

## Title:

Costa Rica, a Paradise for Eco-Tourism

## Word Count:

721

## Summary:

Description of Costa Rica, a great place for eco-tourism with lots to see and do.

## Keywords:

costa, rica, eco, tourism, travel, central, america, latin, jungle, rain, forest, scuba, diving, san, jose, volcano, arenal

## Article Body:

For those who would like a destination for eco-tourism, Costa Rica is hard to beat. For a little country in Central America that's only 19,730 square miles, there's definitely a lot to see and do there. Costa Rica means 'rich coast' in Spanish, which is the country's official language. Located between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south, Costa Rica is one of the most stable and prosperous of all Latin American countries. There are tropical beach resorts on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of the country for sun vacationers but the main attraction of Costa Rica is the eco-tourism. For example, there is a wider variety of bird species in Costa Rica alone than in all of Europe and North America.

Surprisingly, there are diverse eco-systems and microclimates within Costa Rica. In addition to the coastal beaches, there are dense jungles and rain forests with a wide variety of fauna. Some of these forests are referred to as cloud forests because of the moisture of the mists that linger among the trees in some parts. One forest has a cable car set up so that tourists can observe the plant and animal life at the treetop levels. For the more adventurous types, there is a place where one can swing from tree to tree using a network of rope attachments. There are also dry forests as well as colder barren volcanic tundras. Quite extreme changes in microclimate can be observed even within 30 minutes of travel. Some parts of the country have canal systems similar to those found in the Amazon and a few rivers offer excellent white water rafting.

There are several volcanoes within the country and the extinct ones are easily accessible since they are tourist attractions. A few have beautiful turquoise color lakes that have formed in the craters at the top of such volcanoes. One

of the more famous active volcanoes is Arenal where visitors can safely watch the eruptions from a nearby facility that has outdoor hot springs naturally heated by the mountain.

In addition to the many different birds that can be sighted, there is a wide number of other exotic wildlife including monkeys, sloths, jaguars, bats and reptiles that can be seen during one of the many available nature tours. Every year, there are sea turtles that come to certain beaches to nest and this event attracts many nature lovers. The wildlife in Costa Rica is not only rich on land or the air but also in the surrounding oceans. For scuba divers, Costa Rica offers excellent diving opportunities and they are quite different from the waters in the Caribbean. The higher amounts of plankton in the local seas attract more numbers of large marine animals than can be found in the Caribbean.

Coffee and bananas are some of the main exports for Costa Rica. For coffee lovers, this is the place to sample some of the best in the world although it should be warned that the locals like their coffee quite strong. Tours in the valleys will often go past numerous coffee plantations.

Most tourists will fly into the capital city of San Jose. Although there is some nice colonial architecture to see in San Jose, it's not one of the nicer places to stay in Costa Rica. The city is noisy and polluted but relatively safe. One can use San Jose as a base for many day trips to the various rain forests, volcanoes and beaches. Travelers can also fly into Liberia which is a town in the north part of the country. This is a much quieter region and close to many of the northern resorts. One option that many travelers take is to rent a vehicle and tour the country on their own. However, the roads of Costa Rica are not the best with lots of potholes and mudslides are common during the wet season from June to November. If renting a vehicle, a 4x4 is definitely recommended.

There is so much to see and do in Costa Rica that many visitors return to see parts of the country that they missed before. The country is easily the most popular destination to visit in Central America. Costa Rica now has tourist offices set up in North America for those who want further information.