

Official Costa Rica

MEETINGS & INCENTIVES GUIDE



REWARDING COSTA RICA

CONTENTS

- [2](#) INDEX
- [3](#) YES, TO COSTA RICA
- [4-17](#) THE DESTINATION
- [18](#) AIR ACCESS
- [19](#) COSTA RICA FACTS AND FIGURES
- [20-21](#) SUPPORTING SERVICES
- [22](#) OUR PRIDE AND JOY
- [23](#) REWARDING REGIONS
- [24-25](#) CENTRAL VALLEY
- [26-27](#) NORTH AND SOUTH GUANACASTE
- [28](#) CENTRAL PACIFIC
- [29](#) PUNTARENAS AND THE GULF ISLANDS
- [30](#) MONTEVERDE
- [31](#) NORTHERN PLAINS
- [32](#) NORTH AND SOUTH CARIBBEAN
- [33](#) SOUTH PACIFIC CORCOVADO AND GOLFITO
- [34](#) TOP SUPPLIERS FOR MEETINGS AND INCENTIVES



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Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa

Los Sueños Resort and Marina

Marriott Hotels of Costa Rica

Meliá Cariari Conference Center and Golf Resort

National Symphonic Orchestra

Orquimex

Paradisus Playa Conchal

Poseidon Spa & Fitness Center

Real InterContinental Hotel

Ríos Tropicales

Sky Walk

Tabacón Hot Springs Resort & Spa

Tayutic: The Hacienda Experience

Villa Caletas Hotel

SPECIAL THANKS

Los Sueños Marriott Ocean & Golf Resort

Serenity Spa

Waterfall Canopy Tours

CRT Destination Marketing & Mgmt Services

Kayak Jacó

Punta Leona Hotel

Rain Forest Aerial Tram

Villa Caletas Hotel

COSTA RICA
No Artificial Ingredients
www.visitcostarica.com



Yes, To Costa Rica!

1. Close and Preferred

Whether arriving from the USA, Canada or Europe, flying to Costa Rica has never been easier! Merely 2 hours from Miami, and a direct flight from Toronto is only 5 hours. Costa Rica's two international airports are hosts to 15 international carriers, representing 350 flights weekly into Juan Santamaria Int'l Airport (SJO) and 28 into Daniel Oduber International Airport (LIR). Why? Because during the past two years, Costa Rica has been chosen by numerous travel industry leaders and publications as the favored best destination for adventure, sports and honeymoons!

2. Outstanding Value and Selection

Costa Rica boasts an excellent selection of services and infrastructure; from 5-star resorts to unique boutique hotels, creative and experienced DMC's, the latest in deluxe transportation, multilingual tour guides, venues for theme events and fine dining. All this is available in a tropical setting for an outstanding value, because the Costa Rican economy is not wholly dependent upon tourism. Unlike other tropical destinations, Costa Rica grows and produces vegetables, fruits and meats, helping reduce the expenses of your program.

3. A Seasoned Destination

When choosing Costa Rica you are assured a destination that offers expertise in not only the planning, organizing and marketing but also the successful operation of your event, be it a small incentive or a meeting of the most demanding top executives. The reason is that the DMC's, hotels and tour operators have more than a decade of experience in executing world-class events.

Hundreds and hundreds of testimonials confirm this!

"Just a short note to tell you what a wonderful time our group had in Costa Rica. The staff were so terrific, the trip would not have been the same without them, they were always cheery, smiling and so helpful. They gave 200% to our group."

Cynthia Bullock
Mentor Corporation

"Thank you for everything you have done to make our Datex-Ohmeda program a wonderful success. It was a great privilege for me to work with you, and I hope I will be honored with another opportunity to be with you and bring another group to your beautiful country."

Lyne Parish
Creative Group

"I can't thank you and your staff enough for all of your hard work and long hours. I appreciate all of your time spent on the Kronos Program! You really went above and beyond."

Debbie Peña
Navigant Performance

4. So Many Choices...

As your destination, Costa Rica presents a wide selection of optional activities to choose. Select a natural experience hiking one of the numerous national parks, volcanoes or rainforests; float down the river on a raft or canoe or soak up the therapeutic effects of thermal hot springs. Should this sound like too much, then opt for the more leisurely and laid-back options of viewing the coffee making process; a visit to see the incredible variety of butterflies; teeing off at a world-class golf course; or simply basking in the energizing effects of the tropical sun. Top off a busy or relaxing day with a delicious tropical dinner under the bright stars to the sound of calypso music.

5. Tax Deductions for U.S. Organizations

Costa Rica enjoys a privileged status as a destination for meetings organized by U.S. companies. Under United States Internal Revenue Code section 274 (h) and IRS Revenue Ruling 94-56, Section 274 (h)(6), Costa Rica is considered within the "North American Area" for deductions of conventions, seminars, or similar meetings in Costa Rica and for individuals attending such meetings. All are entitled to the same deductions applicable to conventions held in North America. For more information consult your local IRS office or visit www.irs.gov/irb/2003-42_IRB/ar06.html#d0e152.

6. Confident and Secure

Because Ticos have a long legacy as a peaceful society (the oldest in Latin America), including social guarantees and a high literacy rate, you can feel confident that your guest will receive the care and hospitality they deserve. In addition, you are assured of internationally enforced safety measures, allowing you the security to indulge in any of the plentiful activities Costa Rica offers, be they adventures such as whitewater rafting or canopies through the treetops, or gentler activities such as a boat trip, bird-watching or hiking the abundant forests.





▼ Playa Mantas

Naturally Refresh and Renew

Come refresh and renew in this tropical paradise favored by Mother Nature. Costa Rica contains only 0.03% of the planet's surface, but its geographic position, its two coasts, and its three mountain ranges create numerous and varied microclimates. This natural wealth, both in terms of species and ecosystems, represents nearly 3% of the estimated biodiversity worldwide.



▲ Tapanti National Park



▲ Herradura Beach

For biodiversity, Costa Rica is one of the top 20 countries in the world, with greater biodiversity, greater than Europe and North America combined. The tropical climate and the different habitats, ranging from lowland rainforests and cloud forests to tropical lakes and rivers are the basis for the variety of life zones that exist in Costa Rica.

Experience the rainbow of nature that is Costa Rica, discover enchantment.



26 NATIONAL
PARKS

8 BIOLOGICAL
RESERVES

63 WILDLIFE
REFUGES

15 WETLANDS

31 PROTECTED
AREAS

SOURCE: SINAC-MINAE 2004

▲ Jacó, Central Pacific

Take pleasure in...

- Bird-watching
- Sea-turtle hatching sites
- Hiking trails
- And many other natural pleasures



Team Building



▲ Outriggers, Playa Agujas



**Together
Everyone
Achieves
More**



- GOLF
- BEACH GAMES
- SCAVENGER HUNTS
- RALLIES
- CULTURAL SHOWS
- COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- MUSEUM VISITS
- CRUISES
- COOKING LESSONS
- COFFEE TOURS
- ECOTOURISM
- JEEP SAFARIS

Conduct enjoyable employee incentives, customize reward travel programs, create exciting team-building activities and conceive unique events to celebrate the achievement of an important company milestone or to raise morale during challenging times. Costa Rica is just the place to provide this opportunity for participants to learn and have fun together while enjoying this extraordinary destination.

Bountiful Beaches & Sunshine



▼ Los Sueños Marina and Resort



The Costa Rican coastline has a length of more than 1,800 km with a never-ending variety of beaches for every possible taste. Rocky and stony beaches; sandy beaches in shades of white, gray, bluish-black, tan, and pink; sandy, palm-fringed beaches; beaches where the tide changes several meters each day; beaches with hotels and music; beaches with nightlife; and beaches with only palm trees, just waiting to be discovered.

- SAILING
- SCUBA DIVING
- SNORKELING
- JET SKIING
- WATER SKIING
- SURFING
- WINDSURFING
- PARASAILING
- CRUISES
- SEA KAYAKING
- OUTRIGGERS

Take pleasure in...

- Bird-watching
- Sea-turtle hatching sites
- Hiking trails
- And many other natural pleasures

▼ Playa Blanca

Convenience & Comfort



Although not new to providing first-class meetings, incentives or conventions, Costa Rica has become a fashionable, world-class destination for all seasoned travellers who expect first-rate and personalized service to satisfy the needs of demanding clients. Try Costa Rica for your next meeting!

You will find not only Costa Rican comfort in this tropical paradise, but also American efficiency and European charm. Relax in tastefully decorated, non-smoking rooms with king-size beds, twice-daily maid service, room service, pay-per-view movies, international TV, stereo, and direct internet connection.

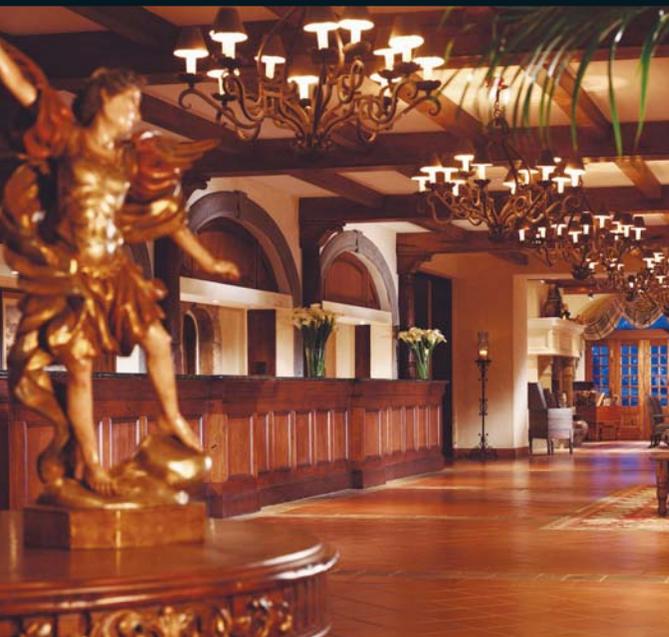
- FIVE-STAR HOTELS AND RESORTS
- UNIQUE BOUTIQUE HOTELS
- LODGES AT NATIONAL PARKS
- GOURMET DINING
- VIBRANT LATIN NIGHTLIFE
- TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS



★★★★★

International Standard Resorts

You will find everything you require for your meeting or seminar: function rooms, exhibit space, translation services, audio-visual equipment, event catering, business center and internet access.





▲ Rincón de la Vieja, Guanacaste



▲ Canopy zip lines, Central Pacific

Adventure is a proposition that involves situations, that cannot be predicted—the unknown. What one person considers adventure, another may not. Costa Rica belongs at the top of everyone's destination list, because here you find the best adventures and sports. Whichever adventure suits your definition, from dense rainforests, sparkling seashores and backcountry adventures to exploring the forest canopy, rappelling waterfalls, or sport fishing, all you have to do is choose.



▲ Hanging bridges, Monteverde

Chosen for Adventure

COSTA RICA RECOGNIZED AS A FAVORITE FOR TRAVELERS IN 2004

The prestigious "**Recommend**", one of the world's most widely read magazines for travel agents, once again recognized Costa Rica in its Eighth Annual Reader's Choice Awards (America), as the

"best destination for adventure and ecotourism in the world."

Travel Weekly magazine:
"Best destination in Central and South America."

Elmundoviajes.com:
"Best destination for adventure tourism and sports worldwide."

Pacific Business News:
"Best destination for adventure worldwide among high-level tourists."



▲ Pacuare River, Central Valley Region

- WHITE -WATER RAFTING
- DIVING
- DEEP-SEA FISHING
- CANOPY ZIP LINES
- RAPPELLING
- KAYAKING/CANOEING
- TUBING RIVER RAPIDS
- ATV ADVENTURES
- HORSEBACK RIDING
- BUNGEE JUMPING
- BIKING
- MOTORCYCLING
- HANGING BRIDGES

Tranquil and Soothing



Work and everyday life! When all these responsibilities leave you unmotivated, tired and jaded, find balance of mind, body and spirit, and forgotten pleasures in an oasis of beauty and tranquility – namely, Costa Rica. Come experience the mist as you hike in the cloud forest, listen to the bird songs on a stroll to the volcano crater, and smell the warm ocean breeze as it caresses your sun-warmed skin.



Freeing the body of tension as magical hands massage your body is one of countless, delightful sensations Costa Rica has in store for you.

Pamper your body and soothe your soul...



• Spas • Yoga centers • Meditation centers • Hot springs • Pristine beaches

- Body treatments: Herbal Body Wrap, Mud Body Mask, Salt Glo, Papaya Body Polish, Sea Mineral Detoxifying Body Mask or Coconut Body Scrub
- Massages: Hot Stone Massage, Zen Shiatsu, Deep Tissue Massage, Aromatherapy Massage, Swedish Massage, Traditional Massage, Reflexology
- Facials
- Manicures
- Pedicures

Greens for Golf



World-class championship and luxury golf courses

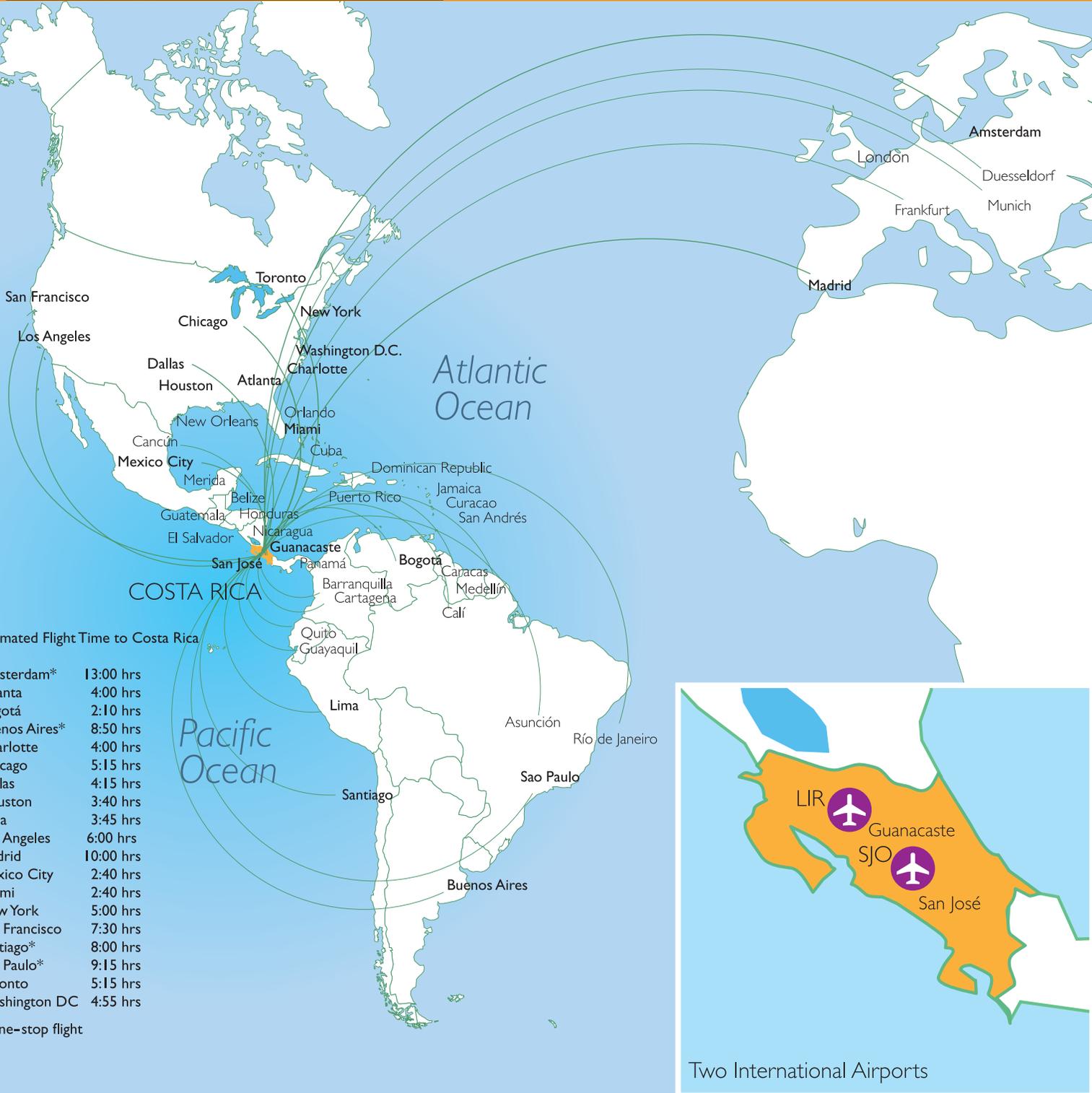
Cariari Country Club
Valle del Sol
Conchal
Pinilla
Los Sueños
Los Delfines
Four Seasons





Teeing off to the sounds of birds, the pounding surf, and rolling waves make golfing in Costa Rica a unique experience! Additionally, the near-perfect weather, crowd-free courses, secluded coastlines and luxurious golf resorts with outstanding courses designed by famous names such as George Fazio, Ron Garl, Tracy May, Greg Norman, Arnold Palmer, Ted Robinson Jr., Robert Trent-Jones II and Mike Young, have earned Costa Rica the reputation as a premier golfing destination.

AIR ACCESS



Two International Airports

Traveling to Costa Rica couldn't be better.

Major US, Canadian and international carriers such as American, Continental, Delta, United Airlines, US Airways, Air Canada, Grupo Taca and Mexicana offer daily flights from hub US and Canadian cities to the Juan Santamaría International Airport (SJO), classified among the best in the world by the International Association of Air Transport in its annual report of passengers surveys.

Other international carriers such as Iberia, Air Madrid and Martin Air service Europe with connections via Atlanta, Miami and New York, in addition to the latest direct flights from Madrid to Juan Santamaría Airport a number of days per week.

The Daniel Oduber International Airport (LIR) located in the northwest province of Guanacaste, just outside the provincial capital of Liberia, receives regular international flights serviced by American, Delta, Continental, Northwest and Air Canada with non-stop flights from Miami, Atlanta, Houston and Toronto. Additionally, the airport is conveniently near the beach resorts, which continually host mid-size and large groups.

Domestic carriers SANSa and NatureAir both service Liberia's international airport in addition to the smaller domestic airstrips; SANSa flies from Juan Santamaría International Airport and NatureAir from the Tobias Bolaños Airport in nearby Pavas.

Name: Republic of Costa Rica

Location: Located in the Central American isthmus, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean, between Nicaragua and Panama, only 10 degrees north of the equator.

Capital City: San José

Provinces: Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limón, Puntarenas, San José

Population: 4.1 million

Size: 51,000 km² (19,652 sq. miles)

Official Language: Spanish (English widely spoken)

CLIMATE

Temperatures are dictated more by elevation and location than by season. Ranging from tropical on the coastal plains to temperate in the interior highlands, the mean temperatures average 22°C (72°F) on the Central Valley, at sea level on

the Atlantic coast the average is 27°C (82°F) and on the Pacific lowlands 31.6 °C (89°F). Most regions have a green/rainy season (May-Nov) and a dry season (Dec-April).

GOVERNMENT

Democratic Republic
Elections: Every 4 years.
The political structure establishes three independent powers:
1. Executive: President and Ministers
2. Legislative: 57 elected Representatives
3. Judiciary: 22 justices are elected for eight-year terms by the Legislative Assembly
Army: Abolished in 1949

ECONOMY

In its 2004 World Investment Report, the UNCTAD classified Costa Rica in 3rd place in Latin America in the reception of FDI per capita.

Total labor force: 1.758 million
Economically active population: 42.3%
Unemployment rate 2003: 6.7%

MAIN EXPORTS

Tourism, electronic components, textiles, bananas, coffee, sugar, medical equipment, pineapples, ornamental plants & foliage, fish and seafood, processed foods.

STANDARD OF LIVING INDICATORS

Life expectancy: 78.1 years
Literacy rate: 95.6%
Education expenditures: 5% of GDP.
Education in Costa Rica is universal, and has been free and compulsory since 1870.
Youth literacy: 98.4%
Population served with piped water: 95%
Public health services coverage: 90.4% of population
Health expenditures: 27.8% of government budget
Access to telephone service: 92% of population

Due to these efforts, Costa Rica has achieved one of the highest Human Development Indexes among developing nations (0.834) and one of the highest literacy rates of the Americas (95.6%), with an expected number of years of schooling calculated at 10, according to World Bank's World Development Indicators 2004.

NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

More than 25.6% of the national territory is protected by the state in addition to 3% protected by private enterprises.

LEGAL HOLIDAYS

January 1: New Year's Day
April 11: Juan Santamaría Day (National Hero)
May 1: Labor Day
July 25: Guanacaste Annexation Day
August 15: Mother's Day
September 15: Independence Day
December 25: Christmas Day
Easter: Holy Thursday and Good Friday (Jueves y Viernes Santo)



Banquet Services, Theme Parties and Special Events



Delight and reward even the most demanding food connoisseur with unimaginable food combinations. New dishes sure to tease everyone's palate: crunchy heart-of-palm salad, creamy *pejibaye* (Peach Palm) mousse, or cassava meat pie all fuse perfectly together with Costa Rica's typical food, such as rice and beans and fried plantain.



▲ National Theater

If you're planning a formal sit-down dinner or a buffet, give your clients something to talk about with colors, textures and scents of the tropics – surprise them with fruit and vegetable decorations. The country's cheerful personality and culture can be felt during a poolside barbecue, making your event memorable.

Spice up any occasion with entertainment by Costa Rican folkloric dance troupes, a group of stilt-walking fantasy figures, or a typical marching band called a *cimarrona*. Costa Rica has graduated hundreds of artists in the performing arts, therefore, musical and theatrical presentations can easily be arranged. Also, you can choose from popular bands performing merengue, salsa, and pop music or jazz groups, big bands and even the National Symphonic Orchestra.



The country's riches provide plenty of inspiration for theme parties: volcanoes, coral reefs, and cloud forests can be applied in unimaginable ways to set the ideal mood for a wonderful event. History and culture present the pretext for a celebration, from the witchcraft of Escazú to the mysterious golden treasures buried by pirates in Coco's Island, and the culture and heritage of the Chorotega Indians.

Off-Site Venues

Specialty restaurants, theaters and sites of cultural and historical importance will turn your event into an occasion to remember. Envision a gala affair at the Children's Museum, location of a former penitentiary. Enjoy a private Costa Rican-style rodeo, dinner and folk dance performance in a traditional setting. Savor a tropical dinner cruise to a secluded island or a sunset dinner in an amphitheater.

Alternative settings can be found at a variety of locals: a butterfly farm, a colonial village, a coffee plantation, or a typical, old-fashioned Costa Rican restaurant. Both private and prestigious clubs, such as the Club Union and the Costa Rica Country Club are available, along with the National Museum, Gold Museum and the National Art Museum. Lecture halls and auditoriums of Costa Rican universities and meeting rooms of professional Costa Rican associations are also available for breakout sessions away from your hotel.



Dining Around

Dine al fresco or enjoy fine dining at a selection of restaurants set in the center of town, by a nearby mountain river, or in sophisticated suburbs, which offer local and international cuisine. Choose from a generous list of gourmet cuisines available: Italian, Spanish, German, Swiss, French, Thai, Mexican, Peruvian, Indian, Brazilian, Argentinean, Chinese, Greek, Japanese, and Caribbean. Ready for that perfect tropical drink? At the assortment of bars and lounges you will find wait staff, known for their service with friendly smiles, ready to serve it to you.

Giveaways



Pick gifts that range from the conventional to crafts and the consumable for your meeting or convention. The conventional include umbrellas or ponchos with the company logo for the rainforest trips, carry-alls made from the same natural fibers, and adventure kits that include a T-shirt, repellent, poncho, bandana and sunscreen.

Crafts are available in precious hardwoods, coffee roots, banana paper, gold, clay, enamelware and other materials. They include replicas of pre-Columbian art, indigenous pottery, boldly colored images of daily life painted on banana paper, jewelry, masks, woven wall hangings, or the most popular Costa Rican souvenir, the colorfully hand-painted oxcart.

For the consumable, local products make the perfect keepsake: fresh and world-renowned coffee, spirits and liquors made from sugar cane or coffee, and hand-made chocolates.

Communications and Technology

"Costa Rica is ranked 3rd in Latin America in the Technology Index for the quality of its environment for innovation, the capacity to receive international technology and export goods with technological content, and the degree of assimilation of new information and telecommunications technologies." (Global Competitiveness Report 2001).

"It is also among the 30 leading exporters of high-tech products," (Human Development Report, 2001).

Costa Rica has positioned itself as one of the most technologically advanced telecommunications systems in the Latin American region. This position is no coincidence, since Costa Rica's forward-looking policies in telecommunications have attracted major production investment from corporations such as Intel.

You can dial direct to anywhere in the world from Costa Rica. What's even better, for credit card and collect calls, an international code connects you with an operator in your country. For your convenience, you can call toll free from the United States and Canada to make the arrangements for your event, since many local companies now have 1-800 numbers. If you prefer the Internet, more and more companies have web pages. To keep in touch with your job when you're here, you can conduct research or access your own computer files from Costa Rica.

Costa Rica offers all the ingredients for a successful meeting. The majority of hotels offer the latest in audiovisual technology: sound systems, lighting and top-of-the-line projection, or even videoconference via satellite.



Transportation

Costa Rica offers a large fleet of late-model motor coaches, deluxe buses, microbuses and vans for any kind of traveling needs. To ensure a comfortable ride, all vehicles have air-conditioning, and the larger coaches are equipped with video monitors and washroom facilities. Most are owned and operated by transportation companies that rent them to local ground operators, although some DMCs have their own fleets (please see services descriptions for each company). You can be sure that in all cases,

experienced drivers take passengers to nearly every corner of the country on Costa Rica's more than 35,000 kilometers of road. VIPs can count on limousine service upon request.

Two domestic airlines and a number of charter services, including helicopters, service the country so visitors can make up for lost time and swiftly travel inside the country. This makes any itinerary possible, even if visitors are not staying for long, since these services offer sensible fares and there are airstrips in even the outmost part of the country.

▼ Juan Santamaria International Airport



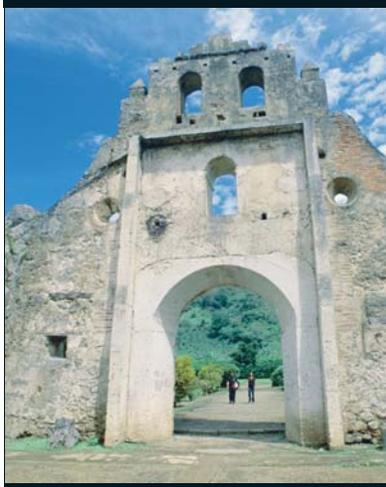
▼ Ginger flowers



▼ Orosi Church



▲ Gallo Pinto, Costa Rican typical breakfast



▲ Ujarrás Ruins



▲ National Museum



▲ Street Mascarade

OUR PRIDE AND JOY

THE COSTA RICAN LOVE FOR SOCIAL VALUES SUCH AS DEMOCRACY, FAMILY AND PATRIOTISM EXTENDS RIGHT DOWN TO CREATING A CULTURE FOR LOVING CULTURE. WHETHER IT BE MUSIC, ARTS OR POLITICAL ISSUES, COSTA RICANS TAKE PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE, AND STRIVE TO BE THE VERY BEST AROUND THE GLOBE.

CULTURE

Pura Vida is used by everyone on a daily basis. This expression conveys the state of happiness, greeting, appreciation, peace and the tranquility that political stability and freedom bring to Costa Ricans.



▲ San José, Central Avenue

ART

Sculptor Jiménez Deredia was born in 1954 in Costa Rica. He studied architecture in the University of Florence and currently resides and works in Carrara, Italy. His works of art have traveled the world through the most renowned museums and art galleries. His latest work is a statue of San Marcelino Champagnat, located in the outer facade of San Peter's Basilique in the Vatican City, designed by none other than the Renaissance genius, Miguel Ángel Buonarroti.



Editus

MUSIC

The national trio, **Editus**, pursues a musical concept where music knows no frontiers, yet it maintains the spice of Latin America. They won a Grammy Award for their performance with Rúben Blades on *Tiempos*, in 2000, and recently won another in 2003 for *Mundo*, another collaboration with Rúben Blades.

Manuel Obregón, well known in Central America for being the leading classical and jazz pianist of the region. Performing throughout the continent and in Spain, France, Switzerland and the United States.

The **National Symphonic Orchestra**, founded in 1940, offers the utmost classical music performance in Costa Rica and is considered one of the best in Latin America. It has played in numerous important concerts and tours around the globe, in Europe, North and South America.

Costa Rica expands its love of music down to its children too, implementing the Suzuki program since 1990. This method, created by violinist-pedagogue Sinichi Suzuki, is based on the easy and natural learning of the "Mother Tongue Method," and teaches Costa Rican children how to play the violin inducing total respect, appreciation and a whole new enthusiasm toward this art and its positive influences on culture.



Suzuki Program

POLITICS

Oscar Arias Sánchez, former president of the republic and Nobel Peace Prize, born in 1941. As president, his focus was to engage Nicaragua and the other Central American states in a peace-making process. In 1987, he succeeded submitting his own peace plan, which was approved in Guatemala on August 7. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987.

HONORABLE MENTION

Franklin Chang Diaz, born on April 5, 1950, is the first Costa Rican astronaut, and one of the most prominent astronauts and scientists in the world. A graduate of the University of Connecticut and M.I.T., He completed his PhD in 1977. On January 12, 1986, he flew aboard the Columbia spacecraft. A veteran of seven space flights, he has logged over 1,601 hours in space, including 19 hours and 31 minutes in three spacewalks. He works closely with other researchers in Costa Rican institutions such as Neotrópica and the EARTH University and Research Center.

UNESCO (The World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has named three protected areas as World Heritage: La Amistad National Park, Cocos Island National Park, and the Guanacaste Conservation Area, recently extended to Rincón de la Vieja National Park, Santa Rosa National Park, Guanacaste National Park and Junquillal Bay Wildlife Refuge.



Blue Flag Ecological Program:

Recognizing the growing pollution problem at Costa

Rica's beautiful beaches, a number of government institutions came together to do something about it. Spearheaded by the Costa Rican Tourism Institute and the National Water and Sewer Service, the Blue Flag Ecological Program addresses the issues of beach garbage, as well as minimizing negative impacts that can arise as a result of tourism.

The initiative is geared to all coastal communities, and provides incentives to keep beaches safe and clean. Currently, 50 beaches boast blue flags.



INBio

Considered a leader in the conservation of biodiversity, the National Biodiversity Institute is a non-profit organization that promotes awareness of the value of biodiversity, preservation and sustainability. The institution has received national and international recognition for its important mission.

The National Biodiversity Institute (INBio) was awarded the "Augusto González de Linares" environmental award from the University of Cantabria and the Ministry of Environment of the autonomous government.

"In a context of sustainable development, Costa Rica is ranked 9th out of 142 countries in the Environmental Sustainability Index." (World Economic Forum, 2002)

