

Costa Rica



Introduction

Costa Rica (meaning "rich coast") has a population of three million in which 95 percent is of European (including some 7 percent mestizo—mixed European and Indian blood), 3 percent black or mulatto, 1 percent East Asian (primarily Chinese), and 1 percent Amerindian. About 51 percent of Costa Ricans live in urban centers.

Costa Rica has developed and maintained a stable democratic government. They are a fiercely democratic culture with a belief in peace through negotiations. The government is a unitary multiparty republic, composed of a president, a unicameral legislative assembly made up of 57 deputies, and the Supreme Court of Justice. The president is both chief of state and the head of the government, holding only one successive four-year term of office. The people of Costa Rica are politically active and proud of their government. Election voting is mandatory of anyone over 18 years old.

The official language is Spanish. Creole is also spoken. English is widely understood. Roman Catholicism is the official religion. However, various evangelical Protestant sects have been growing.

Fun Fact

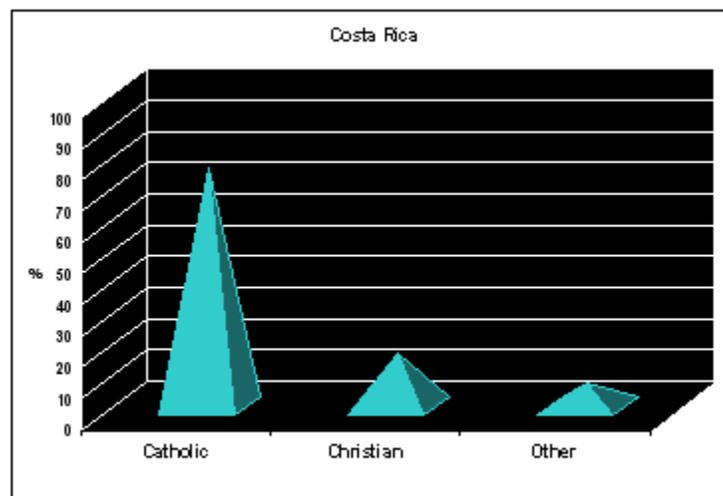
In recent years, Costa Rica has nearly become synonymous with the term "ecotourism." Its pristine rainforests are painstakingly protected, and an ever-increasing tide of people come to witness the astounding abundance of plant and animal species each year. Women in business will meet with greater acceptance in Costa Rica than in other Latin American countries. Women have even been elected vice-president of Costa Rica. Costa Rica's higher learning institutes award degrees in many fields -- including law. Costa Rica has a higher number of lawyers per capita than any other country in Central America

Geert Hofstede Analysis Costa Rica

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The Geert Hofstede analysis for Costa Rica shows similarities to other Latin American countries, as far as strong uncertainty avoidance and low individualism. However, there are distinct differences between Costa Rica and other Latin American countries. Costa Rica has a low power distance ranking which signifies the society de-emphasizes the differences between a citizen's power and wealth, in other words, equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed. Also, Costa Rica ranks lower on masculinity which indicates a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders. In this culture, females are treated more equally to males in all aspects of society. [More Details](#)

Religion in Costa Rica



* WORLD FACTBOOK 2002

Appearance

- Business dress: Men should wear a conservative dark suit. In warmer climates, a jacket is optional. Women should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. Pants are never worn by women. Costa Ricans are much more formal and serious than other Latin Americans. Therefore, keep jackets on during business meetings
- Local people bathe frequently because of the heat, and guests are expected to bathe at least once daily
- Making a fist with the thumb sticking out between the middle and index fingers is obscene. This gesture is known as the "fig"
- Most North American gestures will be understood in Costa Rica
- Don't put your feet up on any furniture except items expressly designed for that purpose
- Fidgeting with your hands or feet is considered distracting and impolite

Behavior

- Costa Ricans are by far the most punctual people in Central America. North Americans are expected to be on time for appointments
- Since Costa Ricans allow themselves only a limited time for their midday break, everyone is expected to be on time for a business lunch
- Most business entertaining takes place in the evening, since lunch is the main meal of the day. Spouses are welcome at business dinners
- Gifts frequently exchanged on all kinds of special occasions
- If you are invited for dinner to a home, bring flowers, chocolates, scotch, or wine. Do not bring calla lilies; they are associated with funerals
- Have business cards, proposals, and other material printed in both English and Spanish

Communications

- Handshaking the common greeting. *Abrazos* (embrace of good friends) is not as common as in other Latin countries
- Titles are important and should be included on business cards. Address a person directly by using his or her title only. A Ph.D or a physician is called *Doctor*. Teachers prefer the title *Profesor*, engineers go by *Ingeniero*, architects are *Arquitecto*, and lawyers are *Abogado*. Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as Mr., Mrs., or Miss, plus their surnames. In Spanish these are
 - Mr. = *Senor*
 - Mrs. = *Senora*
 - Miss = *Senorita*
- Most Hispanics have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- Costa Ricans call themselves *Ticos* (TEE-kos)
- Politics are freely discussed because of the stability there
- Good conversation topics: children, history, art
- Bad topics: any personal criticism, religion