

General Info About Costa Rica

- " Costa Rica = rich coast
- " 1502 - Columbus discovered people in CR
 - " landed in Puerto Viejo and stayed for 3 months
 - " amazed by riches and biodiversity
 - " landed on Isla Uvita (little grape island)
 - " indigenous name = Cariarí
 - " La Huerta = Columbus name
 - " 400-500,000 indians lived in CR
 - " now only 1% of pop. is indigenous (30,000)
- " located between the Atlantic and Pacific
- " lots of volcanic activity - Fire Belt
 - " that's what gives CR so many different ecosystems
 - " 12 of 16 ecosystems in CR
- " ecosystem = collection of species, how they interact with themselves and the world around them
- " north - Nicaragua
- " south - Panama
- " east - Caribbean
- " west - Pacific
- " 10° N from equator
- " sea level to 12,000 ft. above sea level
- " highest mtn. = Mt. Chirripo in Talamanca cordillera
- " economy
 - " base is agricultural
 - " 3 main crops
 1. Bananas from Asia
 2. Coffee from Kenya
 3. Sugar cane from New Guinea
 - " Bananas
 - " introduced in late 18th century
 - " from Asia originally
 - " Frayle Gomez de Verlanga sold them to US from Canary Islands
 - " Minor Cooper-Cate - built railroads, decided to grow bananas in CR and export to US
 - " United Fruit Company
 - " harvested all year round
 - " Coffee
 - " introduced in early 18th century from Cuba
 - " grows all over central valley
 - " needs volcanic soil, shade, 2400-4500 ft. above sea level
 - " must be handpicked
 - " gourmet coffee
 - " harvested Nov.-March (dry season)

- " export from Puerto Caldera (2nd main port)
- " main consumer = Germany
- " one of the main producers of coffee (2nd to Colombia)
- " arabica = most common species (100 varieties)
- " important drink in many people s lives - traditional for mestizos
- " Sugar Cane
 - " harvested Nov.-March
- " Population
 - " 4 million people
 - " 51,100 square km in 7 provinces
 - " 4 in Central Valley
 - " capital in San Jose, 36,000 ft above sea level
 - " 60% live in Central Valley
 - " Spanish = mother language
 - " most Roman Catholic
 - " mestizo country = Spaniards and indians
 - " 1% indians
 - " 25% land protected
 - " 15% primary forest (untouched by human hands)
 - " secondary forest = regenerating forest
 - " 1948 - abolished army, money goes to health care and education
 - " highest literacy rate in Latin America - 96%
 - " elections every 4 years
 - " every Tico 18 and above can vote
 - " National Liberation Party and Social Unity Christian Party
 - " federal system of government - democracy (executive, legislative, judicial)
 - " 100% kids go to elementary school (1-6th grade)
 - " 46% graduate high school (7-12th grade)
 - " 27% graduate college
 - " life expectancy = 76 years
 - " over 90% sanitary rate
 - " 12/1000 infant mortality rate in CR, 56/1000 in Panama
 - " 1949 - women can vote
 - " 1975 - conservation areas develop (National Park System)
 - " Costa Rican independence = Sept. 15, 1821
 - " has Coast Guard
 - " controls borders
 - " OIJ = FBI - runs everything
- " South Pacific and Caribbean = unpredictable weather
- " Dec.-April = dry season (verano - summer)
- " May - Nov. = rainy season (invierno - winter)
- " turdus grayi = clay-colored robin - national bird
- " cattleyas skinneri = guaria morada (purple orchid) - national flower
- " guanacaste tree = national tree (became on Aug. 3, 1954)