

Title:

Overview of Costa Rica for Travelers

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Summary:

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Article Body:

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Overview of Costa Rica for Travelers

Christopher Columbus discovered Costa Rica and the indigenous people living there in 1502. The Spanish subsequently colonized it. The name of the country, Rich Coast, comes from their mistaken belief that gold was prevalent. It wasn't, but the name stuck. In 1821, Costa Rica joined other Central American countries in declaring independence from Spain. True independence didn't occur till 1838 when Costa Rica broke away from a federation of Central American countries.

In a major departure from many Central America countries, Costa Rica has largely been a free and peaceful democracy since 1899. It has a system of checks and balances similar to the United States, but more power is invested with the President and executive branch. The President and congressional members are elected to 4-year terms.

Costa Rica covers an area of 19,730 square miles. The capital is San Jose, which has a population of 2.1 million people. The terrain is rugged and tropical with dormant volcanoes, a rain forest in the south and immaculate beaches. Rainfall is heavy during summer months, but temperatures are consistently in the 70 to 90 degree range.

The people of Costa Rica are known both as "Ticos" and "Costa Ricans." The total

population is 4 million, but growing at 1.5 percent. Roman Catholic is the dominant religion, although 15 percent of the population claims Protestant as their faith. Literacy is at 96 percent. Average life expectancy for a woman is 79 years while men average 74 years. Spanish is the dominant language.

Costa Rica is both a hot tourist and relocation destination. The country is simply beautiful and the people are friendly. There has been a lot of construction and expansion over the last 15 years. Places like Tamarindo are no longer sleepy little coast towns. If you want to see the sleepy Costa Rica of old, now is the time to go before it is too late.