

COSTA RICA

Continent: North America (Central America)

[Population](#): 5.1 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 81

[Governance System](#): Democratic Republic

Capital: San José

[Area](#): 51,060 km²

Major Languages: Spanish

[GDP \(2021\)](#): 1,990,762 US\$ Millions

Select Global Rankings

[Human Development Index](#): 58th

[Fragile States Index - Inverted](#): 31st

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): NR

[Human Freedom Index](#): 37th

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 23rd

[Good Country Index](#): 49th

Elite Sport System Rankings

[Global Cup Ranking](#): 68th

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): NR

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): NR

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): NR

Football/World Cup Profile

[FIFA Region](#): CONCACAF

[FIFA Ranking](#): 31st

World Cup Appearances: 5

Best World Cup Performance(s): Quarter Finals (2014)

Qualification: Intercontinental Playoff winner

[World Cup Group](#): E

Last World Cup Appearance: 2018

COSTA RICA in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Anthony Samuels)

The Republic of Costa Rica (Spanish for 'Rich Coast') is a country in Central America, bordered by Nicaragua and Panama to the north and south, and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to the east and west, respectively. A relatively small country, Costa Rica is seen as an international leader in wildlife conservation and environmentalism. Modern day Costa Rica is known for its pacifism and happiness, reflected by the nation's slogan 'Pura Vida', meaning "pure life".

The land of Costa Rica, defined by its tropical coastlines, dense rainforests, and volcanic mountain ranges, has been inhabited by indigenous peoples for millennia. While lacking a complex civilization such as the Aztecs or Incas, Spanish explorers observed that the locals wore vast quantities of gold jewelry, giving the land its name. Costa Rica became a Spanish colony along with most of Central and South America, but its reputation ironically became that of a poor backwater province and was neglected by Spain for its sparse population and lack of resources. Because of its slow early development and relative isolation, Costa Rica was not as impacted by the institutionalized inequality and exploitation common in other colonies, laying the groundwork for a more socially progressive society. Costa Rica separated from the Spanish Empire in 1821 as a result of

the Mexican War of Independence and was faced with the choice of joining the newly formed Mexican Empire or becoming its own republic. Disagreement on this choice led to the Battle of Ochomogo, where republican forces prevailed over the imperial faction and established Costa Rican independence as part of a federation of Central American states.

Throughout the 19th century, Costa Rica pursued economic growth and modernization driven by its coffee industry, connecting isolated parts of the country by railroad and giving rise to a strong middle class. Foreign-owned fruit plantations began to proliferate in Costa Rica in the late 19th century and would become known for their exploitative labour practices. Resistance to the exploitation caused by the United Fruit Company culminated in the 1934 Great Banana Strike, which ultimately resulted in the creation of Costa Rican trade unions and the beginning of a progressive tradition of legal and political reform. Costa Rica experienced a turbulent period in 1948 when a disputed election sparked the Costa Rican Civil War. Despite only lasting 44 days, it was the bloodiest conflict in Costa Rican history and had a profound effect on national politics. In the aftermath of the war, Costa Rica completely abolished its military and embraced a policy of pacifism. Costa Rica has since become the most peaceful and stable democracy in the region, known for its strong public education and healthcare systems. Today, Costa Rica welcomes millions of tourists a year from all over the world to enjoy the country's natural beauty and easygoing lifestyle.