



INFOCARD ELANBiz Business Travel to Costa Rica

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ELANBiz is a Project funded by the EU and provides information free of charge.

This Infocard provides a business travel advice for EU companies travelling to Costa Rica

General Information

Geographic location:

The Republic of Costa Rica is located in Central America bordered by the north with Nicaragua, by the south by Panama, and enjoying the Pacific Ocean on the west coast and the Atlantic on the east coast.

The higher mountainous regions are in the center of the country while the lower ones, with more extended plains in the Caribbean area and the northern parts. On the Pacific side the slope is more abrupt, originating great amount of bays, capes, cliffs and coves.

Time:

UTC -6 hours

Language:

The official language is Spanish although English is used in business. According to the English Level Index (EF EPI, 2017), Costa Rica ranks 3rd in Latin America for English skills or proficiency.

Religions:

Catholicism is the official religion, while any type of worship is guaranteed. About 90% of the population is estimated to be Roman Catholic. The Afro-American population is located in the



Caribbean coast and tends to be protestant; there are a variety of other beliefs in San Jose, including a small Jewish community.

Climate:

Costa Rica has a diverse and varied climate, usually classified as a tropical country because of its proximity to Ecuador (11 ° latitude). Temperatures vary between 14 and 22 degrees Celsius regularly. While there are no defined seasons and the climate of each region in the country remains relatively stable throughout the year, slight changes are presented as "summer" (dry season from December to April) or "winter" (season rainy from May to November).

National holidays:

Date	Local denomination	Notes
January 1st	New Year	Fixed date, national holiday
Last week of March or first week of April (date varies)	Monday, March 26, 2018	Public sector only
	Tuesday, March 27, 2018	Public sector only
	Wednesday, March 28, 2018	Public sector only
	Holy Thursday, March 29, 2018	
	Good Friday, March 30, 2018	Friday before Easter Sunday
	Easter Sunday, April 1 st , 2018	
April 11th	Juan Santamaria Day	Fixed date, national holiday
May 1st	Labor Day	Fixed date, national holiday
July 25 th	Annexation of Nicoya to Costa	Workable holiday
August 2 nd	Our Lady of Los Angeles	Workable holiday
August 15 th	Mother's Day	Fixed date, national holiday
September 15 th	Independence Day	Fixed date, national holiday
October 12 th	Columbus Day	Fixed date, national holiday
December 25 th	Christmas	Fixed date, national holiday

Business hours:

Costa Rica shares time zone with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the United States Central Time. Schedules for the main entities and public entities are 8:00 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

Businesses generally open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday.



Public banks from 9:00am – 3:00pm and private banks from 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. Some banks work extended hours until 9:00 pm and some malls open on Saturday and Sunday.

Mainstream media:

Television

Channels 6: <http://www.repretel.com/>

Channels 7: <http://www.teletica.com/>

Printed media

La Gaceta Oficial: <http://www.imprenal.go.cr/>

Al Día: <http://www.aldia.co.cr/>

Diario Extra: <http://www.diarioextra.com/>

El Financiero: <http://www.elfinancierocr.com/>

La Nación: <http://www.nacion.com/>

La Prensa Libre: <http://www.prensalibre.co.cr/>

La República: <http://www.larepublica.net/>

Other

Radio Monumental: <http://www.monumental.co.cr/>

The Tico Times: <http://www.ticotimes.net/>

Before travelling

Vacations:

The business holiday period is usually related to school calendar, which regularly have holidays during July and December. It is advised to avoid business in December mainly by low labor activity.

For information regarding salary payment for employee vacation refer to the Labor Code that is broken down clearly at <http://www.tusalarario.org/>



Visa Requirements:

For entry into the country, European citizens require a valid passport for at least 6 months after arrival to Costa Rica. The maximum authorized stay without a visa is for 90 days. If entering via the United States, local regulations should be taken into account. The main requirements to enter Costa Rica are:

- Valid Passport for 6 months after entry
- Inbound and outbound ticket
- No European country requires visa for entry into Costa Rica except Russia.

There are several exceptions for passports from other countries, therefore it is advisable to check the official website of migration <http://www.migracion.go.cr/extranjeros/visas.html>

Entry of commercial samples:

According to Article 120 of the Customs Act, samples without commercial value must be visibly marked no erasable with the words "sample without commercial value" and clearly state so in the shipping documents and invoice in order for it not to be taxed. However commercial samples are subject to inspection and approval by the relevant entity. Consulting a customs organism previous to shipping is advised to avoid delays in customs.

Communications:

Competition in the mobile market has led to greater availability and smartphone usage in Costa Rica, generating increased market dynamism for use of applications. Cultural and technological level of Costa Rica allows greater use of APPS. Leadership of Costa Rica within Central America regarding the ICT industry is notorious. The mobile phone companies are Kolbi, Claro, Movistar.

Exchange and payment:

It is common to use data phones for credit card transactions, but not all stores have pin system. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) accept all international cards. Commercial transactions use upfront payment, credit, letter of credit and bank guarantee. The local currency, Colones, is usually used in local business transactions for real estate and vehicles; the US dollar is the most accepted form for international business.



Hotels and lodging:

Hotel accommodations must be booked well in advance. The website of the Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (Costa Rican Institute of Tourism) lists all [certified hotels](#), that have been approved by this public regulatory institution.

Safety and Security:

Tap water is safe to drink in most of the national territory. Bottled water is recommended, especially in coastal areas.

Costa Rica is relatively a safe country. However, Costa Rica has also experienced an increase in the number of assaults and robberies in recent years, so it is recommended to take safety precautions, leaving jewelry at home, using the hotel safe, not leaving valuables at sight in the vehicle or carry them in sight and in the cities, mobilize only by taxi at night.

Internet:

Costa Rica has extensive Internet coverage except in very remote areas. Almost all hotels offer this service either through a central computer or wireless connection. In most towns there are Internet Cafes.

Business lunches:

It is advisable to choose a place where you can talk without interference from loud music that several restaurants usually have. Reservations are recommended. The regular schedule for a Costa Rican lunch is from 12 to 1pm.

Tipping:

By law, tips are included in the restaurant bill, it is set at 10% expense.

Electricity:

Electrical voltage is 110v. Only exceptionally 220V is used for specific lines used for clothes dryers and electric ranges.



Telephone and country code:

The country code is 506. There is no local encoding system for communicating to any place in the country, even for dialing a mobile phone.

Business protocol

- Business trips should be avoided the last week of September that is when the financial year ends and many businesses close for tax returns. December is a month with very little work activity.
- Negotiators must be sensitive, reliable and persistent (Costa Ricans need to be persuaded, however, you but not pressed)
- Costa Rican business executives place great importance on personal contact with their foreign suppliers. Development of long-term relationships. Relationships may be more important than price of the product. Expect to socialize as part of business.
- Business negotiations proceed much more slowly than in northern cultures. Sometimes Costa Ricans prefer a more indirect and political approach to business as opposed to direct business tactics. Impatience is widely viewed as a weakness and can sometimes lower one's credibility. Talking about family is viewed positively and becoming "friends" might be as a result, good for business.
- Business cards should be presented clearly specifying the position held within the company.
- All appointments, including dining, must be arranged in advance, and should be reconfirmed on the previous day since the culture is quite informal in the sense that often people forget their commitments and excuse themselves saying they have more important issues that have come up or that they have to leave town. In the best case, meetings are delegated to someone else, but most of the times it does not happen.

Practical advice

- It is important to learn about the cultural, historical and geographical aspects of the country. Costa Ricans refer to themselves as "Ticos".
- The family and football are good topics of conversation. Preferably should not touch matters of religion, abortion and personal affairs.
- The Costa Rican nature is friendly and dislikes confrontation. The word "no" is avoided, saying instead "maybe" or other evasive forms.



- Ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer as people may give the answer they believe you would like in order to be friendly and maintain harmony.
- Honesty, humility and formality are highly respected.
- The handshake is the most common form of greeting. Usually Don and Doña are used as courtesies for gentleman and lady. The basic rules of politeness and courtesy are observed.
- The use of casual wear is widely accepted, but if you go out at night or a special celebration formal dress is accepted.

Useful telephone numbers and links

- European Union Delegation in Costa Rica: tel. (506) 2283-2959
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/costa-rica_en
- Emergency: tel. 911, <http://www.911.go.cr/>
- Police: tel. 911, <http://www.fuerzapublica.go.cr/telefonos/>
- Airport Taxi: www.taxiaeropuerto.com/
- Taxi in San Jose: www.taxialfaro.com/
- Public telephone company: ICE, www.grupoice.com
- Public utilities company: CNFL, <https://www.cnfl.go.cr/>
- Public water company: AyA, <https://www.aya.go.cr>
- Social security system and insurance company:
CCSS and INS
- Private companies for car rental:
National, Budget, Avis, Dollar, Alamo, Thrifties, TicoCar.

Relevant links

Cultural aspects of business in Costa Rica:

- <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Costa-Rica-business-customs>
- <https://www.iorworld.com/costa-rica-pages-787.php>



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