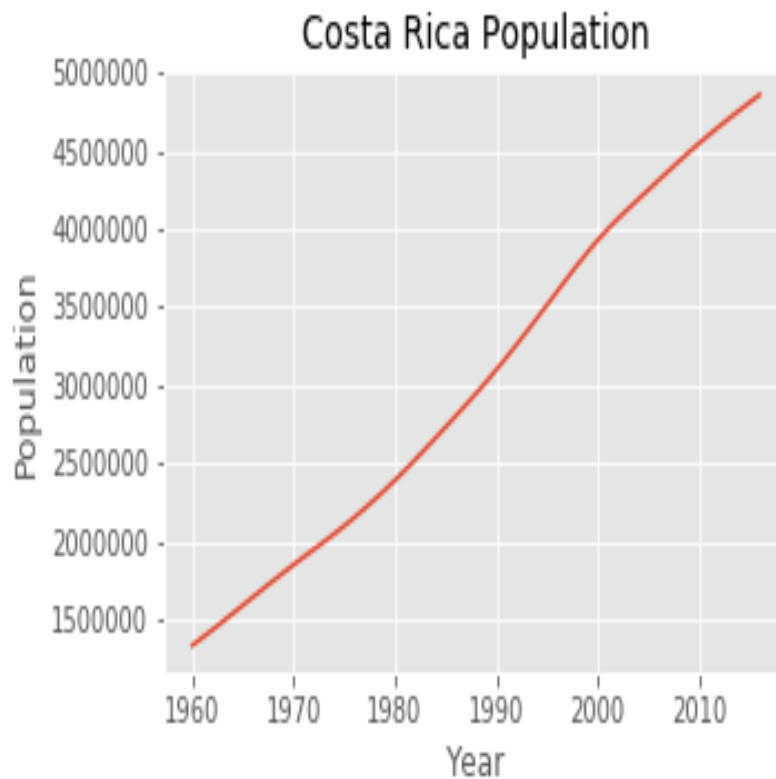


Costa Rica



Coordinates: 10°N 84°W / 10°N 84°W / 10; -84Costa Rica (/kɒstˈrɪk/ (listen); Spanish: [kosta rika]; "Rich Coast"), officially the Republic of Costa Rica (Spanish: República de Costa Rica), is a country in Central America, bordered by Nicaragua to the north, Panama to the southeast, the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Caribbean Sea to the east, and Ecuador to the south of Cocos Island. It has a population of around 4.9 million, in a land area of 51,060 square kilometers (19,714 square miles); over 300,000 live in the capital and largest city, San José, which had a population of an estimated 333,980 in 2015. Costa Rica has been known for its stable democracy in a region that has had some instability and for its highly educated workforce, most of whom speak English. The country spends roughly 6.9% of its budget (2016) on education, compared to a global average of 4.4%. Its economy, once heavily dependent on agriculture, has diversified to include sectors such as finance, corporate services for foreign companies, pharmaceuticals, and ecotourism. Many foreign companies (manufacturing and services) operate in Costa Rica's free trade zones (FTZ) where they benefit from investment and tax incentives.