



Costa Rica at a Glance

I. Costa Rica at a Glance	
Official Name:	Republic of Costa Rica
Capital:	San José
Area:	51.100 square kilometers (19.729 square miles)
Location:	Central America, between Nicaragua and Panama, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean
Administrative Divisions:	7 provinces (Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limón, Puntarenas, San José) divided into 81 subdivisions (<i>cantones</i>), which are also divided into 421 districts
Population:	4.48 million (July 2009)
Official Language:	Spanish
Local Currency:	Colón (named after Christopher Columbus)
Official Religion:	Roman Catholic, but there is freedom of expression of other beliefs
System of Government:	Democratic Republic
Executive Branch:	President and two Vice Presidents elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-years terms. The cabinet is selected by the President. The last election was held on February 7, 2010. President: Laura Chinchilla Vice Presidents: Luis Liberman and Alfio Piva
Legislative Branch:	Unicameral Legislative Assembly (57 seats). Members are elected by direct, popular vote to serve four-year terms.
Judicial Branch:	Supreme Court (22 justices are elected for eight-year terms by the Legislative Assembly) and Tribunals.
Army:	Abolished in 1949
Independence:	15 September 1821 (from Spain)



Constitution:	7 November 1949
Geography:	Rugged highlands are found throughout most of the country, ranging from approximately 1,000 to 2,000 meters (3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level). The Guanacaste Mountain Range, Central Mountain Range, and Talamanca Mountain Range are the main mountain ranges of the country. There are several active volcanoes (Arenal Volcano, Irazu Volcano, Rincon de la Vieja Volcano and Turrialba Volcano), and the country's highest mountain (Chirripo Hill) has a height of 3,819 m/12,530 ft. The country has a relatively long coastline in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
Climate:	Tropical and subtropical; dry season (December to April); rainy season (May to November); cooler in highlands