

# A VARIETY OF TOURIST ACTIVITIES



**C**osta Rica, a country that occupies just 0.03% of the earth's surface, possesses 5% of the world's biodiversity and is considered one of the 20 richest countries in plant species. The country has two oceans and a great variety of ecosystems that range from humid tropical forest, cloud forests and the dry forests, to coral reefs, the Paramus and volcanic lagoons. These exuberant scenarios host a diversity of activities for the adventurous, sport or leisure traveler.

Studies carried out by the ICT demonstrate that currently there is a broader motivation from the tourist to remain longer in Costa Rica, thanks to the diverse supply of activities and lodging options.

These activities tend to be carried out in natural sites and include well known sports as diving and sport fishing, as well as new activities that have become a must for the visitor that seeks new experiences, such as canopy tours and sky walking (hanging bridges within the canopy).

Whatever the tourist's interest, the following is a brief that will help him/

her to visit the country and discover the wide range of activities that can turn their vacation into a unique experience.

## CARIBBEAN

### Tropical forest with Afro-Caribbean flavor.

In 1502 Christopher Columbus discovered Costa Rica arriving to these lands of great exuberance with the tropical humid forest and coral reef clear waters. Today this natural charm remains, in a region characterized by the coexistence of diverse cultures (Caucasian's, Chinese, the Indigenous population and the Afro-Caribbean) that have left their imprint on Costa Rican history. The latter, with their rich 'coconut flavored' culinary traditions, their rhythm and their language, offer visitors a very different experience from the rest of Costa Rica's regions.

Thanks to its rich flora and fauna, the variety of aquatic ecosystems and black and white sand beaches; the region is ideal to practice activities focused on nature and sea, among them fishing for Tarpon or Wahoo; diving

its clear waters and surfing. Puerto Viejo constitutes one of the main locations for surfing, where the most avid surfers are attracted to conquer 'Salsa Brava', one of the most famous waves in the world, which surprisingly has reached a height of up to 40 feet. Other prized beaches are those of playa Bonita, Westfalia and Isla Uvita. White Water Rafting is another of the region's most popular activities, thanks to the presence of the mighty Sixaola and Pacuare rivers.

The Caribbean region embraces the province of Limón with its principal towns of Guácimo, Matina, Talamanca, Pococí, Siquirres and Limón. The latter is the country's main port of export. Port Limon is connected to the capital, San José, by means of an excellent highway that takes the visitor through the mountains of Braulio Carrillo's National Park, amid exuberant landscapes and continuing through tropical banana plantations and farms that produce, ornamental plants, pejibaye, heart of palm and cocoa; flowing finally into the beaches of our Caribbean Coast, skirted by infinite arrays of coconut trees. The

region possesses a humid tropical climate and presents temperature changes that oscillate from 95° F during the day and 70° F during the night.

The Caribbean Rain Forests reflect the perfect idea of the tropical forest, with immense evergreen trees, adorned with lianas and plants of exuberant height. These characteristics, and the presence of species such as the rainbow-beaked toucan, the wild turkey, the spider monkey, the opossum and the tapir; result from presence of a great quantity of yearly rainfall, with drier periods in the months of April and October. Coincidentally, in October the Carnival of Limón dazzles visitors with its colorful and rhythmical parades and musical groups.

Some of the protected wildlife areas that offer the opportunity to visit the region's rain forests, as well as their diverse aquatic ecosystems are: Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge, Hitoy Cerere Biological Reserve, Cahuita National Park, Barra de Colorado Wildlife Refuge and Tortuguero National Park. The latter, famous for the marine turtle 'arribadas' and the natural canals that harbor threatened species such as the manatee, the otter and the crocodile.

The Caribbean will always await the visitor with its exuberance, to explore a national park, to enjoy the warm ocean

or flavor the delicious and traditional "rice bean" (consisting of rice and beans with coconut oil).

## CENTRAL PACIFIC

### The Coast and Nature, just a few hours away.

Just a few hours away from San José is the Central Pacific region, the closet beach area to the capital. This area offers a multitude of beaches and popular places to practice surfing and sport fishing; as well as tropical forests rich in wildlife species, islands full of exotic vegetation, small fishing towns and endless stretches of sandy beach, ideal for those who wish to rest. Due to the existence of some of Costa Rica's best boutique hotels, as well as international hotels chains, lodging and cuisine are equally diverse.

The observation of wildlife is one of the region's most attractive activities. Two hours from the capital, in Carara National Park, lies one of the country's largest populations of scarlet macaws, which can be observed at sunrise or at sunset. The park itself constitutes a biological jewel by representing a transition area between the Pacific humid forest and the dry forest. Nearby the delta of the Río Tárcoles, has become a must stop to observe, enormous crocodiles resting beside the river banks.

Continuing along the coastal highway, it is possible to observe endless lines of African palm trees whose oil is used in cosmetics and other by products. The Palms 'pave' the way to one of the most visited national parks in the country: Manuel Antonio, home of numerous wildlife species such as the small tití monkey and the capuchino (white faced) monkey. The park offers the opportunity to explore its tropical humid forest, its mangroves, islands and marine life. Many on the region's beaches are ideal to surf such is the case of Esterillos, Jacó, Playa Hermosa, Boca Barranca and the beaches that skirt Puerto Caldera.

Port Puntarenas, the region's largest city, is literally a point of sand that juts into the Gulf of Nicoya and one of the main areas for the arrival of cruises ships. The city possesses the only marine park of the country and is considered the best place in Costa Rica for the realization of international triathlons. It also has many festivities such as the carnivals that display its port atmosphere.

Anchored in the Gulf of Nicoya, the islands of Guayabo, Negritos, Pájaros and Tortuga offer those who navigate their proximities, a natural display in which large flocks of frigate birds, brown pelicans and parrots stand out. Isla Tortuga is one of the region's and for that matter the country's most visited destinations, due to its white sand beach and natural landscapes.

After crossing the Gulf of Nicoya, many hidden beaches, waterfalls and wildlife preserves, such as the Reserva Absoluta Cabo Blanco, offer the visitor a variety of activities to enjoy.

Nearly 600 miles off the coast, far out into the Pacific, lies Coco's Island that marks the furthest reach of the country, the island has been declared 'Patrimony of Humanity' by UNESCO. A former refuge for pirates and their legendary treasures, Coco's invaluable wealth resides in its diversity of wildlife, especially marine life that presents abundant species of hammerhead sharks and marine mammals as well as coral reefs great attraction for divers.



## CENTRAL REGION

### Gateway to Costa Rica

The Central Region is the country's gateway, but in itself offers a wide range of activities and attractions worth exploring. One of the main characteristics of this 'central plateau' is its pleasant spring like climate, since even San José, located 1.149 meters above sea level (3.734° F), enjoys an average daily temperature of 24 °C (77 °F). A great gamma of gastronomic alternatives and high level lodgings characterize this region, and let's not forget the bed & breakfasts and the popular "sodas" or small local food restaurants. Five of the best museums in the country are in the capital i.e.: the Gold Museum, the Jade Museum, National Museum, the Museum of Art Contemporary and the Children's Museum, in addition to the famed architectural jewel of Costa Rica: The National Theatre, built in 1897 through a self-imposed coffee tax.

Dance halls and discos where tropical rhythms vibrate, as well as fashionable pubs are part of the San José's night life. San José is also headquarters of the country's government and political structures. Cultural activities, such as the theatre and contemporary dance, as well as academic activities are also an integral part of an area that boasts high standards in education and health.

In San José's surrounding areas, typical towns of great scenic beauty and rural landscapes offer, a glance of the former Costa Rica, with its tile roof houses with large solariums, "trapiches" and dairies as well as ox carts, one of the leading rural symbols of Costa Rica. The fairs of the patron saints, as well as San José's "Festejos Populares" in December, are some of the traditional activities offered to the visitor.

The great scenic beauty that is the central region of Costa Rica, a result of the central Volcanic Mountain range that in addition to its attractive mountains, also includes impressive active volcanoes like the Poás and the Irazú.

The climate and altitude of this region is ideal for coffee production, a product for which Costa Rica is famous. Other farming includes, vegetable crops, fruits and a great variety of ornamental plant nurseries.

Another jewel of the region is the Basilica of Los Angeles: Costa Rica's Cathedral and maximum religious symbol, located in the city of Cartago, former capital of the country. More than a church, it is a sanctuary, where the faithful, devoted to the Virgin of Los Angeles carry out a pilgrimage every August 2<sup>nd</sup>, day on which her appearance to a humble native of the region is commemorated. Without a doubt, the central region means much more the gateway, to the country.

**Simply the Best!**  
**When in SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA, stay at**  
**HOTEL Casa Roland**  
BED & BREAKFAST

**STANDARD AMENITIES:**  
Three-bedroom Roland Suite  
20 Elegantly decorated rooms  
Queen-size beds  
Outside Jacuzzi  
Cable Television  
High-speed internet access

**Full bath amenities**  
Maid service  
TV with DVD  
Laptops available  
Garage  
Fully stocked bar  
Tour & Car Rental

**For more information or reservations:**  
From outside C.R.: 011-506-231-6571  
From C.R.: 231-6571 Fax: 290-5462  
E-mail: [info@casa-roland.com](mailto:info@casa-roland.com)  
[www.casa-roland.com](http://www.casa-roland.com)

## NORTH PACIFIC

### Sun, sea and savannah traditions

The country's North Pacific, comprising the Province of Guanacaste and the Peninsula of Nicoya, is a region of the country where high levels of tourism arrivals mingle with traditions and typical elements. Among these, the figure of the "sabanero" (Costa Rican cowboy) stands out, with his joviality and skill in handling cattle. It is for this reason that in the region's "fiestas patronales" (county fairs) and corridas (rodeos) are a must. The fairs always include a great variety of typical cuisine based mainly on corn and cattle.

The region has a strong influence in Costa Rican history, beginning in the colonial period. Santa Rosa National Park was scenario of three important battles, one of which back in 1856, meant for the victorious Costa Ricans the conquest of national sovereignty over attacks of foreign invaders.

Geologically, the region harbors some of the oldest natural formations in the country, such as the caverns of Barra Honda National Park with its many stalactites and stalagmites. The park also protects important extensions of dry tropical forest, most of which is in regeneration. In the summer time the months of November through May, the deciduous trees lose their foliage creating a very diverse landscape, almost dessert-like in appearance. In the months of June through October, when the rain falls and the rivers recover their flow, these forests flourish into diverse tonalities of green. Some typical

flora of the region are Guanacaste, the national tree; the savanna Oak and the naked Indian tree, commonly named due to its intense reddish colored trunk. Animals such as the white tailed deer, the iguana, the opossum and the white faced monkey, are also characteristic of the area.

Some of the region's protected areas possess worldwide importance for the protection of wildlife species and constitute observation areas of great interest. This is the case of the Baula Turtle, in Playa Grande, the fauna in the lagoons of Palo Verde National Park; and the nesting areas of the Lora Turtle in the Nancite and Ostional beaches. National parks such as Volcán Rincón de la Vieja also offer unique sites with their hot mud pools and fumaroles in constant activity.

With its many beaches, the North Pacific constitutes one of Costa Rica's most

important tourism areas and the presence of a diversity in tourism infrastructure that includes five star services and some of the best places to practice golf and sport fishing, combines with natural settings and a myriad of small quaint properties.

Marine currents that dredge nutrients from the ocean's depths, facilitate the existence of a rich marine biodiversity, favoring the abundance of species like swordfish, marlin and the dorado. Near the city of Liberia one of the main access points to the different attractions of the region stands Daniel Oduber International Airport which offers direct international access to the region. The International American highway, in excellent condition, also communicates this city with the country's capital to the South and Nicaragua to the North.

Guanacaste's white sand beaches, full of sun and activity, offer all types of outdoor activities including surfing, kayaking, swimming, diving, snorkeling and horseback riding. Some of these beaches are true tourist centers, such is the case of Playa Tamarindo and El Coco, while others are secluded natural environments. All however, seem to be made just for sports and sun lovers.

## MOUNTAINS AND PLAINS OF THE NORTH

### Energy and natural beauty

This is a land of volcanoes, humid and cloud forests, enormous waterfalls and mighty rivers, amid rich vegetation

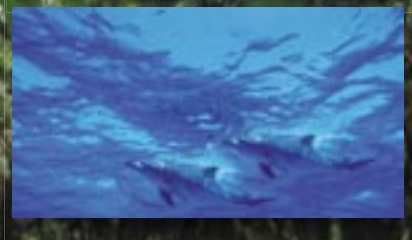
Continues on page 17



**HOTEL & VILLAS  
NACAZCOL**  
CONFERENCE CENTER

## The essence of Guanacaste

- Located in the most beautiful area of Guanacaste, just a few kilometers from exotic beaches such as Hermosa, Panama or Coco Beach.
- Hotel & Villas Nacazcol offers all the needs that you deserve for your enjoyment
- Modern Villas fully equipped, Cable TV, Refrigerator, Telephone, microwave, kitchen, and more
- 12 Hotel air conditioned rooms with cable TV, Jacuzzi bath, mini bar
- 2 Tennis Courts, Mini soccer field, and beautiful gardens surrounded by nature.
- 2 Swimming pools for adults, 2 for childrens and an outdoor Jacuzzi for 8 people
- Restaurant Capitan Grill
- Disco Bar Pirata Cojo
- Laundry service and Mini Market
- Bicycle rental
- Telephone
- Billards
- Conference Center for up to 200 pax



**Hotel y Villas Nacazcol**

**Phone: (506) 670-0270 • Fax: (506) 697-0358**

**Email: info@nacazcol.com • Site: www.nacazcol.com**

and wildlife. This generosity of nature has facilitated diverse activities for the visitor that include horseback riding through natural scenarios; canopy tours, hiking, mountain biking and wildlife observation. The region combines the fertile plains of Guatuso, San Carlos and Sarapiquí with the volcanic mountain ranges of Guanacaste and Tilarán. One of the main attractions is the Arenal volcano, a perfect cone of 1633 meters of altitude (5.307 Ft.), in constant activity that at night offers the visitor a fireworks spectacle of incandescing flows of lava. At its base, the Lake Arenal reservoir, an artificial lagoon of 87 kilometers of longitude, characterized by its scenic beauty, constitutes one of best places in the world to practice windsurfing, thanks to winds that reach 72 kilometers per hour. It is also center of other water sport activities as are boat rides and sport fishing.

The Tabacón River that runs along the vicinity of the volcano, is the source of thermal waters that, in public and private areas offer visitors a refreshing therapeutic bath. The volcano and its bordering forests have the category of National Park and trails are available that allow exploration of the surrounding areas of this colossus.

Other areas of great beauty include Cerro Chato, an extinct volcanic crater crowned by a beautiful blue green colored lagoon, which is also part of the Volcán Arenal complex. Nearby, one can also admire La Fortuna waterfall ‘crashing’ to earth from its 70 meter height . In the cloudy summits of the Tilarán Mountain range you can find the town of Monteverde, well known for its biological reserve of the same name, which protects many bird species among them, the famous Quetzal.

Founded by Quakers, in the early 1950’s this area is known world-wide for its conservation efforts and way of life centered on respect for nature, that are reflected in its environmental educational projects, recycling efforts, eco-tourism and protection of the forests.

The north region is also characterized by its productivity. One of the main activities is dairy farming, basis of a great variety of products, among these the cheese industry. Ciudad Quesada constitutes one of the main populations, with high levels of development. The famous fairs, carried out in the different towns with dances, bull mount championships and cattle auctions are characteristic of the region.



The Hotel Amapola is located 2 hours by road from San Jose in Jacó, an important tourist town on the Pacific Coast, with a wide range of entertainment and restaurants. Famous for surfing thanks to its nice waves, this wonderful property offers the well known “ALL INCLUSIVE” system to enjoy with family and friends.

- A la carte Restaurant (breakfast, lunch and dinner timetables)
- Barbecue at the swimming pool area
- Discotheque
- Wet Bar
- Casino
- Swimming pool for adults and for children
- Jacuzzis
- Gift Shop
- Volleyball court

Due to the high percentage of rainfall, the north region has humid and evergreen forests as well as fertile plains. Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge, located in the plains of Guatuso, is one of the most important protected areas in the region and harbors ecosystems like lagoons, swamps and wetlands.

These natural environments are true oasis for aquatic birds, reptiles and mammals and therefore, important places of interest for wildlife observers.

Rivers such as the San Carlos and Sarapiquí, are also of great importance. The latter joins with the San Juan River and forms part of the hydrological system that feeds the Lake of Nicaragua. Areas of great biodiversity like Sarapiquí are also a source of scientific investigation and the country’s last haven of endangered species such as the green macaw.

## SOUTH PACIFIC

### Exuberant nature

Large masses of humid tropical forest that harbor unique natural species of the planet, abundant marine diversity, the highest peak in the country, an indigenous legacy that holds mysteries as captivating

Continues on page 19

as the Pre-Colombian stone spheres and ancient cultures that still today conserve its traditions, are all part of what Costa Rica's South Pacific can offer.

Its distance from the Central Valley makes of this area one of the country's last frontiers of development, allowing the conservation of important forests such as Corcovado National Park, last haven of humid tropical forest in the Mesoamerican Pacific coast; and La Amistad Internacional Park (Costa Rica-Panamá) declared by the UNESCO as a natural patrimony of the world. The region also possesses the country's largest swamp extension, the wetlands of Sierpe-Térraba, of great scenic beauty; it also contains unique ecosystems, such as the glacial lakes of the Chirripó National Park, Costa Rica's highest peak at 3280 meters high (12.400 F); and Golfo Dulce, which scientists consider a unique true tropical fjord adding to its fauna and flora diversity.

The Osa Peninsula, covers great part of the South Pacific, and constitutes an area of great natural attraction that, together with the Talamanca mountain range, represents one of the first land formations that emerged in Central America. Both are places of great biological diversity. Given that the peninsula was originally an island, it possesses unique endemic species of wildlife, in addition to those migratory species of North and South America. It's tropical forests harbor trees of up to 70 meters high, (over 200Ft.) wood species of great value, and the largest populations of endangered animals including felines and scarlet macaws. In the upper slopes of the Talamanca Mountain range the Paramo ecosystem harbors species of great attraction such as the resplendent quetzal and others.

Osa and Talamanca are also home to the country's main indigenous tribes of Meso-American and South American influence. Indigenous vestiges such as the stone spheres are also characteristic of the region. Some of the most famous spheres are on Caño Island, near the coast of Drake's Bay, one of the country's best diving spots. Its clear waters, witness the legendary migration of the humpback whale, spotted and bottle nose dolphins, and the green baula turtle.

The countless beaches of the South Pacific coasts are surrounded by exuberant nature and their sands possess the most diverse tonalities. Some are sought after for surfing, as are Dominical Beach, near the Marino Ballena Park National, and Playa Pavones, famous for having the world's longest left-hand breaking wave. Others are solitary beaches, ideal to walk on for hours in search of solitude and communion with nature. Rivers and waterfalls supplement the natural landscape and the charm of this region.

# AERO SERVICIOS

- Charter Flights  
Taxi Aereo
- Sightseeing  
Vuelos de recreo
- International Flights  
Vuelos internacionales
- VIP Flights  
Vuelos VIP
- Executive Transport  
Transporte Ejecutivo

- Med-evac/EMS  
Evacuaciones médicas
- Aerial photography  
Fotografía aérea
- Const. support-long line  
Carga externa
- Search and rescue  
Búsqueda y rescate
- Fire fighting  
Extinción de incendios forestales


Our fleet  
Nuestra flota

We will help you set up  
your own heliport

## Helicopters



Bell 205 A1




Bell 206 BIII



Schweizer 300

## Airplanes



Islander



CESSNA-206



CESSNA-182



CESSNA-310



Telefonos:  
(506) 440-7241 / 232-1248 / 232-9192  
ddiaz@aerodiva.com  
Aerop. Tobías Bolaños P., Hangares 26 y 34  
Costa Rica

