

COSTA RICA

Region: Central America (Global South)
Population (2022): 5.1 million (121st)
Life Expectancy at Birth (Women): 83.44 (27th)
Governance System: Democratic republic

Capital: San José
Land Area (km²): 51,060 (124th)
Major Languages: Spanish

Select Global Rankings

GDP (2022): 84th (68,381 US\$ Millions)
Human Development Index: 58th (Very High)
Fragile States Index - Inverted: 30th (Cat. 4)

Good Country Index: 49th
Human Freedom Index: 37th
World Happiness Ranking: 23rd

Select Global Rankings (Gender-Focus)

Gross National Income Per Capita (Women): 56th
Gender Social Norms Index: no ranking
Women's Power Index: 2nd
Social Institutions and Gender Index (World Cup rank): 9th

Gender Inequality Index: 60th
Global Gender Gap Index: 14th
Women Peace & Security Index: 47th

Elite Sport System Rankings

2020 Summer Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): none
2022 Winter Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): none
Global Cup Ranking (Women): 53rd

Football/World Cup Profile

FIFA Region: CONCACAF
FIFA Ranking: 36th
World Cup Appearance: 2nd
Best World Cup Performance(s): Group Stage

Qualification: Runner-up CONCACAF Group B
World Cup Group: C
Last World Cup Appearance: 2015

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.

GENDER EQUITY (by Alanna Harman)

“In Costa Rica, there is hard evidence to support the “feminization of poverty” in which more women and women-led households are experiencing higher rates of poverty. Between 2010 and 2016, gender inequality increased mainly through the increasing rates of income [inequality](#)”. Low-income women also experience healthcare inaccessibility which contributes to lower education levels, increased health risks, and delayed or restricted access to the workforce leading to economic [repercussions](#). Only 50% of women participate in the workforce and women also earn about 12% less than their male counterparts. The social norms that have engrained the gender divide also permeate the workforce as men are more likely to work in science and engineering and women socially acceptable roles that are compensated at a lower rate and have lower social [standing](#). More recently in April 2022 the Costa Rican government approved a reparation bill for survivors of femicide (intentional killing of women or girls because they are female). “Since 2007, 400 women have died of femicide with 51 cases still pending [investigation](#)”.

The 2023 Women's World Cup will mark the second time that Costa Rica has qualified. Costa Rica's qualification also marked the success of the players' union which “successfully negotiated a collective agreement on rights and duties for the women's national team similar to the one already achieved in 2014 for the men's national [side](#)”. The agreement defined “bonuses, allowances, travel, and other basic needs for the [players](#)”.