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A LONDON FOOD & TRAVEL BLOG

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## COSTA RICA TRAVEL GUIDE: TOP 10 THINGS TO DO ON THE CARIBBEAN COAST

Costa Rica is a Central American gem which stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea. It's a destination for everyone from nature lovers, adventurers, foodies to beach bums. The nature ranges from beaches, jungles to volcanoes. Costa Rica accounts for only 0.03 percent of the earth's surface yet it contains nearly 6 percent of the world's biodiversity.

On our recent trip to Costa Rica we explored the beautiful Caribbean Coast and it was hard to narrow down a list but here are my top 10 things to do on the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica.

### *1 – Eat all the food*

Activity number one is eating of course, this goes without saying. Two key ingredients come to mind when thinking of Costa Rican cuisine, rice and beans (Gallo Pinto), which is very much inspired by Caribbean cuisine. Gallo Pinto is traditionally served with breakfast alongside fried or scrambled eggs.

Another dish to try is Casado, a Costa Rican meal which contains rice, black beans, plantains, salad, a tortilla, and an optional side such as chicken, beef, pork or fish. (*Recommended restaurant for Casado in Sarapiquí – Rusti Ticos, 100 Oeste de la Policia de Transito, Heredia 41001 Costa Rica*).

Make sure you add Lizano sauce to your rice and beans, it's the Costa Rican version of HP sauce but more delicious.

The further you move towards Limon and Puerto Viejo you'll find delicious fish dishes from the coast. (*Recommended fish restaurants: Coral Reef Restaurant, Cahuita & Red snapper, Puerto lemon*)

Lastly, let's not forget the range of fresh and exciting ingredients and fruits that grow in Costa Rica's tropical climate. My favourite fruit that I tried is called Cas, a type of sour Guava found mostly in Costa Rica. Believe me it's delicious!





## ***2 – Explore Nature & Wildlife***

Costa Rica offers one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world with volcanoes, lush rainforests, beaches, and unique wildlife. If you look closely you'll spot birds and wildlife on top of trees, hiding behind bushes and along riversides. Costa Rica has an estimated number of 901 bird species alone which is more than the total amount of birds found in North America.

It can be quite difficult to spot these on your own as they are excellent at hiding but locals know where to find them. As such there are many tours that will help you spot wildlife and birds.



### ***3 – Visit Tortuguero National Park***

Tortuguero is a national park which can only be visited by air and boat. The name comes from Tortuga, which means turtle in Spanish, because its beaches are famous nesting grounds for sea turtles. July and August are the most popular months for the turtle season. However there are plenty of things to do on this stunning national park on any other month.

Tortuguero is not a beach destination but more an eco-travel paradise. Discover the colourful town centre, breathtaking canals, lagoons and trek through the rainforests.











*Where to stay in*

*Tortuguero*

Mawamba Lodge – Mawamba is a lodge located alongside the canal that stretches across Tortuguero. The rooms are comfortable, each equipped with a little outdoor terrace and hammock. The grounds are stunning with plenty of greenery. Lastly Mawamba offers great wildlife tours along the canal which takes me to my next point.



*& Canal Tour*

*4 – Go on a Kayaking*

One afternoon we departed from Mawamba Lodge and went on a 2 hour boat tour which was one of the most break taking experiences I've ever had. The calm waters, perfect reflections and lush greenery were unreal. Alongside the river you can spot monkeys, caimans, crocodiles, toucans, sloths and other exotic animals. You can also explore the river by kayak or canoe. which is highly recommended.



*Rafting in Sarapiquí*

Sarapiquí is known for its amazing and rich biodiversity but is also a great destination for adrenaline junkies and a prime spot for white water rafting.

I was quite scared of going white water rafting but quickly got over my fear once I noticed that the guides know the river inside and out. It ended up being a great experience with *Aventuras del Sarapiquí*. Our class 3 rafting experience is suitable for first timers and families.





***Where to stay in Sarapiquí – La Quinta Lodge***

There's something so soothing about falling asleep and waking up to the sound of the river right outside of your window. La Quinta is set on 4 hectares of forest and tropical gardens and offers the perfect relaxing place to stay whilst exploring Sarapiquí.



***6 – Walk the longest suspension bridge in Tirimbina***

Tirimbina is a non profit organisation which protects 345 hectares of tropical forest. The rainforest has more than 9km of trails and is home to the longest suspension bridge in Costa Rica, 262m long and 22 meters high. This shaky walk is a challenge if you're scared of heights but so thrilling and well worth it for the rush of adrenaline!







*and Puerto Viejo*

As soon as you reach the East Coast of Costa Rica you can see all the Caribbean influences. Puerto Limon is the capital city and main hub of the Limón province, home of the largest Afro-Caribbean community in Costa Rica. Puerto Limon is a great cultural experience with so many markets, cafes and friendly locals. Puerto Viejo is a colourful town south of Puerto Limon. It's vibrant, lively and also known for being a surfers paradise.





***8 – Visit the Sloth Sanctuary of Costa Rica near Cahuita***

Sloths are such sweet animals your heart is guaranteed to melt. I had the pleasure of seeing a sloth up close for the first time at this sanctuary.

The Sloth Sanctuary of Costa Rica is a privately-owned rescue centre dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, research and release of injured or orphaned sloths. The sanctuary are doing amazing things for the community and all sloths are treated with such care.

Say hello to Buttercup, 27, the oldest ever recorded female sloth!





### ***9 – Hang out with the locals***

Costa Ricans have a motto – Pura Vida. Pura Vida means pure life. It represents a relaxed and positive attitude towards life and it translates into your daily encounters with the locals. Whether you join the locals to learn more about the environment, agriculture, wildlife or cooking, they're so welcoming and are more than happy to share their experiences.

The Caribbean side of Costa Rica is also home to the BriBri, the largest indigenous group in Costa Rica. We got to join their community for an afternoon and peek into the life of the indigenous people of Costa Rica and again, we were so welcomed.









### ***10 – Go Snorkeling in Cahuita***

Cahuita National Park is one of the most visited in Costa Rica. The national park offers plenty of activities such as hiking,

scuba diving, canoeing and lastly snorkelling. The snorkelling was beautiful, enjoyable and calm. Cahuita is also filled with stunning black sand beaches to enjoy.

I was stunned by Costa Rica and feel truly lucky to have visited. Thank you to the [Tourism Board of Costa Rica](#) for showing us around your beautiful country. This article is a collaboration with the Tourism Board but all opinions remain my own as always.



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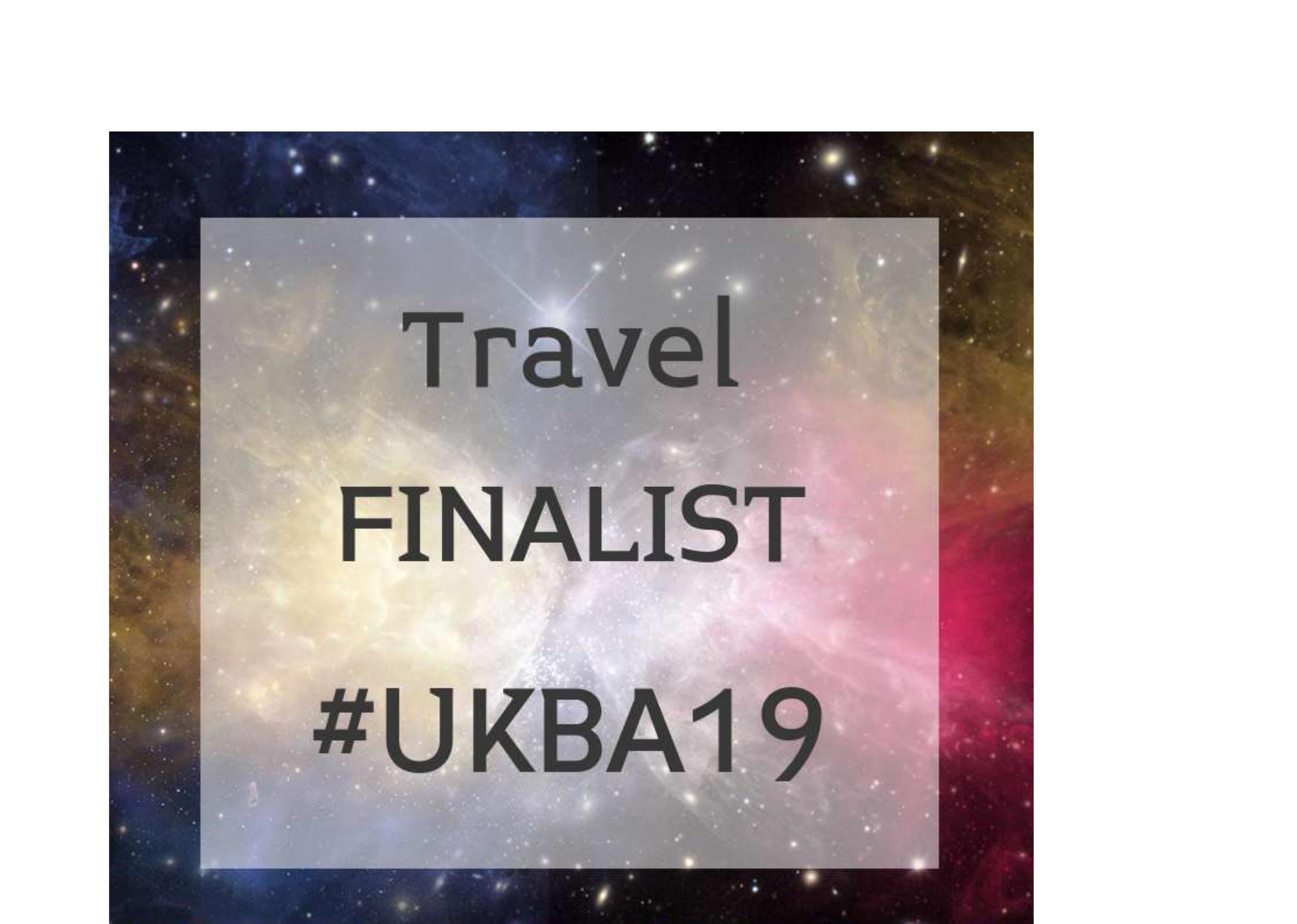
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