



REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

Although explored by the Spanish early in the 16th century, initial attempts at colonizing Costa Rica proved unsuccessful due to a combination of factors, including disease from mosquito-infested swamps, brutal heat, resistance by natives, and pirate raids. It was not until 1563 that a permanent settlement of Cartago was established in the cooler, fertile central highlands. The area remained a colony for some two and a half centuries. In 1821, Costa Rica became one of several Central American provinces that jointly declared their independence from Spain. Two years later it joined the United Provinces of Central America, but this federation disintegrated in 1838, at which time Costa Rica proclaimed its sovereignty and independence. Since the late 19th century, only two brief periods of violence have marred the country's democratic development. In 1949, Costa Rica dissolved its armed forces. Although it still maintains a large agricultural sector, Costa Rica has expanded its economy to include strong technology and tourism industries. The standard of living is relatively high. Land ownership is widespread.

Physical Geography

Official name: Republica de Costa Rica

Region: Central America

Size in Square Kilometers: 51,100 sq km

Bordering Countries: Nicaragua, Panama

Physical Features: The nation's terrain is a coastal plain separated by rugged mountains, the Cordillera Central and the Cordillera de Talamanca, which form the spine of the country and separate the Pacific and Caribbean watersheds. Costa Rica claims an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles (370.4 km; 230.2 mi) and a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles (22.2 km; 13.8 mi).

Climate: tropical and subtropical; dry season (December to April); rainy season (May to November); cooler in highlands

Cultural Geography

Population : 11,323,973 (July 2015 est.)

Ethnic groups: white or mestizo 83.6%, mulato 6.7%, indigenous 2.4%, black of African descent 1.1%, other 1.1%, none 2.9%, unspecified 2.2%

Official language: Spanish

Other Languages Spoken: English

Capital: San José

Other Major cities: Puerto Limón, San Francisco, Alajuela, Puntarena

Quality of life : Above average

Political Geography

Founded: 15 September 1821

Type of government : presidential republic

Country's leaders:

President: Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera

First Vice President: Helio Fallas Venega

Country's military: without armed forces

Allies: China, Cuba, Russia, India, Israel, USA, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Korea, Spain.

Enemies: Nicaragua

Economic Geography

Gross domestic product (GDP): \$52.9 billion (2015 est.)

Natural resources: bananas, pineapples, coffee beans, melons, corn, rice, beans, potatoes; dairy; timber

Currency: Costa Rican colón

Major Exports and Imports:

Exports: bananas, pineapples, coffee, melons, ornamental plants, sugar; seafood; electronic components, medical equipment

Imports: raw materials, consumer goods, capital equipment, petroleum, construction materials

Biggest trading partners:

Export partners: US 33.6%, China 6.2%, Mexico 4.6%, Nicaragua 4.3%, Netherlands 4.2%, Guatemala 4% (2015)

Import partners: US 45.3%, China 9.8%, Mexico 7.1% (2015)
