



Costa Rica



Background Although explored by the Spanish early in the 16th century, initial attempts at colonizing Costa Rica proved unsuccessful due to a combination of factors, including disease from mosquito-infested swamps, brutal heat, resistance from Indigenous populations, and pirate raids. It was not until 1563 that a permanent settlement of Cartago was established in the cooler, fertile central highlands. The area remained a colony for some two-and-a-half centuries. In 1821, Costa Rica was one of several Central American provinces that jointly declared independence from Spain. Two years later it joined the United Provinces of Central America, but this federation disintegrated in 1838, at which time Costa Rica proclaimed its sovereignty and independence.

Since the late 19th century, only two brief periods of violence have marred the country's democratic development. General Federico TINOCO Granados led a coup in 1917, but the threat of US intervention pushed him to resign in 1919. In 1948, landowner Jose FIGUERES Ferrer raised his own army and rebelled against the government. The brief civil war ended with an agreement to allow FIGUERES to remain in power for 18 months, then step down in favor of the previously elected Otilio ULATE. FIGUERES was later elected twice in his own right, in 1953 and 1970.

Costa Rica experienced destabilizing waves of refugees from Central American civil wars in the 1970s and 1980s, but peace in the region has since helped the economy rebound. Although it still maintains a large agricultural sector, Costa Rica has expanded its economy to include strong technology and tourism industries.

Capital

name: San José

Government type

presidential republic

Area

total : 51,100 sq km
land: 51,060 sq km
water: 40 sq km

Climate

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

Natural resources

hydropower

Population

total: 5,265,575 (2024 est.)

Population growth rate

0.74% (2024 est.)

Ethnic groups

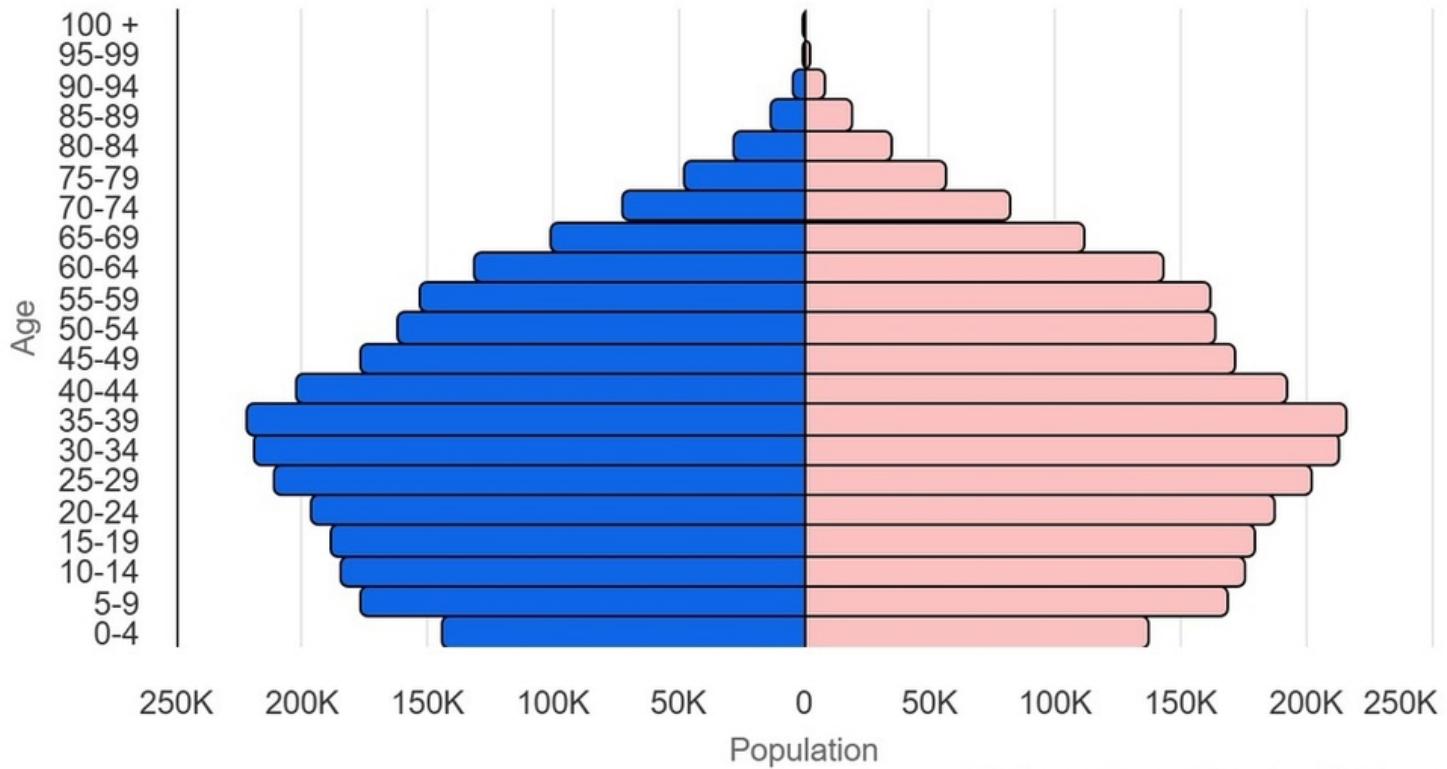
White or Mestizo 83.6%, Mulatto 6.7%, Indigenous 2.4%, Black or African descent 1.1%, other 1.1%, none 2.9%, unspecified 2.2% (2011 est.)

Religions

Roman Catholic 47.5%, Evangelical and Pentecostal 19.8%, Jehovah's Witness 1.4%, other Protestant 1.2%, other 3.1%, none 27% (2021 est.)

Languages	Spanish (official), English
Executive branch	chief of state: President Rodrigo CHAVES Robles (since 8 May 2022) head of government: President Rodrigo CHAVES Robles (since 8 May 2022)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Legislative Assembly (Asamblea Legislativa)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Catalina CRESPO SANCHO (since 19 April 2023)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador-designate Melinda HILDEBRAND (since 3 December 2025); Chargé d'Affaires Jennifer SAVAGE (since August 2025)
Economic overview	trade-based upper middle-income economy; green economy leader, having reversed deforestation; investing in blue economy infrastructure; declining poverty until hard impacts of COVID-19; lingering inequality and growing government debts have prompted a liquidity crisis
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$138.371 billion (2024 est.) \$132.64 billion (2023 est.) \$126.189 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$27,000 (2024 est.) \$26,000 (2023 est.) \$24,800 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$36.77 billion (2024 est.) \$33.683 billion (2023 est.) \$29.392 billion (2022 est.)
Exports - partners	USA 40%, Netherlands 6%, China 5%, Guatemala 4%, Belgium 3% (2023)
Exports - commodities	medical instruments, integrated circuits, orthopedic appliances, bananas, tropical fruits (2023)
Imports	\$30.459 billion (2024 est.) \$28.413 billion (2023 est.) \$27.095 billion (2022 est.)
Imports - partners	USA 38%, China 15%, Mexico 6%, Brazil 3%, Guatemala 3% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, plastic products, cars, medical instruments, broadcasting equipment (2023)

Population Pyramid

Costa Rica (2024)

U.S. Census Bureau, International Database