



Tourist and Cultural Guide of SOUTH GUANACASTE

Lowlands (Bajura)



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Roberto Ramos

10 things every tourist should see and do in South Guanacaste (Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha & Nandayure)

1

Taste corn-based dishes



Photo: Ministry of Culture

2

Visit the Saint Blas catholic temple in Nicoya



ICT

3

Attend a traditional riding of bulls



Photo: Ministry of Culture

4

Enjoy the sea and the sunsets



Photo: Trevor Bernard

5

Birdwatching in Palo Verde National Park



Photo: Laurens Alvarado

6

Live the experience of rural tourism



Photo: Roberto Ramos

7

Acquire handicrafts from La Choreja, Guatil and Saint Vincent



Photo: Roberto Ramos

8

Practice surf in Tamarindo



ICT

ICT - Camaronal

9

Take part in a dance with "marimba"



ICT

10

Watch the "arribada" of sea turtles in Ostional WR, Las Baulas NP & Camaronal



Guanacaste is a province located in the far northwest of Costa Rica. One of its main characteristics is that, despite being the second-largest region of Costa Rica, it is the least populated. Only 326,953 people live in its extensive area of 10,140 km². The warmth of its people, magical forests, natural parks, picturesque beaches and a cultural richness worth experiencing await you there.

Geographically, Guanacaste can be divided into two parts. The northern and southern cantons, also known as the highlands and the lowlands, **La Altura y La Bajura**.

The Highlands (La Altura)

This area is traditionally associated with the cantons located along the Cordillera de Guanacaste and the Sierra Minera de Tilarán: La Cruz, Liberia, Bagaces, Cañas, Tilarán, Abangares.

The Lowlands (La Bajura)

This region is comprised of the cantons located in the Nicoya Peninsula: Carrillo, Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha, Nandayure.

This Cultural and Tourism Guide includes the cantons of **Carrillo, Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha and Nandayure**.

The origins of the province go back to the indigenous people, who associated the land with its majestic elephant-ear trees, known more commonly as guanacaste trees. The name of the land thus comes from the tree that the indigenous peoples called Ka-Nacatzlán: its dense, fan-like foliage, the rounded shape of its canopy, and bearing dark, dry seed pods that look like ears – which is why common names for the species include monkey-ear tree and the elephant-ear tree.

The species, also called *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, remains a common sight in the province, where it is one of the most precious symbols of the locals.

Manifestations of popular culture abound in the region, with traditions that mix indigenous and Spanish cultures, as well as an incredibly diverse mosaic of ecosystems that are well worth exploring. The Chorotega region offers a wide variety of natural environments, with common sights including primary forests, waterfalls, volcanoes, beaches, rivers and exuberant flora and fauna.

Places of cultural interest

The cultural activities and expressions of the region are particular to Guanacaste, including the lowlands or bajura. These include the symbolism of the cowboy of the savannahs, the sabanero, with traditions such as bull riding. The sabanero is also a key figure of activities around the Cristo Negro de Esquipulas in Santa Cruz and the celebration of the Virgin of Guadalupe accompanied by the well-known Dance of the Yegüita, in Nicoya, a mixture of indigenous and Catholic traditions.

Guanacaste Sur is known for its music, with local traditions including the marimba, guitar, quijongo and folk dances. Its customs include special prayers, the "Guanacaste shout", festivals, processions, semi-improvised poems such as bombas and retahílas. Local crafts include a pottery tradition that is over 5000 years old, as well as contemporary crafts and masquerades. The community of Guaitil is famous for its artisans, who meticulously work with ceramics that give a new life to the pre-Columbian motifs of the Chorotega people.

These workers have become true virtuosos of their craft, with pieces that have become highly valued.





Likewise, the indigenous Matambú people are the only representatives of the Chorotega ethnic group in the country. Founded in 1980, the district of Matambú of the canton of Hojancha is located within this indigenous territory. There are tours that offer visitors an experience that mixes adventure, cuisine and handicrafts.

Guanacaste cuisine features corn as a main ingredient, used in tortillas, doughnuts, tanelas, chicheme, and much more. Modern, versatile seafood options play a central role in the culinary offerings, which include local and international dishes. The chefs of the region take advantage of the fresh ingredients available to create different, exquisite dishes. The local food scene has become international in its search for sensations and flavors.

Some of the most nutritious and exquisite foods that nature has to offer are obtained from the sea. Its diversity lends itself generously to the kitchen, where the most incredible, fine and delicious dishes are crafted. A single product can take countless forms by the time it reaches the table: appetizers, ceviches, cocktails and soups, as well as in main dishes such as fried fish, salads, and rice dishes with fish or shellfish.

The most important economic activities are cattle raising, artisanal fishing, and agriculture, including sugar cane cultivation and the use of the trapiche, or sugar mill. Corn, beans, coffee and rice are also grown.

The traditional towns of the region can be discovered in their sodas, small family restaurants or cafés where you can taste the cuisine of Guanacaste. Among all of its communities, Nicoya stands out for its traditional food and beverages.

Guanacaste architecture

Guanacaste architecture reflects the passage of time and presents a truly unique style and aesthetic throughout the province.

Some buildings have been converted into museums due to their historical value, with contents that evoke the remote or recent past, leaving observers with a curious sensation of nostalgia.

The city of Santa Cruz was declared a folkloric city of Costa Rica, precisely because of its strong roots in its local traditions. The city is famous for its colorful parties, delicious food and the rhythm of its folk music.

The canton of Nicoya, meanwhile, is recognized as an eminently historical center, with testimonies to the past including the country's oldest standing Catholic church.



The warm waters of Guanacaste

La costa de Guanacaste Sur es mundialmente conocida por su belleza. The southern coast of Guanacaste is known around the world for its scenic beauty and for top-notch services that cater to even the most demanding tastes of tourists from Costa Rica and abroad.

Along the coastline of Guanacaste, there are numerous beaches bathed in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean. The coastal scenery is exceptional. There are extensive white sand beaches, a calm sea with intense blues and a shore dappled with the shade of the widespread coconut palms.

Many of these beaches are part of protected areas because of the richness of their flora and fauna.

These beaches are located in the extreme south of the province of Guanacaste, in the cantons of Carrillo, Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha and Nandayure, with top choices including Playa Panama, Hermosa, del Coco, Ocotol, Pan de Azúcar, Potrero, Flamingo, Brasilito, Conchal, Grande, Tamarindo, Avellanas, Junquillal, Nosara, Garza, Guiones, Sámara, Carrillo, Islita, Corozalito, Bejuco and Coyote.

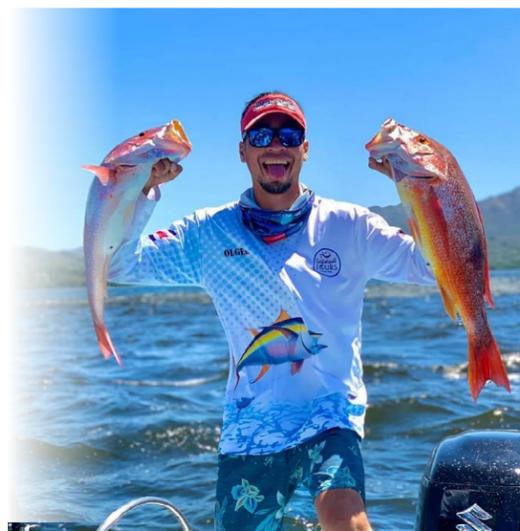
The diverse environments of these tropical paradises refresh the imagination of visitors who can choose between practicing beach sports such as surfing, jet skiing, sea canoeing or endless horseback riding.

The rivers of Guanacaste also offer ideal conditions for tourism, with abundant fishing and riverbeds that make it a breeze to traverse their bends and deltas that should be on every tourist's list.

The Tempisque is one of the most important rivers that Guanacaste has in the North Pacific region, running over 144 km and collecting all the waters that originate in the slope of the Gulf of Nicoya, into which it finally flows.

Protected areas

Other protected areas are also located in the area, such as Palo Verde National Park in the Tempisque lowlands, which is one of the most ecologically diverse places in its home canton of Bagaces; in terms of its bird fauna, it is nearly unparalleled in Costa Rica. The Las Baulas Marine National Park is



Parque Marino Las Baulas



situated nearby, one of the most important nesting sites in the world for leatherback sea turtles. The leatherback is the largest known species of sea turtle. With its deep blue shell, it can measure up to 2 meters in length and can weigh up to 700 kg. Barra Honda National Park is the most prominent protected area of Nicoya, with a famous complex of caverns. In truth, the entire park is an inexhaustible source of natural wealth, offering sublime moments to contemplate the area's scenic beauty.

Barra Honda



Diriá National Park is located in Santa Cruz, playing a key role in protecting the region's watersheds and around 1,500 ha of forest. Evergreen species predominate at altitudes of over 700 m, with plentiful mosses and giant bromelias.

Other important protected areas include the Lomas Barbudal Biological Reserve, where 130 species of birds have been identified, and Ostional National Wildlife Refuge to the north of Punta Guiones in the canton of Carrillo, no less incredible in terms of its wealth of natural beauty.

Ostional is particularly important because of its protection of marine species and aquatic birds. The flora consists of the trees of the tropical rainforest, with estuaries and mangroves in the southern part, especially those separating the beaches of Islita, Bejuco, San Miguel, Coyote and Guiones. Mangrove conservation has left the ecosystem in excellent shape, making it an ideal place to spot birds and other animals, as well as for leisurely sports like kayaking.

Camaronal National Wildlife Refuge is a wide and open beach, about three kilometers long and has moderate to strong waves. Towards its southern end is the mouth of the Río Ora, which can be crossed by wading carefully. The sector on the other side provides access to other beaches to the south (Islita, Bejuco, San Miguel) and north (Carrillo, Samara). Camaronal is known as a nesting site for leatherback and olive ridley turtles. The wildlife refuge here protects the sea turtles. The park is also suitable for camping and fishing.

Diriá
Photo: Roberto Ramos



Services and infrastructure

The attractions on offer here are diverse, with hotels boasting 2 to 5 stars, and numerous small and medium businesses with a commitment to quality, which offer lodging and thematic activities, restaurants and tour guides, travel agencies and transportation by land or water. It is said that southern Guanacaste has it all, drawing tourists from all over to visit the province and experience its attractions and activities.

Its efficient public transportation network and ferry terminals at Paquera and Playa Naranjo make it easy to travel around the region. Likewise, the bridge over the Río Tempisque makes it possible to get to the entire central and southern part of the peninsula quickly and conveniently.

It also has a series of airfields (Tamarindo, Carrillo, Islita) that allow quick and safe access to the main tourist destinations in southern Guanacaste.

Guanacaste Sur is one of the most developed regions, with quality tourism services. Tourists from Costa Rica and abroad are invited to relax, forget the stress and enjoy the sun and the beach. Experience the land of boyeros, sabaneros and bull riders. Savor food prepared in a wood stove, a clay oven. Guanacaste and its people await you with pleasure.



South Guanacaste Map • Costa Rica

Cultural heritage

-  **Crafts** [Leer más](#)
The traditional crafts found in the area include the Chorotega ceramics of Guaitil and San Vicente de Nicoya, which are made with pure clay using traditional techniques of the Chorotega indigenous group that have been passed down through the generations.
-  **Traditional bullriding** [Leer más](#)
Bullriding is an activity that is part of an important festive ritual in Santa Cruz traditions. Plaza Los Mangos, Santa Cruz. Between November and July.
-  **Museo de San Vicente** [Leer más](#)
The Ecomuseum of Chorotega Ceramics of Nicoya launched its permanent exhibition in 2017 with the aim of preserving the history, design and preparation of this form of pottery.
-  **Marimba** [Leer más](#)
Guanacaste is considered to be the home of marimba in Costa Rica. The instrument is a fixture at all public events, celebrations, bullriding spectacles and festivals.
-  **Breeding and herding Santa Cruz cattle** [Leer más](#)
The trade includes various professions that harken back to hacienda life in old Guanacaste, including the sabanero cowboys, boyero ox-cart drivers, horse riders or montadores, bull trainers and vaqueros.
-  **Mascaradas** [Leer más](#)
These masquerade groups, also known as "the clowns," can frequently be seen living up festivities in the canton.
-  **Cimarronas** [Leer más](#)
These colorful musicians, known as "dog scarers" often accompany the mascarada groups in popular festivities.
-  **Trapiche** [Leer más](#)
Several sugar mills, called trapiches, can be found in the region. Raw sugar known as panela or tapa de dulce is made from the sugarcane they process.
-  **Folk dances** [Leer más](#)
Folk dances make use of traditional music, clothing and choreography in order to represent historic events and the historical relationships between men and women.
-  **Popular dances** [Leer más](#)
The dance halls of the communities host dances to popular music, alternating between salsa, merengue, cumbia, swing criollo and more.
-  **Quijongo** [Leer más](#)
Music played using an instrument of the same name, made from the wood of the guácimo tree along with a jicara gourd and string to produce the instrument's characteristic twang.

Ingresar a los siguientes enlaces y podrás encontrar información sobre empresas de la zona registradas por 

-  [Lodging](#)
-  [Car rental](#)
-  [Restaurants](#)
-  [Travel agencies](#)
-  [Directory of certified tourist guides](#)
-  [Traveler tips](#)
-  [Buses Itinerary](#)
- 
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[Para conocer más sobre servicios turísticos ingrese aquí](#)



South Guanacaste Beaches

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Playa Panamá | 51 | Playa Vuelta del Sur |
| 2 | Playa Buena | 52 | Playa Camaronal |
| 3 | Playa Hermosa | 53 | Playa Islita |
| 4 | Playa Pedregosa | 54 | Playa Corozalito |
| 5 | Playa Calzón de Pobre | 55 | Playa Bejuco |
| 6 | Playa Penca | 56 | Playa San Miguel |
| 7 | Playas del Coco | 57 | Playa Coyote |
| 8 | Playa Ocotral | 58 | Playa Caletas |
| 9 | Playa Matapalo | 59 | Playa Pencal |
| 10 | Playa Matapalito | 60 | Playa Ario |
| 11 | Playa Guacamaya | | |
| 12 | Playa Grande | | |
| 13 | Playa Guachipelin | | |
| 14 | Playa Danta | | |
| 15 | Playa Pan de Azúcar | | |
| 16 | Playa Prieta | | |
| 17 | Playa Penca | | |
| 18 | Playa Potrero | | |
| 19 | Playa Blanca (Fleming) | | |
| 20 | Playa Brasilito | | |
| 21 | Playa Conchal | | |
| 22 | Playa Zapotillal | | |
| 23 | Playa Nombre de Jesús | | |
| 24 | Playas Real y Roble | | |
| 25 | Playa Ventanas | | |
| 26 | Playa Grande | | |
| 27 | Playa Tamarindo | | |
| 28 | Playa Langosta | | |
| 29 | Playa Mansita | | |
| 30 | Playa Avellanas | | |
| 31 | Playa Negra | | |
| 32 | Playa Junquillal | | |
| 33 | Playa Surco de Piedra | | |
| 34 | Playa Socorro | | |
| 35 | Playa Manzanillo | | |
| 36 | Playa Honda | | |
| 37 | Playa Cóncevas | | |
| 38 | Playa Pitahaya | | |
| 39 | Playa Azul | | |
| 40 | San Juanillo | | |
| 41 | Playa Ostional | | |
| 42 | Playa Nosara | | |
| 43 | Playa Pelada | | |
| 44 | Playa Guiones | | |
| 45 | Playa Cuarzo | | |
| 46 | Playa Garza | | |
| 47 | Playa Barrigona | | |
| 48 | Playa Buena Vista | | |
| 49 | Playa Sámara | | |
| 50 | Playa Carrillo | | |



Tourist activities in the area

-  **Fishing:** In Tamarindo and surroundings, tours are offered that allow you to practice sport fishing. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Surf:** The waves and great scenic beauty stand out, which favors the practice of surfing on beaches such as Tamarindo, Avellanas, San José, Madero. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Leatherback turtle:** Playa Grande and Playa Negra. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Kayak:** very favorable conditions for the practice of this sport. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Bird watching:** at Palo Verde National Park and Barra Honda National Park. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Caverns:** Barra Honda is the only park in Costa Rica that has a complex of underground caverns. [Leer más.](#)
-  **BMT Diria:** offers tourist tours in Arado de Santa Cruz. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Sun and beach:** excellent sea conditions and wide capacity of the beaches. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Diving:** a wonderful destination for diving lovers. Home to turtles, rays, white tip sharks and many schools of different fish. [Leer más.](#)
-  **Nightlife:** there is an important offer of restaurants, bars and hotel chains that offer nightlife to visitors. [Leer más.](#)

Airport Distances

Tamarindo Airport -	4.8 km
Cabo Velas Airport -	19 km
Filadelfia Airport -	45.4 km
Nicoya Guanacaste Airport -	59.4 km
Nosara Airport -	106 km
Daniel Oduber Int. Airport	68.7 km
Juan Santa María (tolls)	246 km
Tobías Bolaños Airport	259 km

Public Services:

-  Gas Station
-  Tamarindo & Flamingo bus stations
-  Tamarindo Airport - domestic flights
-  Liberia Airport domestic and international flights
-  Hospital Metropolitano - Reserva Conchal
-  General Medicine Private Clinics and dentistry
-  Firefighters - Reserva Conchal
-  Banks - 3 sedes en Tamarindo
-  Red Cross - Santa Cruz
-  Public Force Station (in process)
-  Costa Rica Post Office
-  Tamarindo Coast Guard

Historic Architectural Heritage: Property declared to have historical and architectural value under Law 7555 on Historic Architectural Heritage

No podés dejar de visitar estas obras de patrimonio arquitectónico

1 **1. The old house of Pedro Nolasco Cascante Piña (Bolsón)**
The home of Pedro Nolasco Cascante Piña, located in Ortega de Bolsón, has heritage value due to its age and because its construction is an example of the common regional architecture of the late 19th century.

The house is private property and is for private use.

2 **San Andrés Catholic Church (Barra Honda)**
Built in 1911, originally in bahareque construction, with a wooden roof and central columns. In 1950, its façade cracked in a major earthquake and led to the widening of the nave to 6 meters.


3 **San Blas Catholic Church (Nicoya)**
This handsome church is located in the center of the city of Nicoya, occupying the same site on which the first parish church in Costa Rica was erected in 1544.


4 **Old Catholic Church Tower of Santo Cristo de Esquipulas (Santa Cruz)**
The church tower has historic, cultural, symbolic and emotional value, representing a key element in the creation of a local spirit in the city of Santa Cruz.


South Guanacaste Cultural Agenda

JANUARY

SANTA CRUZ

Second week of January: Santa Cruz Cultural Week (activities throughout the civic center).

January 13: Vigil of Santo Cristo de Esquipulas (in Ato Viejo de Arado).

January 14: Solemn Entrance of the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas (central temple)

January 15: Day of the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas

January 14-18: National Traditional Festivities in honor of the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas.

FEBRUARY

NICOYA

February 1: Entrance of the Saint (San Blas) and civic/patron saint festivities (San Blas church and surroundings).

February 3: Day of San Blas, patron saint of Nicoya (San Blas church and fairground).

SANTA CRUZ

February and March: Coyoleras are organized in Santa Cruz.

March to December. Villareal Fiestas Patronales (Villareal Park).

Brasilito Civic Festivities (Brasilito central park).

MARCH

SANTA CRUZ

February and March: Coyoleras are organized in Santa Cruz.

March: Dance of Dust in the bull ring of Villareal de Santa Cruz.

HOJANCHA

March 19: Day of Saint Joseph, patron saint of the canton (with religious activities).

MAY

HOJANCHA

May 1: Parade of Boyeros in Hojancha (parade, food, music and dance in the center of town).

JULY

NICOYA

Week before July 25: National Cultural Festival of the Annexation.



July 25: Celebration of the Incorporation of Nicoya to the Free State of Costa Rica. Town's central park with the regular presence of the President of the Republic and deputies of the Legislative Assembly. Parades in all cantons.



SANTA CRUZ

First Saturday of July: Dance of the Guacales in Santa Bárbara de Santa Cruz.

AUGUST

HOJANCHA

August 2: Pilgrimage to Los Angeles de Hojancha in honor of the Virgen de Los Angeles.



August 31: Arreo in Huacas de Hojancha, in Celebration of Santa Rosa.

SEPTEMBER



September 14: Lantern Parade and Arrival of the Torch.

September 15: Independence Day. Parades in all cantons.

NOVEMBER

NICOYA

November 1: The Cantadera de Días (in La Cofradía) begins.

November 11: Pica de leña, tope, parade, and meals.

November 21: Pica de Leña. Parades in the streets of Nicoya.

November 13: National Day of the Sabanero.

November 30: Marimba Day. Colegio Liceo Diurno de Nicoya.

DECEMBER

NICOYA

December 7: Anniversary of the Cantonato de Nicoya.

December 9: Atolada (in la Cofradía).

December 11: Vespers of the celebration with Alborada, Pasada de la Virgen, La Salve and Serenata (in La Cofradía).

December 12: Feast of Our Lady Virgin of Guadalupe and Dance of the Yegüita, election of new positions in La Cofradía and candlelight procession.

Third Monday of each month: Peña Cultural Nicoyana.

HOJANCHA

Second Saturday in December: Christmas Festival (artistic activities, food, crafts, parade and lights). tesianías, desfile e iluminación).

December 8: Immaculate Conception of Mary, patron saint of Matambú (religious and cultural activities, turns, food and handicrafts).



Traditional Crafts

The traditional techniques practiced in the cantons of Santa Cruz and Nicoya include Chorotega ceramics, practiced in Guaitil de Santa Cruz and San Vicente de Nicoya by the Chorotega indigenous people. The figures are made from pure clay using traditional techniques passed down through the generations. There are also jícaro handicrafts, using a carving technique called "esgrafiado", and leatherworking, with the production of hats, saddles and traditional clothes.

Ecomuseum of Chorotega Ceramics San Vicente, Nicoya

In order to preserve the history, designs and techniques of this pottery style, the Ecomuseum of Chorotega Ceramics of Nicoya inaugurated its permanent exhibition in 2017. This new room is the result of several years of research into oral history, design and museum installation, all carried out by the community itself with the support and advice of the Regional Museum Program of the National Museum of Costa Rica (MNCR) and the Network of Community Museums of America.

[Eco museo San Vicente de Nicoya](#)

[Artesanía en jícaras](#)

Take a little bit of the color and beauty of Santa Cruz and Nicoya back home with you!

Colectivo artesanal La Choreja

The catalog below contains a wealth of quality handicrafts from local artisans at excellent prices.



Your purchase helps to support our small business and to preserve the local identity and culture.

[See catalog here](#)

Other Handicrafts



The cantons of Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha and Nandayure share elements of their culture such as traditional foods, hand-pressed tortillas, marimba music, and the intangible heritage of the Chorotega region. Pottery is one component of this cultural heritage, an ancient tradition that is carried out in Guaitil, San Vicente and Las Pozas de Nicoya, as well as San Pablo de Nandayure, where families have used red clay in their crafts, making domestic utensils such as nimbueras, comales, jars, and more. However, this clay does not work for objects made with curioles, because pigments do not stick to them (as in Guaitil and San

Vicente). An example of this is Crafts Building a Legacy by the family of Claudia Rosales Perez, who have taken this legacy to the new generations such as her daughter Zeneida Trejos Rosales and other people through workshops and fairs. This tradition reveals part of the history of our province and the country. It is the identity of our canton.

CONTACT PEOPLE: Priscila Álvarez - Tel: 8404-3700 / Jeimy Álvarez - Tel: 8795-1092 . **13**
Facebook: [facebook.com/Artesanias-Contruyendo-un-Legado](https://www.facebook.com/Artesanias-Contruyendo-un-Legado)

SANTA CRUZ Y NICOYA LA CHOREJA HANDICRAFT COLLECTIVE

The Colectivo Artesanal La Choreja is an organization of local artisans, whose name comes from the fruit of the monkey-ear tree, also called the guanacaste tree (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*). In the Nahuatl language its name is Guaitil Nacaztli. With wide, imposing branches, it provides ample shade, and has given its name to the province of Guanacaste, home to a vibrant and rich cultural tradition. It has also been declared Costa Rica's national tree.



Handicrafts made from its seeds are inspired by the rich culture of the Guanacaste plains, with their flora, fauna, beaches, gastronomy and sabanero tradition.



The **La Choreja Collective** was formed in 2019 through an assistance program of the Costa Rican Tourism Board as part of the **Artesanías con Identidad Program** of the Department of Tourism Development of the Directorate of Planning and Tourism Development. Its creation was part of a strategy aiming to ensure that tourists can enjoy the travel experience and take a unique product back with them, one that has been forged by the hands of Guanacaste's local artisans, giving them a piece of the soul of this wonderful place.





Traditional bull riding



Photo: Ministry of Culture

Bull riding is a traditional activity is part of an important festive ritual in the traditions of Santa Cruz.

It brings together riders, preparers, wranglers, and more.

Locación: Plaza de los Mangos in the district of Santa Cruz, canton of Santa Cruz.

 [More information here](#)

Events:

Held **between November and July** in well-known squares such as the Plaza de los Mangos in the Santa Cruz district and in Tempate, as well as on private farms throughout the canton.

 [More information here](#)

 [Documental parte 1](#)

 [Documental parte 2](#)



Fiestas patronales

Festival of the Virgin of Guadalupe

Nicoya Center

Declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nicoya by means of Decree No. 38290-C.



Foto: Cristina E. Díaz

Every year, during November and December, Nicoya celebrates the festivities of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which include different religious, cultural and secular activities. These include the contadera de días (counting of the days), the pica de leña (chopping of firewood), the atolada, the alza de la armada (raising of the arms), the alborada, the procesión de la pasada (Procession of the Passing), the Dressing of the Image of the Virgin, the alba, the elección and the Procession of the Candles.

All these activities are organized by La Cofradía de Nuestra Señorita de Guadalupe, which is the last of the religious congregations of the colonial era, whose primary purpose is to support and maintain all the traditional activities that take place around the festivities of the Virgin of Guadalupe, patron saint of the Nicoyan canton.

The organization won the 2019 Emilia Prieto Tugores Award for Intangible Cultural Heritage, for its complex organizational structure, which brings together various social actors, age groups and gives importance to the role of women at different levels, in addition to the centuries-long tradition of electing the members of the Cofradía, or Brotherhood.

These festivities involve a centuries-old tradition inherited from the Chorotega ancestors, who recognized the Virgin of Guadalupe, whom they called La Señorita, as their patron saint. This followed the evangelization processes carried out in the Nicoya region, starting with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1522.

The festivities begin on November 1, with the major celebration held annually on December 11 and 12.

More information

 [Festivity of Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)

 [Dance of the Yegüita](#)

 [Alza de la Ramada](#)

 [La Atolada](#)



Feast of the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas

Downtown Santa Cruz

Since the beginning of the 19th century, a pilgrimage has been made through the different communities of the canton and a procession of the image to Santa Cruz each year on January 14. A large number of men and women of all ages participate. The participants include mayordomos, caballeros del Santo, indios promesanos, musicians from the philharmonic orchestra, traditional bands and ensembles, masqueraders, clown dancers, gigantonas, saddle-makers, ranch-hands including vaqueteros, lazadores and amarradores, horsemen with traditional implements, ranchers with their best bulls, storytellers, cooks, artisans, helpers and celebrants.

Links:

 [Passing of the Saint of Esquipulas](#)

 [Santo Cristo de Esquipulas](#)

 [Photo gallery](#)



Ministerio de Cultura

Ready to see the cimarronas and clowns? Come to the patron saint festivities of Cartagena, Nicoya, Santa Cruz, Santa Cecilia and the different communities in the area.

Cimarronas



These are groups of musicians that tend to include mainly percussion and wind instruments, such as the saxophone, trombone, snare drum, trumpet, clarinet, tuba, bass drum and cymbals.

They accompany the mask-wearing clowns to liven up parties or traditional popular celebrations.

 [Clowns Santa Cecilia](#)

Popular dance



The popular dances are part of most of the canton's patron saint festivities. Depending on the time and celebration, they may be accompanied by marimba or cimarrona music, or popular music groups. Likewise, these popular dances are used in Santa Cruz to organize the communities and collect funds. People are called together to report on important causes in the region, celebrate traditions and honor the outstanding inhabitants of the towns.

Some dances depict religious events, like the Dance of the Indios Promesanos, a group of campesinos who give thanks to the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas during the cultural week of January. Or the dance of La Peseta, a tradition in the Santa Cruz district, where a space is created to bring together members of the community.

 [Cartagena Marching Band](#)

 [Concert Band](#)

 [La Rejunta Band](#)

 [Marimba Aradenita](#)

Quijongo music



A traditional musical instrument made from the wood of the guácimo tree, with a wire and a hollow jícara shell for resonance.

 [More information here](#)

Marimba music



The marimba is a traditional Latin American musical instrument. It is frequently used in the popular and religious festivities of the area, often accompanied by traditional dances.

Events:

 [Expo Marimba Santa Barbara de SantaCruz](#)

 [More information](#)

 [Marimba aradenita](#)

Folk dances



Folk dance employs traditional music, movement, costumes and staging to represent historical moments and relationships between men and women that used to take place historically. Folk dances are used to promote the culture of Santa Cruz, with specific costumes to represent the canton, along with music that is typical of the area and objects that recall its different communities, such as jícaras, Chorotega ceramic handicrafts, cheese curds, images of livestock, coyol wine, and others.

Those in charge of choreographing the dances therefore seek to project a clear and consistent image, from the steps and music to the costumes and stage decoration.

¿QuDo you want to find the groups and artists in the area?

 [Enter here](#)



Punta Islita



The Punta Islita Open-Air Museum of Contemporary Art was created in 2003 from the first Meeting of Artists in 2002 who made more than 15 public works in houses, the forest, the community hall, town square and the Punta Islita Hotel. This museum seeks to develop an artistic language through a process with a group of approximately 50 local artists. This institution has a Museum House where various workshops and activities are held in San José in coordination with the Costa Rican Art Museum. The museum is currently a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Since 2002, under the direction of Loida Pretiz, the museum has promoted groups and workshops of artists who develop an artistic language with local identity. The Museo Islita gallery has held 10 to 15 exhibitions a year of local and guest artists, many of whom have conducted training workshops in the community. Since 2002, Islita has been an open-air museum of contemporary art, a showcase of works that evoke

the Chorotega culture and honor the Nicoya Peninsula, which is one of the five blue zones of the planet, known for the high longevity of its population, with many inhabitants aged over 90 and 100 years.

The Museum House now exhibits his works of graffiti on recycled wood, jewelry with local materials such as seeds and shells, mobiles, mirrors made from logs left by the sea, nature landscapes engraved on second-hand fabric, lamps, soap dishes or coconut cutlery and ceramic pieces that tell the history of the Chorotega.

The Villafranca Zurcher Foundation (VC) has created the Islita Art Museum, a day center and the Creative Center, which teaches and promotes art, crafts and culture in the local community and the province of Guanacaste.

Information: Mariel Pinel, directora ejecutiva
 Mariel@fundacionvz.org
 (506) 2661 4044
 museo.dir@hotelpuntaislita.com



Guanacaste cuisine

Guanacaste offers an unparalleled gastronomic experience, offering a memorable blend of smells, flavors and culinary practices that are based on the region's cultural wealth.

Guanacaste has the virtue of being a region with a vast wealth of cultural traditions, with highly developed indigenous communities with Mayan and Aztec influences that went on to mix with Spaniards, who brought their own culinary traditions. The result is a combination of cultures for which the Costa Rican palate is very grateful.

Corn

Corn plays a central role as an ingredient in many foods. Some of the traditional foods that employ it include tamales, marquesote, atolillo, atolillo de arroz, atolillo morado, tamal asado, tanelas, rosquillas, rosquillas bañadas, rice with corn, cajetas, cuajadas, tortillas, chorreadas, yoles de maíz tierno, cajetas, picadillos, empanadas and gallina en salsa.

Beverages

The local beverages are generally made from the fruit-bearing plants of the region, including the guapinol, pitahaya, chestnut and cashew. Local favorites also include the lemony aguadulce, fresh pinolillo, horchata, mozote, leche de burra, chicha, coyol wine and resbaladera.

Seafood

In addition, Guanacaste has been blessed with an extensive coastline, providing access to a rich range of seafood products, mainly harvested by artisanal fishermen and piangueros. This explains why many local dishes are based on fish and seafood from the region's waters. Examples are fried fish, fish ceviches, shrimp, octopus and squid rings. As well as shrimp with garlic, we have clear and cream shellfish soups, shellfish platters and rice dishes that include shrimp, squid, shellfish, and much more. A variety of turtle egg dishes are eaten in Ostional.

Tradicición

Wood stoves and traditional ovens play an important role in the local cuisine. These require an understanding of how to work with the different temperatures and cooking times, the best wood to burn in order to give the food the right flavor, and even the traditional brushes used to clean the ashes in the ovens.

The traditional towns of the region can be discovered in their sodas, small family restaurants or cafés where you can taste the cuisine of Guanacaste, in the cantons of Santa Cruz, Nicoya, Hojancha and Nandayure. The area also offers international cuisine, including gourmet restaurants.



Bizcochos



Mozote beverage



Rice & Shrimp



Fish Ceviche



Horchata



Fried fish



These foods from Guanacaste are not to be missed...

CORN TORTILLAS

Corn tortillas are a staple of many typical meals in Hispanic countries such as Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama.



AYACO



This dish is a fusion of beef broth, achiote, cornmeal, panela, bacon, fried ripe plantain, milk, quititeña, lots of garlic, culantro coyote and the mandatory chिकासquil leaves.

YOLES

Yoltamal is an indigenous term that means a tender corn tamale. When the corn harvest begins, the first corn is cut at the bottom to preserve its leaves, which will be used to wrap the tamale. Tender leaves fold well, or they can be soaked in hot water and dried.



ATOL DE PUJAGUA



The term "pujagua" comes from the Nahuatl word *puxauac*, meaning soft or spongy. In Costa Rica there are different types of purple corn, one of which is the dark purple Congo variety. The color of the pujagua, meanwhile, is closer to pink.

ARROZ DE MAÍZ

From generation to generation, the recipe for arroz de maíz, whose name means "corn rice" but does not contain rice, has managed to stay alive as a symbol of pride in the Guanacaste culture.



VINO DE COYOL



Coyoleada is the process of extracting the sap from the coyol palm to make coyol wine. People known as "coyoleras" are the ones who understand the traditional extraction processes, tree growth and the ideal times and seasons.

ROSQUILLAS Y TANELAS

Cracked corn, dried cheese, egg and butter: these are the ingredients needed to make the famous doughnuts known as rosquillas. Tanela is a sweet bread made from corn stuffed with a panela, syrup and cheese.



Nicoa Market



A market where you can find traditional food from around Nicoya, with authentically Nicoyan homemade corn tortillas, bread, rosquillas and tanelas, not to mention delicious chicheme, one of our traditional drinks.

We have delicious local food and drinks for sale:

	Gallina achiotada		Chilote stew
	Horchata		Chicheme
	Arroz de maíz		Picadillo de papaya

Where: In front of the courthouse in downtown Nicoya, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica.

The Nicoya Market is open Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and opens on Sundays during the high season. **Telephone:** 8331-1437

[Mercado Nicoya](#) [Mercado Nicoya](#)

For more information about some of the places where you can eat these delicious dishes, click on the following links:

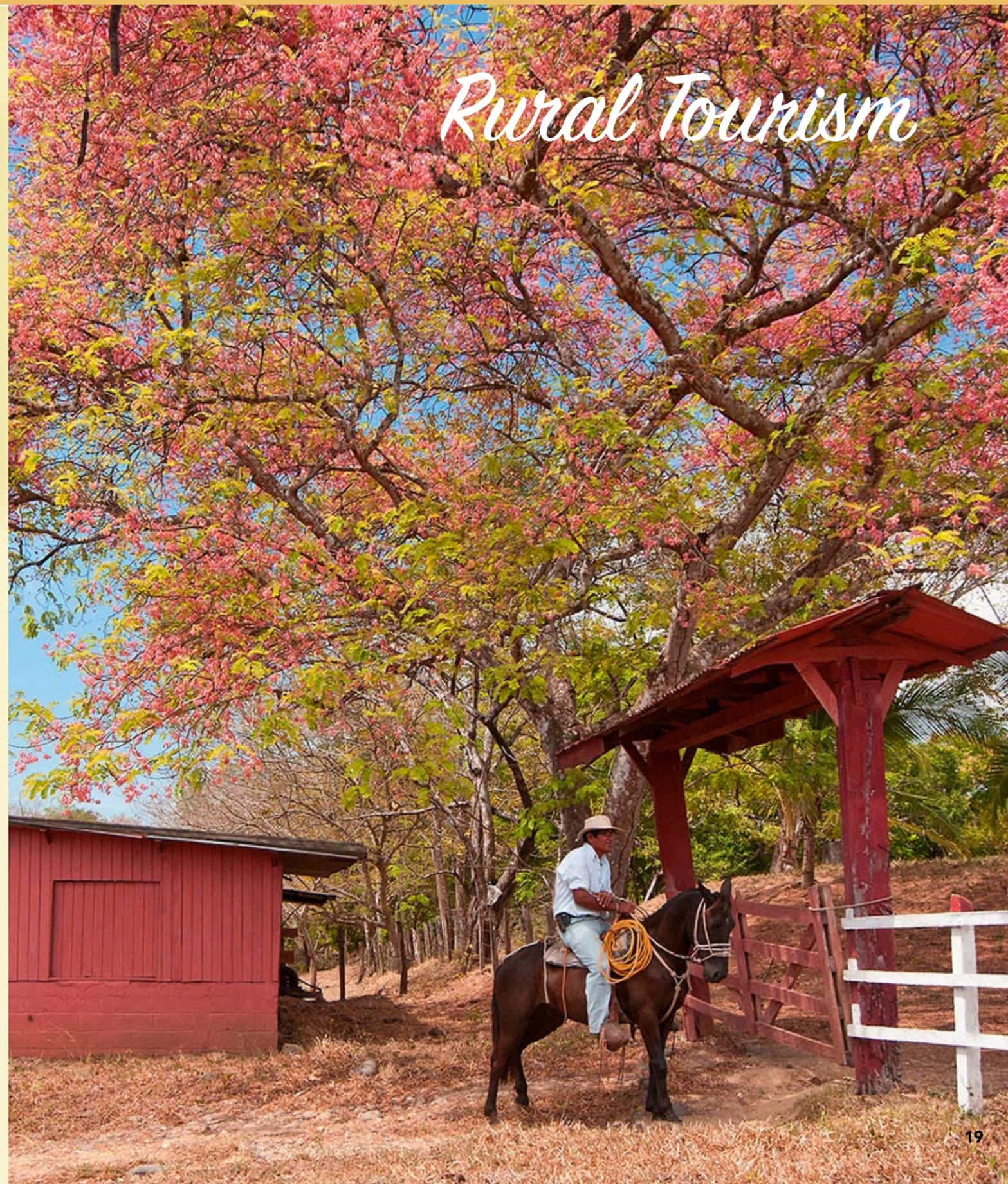
[Coopetortillas](#)
[Fogón Típico Santacruceño](#)
[Dulces Tradicionales](#)

For further information and recipes:

[Recipes of the native seeds of Guanacaste](#)
[Recipes of Puntarenas and Guanacaste](#)
[Maíz Pujagua in Costa Rica](#)

You can also enjoy these foods and beverages in popular sites like the markets of Liberia and Nicoya and in Santa Cruz at the famous Cooperativa de Mujeres.

Rural Tourism





Rural life in Guanacaste plays out in the communities that belong to the cantons of Carrillo, Santa Cruz, Nicoya and Nandayure, which are an expression of country living and a lifestyle that has been internationally recognized as promoting long lives. People here live from agriculture and ranching, keeping their culture alive. It's a place of agroecological farms, rural communities and organizations that lead conservation, reforestation and agriculture projects. Learn about sustainable and efficient agricultural practices and hydroponic farming and enjoy a lunch prepared with locally grown produce.



Rural tourism makes it possible to have an authentic and enriching experience, with the option to participate in the daily activities of country life and enjoy the family atmosphere. Another option is taking in bullfighting events in the communities of Mansión, Pueblo Viejo, San Joaquín and Vigía. Once a year, these spectacles coincide with the celebration of the town's patron saint. These activities include the sale of typical foods, bull riding and bullfighting competitions, ribbon races, dances and more.

Tourists can enjoy unique experiences that combine sun, warm water and waves, sea breeze and beautiful sunsets. Adrenaline-pumping activities on offer include fishing, snorkeling, diving, kayaking, surfing and rafting, as well as adventure activities such as tours to the Rincón de la Vieja Volcano, horseback riding, ziplining and hanging bridges. Or relax in the peace and quiet of the countryside, visiting to waterfalls, serpentariums, butterfly farms, ranches, hot springs, and mud huts. Savor authentic traditional cuisine that is true to its identity, enriched with the personalized touches of the region's inhabitants.



Hojancha y Nandayure are two cantons with an extensive natural and cultural wealth. Their lifestyle and geographic features are some of the reasons why the Nicoya Peninsula has been identified as one of the world's five blue zones with a uniquely high life expectancy, a distinction that has put them on the map and awakened the interest of the tourism sector.

Rural tourism offers an authentic experience that preserves the natural and cultural heritage of our villages. Spending time in a blue zone offers a special feel to the destination for both entrepreneurs and visitors.



Tourists who experience rural and community tourism enrich their vision of the world by supporting and strengthening the local economy and helping communities to preserve their identity, traditions, folklore, and the transmission of ancestral customs, which prevents emigration and allows for effective conservation of the environment.

Visitors to southern Guanacaste can spend time with people from the Santa Cruz communities of Guaitil and San Vicente de Nicoya, who make ancestral handicrafts such as pots, vases, comales arras and indigenous clay figures.



Enjoy hiking and trekking, a tour of an orchid garden, a visit to the sugar mill and horseback riding in the mountains located in the highlands of the cantons of Hojancha and Nandayure, passing by viewpoints, historical sites and the highest waterfall in Central America while taking in the exuberant natural environment.

Discover the unique aspects of Isliteño culture (in Punta Islita), including the arts, history, customs, cuisine, blue zone, native ingredients and more.

Try your hand at artisanal fishing, using the techniques of fishermen from the coastal region who capture commercial species like the weakfish, whitefin weakfish and Stoltzmann's weakfish, along with sea bass and white shrimp, as well as mollusk harvesting.

The community of Bolsón is known for its lodging services in the Ortega and Bolsón houses, which offer tours of the Río Tempisque and Palo Verde National Park to observe crocodiles, birds and monkeys, among others. You can share experiences with families who welcome tourists into their homes.



Islita is picturesque, popular natural destination in Guanacaste, which also boasts a colonial church with a bell tower and a lively artistic community.

As for tourist services, the region offers accommodations, restaurants, free private parking, outdoor pool and bar. Thematic activities and travel agencies will help you turn your dreams into reality.
Cattle raising and herding





Photo: Roberto Ramos

Cattle rearing and herding



The **sabanero** is one of the most iconic local figures, not only of the canton of Santa Cruz, but of the entire province, representing one of the most deeply rooted traditions of the Guanacaste identity. Sabaneros, the cowboys of the savannah, are mainly involved in caring for, transferring, taming and managing cattle and horses, intimately intertwined with the livestock rearing traditions of the cantons of Guanacaste.

[Cattle rearing and herding](#)

[El arreo Santacruceño](#)

[Video](#)



Traditional fishing

This activity reflects a process of teaching and practice among family members who have learned from generation to generation, exchanging knowledge together with people from the community.

[More information here](#)

Production of panela using a trapiche sugar mill



In Santa Cruz, sugar millers work with traditional oxen-powered mills called trapiches, although there are also motor-powered mills, as in Arado.

These people are also farmers, cattlemen and cowboys or sabaneros.

[More information here](#)

Oxherding and oxcarts

The traditional oxcart has been used in Costa Rica since the beginning of the 19th century, when they were used as a means of transportation and provided subsistence for many families.

[More information here](#)



Matambú indigenous territory



The indigenous territory of Matambú, the only territory of the Chorotega indigenous people, is located in the canton of Hojancha.

The Chorotegas were the largest pre-Columbian ethnic group in Costa Rica. Historically, they lived in the province of Guanacaste and part of Puntarenas. They went through a process of extensive miscegenation that is evident today in the current population of the Nicoya Peninsula; the dances, music and food are among the legacies of the indigenous people.

From their ancient customs they preserve the typical recipes, based on corn, the healing knowledge of many medicinal plants and the manufacture of pottery. This group has not kept its original language. Tours on Chorotega life are offered.

Matambú: How do you get there?

From San José you can take Route 27, turning off onto Highway 39 and Route 1 or simply take Route 1 from San José to Limonal. In Limonal, take Route 18 towards Puente de la Amistad, until it meets Route 21 towards Nicoya until the turnoff to Mansión on Route 158. Before arriving at Mansión, take the fork in the road leading to Matambú.

[Comunidad indígena Matambú](#)

[Matambú Tours](#)

[Haga sus propias cerámicas](#)



The community of Santa Bárbara

Located about 45 km from Tamarindo, this community has preserved the essence of a typical Guanacaste town with its hamlets, customs, a cuisine that features non-GMO native corn, cow's milk from pastures without agrochemicals, folk dances and marimba music, where the marimberos make their own instruments and delight in their music. A road in the community has been given the name Paseo de la Marimba, in recognition of the artisans who practice this art.



Foto: Roberto Ramos

Guanacaste spectacle: La Casona and Zanja Negra

This family project is aimed at preserving the traditions and culture of Guanacaste, offering a tour of a house over 100 years old that preserves some of the belongings of that time: leather beds, shears, tents, chamber pots, trunks, etc. In addition, there are demonstrations of tortillas and Chorotega pottery, as well as leather souvenirs from local enterprises run by women heads of household and folk dances with marimbas from the same community.

Tel. 8458-9950

wilfredypadilla2015@gmail.com

[More information here](#)

[Casona](#)

Terruño Local Experiences

A local venture that aims to highlight the culinary and cultural traditions of the traditional towns of Guanacaste. Among its offerings are:



MCJ

Manos a la Obra: A tour to Villa Real market and cooking class (three local dishes prepared from food purchased at the market). Duration of tour: half day.



ICT

Cafeteando 101: Discover the history and importance of Costa Rica's golden bean: coffee. Duration of tour: 2 hours. Includes beer and appetizer.



MCJ

Drinking Coyoil: This tour takes place in Nicoya, passing by the San Blas Church. Experience coyoil wine in a 45 year old plantation. Traditional lunch is included. Duration of tour: 7 hours.



Rancho 1,2,3 queso

1, 2, 3 Cheese: See a goat farm at Rancho Avellanas. It is located approximately 12 km from Tamarindo and you can enjoy a traditional dish prepared with products from the farm. Duration of tour: 4 hours.



CAFÉ DIRIA COFFEE TOUR, COOPEPILANGOSTA R.L.

Experience an authentic Coffee Tour!



The Diria Coffee Tour is a tourism project of COOPEPILANGOSTA R.L. located in the canton of Hojanca, Guanacaste. This canton stands out as the leader in coffee cultivation in all of Guanacaste. Beaches such as Camaronal, Playa Carrillo and Playa Samara are located a few kilometers from the seat of the canton. Playa Carrillo, which is part of Hojanca, is considered one of the most beautiful beaches in the country.

Hojanca is known in Costa Rica as “the forest canton”, due to its long-standing practice of establishing, managing and using forest plantations. It also enjoys great national prestige because of the active participation and coordination of production and conservation activities on the part of the canton’s institutions. A good example of this is the creation and administration of the Monte Alto Natural Reserve.



Activities:

- Guided coffee tour.
- Cafeteria.
- Folk dance group.
- Local craftsmanship.
- Guided tours of the community and nearby reserves.
- Lodging in beautiful cabins in Hojanca.
- Educational talks.
- Model organic farm.

Nearby attractions:

- Barra Honda National Park
- Monte Alto Forest Reserve.
- Matambú Indigenous Reserve.
- Rio Nosara Tourist Center.
- Playa Sámará
- Playa Carrillo
- Playa Nosara
- Isla de Chira

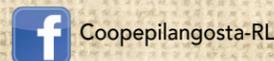
Location:
Hojanca,
Guanacaste



Foto: Coopepilangosta R.L.

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Beaches of Southern Guanacaste

Guanacaste occupies a privileged place in Costa Rica because of the richness of its beaches, making it possible for visitors to come to the coast as a means of recreation, sports and rest. These beaches feature a backdrop of tropical trees, natural spaces, and relatively low numbers of tourists.

This zone stands out for its variety of marine ecosystems and the multiple shades of its beaches, ideal for activities centered around nature and the ocean, including surfing, diving in clear water, basking in the sun and hiking along the coast.



Foto: Edgar Marín



ICT

ICT

Sunset Spots

One of the best in the entire Pacific

The morphology of the cliffs mixed with the tropical dry forest climate allows for multiple viewpoints that are accessible by vehicle in less than an hour's drive. Some examples:

- Mirador de Tamarindo
- Mirador de Playa Grande
- Mirador de Playa Blanca

The country's beaches offer a wide variety of accommodation and opportunities to enjoy Costa Rican cuisine. The wide variety of hotels available for you to enjoy features options such as all-inclusive hotels, **honeymoon hotels**, **eco resorts**, **family hotels**, **5-star hotels**, **spa & wellness**, and more.

The 5 most visited beaches in and around southern Guanacaste for surfing and "sun and beach" activities are:



Photo: Antonio Farah

Langosta



Photo: GoPlaya

Playa Grande



Photo: GoPlaya

Avellanas



Photo: GoPlaya

Playa Negra



Photo: GoPlaya

Nosara

[More information here](#)

[Information about beaches here](#)



Playa Monte del Barco

This small beach is located between two points jutting out into the sea that shelter it and provide a beautiful environment ideal for resting and swimming. From the slopes and higher parts of the immediate hill, the Culebra Bay can be seen in all its splendor, especially during sunset. This beach has been awarded the Ecological Blue Flag, which identifies it as a clean and safe beach.



Playa Arenilla

Playa Arenilla, located in Papagayo, Guanacaste, is a place of golden sand with very soft waves, where the surrounding mountains give it a private and paradisiacal touch. The beach is quite clean and has just a few rocks. Arenilla is an ideal place to relax or enjoy a swim in its calm waters.



Playa Panamá

This wide bay with fine sand is surrounded by brazilwood, manchineel and mostrenco trees. It has a low swell, with a small mangrove swamp in the Rocha Estuary. The beach is very popular for swimming, resting, hiking and camping. It is frequented by families who like to take in the beauty of the maritime landscape that extends to the white beaches located on the other side of Culebra Bay.



Playa Hermosa

Located a few minutes away from El Coco, it is a much less frequently visited than its neighbor, remaining an attraction for those who are looking for some peace and quiet. With its light gray sand and only a few stones, it's a beach for swimming in gentle waves, enjoying a walk or just lying under the palm trees that provide shade at the edge of the beach.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/hermosa-el-coco-guanacaste

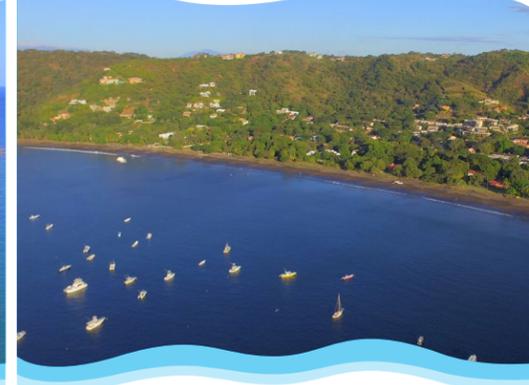


Playa Buena

There are plenty of reasons to visit Playa Buena in Papagayo. Right next to the Occidental Papagayo hotel, head down a 400 m cobblestone path, which will take you to a good-sized white sandy beach and turquoise sea, with trees on the shore that provide shade and barely perceptible waves. Just watch out for currents.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/playa-buena

Photos: goplaya.cr



Playas del Coco

Of all Costa Rica's many beaches, Playas del Coco is one of the most popular, with deep roots in the country's traditions. It is located in a bay with little swell and is very suitable for swimming and safely anchoring boats. It has grayish sands that extend for almost three kilometers. Playas del Coco has a wide range of services that allow you to enjoy all kinds of recreational and sports activities, including sport fishing, scuba diving, boat rides, etc. It is also ideal for hiking and horseback riding.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/el-coco-guanacaste



Playa Ocotal

This beach is located on an inlet bounded by hills, with grayish sands and low waves. It is ideal for swimming, sunbathing, and water sports such as diving and sport fishing that are offered at different points in the region. The high parts of the adjacent hills boast magnificent views of the entire Gulf of Papagayo. This beach has been awarded the Ecological Blue Flag.

 goplaya.cr/es/playa/ocotal



Playa Danta

Its scenic beauty can be appreciated from the entrance, when you cross a path with a small wooden bridge, just before entering this beach of light gray sand, soft waves and few stones. The place combines nature with crystal-clear water and lots of vegetation. From Playa Danta, you can see the Pitahayas and Santa Catalina islands. The latter site, about nine kilometers away, is a favorite site among divers in this part of the coast.

 goplaya.cr/es/playa/danta



Playa Pan de Azúcar

A quiet beach with light gray sand, with intermediate swell and few stones. The scenery at Pan de Azúcar beach is extraordinary, as the Islas Catalina can be seen in the distance. It is an ideal place to relax, as the beach remains free from crowds. It belongs to the area known as Las Catalinas in Guanacaste.



Playa Potrero

Potrero occupies a bay with calm waters that is about four kilometers in length. Its beautiful landscape boasts both estuaries and mangroves. Towards the southern end is the Flamingo (Blanca) marina. The beach is ideal for swimming, sunbathing, hiking, horseback riding and the water sports that are organized from this site, including sport fishing and diving.

 goplaya.cr/es/playa/potrero



Playa Blanca (Flamingo)

Located on an inlet with moderate waves, it's a great beach for swimming. It has a mangrove swamp as well as Isla Plata and Punta Salinas to the north. These islands separate Brasilito and Potrero Bays. From this point, you can enjoy a spectacular view of both bays. Its scenic and natural beauty, along with a variety of excellent services, make it an ideal option for those who wish to enjoy the beach during the day and have fun at night.



Playa Flamingo

Flamingo's beautiful white sand beach with few stones is just part of a landscape covered by luxury houses located on the highest hilltops surrounding the beach, and the yachts that decorate the sea as they glide through the crystalline aquamarine waters. It is an ideal destination to travel to nearby beaches and visit pristine sites nearby that are free from the crowds.

 [Playa Flamingo](#)



Playa Penca

This is another small beach, with moderate to strong waves. It has an estuary and a mangrove swamp. Along with the Islote Chocoyas, located just off its northern end, this beach is a special natural attraction that is perfect for rest and contemplation. It has received a Blue Flag designation.

 [Playa Penca](#)



Playa Guacamaya

This beach is located in Culebra Bay and is empty for most of the year since the route to the beach is in quite a bad state (only accessible by 4x4 vehicles), though visitors can also reach the beach by boat and enjoy the beautiful scenery full of little islands. In Guacamaya, the sand is light gray and the waves are very gentle. On one side of the beach, there are some trees that provide shade. The sea feels untouched and picture-perfect, perfect for snorkeling. Guacamaya also lends itself to a peaceful swim or a quiet rest.

 [Playa Guacamaya](#)



Playa Guacamayita

Small and crystalline, as beautiful as it is hidden. The small beach with light gray sand offers a calm sea, perfect for snorkeling and swimming.

Vacations can take many forms, but there's nothing like being in an isolated, untouched spot with shade on one side.

 [Playa Guacamayita](#)



Playa Brasilito

A popular Guanacaste beach that stands out for its light gray sand, few stones and moderate waves. Although it is often visited by tourists, Brasilito still retains its small-town essence, with farmhouses and the town soccer field just a few meters from the beach.

 goplaya.cr/es/playa/brasilito



Playa Conchal

This inlet, less than 2 kilometers long, owes its name to the millions of shell fragments that make up the northern part of the sandy beach, as concha is the Spanish word for shell. It has lush vegetation and a mangrove swamp and its waters are crystal clear. It is one of the most beautiful beaches in the country and is ideal for swimming, hiking, horseback riding, boating and other water sports, including scuba diving. This beach has been awarded the Ecological Blue Flag.

 <https://goplaya.cr/es/playa/conchal>

Photos: goplaya.cr



Playa Real

Playa Real forms a single coastal unit together with the beaches of El Roble (to the south) and Nombre de Jesús (to the north), with the first two separated from the third by Punta Real. These beaches have light-colored sands with a combined length of two kilometers. The beautiful coastal landscape is complemented by the presence of several islets and rocky points that enhance its scenery. It has mild to moderate waves and is very suitable for swimming, hiking and other activities such as sea kayaking.

 goplaya.cr/es/playa/real-guanacaste



Playa Roble

Situated near Conchal in Guanacaste, in the area known as the Bay of Pirates, Roble is a beautiful white sand beach with few waves.

The turquoise color of the water stands out because of the huge stones that adorn the bottom of the sea, creating an extraordinary landscape. At the edge of the beach, the trees provide shade.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/roble-conchal

Playa Honda

Playa Honda, located in the Bay of Pirates, is an untouched spot that has been highlighted in recent years as a nesting site for black turtles. To reach this beautiful white sand beach with moderate waves and crystal-clear water, you must cross a dirt road on foot and then along a narrow path until you reach the entrance to the beach.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/honda-bahia

Playa Azul - Jurel

Olive-black and blackish-gray sand beach, with navy-blue waters. This bay type beach extends over a length of 177 m, representing little danger for bathers at low tide. Rich vegetation grows along its coastline with excellent countryside scenery. It has a dock and is an anchorage for boats.

The beach is primarily used for fishing tours.

goplaya.cr/es/playa/azul-pez-vela

Playa Nombre de Jesús

Playa Nombre de Jesús is located near the Bay of Pirates, but closer to Playa Minas, up the mountain. It is a hidden-away beach that lends itself to surfing.

[Playa Nombre de Jesús](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/nombre-de-jesus)

Playa Potrero

Potrero offers tranquility, peace and a clean gray sand beach with moderate waves. The beach has very few stones, making it perfect for a dip or a walk along the sand, taking in the huge mountains that can be seen in the distance.

In a bay with calm waters, it also has picture-perfect estuaries and mangroves. Suitable for relaxing, admiring the scenery, and for water sports such as sport fishing, scuba diving and snorkeling.

[Playa Potrero](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/potrero)

Playa Surco de Piedra

Dark brown sand, strong, irregular waves and a moderate slope down toward the sea. The beach has trees that provide a good amount of shade and the sea is calm enough for swimming. Please exercise caution due to the presence of submerged rocks.

[Playa Surco de Piedra](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/surco-de-piedra)



Playa Calzón de Pobre

Playa Calzón de Pobre is just as peculiar as its name, which means "poor man's underwear". It is a small spot located in Carrillo, Guanacaste, but it has everything you need to relax: white sand, crystal clear water, gentle waves and few rocks. Before entering the site, a security guard will ask you for your information, part of the protocol for a tourism complex that is being built nearby.

goplaya.cr/es/playa

Playa Matapalo

Playa Matapalo is located in Sardinal de Guanacaste, one of Costa Rica's few five-star Blue Flag beaches. This spot offers gray sand and crystal-clear water. The sea is calm, perfect for taking a dip with the family. There is not much vegetation or shade around it.

[Playa/matapalo-guanacaste](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/matapalo-guanacaste)

Playa Zapotal

This beautiful light gray sand beach and calm waters is situated away from the noise of the city. It is ideal for a relaxing vacation.

[Playa Zapotal](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/zapotal)

Playa Pitahaya

Pitahaya is a pristine beach with gray sand. Despite its beauty, it remains off the beaten path for tourists. Its intermediate swell will allow you to swim and enjoy its crystal-clear water. Be careful because this beach has a lot of stones, both on shore and on the seabed.

Its great natural wealth includes cliffs that look out over the scenic beauty, steep rocks and streams. It is suitable for bathing, camping and photography.

[Playa Pitahaya](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/pitahaya)

Playa Concava

A huge boulder divides Playa Pitahaya from Playa Cóncava, but the beaches on either side of this natural dividing line are quite different from one another.

Playa Cóncava in Guanacaste has black sand, unlike its neighbor, which has light sand.

It is characterized by its strong waves and huge rocks that adorn the landscape. The dark sand intermingles with the rocks,

wearing sandals is recommended on this solitary beach.

Its main attraction is the nesting season of the olive ridley turtle, but it is also ideal for swimming at low tide and hiking.

[Playa Concava](http://goplaya.cr/es/playa/concava)



Playa Tamarindo

Together with Playa Grande and Ventanas, Playa Tamarindo is located on Tamarindo Bay. It is a beautiful beach that also has rocky areas and an island (Capitán) at its southern end. It has lush vegetation: the rosy trumpet tree or roble de sabana, as well as tamarind and coconut trees. The surrounding area offers a variety of excellent services that allow you to enjoy the sea during the day and have fun at night. This beach is ideal for relaxation, hiking and horseback riding, not to

mention sport fishing and diving tours, as well as visiting the mangrove swamp and observing turtle nesting. The prime surfing spots on this part of the coast are located in this bay and extending southward. This beach has been awarded the Ecological Blue Flag, which identifies it as a clean and safe beach.

It combines white sand, good waves for surfing and an incredible landscape surrounded by mountains. Here, you can

sit under the trees to rest, take a walk or enjoy the incredible sunsets. Tamarindo is a great meeting point for a variety of different activities. It is close to Las Baulas National Marine Park where you can enjoy turtle nesting and beaches such as Playa Negra, popular with surfers. It has another advantage: the town of Tamarindo offers all kinds of services.

[Playa Tamarindo](#)



Playa Grande

This beach of white sand, few rocks and lots of vegetation receives waves of leatherback turtles year after year, in an incredible spectacle enjoyed by many visitors. Playa Grande belongs to Las Baulas National Marine Park, a protected area to which the beaches of Ventanas, Langosta and Carbón also belong. It is very popular with surfers for its huge waves, and offers options for hiking, swimming and sunbathing. The hours of access are restricted.



Playa Ventanas

Situated on an inlet marked by rocky promontories, with great sunbathing, swimming, relaxation and hiking options.

Ventanas is located within Las Baulas National Marine Park, offering a white sand beach, few rocks, strong waves and a landscape surrounded by mountains. This incredibly beautiful beach is ideal for relaxation, but it also has an additional attraction: leatherback turtle nesting at certain times of the year.

[Playa Ventanas](#)



Playa Punta del Madero

A white sand and stone beach with strong waves. At high tide, some natural pools are formed between the rock formations. At Punta del Madero, the trees provide shade on the shore of the beach. The beach is far from the crowds, ideal for tourists who wish to sunbathe in peace.

[Playa Punta del Madero](#)



Playa Langosta

This inlet has two main sectors, divided by the mouth of the Río San Francisco. To the north, the coast is rocky and not suitable for swimming. To the south is the San Francisco estuary, whose mangrove swamp is important for nesting birds. It is an important nesting site for leatherback turtles and is part of Las Baulas Marine National Park. Langosta is also very popular among surfers. This beach has been awarded the Ecological Blue Flag.

[Playa Langosta](#)



Playa Avellana

Playa Avellanas in Santa Cruz de Guanacaste is one of the most popular spots in Costa Rica. It's the backdrop to hundreds of selfies taken by tourists. One favorite location for these vacation snaps is the iconic wooden bridge surrounded by dry branches. Avellanas is a white sand beach with shade trees along the shore. It also stands out for its waves, which make it a favorite spot for surfers, from beginners to experts.

[Playa Avellana](#)



Playa Mansita

Playa Mansita is located within Hacienda Pinilla. It is a small white sand beach with a landscape similar to that of Avellanas, but smaller and without the high waves that characterize its neighbor. Mansita has little vegetation and a lot of stone.

[Playa Mansita](#)



Playa Negra

Playa Negra is considered one of the best surfing beaches in Costa Rica. Its waves receive dozens of intermediate to advanced surfers every day. Despite its name, meaning "Black Beach", Playa Negra has white sand with lots of rocks on the sides. It is a perfect location in Santa Cruz de Guanacaste for a hike or just to sit under the shade of a tree and relax. You must walk along a short trail before visiting the beach.

[Playa Negra](#)

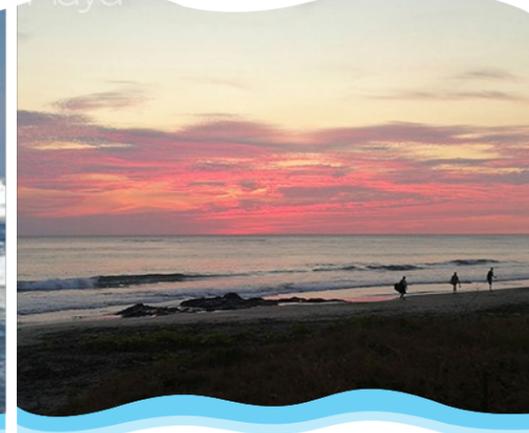
Photos: goplaya.cr



Playa Bonita

Playa Bonita is located within Hacienda Pinilla, a residential area inside a luxury resort in Guanacaste. This beach combines white sand and crystal clear water. There are also a lot of rocks, not much vegetation and an intermediate swell. It is a place to rest in solitude. This is just one of the beaches named Playa Bonita: there are a total of three with the same name in Costa Rica.

[Playa Bonita](#)



Playa Junquillal

Junquillal is a special destination that combines big waves that draw surfers from near and far with the jungle sounds of the howler monkeys that live in the area. This beach has gray sand and has few stones. The beautiful sunsets are part of the attraction of Playa Junquillal.

[Playa Junquillal](#)



Playa Azul

Azul is a quiet beach with black sand and gentle waves, located within the Bahía Pez Vela Resort. This beach is kept very clean and is surrounded by trees. At Playa Azul, you can see the wonders hidden among the rocks that adorn the seabed while snorkeling. The beach lives up to its name, meaning "Blue Beach", with the blue sky reflecting in the wet, dark sand of the beach.



Playa San Juanillo

Playa San Juanillo has white sand, turquoise water, gentle waves and many rock formations.

You are sure to notice that the beach is divided in two by a sandbank, in both sectors you can swim and snorkel in the natural pools near the shore, formed between the rocks.



Playa Ostional

Hundreds of olive ridley turtles arrive on the beach to lay their eggs in Playa Ostional. Groups of turtles may arrive on up to 10 different occasions throughout the year, but mass arrivals usually occur during the months of June, August, September, October and November. Turtles are the main attraction on this gray sand beach with strong waves and few rocks.



Playa Guiones

In Nosara, Guanacaste, Playa Guiones is well-known as an ideal place for surfers. This white sand beach has few stones is a top destination, regularly seeing dozens of visitors, making it the busiest beach in the Nosara area. Despite its popularity, this area is extremely peaceful and quiet. It is a site of enormous natural beauty. Not many people know this, but Playa Guiones belongs to the Ostional Wildlife Refuge, the nesting site of olive ridley turtles.



Playa Garza

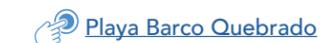
The white color of the sand and the palm trees that surround the beach make it a special place. Garza, located in the Nosara sector of Guanacaste, is a stony beach that usually receives visits from experienced surfers.

It has moderate waves and a mangrove swamp. A small fishing village is located nearby as well as Playa Rosada, famous for the color of its sand.



Playa Barco Quebrado

After crossing a long road full of trees and cattle ranches, you'll arrive at this solitary gray sand beach with lots of stones. Playa Barco Quebrado has beautiful panoramic views and calm waves. It is surrounded by imposing rocks and the perfect spot for relaxation and photography or swimming in its crystal-clear waters. It is located 9 km from Playa Garza. To get there, just follow the Nicoya-Curime road.



Playa Nosara

Playa Nosara is the least crowded of all the beaches in this region. It is characterized by shallow sandbars and rocky reefs.

This long beach stretches from the Ostional Wildlife Refuge to Punta Nosara, ending at the mouth of the Río Boca Nosara.

Playa Nosara is ideal for intermediate and experienced surfers.



Playa Cuarzo

Cuarzo, also known as Pink Beach (Playa Rosada), stands out because its white sand has a slight pinkish tone due to the small, powdery shells that shine in the sun. It is a pristine beach with gentle waves located in Nosara, Guanacaste. Its name comes from the shiny quartz stones that can be found while walking on the sand. It has lots of rocks and crystal-clear water, a perfect place for snorkeling.



Playa Pelada

Picture-perfect Pelada is located in the Nosara sector of Guanacaste. This white sand beach has strong waves, making it a regular spot for surfers. Tranquility and peace prevail on this beach. It is less visited than its popular neighbor, Guiones. In Pelada you can snorkel or hike along the beach while admiring the surrounding mountains.

It is also popular for sunbathing, horseback riding, sport fishing and snorkeling, due to its clear waters.



Playa Barrigona

To get to Playa Barrigona, a few kilometers from Sámara, you have to cross a very poorly maintained road. But the destination is worth it: a picture-perfect beach with some of the best sunsets, crystal-clear water and good waves, which attracts more and more surfers. It is on this white sand beach that actor Mel Gibson decided to build his huge mansion.

It is a wide beach with light-colored sand and very calm waves, ideal for swimming. Along its 1.4 km length, it is bordered by coastal vegetation.



Playa Buena Vista

Buena Vista has moderate waves and lots of vegetation, as well as a small estuary. Because of its steep slopes, it's a popular spot for ultralight trips. It is located 4 km northwest of Sámara. Because of the road conditions, a four-wheel drive vehicle is required.

The beach is divided by a river, which you will have to cross to enjoy the sea. The beach has brown sand, a lot of stones and intermediate swell. Although it is close to the popular Sámara, it sees fewer visitors than its neighbor.



Playa Sámara

One of the most extensive beaches of Guanacaste, its coastline stretches on for almost 4 km. It has moderate waves and lots of vegetation. It is a perfect beach for kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, enjoying its waters, biking and sunbathing. It offers a variety of tourist services, which makes it a very popular beach for visitors. Since the waves are small, swimming is also a great option. The site is very developed, but the white sandy beach with few stones is kept very clean.



 [Return to map](#)



Playa Puerto Carrillo

Carrillo is 34 km from the center of Hojancha, on the Hojancha-Lajas-Santa Marta-Estrada Rávago leg of Route 160. It stretches over 3 km, close to large hotel developments by international companies.

Carrillo is a white sand beach with few rocks. It is an ideal place to rest, sunbathe, or enjoy a walk. Over time, it has become an ideal place for swimmers due to its gentle waves.

 [Playa Carrillo](#)



Playa Coyote

In Coyote you can still feel the essence of the Guanacaste of yesteryear, with small houses surrounding the beach and a beautiful and simple town. The beautiful gray sand beach is its main attraction.

On the beach the swell is moderate, and near the coast you can find some palm trees that provide shade. Due to its large size, the swell can differ in particular spots along the beach.

 [Playa Coyote](#)

Playa Corozalito

This stunning Guanacaste beach guarantees privacy and tranquility. There isn't anywhere quite like Corozalito: the beach is untouched during most of the year, offering good conditions for surfing. Then, during certain times of the year, the olive ridley turtles come to nest. Playa Corozalito has light gray sand, few rocks and currently carries the Ecological Blue Flag, which marks it as a clean beach.

 [Playa Corozalito](#)

Playa Carbón

Carbón is one of the four beaches that belong to Las Baulas National Marine Park in Guanacaste. To get there, you have to cross a jungle trail from Playa Ventanas. The color of the sand perfectly reflects its name, which means "Coal Beach", since it combines black and white sand for a very marked contrast. This stony beach is difficult to access and its waves are strong. It is part of Las Baulas National Park.

 [Playa Carbón](#)

Playa Islita

A crescent-shaped inlet with calm waters and two estuaries. Here, visitors can enjoy clean water, hiking, sunbathing, horseback riding, mountain biking, 4x4 and quad tours, boat rides, sport fishing and scuba diving.

Although the number of tourists has been growing, it is still not very crowded compared to many other beaches in Guanacaste.

 [Playa Islita](#)

Playa Bejuco

Bejuco is a beach with grayish sand and moderate to strong waves. It also has a mangrove swamp that extends to the mouth of the Río Bejuco.

Considered one of the most beautiful and environmentally pristine beaches of Guanacaste, Bejuco has become a reference for tourists, from Costa Rica and abroad, since its crystal-clear waters and reddish sands offer the perfect combination for a few days of disconnecting and relaxation.

 [Playa Bejuco](#)

Playa San Miguel

San Miguel is a beach with light gray sand, strong waves and few rocks located in the canton of Nandayure in Guanacaste. Because it is so large and secluded, it is perfect for quiet relaxation or a hike. San Miguel is located near the popular Playa Coyote, though it is much less crowded.

 [Playa San Miguel](#)

Playa Caletas

Playa Caletas is known as Costa Rica's hidden treasure and is a wonderful sandy beach. Because it is relatively isolated, traveling here can be a bit difficult, since the dirt roads are rough and extremely difficult to navigate during the rainy season. However, once you arrive, you will find yourself in a little piece of paradise on earth.

Incredible Surf

Playa Caletas is recognized as one of the best beaches in the country for surfing because of its high waves that are just right for surfers. Its high tide and breaks make it ideal for surfing. The environment is one of adventure, since not many surfers manage to make the trip out here.

[Playa Caletas](#)



Playa Ario

A secluded gray sand beach that belongs to the Caletas-Arío Wildlife Refuge. It is a quiet place, where you can enjoy the sound of the birds that come out to fish every morning. You can also hike or sunbathe in total solitude. Ario has an intermediate swell and few rocks. This beach is noteworthy as a nesting site for olive ridley turtles.

 [Playa Ario](#)

Playa Bongo

This extensive beach is located south of Playa Coyote. It is open and several kilometers long. Caletas Sector is located towards the north end, an ideal spot for surfing. Five kilometers to the south of Caletas Sector is the mouth and estuary of the Río Bongo, whose course marks the boundary between the provinces of Guanacaste and Puntarenas.

 [Playa Bongo](#)

Links to beaches

 [GOPLAYA](#)  [CATUGUA](#)

Photos: goplaya.cr



Guanacaste Sur Tours

Fotografías: Juan Diego Rosales

General Tours



Observing flora and fauna

This is one of the most requested ecotourism activities for both newcomers to ecotourism in Costa Rica and experienced travelers. Guanacaste and its protected areas have a very diverse flora and fauna with numerous species of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, plants and fungi.

- [carrilloadventures](#) [mytanfeet.com](#)
- [samaraadventures](#) [nolimitadventures](#)
- [nosaraparadiserentals](#) [facebook.com](#)
- [stayintamarindo](#)



Palo Verde National Park

Palo Verde National Park is the most important nesting, mating and feeding site for resident and migratory birds in Costa Rica. This adventure will allow a peek into the incredible diversity of species such as monkeys, iguanas and crocodiles on a boat ride.

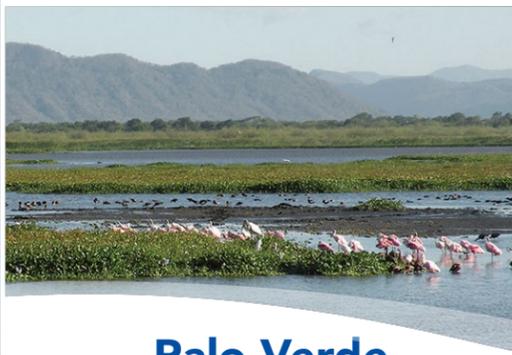
- [hotellunallena](#) [kellyssurfshop](#)
- [pininosadventures.net](#)



Volcán Miravalles NP

Start the day with a visit to one of Guanacaste's largest waterfalls, then move from one treetop platform to another on a series of ziplines to take in Costa Rica's wildlife. End the day with an authentic volcanic mud bath, relaxing in the natural hot springs or refreshing yourself with a ride down the water slide.

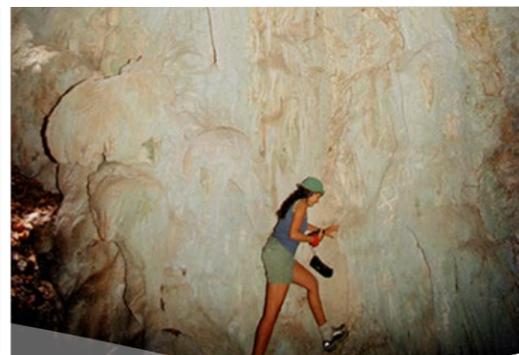
- [Avispas Adventures](#)
- [Mardigi Tours](#)



Palo Verde

A boat safari lasting approximately two hours on the Río Tempisque, along the border of the Palo Verde National Park to see a great variety of wildlife such as iguanas, crocodiles, monkeys and many species of birds.

- [ecotranscostarica](#)
- [facebook.com/CarrilloTours](#)
- [paloverdeboattours.com](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle.com](#)
- [suertetour](#)
- [samaraadventures](#)
- [naturalcentertours-samara](#)
- [sisittransferstours](#)



Barra Honda

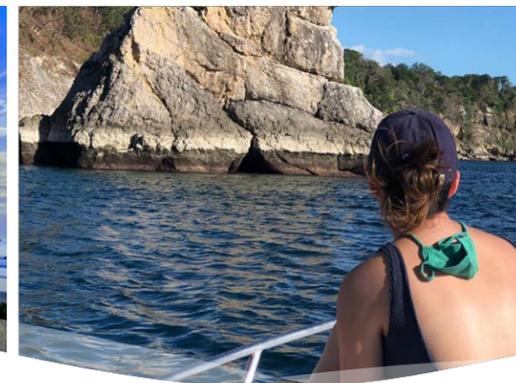
Barra Honda is the largest known cave system in the country.

The geology of Cerro Barra Honda, a mountain 300 meters tall, is a reef-type limestone, meaning that it was once a system of reefs that emerged from the sea due to an upswell in the tectonic plates some 60 million years ago.



These reef formations were shaped by blue and green algae that formed calcium deposits, as well as sponges, sea urchins and foraminifera, tiny marine protozoans with a calcareous shell.

- [sisittransferstourscostarica](#)
- [stayintamarindo.com](#)
- [nolimitadventurescr.com](#)



Rincón de la Vieja

The best combination of full day adventures at Rincón de la Vieja Volcano including ziplining, horseback riding, tubing down the river, a full buffet lunch, hot springs and a volcanic mud bath.

- pininosadventures.net
- ecotranscostarica.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- bluewateradventuretours.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- swisstravelcr.com
- nolimitadventurescr.com
- tamarindodiria.com

Sea turtle nesting

Las Baulas National Park and Playa Ostional

Enjoy an educational experience like no other as you witness a beautiful phenomenon that occurs in Playa Ostional and Playa Grande, where olive ridley and leatherback turtles perform their nesting process under the moon and stars. You will be able to observe the process while a local certified guide will lead you to the nesting turtles and explain all the relevant information. You can also observe how the

leatherback turtle, the world's largest sea turtle, returns to the beaches of Costa Rica to bury its eggs in the sand.

- nativeswaycostarica.com
- hotelgiada.net
- kellysurfshop.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- carrilloadventures.com
- samaraadventures.com
- esperanzatourscr.com
- bluewateradventuretours.com
- nativesway.com
- sisitransferstours.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- mytanfeet.com
- lagartalodge.com

Beach tours

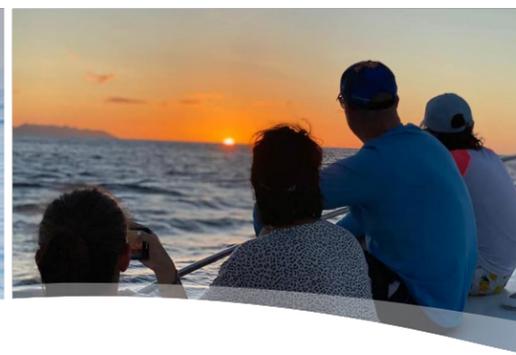
If you want to see the truly unspoiled and secluded beaches our Guanacaste has to offer, this is the tour for you!

- facebook.com/CarrilloToursEco
- bluewateradventuretours.com
- sisitransferstours.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- lagartalodge.com
- margaritavillebeachresort.com

Sailing tour

Sailing along the beautiful beaches of Carrillo awakens all the senses, allowing you to enjoy the wildlife, the beautiful scenery and the majestic Pacific Ocean. If you are lucky, you will be able to observe sea turtles, dolphins, fish and birds. Enjoy some time diving and exploring hidden beaches. You choose the timing: sunset or sunrise. No matter what time you visit, you will be delighted.

- sisitransferstourscostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- lagartalodge.com
- marlindelrey.com/
- panachesailing.com



Sea turtle watching (Camaronal)

Seasonal: July to November

An unforgettable adventure for all ages! This nighttime experience takes place at nearby Playa Camaronal, where you will look for turtles as they peacefully emerge from the ocean. Your guide will use a special red light to avoid bothering the turtles. Made possible by Hotel Punta Islita in partnership with the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and conservation NGOs.

- [facebook/CarrilloToursEco](https://facebook.com/CarrilloToursEco)
- hotelpuntaislita.com

Dolphin watching and snorkeling by catamaran

On this adventure we will look for the nearby populations of spotted dolphins (*Stenella allenuata*), and bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), whales (seasonal) and finish exploring the marine life underwater with snorkeling equipment.

- facebook.com
- carrilloadventures.com
- naturalcentertours-samara.com
- sisitransferstourscostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- lagartalodge.com/
- panachesailing.com
- mytanfeet.com

Humpback whales

Board a boat to explore Playa Sámará area on this guided tour. Home to bottlenose and spotted dolphins, the crystal-clear waters are also a migratory route for the humpback whales that head south at certain times of the year. After the dolphin watching, explore the underwater marine life on your own with snorkeling equipment.

- lazylizardsailing.com
- esperanzatourscr.com
- hotelgiada.net

Sunset cruises

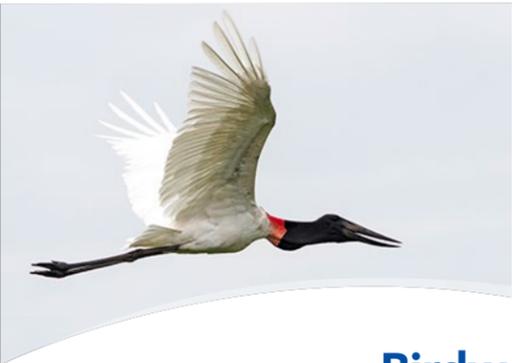
If you are looking for a relaxing evening, join us for a sunset adventure along the coast with drinks, snacks, music and lights. Our guides are ready to show off their best dance moves.

- kellysurfshop.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- suertetour.wixsite.com
- samaraadventures.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- tamarindodiria.com
- swisstravelcr.com
- dreamchasertamarindo.com
- carrilloadventures.com
- lazylizardsailing.com
- sisitransferstourscostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- mytanfeet.com

Waterfall tours

Get a privileged and refreshing view of the Tigre, Malanoche and Belen waterfalls.

- esperanzatourscr.com



Birdwatching

If you're looking to enjoy the tropical dry forest, mangrove swamps, wetlands and the cool and refreshing air of the mountains of Guanacaste, Palo Verde National Park is one of the largest in the province, though there are many others where you can enjoy this activity. You will be able to observe an incredible variety of birds, since Central America is an important stop on the migration routes of many bird species. Some of the birds that can be seen are the antbirds, kinglets,

tanagers, toucans, motmots and nuthatches. Tours are guided by specialists who will help you spot these beautiful, hard-to-find creatures by listening to their distinctive songs.

- [facebook.com](#)
- [tempisqueecotours.com](#)

Mangrove

A beautiful safari boat ride in Las Baulas National Park, Playa Grande. We will take you on a two-hour boat ride through the mangroves to see the beauty of Costa Rica's natural bounty.

- [kellysurfshop.com](#)
- [ecotranscostarica.com](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle.com](#)
- [naturalcentertours-samara](#)
- [nativeswaycostarica](#)
- [sisitransferstourscostarica](#)
- [stayintamarindo.com](#)
- [lagartalodge](#)
- [tamarindodiria](#)
- [nativesway](#)



Photography

Due to the climatic conditions of Guanacaste, the richness of the flora and fauna as well as the varied natural, cultural and architectural landscapes, photography is one of the most popular activities for tourists.

- [caturgua.com/es/inicio](#)

Golf

A 20-minute drive south of Tamarindo, you will find world-class golf courses at the JW Marriott Costa Rica in Guanacaste. One of the most beautiful golf courses in all of Costa Rica. Hacienda Pinilla's greens offer challenging play and some of the best golf holes and views in Latin America.

- [stayintamarindo.com](#)
- [margaritavillebeachresortcostarica.com](#)

Monkey Park Foundation

The Fundación Monkey Park is a wildlife support center that provides:

1. Rehabilitation and release of animals.
2. A home for animals that cannot be released.
3. Volunteer program for Costa Ricans and foreigners.
4. The option for tourists to sponsor the upkeep of animals.

- [monkeyparkfoundation.org](#)

Cultural Tours





Custom art project

The Islita Art Museum and community art associations vividly reflect the region's intense character and passion for color and form. This activity pairs you with local groups to create a signature piece and unique souvenir of your visit. Embroidered collages, refined cell phone cases, rustic sand candles, handmade paper and jewelry are some of the projects that will delight your inner artist.

hotelpuntaislita.com



Tour of architectural and historical sites

Santa Cruz and Nicoya are particularly famous for their sites and buildings of architectural and historical interest, along with national monuments that are considered must-sees.

caturgua.com/es



Taking part in cultural activities

Throughout the year, the region's communities celebrate occasions of historical, religious, sports, civic or artistic importance.

caturgua.com/es



Food tasting

The traditional towns of the region can be discovered in their sodas, small family restaurants or cafés where you can taste the cuisine of Guanacaste. Among all of its communities, Nicoya stands out for its traditional food and beverages.

caturgua.com/es



Purchasing handicrafts

The handicrafts produced in Guaitil de Santa Cruz and San Vicente de Nicoya by the Chorotega indigenous people, who use pure clay and traditional techniques passed down through the generations. The products they make include decorations, vases, flowerpots, plates, ocarinas and more. They are sought after for their fine finish and can be purchased in various places throughout Guanacaste. There are also other handicrafts made using jícaras or



the thipa plant, used in the preparation of various paper products. Handicrafts with Costa Rican identity are also available from the La Choreja collective.

ecomuseosanvicente.org

si.cultura.cr/manifestaciones-culturales

si.cultura.cr/

caturgua.com/es

Adventure Tours



Islas Catalina Diving Tour

(for certified divers)

The Islas Catalinas dive tour starts at 6:50 a.m. at our dive center where we store the equipment. There, we took a few minutes to check the sizes and got on board (our boat is moored in Tamarindo).

After 45 minutes of sailing, we'll arrive at one of the most incredible and places for diving and snorkeling: the Islas Catalinas.

Here, we will have the opportunity to see lots of marine life such as turtles, rays, sharks, manta rays and much more!

After the first dive, we can relax in our boat, eat some snacks, fruits and drink some juice or water. During this time, the boat will take us to our next spot, where, 45 minutes later, we can go back in the water!

We'll dive for the second time and then it will be time to come back. While we sail along, some of our marine friends like turtles, dolphins and whales may approach us! We'll return to Tamarindo at 12 p.m.

Important information

The Islas Catalinas are excellent sites for admiring underwater life that is difficult to find elsewhere. They are one of the best destinations for diving in Costa Rica.

It is possible to observe the giant oceanic manta ray from December to May. As well as other species of rays, sharks, puffer fish, moray eels, catfish, turtles, dolphins, and more.

The best conditions for diving tend to be between May and November, when it is common to enjoy visibility of 35 feet to 80 feet.

Water temperatures in Costa Rica are warm throughout the year, though they are highest between May and October and lowest between December and March.

More information

[tamarindodiving](#)

www.visitcostarica.com



Diving

Costa Rica is very different from other diving destinations. This is because our plankton-rich waters attract an abundance of marine life. Local dive sites (over 20 different sites) teem with shoals of many species of fish, as well as rays, whitetip reef sharks, eels, octopus, seahorses, mantis shrimp, frogfishes and more.

- nativeswaycostarica.com
- es.tamarindodiving.net
- mytanfeet.com
- tamarindodiria.com
- kellysurfshop
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- sisitransferstourscostarica
- hotellunallena.com
- margaritavillebeachresort
- aquacenterdiving.com

PADI certification courses

PADI is the world's leading diver training organization with over 40 years of experience. Pacific Coast Dive Center is the safest and most experienced dive center in Costa Rica. Certified dive instructors and Dive Masters supervise all aquatic activities. PCDC is a PADI center and is certified by the Costa Rican Tourism Commission. We are authorized to conduct courses that guarantee a PADI certificate.

[kellysurfshop](#) [aquacenterdiving](#)



Snorkeling

Beneath the surface of the sea lies a world full of life and color, with a diversity of marine flora and fauna. If you want to discover its beauty, just put on a diving mask, a snorkel and a pair of flippers to start exploring the seabed. Enjoy snorkeling among schools of colorful coral fish, eels, corals, rays and much more. Guanacaste and its dry climate create a perfect setting for fun snorkeling and scuba diving along its rugged and spectacular coastline. This activity is offered in several areas, including: Playa Tamarin-

do, Playa Conchal, Playa Brasilito, Playa Flamingo, Playa Potrero, Santa Elena and the Islas Catalinas, where you will be able to spot dolphins, sea turtles, whales and more. Don't miss this incredible morning excursion.

- [kellysurfshop](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle](#)
- [dreamchasertamarindo](#)
- [pininosadventures](#)
- [samaraadventures](#)
- [swisstravelcr](#)
- [esperanzatourscr](#)
- [nosaraparadiserentals](#)
- [nativeswaycostarica](#)
- [stayintamarindo](#)
- [mytanfeet](#)
- [hotellunallena](#)

River Kayak

A kayak tour on the Río Ora, observing of a variety of wildlife species such as monkeys, iguanas, frogs, snakes and birds.

Suitable for all ages, duration of three and a half hours. Includes transportation from the hotel, fruits, beverages and a bilingual guide.



Surf

Surf the best spots in Guanacaste, like the world-famous Witch's Rock (Roca de Bruja), which has a reputation for offering unbeatable, adrenaline-filled waves. Enjoy the magical long waves and barrels. At Ollie's Point, you will be able to enjoy and take advantage of a right point break. This country offers visitors waves suitable for beginners and advanced surfers. The perfect combination of a tropical climate, warm waters and cool

sea breezes make Costa Rica a perfect year-round surfing destination.

Nosara, Playa Negra, Tamarindo, Marbella, Roca Bruja and Ollie's point, among others.

- kellyssurfshop.com
- mytanfeet.com
- lagartalodge.com
- hotellunallena.com
- pininosadventures.net
- carrilloadventures.com
- naturalcentertours-samara.com
- nosaraparadiserentals.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- pueblodorado.com
- cabinaslasolas.com
- hotellunallena.com
- playanegra.com

Surf Lessons

Not only do the warm waters and world-class waves on the Pacific coast attract surfers from all over the world, but they also offer a great place to learn how to surf. These tours will teach you like to paddle and take control of the surfboard, select and catch the right wave and control the board in the process.

- nativeswaycostarica.com
- pueblodorado.com
- cabinaslasolas.com
- hotellunallena.com
- playanegra.com

Adventures on the ocean

Cruise the ocean and enjoy an exciting sail to distant beaches and an isolated bay. Next, the crew will take you swimming and snorkeling around beautiful reefs to discover Costa Rica's rich marine life. Experience a relaxing and unforgettable sailing experience with vivid colors while enjoying pleasant music, refreshing drinks and delicious snacks.

- kellyssurfshop.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- dreamchasertamarindo.com
- pininosadventures.com
- samaraadventures.com
- swisstravelcr.com
- esperanzatourscr.com
- nosaraparadiserentals.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- mytanfeet.com
- hotellunallena.com

Paddle board flat water tour/lesson

Our instructors are stand up paddlers and will get you paddling comfortably in the first 10 minutes. All equipment included. Our 2-hour course will teach you how to find the optimal point for balance

- kellyssurfshop.com
- mytanfeet.com/



Kayak

Enjoy the view of Tamarindo while paddling towards Isla Capitán. Once you arrive at the island, you will snorkel to enjoy the colors of the water and observe the coral reef life. This is a great tour for learning about and experiencing the world below the water's surface. Take in the power of the ocean as you challenge yourself at a whole new level throughout this kayak tour.



River Kayak

If you are an adrenaline junkie or just love physical activity, this adventure is perfect for you. Test your courage as you plunge through the twists, turns and descents of intense and challenging rapids. Take an exciting and breathtaking guided tour of the Río Colorado, Río Corobicí, Río Tenorio or Río Palo Verde, you choose. This adventure begins where the beauty of the dry forest and rainforest come together, taking you on an incomparable white water rafting experience.



Rafting

Tenorio, Colorado & Corobicí

Test your courage with the descents of intense and challenging rapids. Take an exciting and breathtaking guided tour of the Río Colorado, Río Corobicí, Río Tenorio or Río Palo Verde, you choose. This adventure begins where the beauty of the dry forest and rainforest come together, taking you on an incomparable white water rafting experience.

- kellyssurfshop.com
- ecotranscostarica.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- sisistransferstourscostarica.com
- stayintamarindo.com
- mytanfeet.com



Sport fishing

Costa Rica is not only known for its rainforest, wildlife, volcanoes and beautiful beaches. It is also famous for its marine biodiversity and the endless pristine rocky coastline covered by the crystal blue Pacific Ocean, where you can find some of the best sport fishing sites in the world. The companies provide a high-quality experience for people of all ages who enjoy the beautiful art of fishing.

- gamefishercostarica.com
- coyotesportfishingtamarindo.com
- kellyssurfshop.com
- pininosadventures.com
- tamarindoshuttle.com
- nosaraparadiserentals.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com
- sisistransferstourscostarica.com
- mytanfeet.com
- margaritavillebeachresort.com
- swisstravelcr.com
- hotellunallena.com



SUP (Stand Up Paddle)

You control the experience, whether it's rigorous training or taking it easy, spending a while watching the infinite Pacific Ocean. SUP is a perfect option for seeing the region in a more laid-back way. In addition, it also helps your body to improve its balance, reflexes and body posture.

- carrilloadventures.com
- samaraadventures.com
- esperanzatourscr.com
- nativeswaycostarica.com



Mountain biking

The area has a diversity of scenic roads, adventure and recreational sites that are ideal for tours on ordinary bicycles or mountain bikes, with some of the best tours including visits to beaches and mountains.

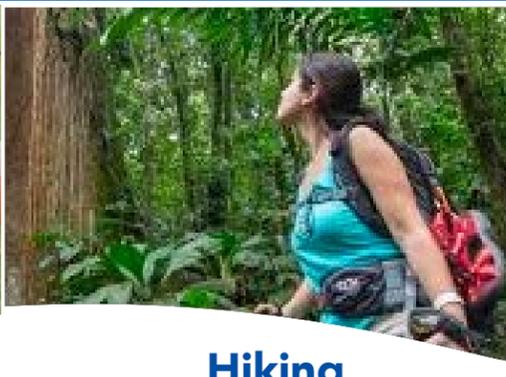
- [kellysurfshop](#)
- [mytanfeet](#)
- [facebook/LAYMATours](#)
- [lagartalodge.com](#)



Ziplining Tour

Start your day with adrenaline as you fly through the woods of Guanacaste, safely suspended and traveling between platforms. Observe the scenic beauty of the forests as you pass through the treetops, while taking in the incredible variety of biodiversity in the area. Many courses provide additional options like the Tarzan Swing and Superman ziplines, as well as hanging bridges – not to be missed!

- [kellysurfshop](#)
- [pininosadventures](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle](#)
- [arenasblancasadventureesperanzatourscr.com](#)
- [bluewateradventuretours](#)
- [sisisitransferstours](#)
- [mytanfeet](#)
- [nativeswaycostarica](#)
- [tamarindodiria](#)
- [pininosadventures](#)
- [ecotranscostarica.com](#)
- [stayintamarindo](#)
- [hotelpuntaislita](#)
- [hotelgiada.net](#)



Hiking

For the more adventurous, you can spend the day exploring the Rincón de La Vieja Volcano on foot, which rises majestically 6,284 feet above a 34,800-acre park and is home to more than 250 species of birds including keel-billed toucans and blue-crowned motmots, ocelots, sloths, jaguars, tapirs, coatis and of course monkeys. You can also visit the Volcán Tenorio National Park, which is an excellent opportunity to see a beautiful region with incomparable scenic beauty.



You can walk along Río Celeste, one of the park's treasures.

- [kellysurfshop.com](#)
- [samaraadventures.com](#)
- [sisisitransferstourscostarica](#)
- [stayintamarindo](#)
- [mytanfeet.com](#)
- [lagartalodge.com](#)



Horseback Riding

Get in touch with your inner cowboy as you take in the sights of Guanacaste mounted on a well-cared for and highly trained horse. During the tour, your guide will tell you about the local wildlife and nature; you may also have the opportunity to see various species of iguanas, birds, butterflies, monkeys and more.

- [hotelgiada.net/tours-samara](#)
- [kellysurfshop.com/en](#)
- [facebook.com/CarrilloToursEco](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle.com](#)
- [carriloadventures.com/](#)
- [arenasblancasadventure.com](#)
- [esperanzatourscr.com/tours](#)
- [bluewateradventuretours.com/](#)
- [sisisitransferstourscostarica.com](#)
- [stayintamarindo.com](#)
- [mytanfeet.com/](#)



Canyoning & Rappel

See Costa Rica from a different perspective from inside a canyon or waterfall. Costa Rica has many hidden canyons full of exotic plants and wildlife, and canyoning and rappelling are your best option to enjoy them.



Mega adventure in Buena Vista Eco Adventure Park

This is a wonderful experience that will show you the essence of Costa Rica and its natural and cultural richness through authentic experiences on the slopes of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano. Experience exhilarating horseback rides and get ready for the Buena Vista ziplining tour, which takes you through the transitional rainforest to a series of treetop platforms, ziplines and suspension bridges. Next, head on a



thrilling ride down the 420-meter-long water slide that winds its way through to the rainforest floor and ends in a freshwater pool. During all these activities, enjoy the flora and fauna of Costa Rica that comes alive in the jungle.

- [pininosadventures](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle](#)
- [ecotranscostarica](#)
- [nolimitadventurescr.com](#)



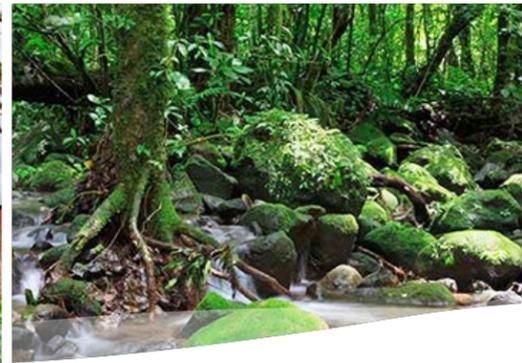
UTV/ATV Quadricycles

Explore Costa Rica with all the adrenaline of your own ATV, while driving through rough roads that are full of excitement, allowing you to see Guanacaste in a different way. You can visit beaches, tropical rainforest and the dry forest, the destination is up to you. The tours have all the necessary safety measures in place to make your experience safe and fun, and the perfect opportunity for a family adventure. The region has impressive biodiversity, with options to observe



different types of birds, butterflies, monkeys, and more.

- [kellysurfshop](#)
- [pininosadventures](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle](#)
- [arenasblancasadventureesperanzatourscr.com](#)
- [bluewateradventuretours](#)
- [sisisitransferstours](#)
- [mytanfeet](#)
- [nativeswaycostarica](#)
- [tamarindodiria](#)
- [pininosadventures](#)



Tour of the Hacienda Guachipelín on Rincón de la Vieja

The tour takes place in a unique property located in the surroundings of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano. First, you will tour the farm on horseback, crossing various trails and rivers, while observing the surrounding flora and fauna. Then, get ready for an adrenaline rush on a tubing adventure, as you float downstream with the rapids of the Río Negro. After a delicious lunch, the excitement returns with a ziplining and

rappel tour through the Río Negro canyon. To finish, relax in a rustic spa amidst the natural volcanic hot springs, steam baths and mud baths, which will calm and cleanse your skin.

- [tamarindoshuttle](#)
- [ecotranscostarica](#)
- [bluewateradventuretours](#)
- [nativeswaycostarica](#)
- [hotellunallena](#)

Natural wonders of Bijagua

Hike through a pristine protected rainforest reserve with over 5 miles of private hiking trails and multiple birding platforms. This is the habitat of the endangered tapir, Costa Rica's largest land mammal. In addition, you can visit Río Celeste, one of the most famous rivers in the country, which is known for its striking color.

- [Secrets_Papagayo](#)
- [amstardmc.com](#)

Vandará (Ziplining, water slides, hot springs)

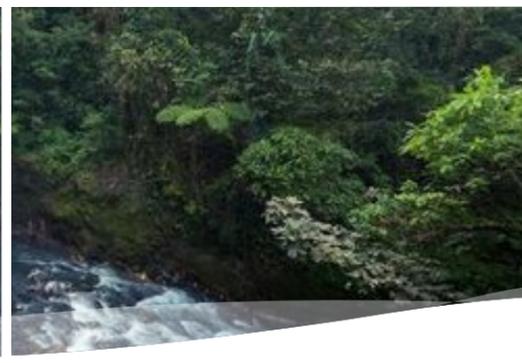
Get ready for a day full of magic in the surroundings of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano. The adventure begins with a scenic horseback ride through trails and forests to reach the first platform, from here the adrenaline will rise while you slide down the various ziplines. Then, have fun on a thrilling ride down the 420-meter-long water slide that winds through the dry tropical forest floor and launches you into a freshwater pool.

- [Tico Tours](#)
- [3 Monkeys Adventures](#)

Half-day Congo Trail adventure

This half-day adventure will have you experiencing a range of emotions. Glide over the trees in a circuit of six zipline stations; you will also be able to cross three hanging bridges with a spectacular view. Next, you can explore the area while riding your own ATV, and finally relax on a horseback ride.

- [hotellunallena](#)



Río Perdido Aerial Canyon

Immerse yourself in the healing waters of an all-natural Costa Rican thermal river, just minutes away from the Miravalles area and the Volcán Tenorio. The adventure begins with short and easy hikes through various trail circuits. This is followed by 15 platforms that are waiting for you, six of which are rock platforms and nine are suspended on the canyon walls, including five ziplines, a Tarzan Swing and a pendulum cable.

Kiwanda Maji Tour

Kiwanda Maji, a peculiar name from the Swahili language that means "The Water Factory" is a term that perfectly explains how this Private Reserve embraces crystalline rivers and amazing waterfalls in the middle of the rainforest. Visit four different waterfalls with their breathtaking beauty as you venture into the rainforest. This wonderful tour will give you the opportunity to swim in a beautiful blue lake and interact with cows, horses, chickens and other farm

animals during the adventure. In addition, you can learn how to milk cows and taste fresh artisanal products such as cheese with combinations of herbs and spices.

- [nolimitadventurescr](#)

Diamante Eco Adventure Pass (One day-pass)

The Adventure Pass combines multiple tour options into one exceptional package that gives visitors maximum flexibility to enjoy all that Diamante has to offer. The tour offers one of the country's longest canopy circuits with a Superman-style zipline, a 10-meter freefall and a hanging bridge over crocodiles. In addition, you will have unlimited access to the Diamante Animal Sanctuary, recognized as one of the most beautiful wildlife education

centers in Costa Rica. Afterwards, you can have a cultural experience at the Botanical Garden. The shaded garden paths are surrounded by fruit trees, flowers and traditional Costa Rican plants.

- [Diamante Eco Adventure Park](#)
- [tamarindoshuttle](#)

Extreme adventure in Borinquen

Enjoy a complete adventure package that includes a ziplining tour, natural spa, mud baths, horseback riding, trails and more. You can explore the ranch grounds all day long and see the many birds, howler monkeys, coatis and other wildlife. The afternoon is very relaxing: be prepared to soak in the hot springs and mud baths. Your body and skin will thank you!

- [nolimitadventurescr](#)



Diving in Guanacaste



Costa Rica represents an ideal destination for scuba diving since its tropical climate, along with the extensive Pacific and Caribbean coastlines, allow nature lovers to find extraordinary beauty in its depths. If you have what it takes to discover our fascinating marine world, you'll understand why Costa Rica is one of the main ecotourism destinations to enjoy the exciting adventure of scuba diving. The different coasts of the country await, with spectacular marine landscapes and the incredible biodiversity of the coral formations.

One of the distinctive features of Guanacaste is the Pacific Ocean. There's no need to be a landlubber here, with a diverse selection of water sports for all tastes.

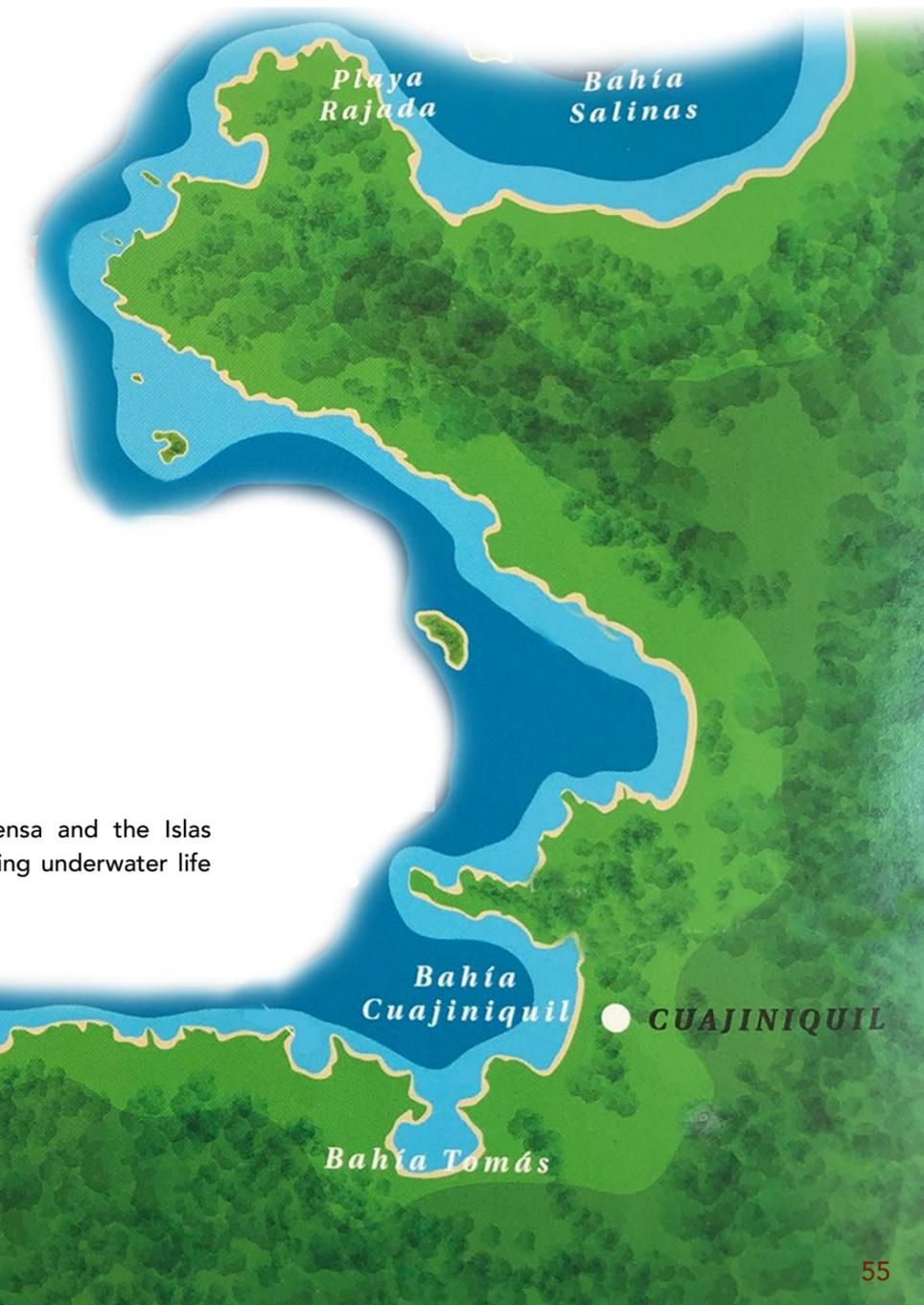
The diving options on offer from operators in Playa Hermosa, Playas del Coco and Playa Ocotal are just an hour's drive from Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport in Liberia. Other locations, such as Isla Bolaños and Isla Negritos, also offer excellent diving options and astounding marine diversity. These sites are located about one hour and forty-five minutes from the airport. Ideal sites for beginners include: Santa Elena Bay, Fila Playa Blanca and Bajo Meros. From March to November, we recommend visiting the waters of Punta Gorda, Bajo Tiburones, Isla Negritos, Isla Cabros and Islas Murciélago, where you can find bull sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*) in their natural habitat.

This list from Diving Center Cuajiniquíl highlights a few extraordinary sites that offer incredible biodiversity and great diving in the canton of La Cruz.

Dive Sites

1. **Black coral and longnose hawkfish** (*Antipathes, Oxycirrhites typus*)
2. **Gran Susto, Isla Murciélago:** Bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*)
3. **Bajo Rojo: Giant manta ray** (*Manta Birostris*)
4. **Gran Susto, Isla Murciélago:** Bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*)
5. **Isla Loros: Whale Shark** (*Rhincondon typus*)
6. **Machetazo: Shovelnose guitarfish** (*Rhinobatos productus*)
7. **Bajo viejón: Pacific seahorse**
8. **Isla Loros: Nurse shark** (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*)
9. **Santa Elena Bay**

Together with the above, Isla Despensa and the Islas Catalinas are excellent sites for admiring underwater life that is difficult to find elsewhere.



Diving in Guanacaste



[Return to map](#)

The Islas Catalinas, with their ghostly manta rays that congregate from January to April, and the Islas Murciélagos, populated by bull sharks, remain the two most famous long-range dive sites in Guanacaste. However, many sites are located much closer: Punta Gorda, Bajo Tiburones, Virador and Los Meros are all about 10 kilometers offshore, and a 20-25 minute boat ride, a fairly short trip in dive circles.

What is the Dome? Where is it located?

The Costa Rica Thermal Dome (CRTD) is a unique oceanographic phenomenon, formed by the interaction of wind and ocean currents, and results in the upwelling of nutrient-rich deep waters, resulting in higher levels of biomass than in the surrounding tropical waters and making it one of the most productive areas in the northeastern tropical Pacific.

It is located to the west of Central America and can measure between 300 and 1000 kilometers wide. The average position of the Dome core is near 9° N and 90° W, in areas outside national jurisdictions. Its diameter and position vary from year to year and over a characteristic annual cycle (Fiedler, 2002).



Fundación MarViva, 2013

This oceanographic phenomenon results from the action of winds and ocean currents that vertically displace deep, cold, nutrient-rich waters towards the surface, creating an upwelling zone.

This upwelling mobilizes an enormous mass of water (about 3.5 million m³/s) to the surface.

The cold water mass is located close to 15 meters from the surface, but is much deeper around the CRTD. As they approach the surface, the nutrients in the cold water mass combine with sunlight to produce a large algae growth.

The greater presence of algae, the first step in the food chain, leads to greater food availability for zooplankton, causing a population explosion. This, in turn, is manifested in each link of the food chain, generating an oasis of resources in the sea.

Due to its high productivity, the CRTD is considered an important habitat for several species. The high presence of phytoplankton also leads to an abundance of zooplankton (1), euphausiids (krill) (2), and small squid, which form the basis of several food chains that are essential for migratory species that benefit from the Dome at various stages of their life cycles. These include manta rays, turtles, dolphins and whales, as well as marine predators including large pelagic fish such as billfishes and sharks. Finally, the area also attracts commercially valuable species such as tuna, mahi mahi and squid. Endangered

blue whales migrate south during the winter from Baja California to the Dome area to feed, mate, calve and care for their young, with some staying in the area year-round.

The Dome is also part of the migratory corridor of a population of leatherback turtles that nest in Costa Rica (Shillinger et al., 2008, 2011). These critically endangered turtles leave their nesting beaches in Central America and Mexico and migrate through the area of the Dome, while hatchlings are transported to the Dome by coastal eddies.

Unsurprisingly, the Costa Rican Dome is considered by scientists to be a critical habitat for the survival of at least these two endangered species.

www.arcgis.com
crdome.marviva.net

Most equipment suppliers offer certification by internationally recognized organizations such as the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). Plan to invest about \$300 per week or so for a beginner certification course.

Many also operate one-day mini-courses to get acquainted with diving. This course does not lead to a certification, but does offer a taste of diving, allowing you to know if you want to go even deeper into the activity.

To view the companies that have received a Tourism Declaration or those that are affiliated with the ICT, go to

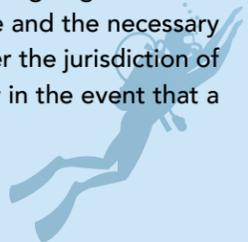
www.visitcostarica.com

Make sure that the company you are going to hire has valid operating permits, risk insurance and the necessary security measures, which are not under the jurisdiction of the ICT. ICT assumes no responsibility in the event that a company is hired.

Guanacaste Diving Centers

The following Guanacaste dive centers can set it up and take it down.

Company	Place	Telephone	Web page / E-mail
Centro de Buceo Agua Rica	Tamarindo	653-0094	www.aguarica.net
Buceo Aguacenter	Playa Flamingo	654-4148	www.costarica-diving.com
Deep Blue Diving Adventures	Playas del Coco	670-1004	www.scuba-diving-incosta-rica.com
Diving Safaris de Costa Rica	Playa Hermosa	672-0012	www.costaricadiving.net
Ocotal Diving Resort	Playa Ocotal	670-0321, ext. 15	www.ocotaldiving.com
Reef del Norte	Cuajiniquil	679-1093	minorlara@racsa.co.cr
Resort Divers de Costa Rica	Playa Panamá	672-0106	www.resortdiverscr.com
Rich Coast Diving	Playas del Coco	670-0176	www.richcoastdiving.com
Centro de buceo Summer-Salt	Playas del Coco	670-0308	www.summer-salt.com
The Edge Adventure Company	Playa Flamingo	654-4946	www.theedgeadventure.com
Diving Center Cuajiniquil	Cuajiniquil	8984-8836 2679-1217	minorlara@hotmail.com www.facebook.com



 **Recommendations before diving** 

- The dive center should be affiliated with one of the international recreational diving organizations such as PADI.
- Personnel must be qualified and trained in rescue diving, oxygen first aid and medical first aid.
- The center must have the maintenance records posted for the equipment and compressors.
- The air in your compressor must be clean.
- The boat must have first aid equipment, oxygen in sufficient quantity and quality, a first aid kit, a staff member trained in first aid and the use of oxygen equipment, drinking water, basic tools and spares, communication equipment, dive flag, an emergency plan written in a manner understandable to all, and a divemaster lifejacket for divers and staff.
- Check the date of the last hydrostatic test of the diving equipment. It must be visible on the tank and must be less than one year old.
- Check the mouthpieces before diving.

Snorkel in Guanacaste

A calm sea with crystal-clear waters is the ideal environment for snorkeling. Guanacaste has no shortage. You will be able to choose between sites close to the beach that allow divers to choose their own route or ones that require taking a boat and going out to sea. Here are some of the best places to dive.

1. **San Juanillo:** one of the region's best places to see the rich marine life. You can swim out to sea to see tiny blue and yellow fish, starfish and sea urchins. San Juanillo is located on the west coast and the nearest towns are Marbella to the north and Ostional, Nosara and Garza to the south. It is located 17 kilometers from Playa Guiones.
2. **Isla Chora:** almost 1.3 kilometers from Sámará. To get there you will have to travel by kayak or hire a boat. Tours to the island cost around \$40 per person. Note that it is best to visit the island during low tide. According to experts, the best time for snorkeling is during the dry season, because in the rainy season the waters become turbid after heavy rainfall. The island has a quiet white sand beach where the water is calm and another rockier part with bigger waves.
3. **Ocotal:** located 40 km south of the city of Liberia, a few minutes from Playas del Coco. Its gentle waves make it ideal for swimming, snorkeling, diving or just relaxing. The beach is surrounded by dry forest and protected by hills and rock formations.
4. **Conchal:** it is one of the best known beaches in the province. It has crystal clear turquoise waters, making it the perfect place for swimming and snorkeling. Near the coast you can find a variety of marine life and swim with multicolored fish.

5. **Nacascolo:** located in the canton of Liberia in the Gulf of Papagayo. It has white sand, blue and crystalline waters. It has shade along its entire coast because from the plants surrounding the beach.
6. **Playa Rajada:** a beautiful, secluded and small beach that is no more than 1 km long with light sand, a gentle slope and crystal-clear blue waters with gentle waves. The beach is surrounded by lush trees of the tropical dry forest, located in Salinas Bay in the province of Guanacaste.
7. **Playa Bahía Junquillal:** the gentle waves, clear water and the long, sandy shore make Junquillal Bay Beach an ideal destination for diving and snorkeling.
8. **Playa Cuajiniquil:** Los Leoncillos, known by locals as Boca Marion, is a hidden away spot that is ideal for snorkeling.
9. **Playas del Coco and Playa Hermosa:** for beginner divers. It is one of the most visited places by divers, but also by tourists in search of beautiful beaches and sunny vacations.
10. **Islas Catalina:** to see manta rays. These islands are located half an hour from Playa del Coco in the province of Guanacaste and are famous for their beautiful seascape. You will be able to see sea turtles, sea horses, rays and sharks.
11. **Islas Murciélagos:** to see bull sharks. These islands are located on the north of the Pacific coast and are famous for bull shark sightings.
12. **Culebra Bay in the Gulf of Papagayo:** a quiet place to snorkel and enjoy the experience safely.
13. **Santa Elena Bay Marine Management Area:** Punta el Pochote is an ideal place for snorkeling because of the rich marine life present in the area.

Sources:

-  guiadeviajeacostarica.com
-  vozdeguanacaste.com



Fuentes

-  ticotimes.net
- viajar.elperiodico.com
- facebook.com/centrodebuceo.cuajiniquil

Wellness Tourism

Our incomparable spas in Guanacaste invites you to embark on the most pleasant journey of your life. They offer a range of rejuvenating treatments performed by **highly qualified massage therapists**.

We also provide an excellent training service that is adjusted to your physical condition and your time, with **walking, jogging, physical trainers, resistance exercises**. A personal trainer will provide you with the best advice that will fit your schedule and requirements.

We also invite you to practice yoga which **relaxes, helps increase strength and flexibility, and is suitable for all ages and experience levels**. You can enjoy a private class or one of the scheduled classes. Days and times vary for each class, so if you are interested, please contact the agency you are interested in.
(See links to agencies)



Waterfall meditation tour

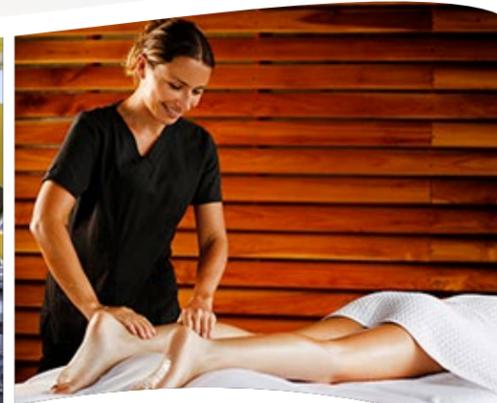
This half-day tour will give you total relaxation and tranquility. You can choose a morning or afternoon tour, where we will drive to the Llanos de Cortés waterfalls. You'll reach these incredible natural wonders after a short hike. Enjoy a few hours relaxing under the falling water and even jump off a cliff if you dare.



Fitness Center

Work out in a premium wellness destination with new state-of-the-art equipment backed by the first open, cloud-based platform. Pamper yourself with customized solutions designed to meet every need.

- [Condovac La Costa](#)
- [Hotel Riu Palace](#)
- [Papagayo Exclusive Services](#)

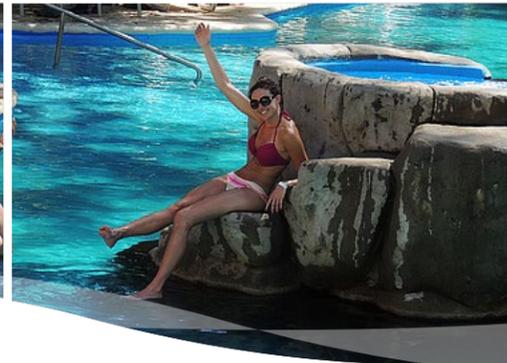


Links to agencies

- [sisitransferstourscostarica](#)
- [stayintamarindo.com](#)
- [lagartalodge.com](#)
- [facebook.com/LAYMA](#)
- [hotelpuntaislita](#)
- [calaluna.com](#)
- [playanegra.com](#)
- [jardindeleden.com](#)



Rural Tourism Tours



Costa Rica Eco Adventure

This tour takes ecotourism and adventure to a new and unique level, aiming to provide the ultimate day of adventure and relaxation for the ecologically minded traveler. After enjoying a natural tropical welcome drink, ride to the zipline and glide from platform to platform as you observe the natural beauty of Costa Rica. Relax in the hot spring pool or enjoy the benefits of authentic volcanic mud with a

beautiful sunset or a panoramic view of untouched lands. In addition, you will have an opportunity to see or hear the many wildlife visitors, including toucans, hawks, hummingbirds, butterflies and monkeys.

[Avispas Adventures](#)

Handicrafts of Guaitil and Santa Cruz

Guaitil is a small town located on the outskirts of Santa Cruz, the main center of Costa Rican folklore. In this town, people make clay pots by hand, decorate them with the natural colors of the earth and fire them in giant wood-burning ovens, just like their ancestors, the Chorotega Indians.

[ecotranscostarica.com](#)
[carrilloadventures.com](#)
[sisitstransferstourscostarica](#)

Traditional festivals

The traditional Costa Rican experience, the rodeo. Riders struggle to stay mounted on fierce bulls. Enjoy an entertaining outing, Costa Rican style. Attend a local rodeo full of fun, flavor and excitement. This tradition is enjoyed by local families of all ages and provides a glimpse into Costa Rican culture. Prize-winning fighting bulls are favorites here for riders to saddle and try to stay on for as long as possible. Riders

earn points by performing maneuvers and delaying their fall to the ground. You can enjoy traditional food and Marimba music. You can't miss it!

[sisitstransferstourscostarica](#)

Rest. Guanacasteco & Coyolera El Sitio de Don Pedro

At El Sitio de Don Pedro, located in Corralillo de Nicoya, you will be able to enjoy the cuisine and traditions of Guanacaste through experiential demonstrations that will involve you directly in the process.

[facebook.com/El-Sitio-de-Don-Pedro](#)



Costa Rican Cultural Tour Hacienda El Viejo

This experience is a perfect way to learn the process involved in processing sugar cane and its derivatives using the trapiche, and an interactive demonstration on the ancient way of extracting the juice from sugar cane with the help of an ox named Puntalito. Afterwards, you can visit the Casita del Sabanero, which recreates the lifestyle of the authentic Costa Rican sabanero.

Finally, you will taste entirely homemade and traditional food, cooked in a wood stove where you can try a puntalito, or snack, of tortillas palmeadas, tanelas and donuts accompanied by the unforgettable and world-famous Costa Rican coffee.

[Hacienda El Viejo](#)

Tour of Nosara Biological Reserve

Bordered by the Nosara River, the Nosara Biological Reserve is an extremely privileged site with rivers that run through it, areas of forests and mangroves, and exuberant flora and fauna.

Starting at the reception of the Lagarta Lodge hotel, you will have the opportunity to walk the trails on your own or accompanied by our guide, admiring the natural beauty of our biological reserve.

[Más información aquí](#)

Diriá Coffee Tour

Diriá coffee is planted, harvested and processed in the highlands of Guanacaste in the cantons of Hojancha, Nicoya and Santa Cruz, one of the world's few blue zones. The high longevity of the region's population is a testament to levels of health and well-being that are the highest in the world. In large part, this has been credited to what people eat and drink in this privileged land.

[diriacoffeetour.com](#)
[suertetour](#)
[samaraadventures.com](#)
[esperanzatourscr.com](#)

Popular dances

Salsa is a union of Afro-Caribbean and European dance styles. If you come to a country like Costa Rica, when you hear this music and its rhythm you will surely feel like dancing salsa, a good option is to take a class, so you can show your skills in a safe and fun way.

[sisitstransferstourscostarica](#)

Guanacaste dances and food

Enjoy a sample of our culture such as dances and the traditional food of Guanacaste.

[tempisqueecotours.com](#)



Rum Experience by Sabandí

Amidst the plains of Guanacaste, surrounded by sugar cane fields and the most important river in the blue zone of Costa Rica, we find Hacienda el Viejo, with a manor house that is over 150 years old and offers the first rum experience in Costa Rica. Prepare your senses to hear, see, smell, touch and taste the whole process of extracting and cooking sugar-cane juice in a traditional way, until it reaches the distiller where the first liquors of

the highest purity are obtained. The Rickhouse awaits you with its oak barrels, which age and improve the flavors of our Ron Sabandí every day.

- [Hacienda El Viejo](#)
- [Swiss Travel](#)
- [3monkies tours](#)
- [3monkies.com](#)

Sabanero Tours

"Sabaneros" is the name given to the Costa Rican cowboys, since they would spend hours and hours guarding the great Guanacaste savannah and its animals. Be part of this experience, and experience working in a poultry farm, milking cows, saddling and tying horses. Includes: guide, refreshments, transportation.

[sisitransfertourscostarica](#)

Guanacaste Lunada

Every Thursday of Holy Week, enjoy this cultural event for the whole family on the night of the full moon, the ritual practiced by our ancestors to thank the moon for their crops.

The evening will feature traditional Guanacaste cuisine and marimba and quijongo music.

Coyolera tour

Alone, or in the company of friends and family, you can enjoy a tour through the history of coyol and learn about this ancestral beverage and its health benefits. If you haven't tried it before, you can't miss it. If you have, it will charm you all over again. Complement your tour with restaurant's culinary offerings, amidst the sounds of the marimba and quijongo, with the option to interact with the musicians in a small gathering.

Guanacaste cuisine tour

Learn about the culinary talent of the most famous Guanacaste tradition, with dishes such as arroz de maíz, atol de maíz pujagua and chicheme, among others. You can also enjoy these and other dishes at El Sitio de Don Pedro's restaurant, amidst the sounds of marimba and quijongo with musicians who will be happy to give you a little musical lesson.



Guanacaste Baking Tour

Be part of a personal experience of the preparation of tanelas, rosquillas and empanadillas from traditional yellow corn, made by the expert hands of Guanacastecan cooks and, at the end of the day, enjoy a cup of coffee in the middle of a rustic local atmosphere. Complement your tour with restaurant's culinary offerings, amidst the sounds of the marimba and quijongo.

Hand-pressed tortilla tour

Learn about the varieties of corn, their properties and benefits, and make your own tortilla by pressing the corn flat with your hands and roasting it on a wood stove. At the end you will be able to taste your own creation with creme fraiche and drip

coffee. Complement your tour with restaurant's culinary offerings, amidst the sounds of the marimba and quijongo, with the option to interact with the musicians in a small gathering.

When looking for a tour operator, make sure that it is endorsed by the Costa Rican Tourism Board. Choose a tour with guided itineraries and always ask for guides who speak fluent Spanish and English. Schedule your tour in advance to avoid disappointment and always make reservations.



Protected Areas

[Return to map](#)

Protected Areas

Do you want to enjoy the incredible spectacle of turtle nesting? Don't miss

Las Baulas Marine National Park

A Ramsar site for mangrove protection and the nesting of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacia*), the Tamarindo estuary is considered the largest in Latin America.

The leatherback is the world's largest species of sea turtle, and is currently endangered. The nesting area in the park is the most important site for the species in the entire Pacific coast of the Americas.



Photo: Sergio Pucci

Recommended activities

- Night tour to observe turtle nesting.
- Natural history talk for participants in the turtle tour.
- Day tour through the Tamarindo estuary.
- Surfing and swimming along Playa Grande.
- Snorkeling or surface diving along Playa Carbón.
- Horseback riding and taking in the scenic beauty.

Services:

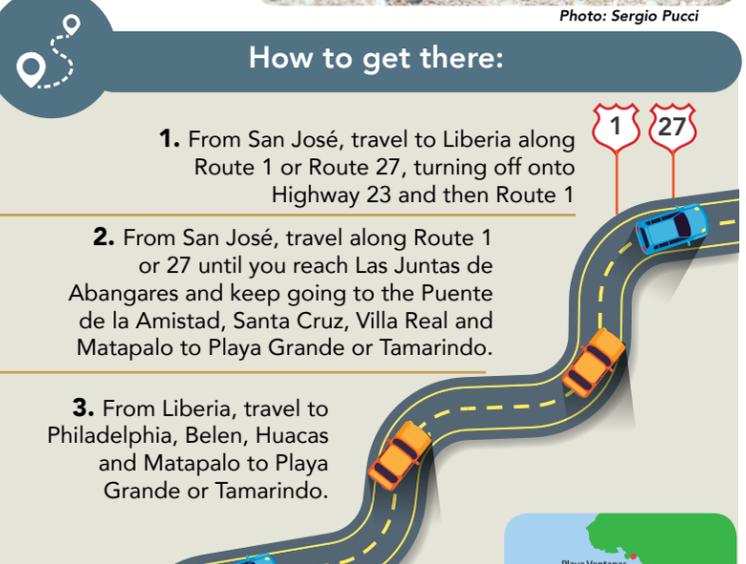
Exhibition room, general information, drinking water, latrines, trails, local guides, beach checkpoint, mangrove checkpoint, mangrove tour.

In the communities of Playa Grande and Tamarindo there is lodging, transportation, food, and an airstrip.

More information
 Las Baulas MNP: 2653-0470
 Subregión Nícoya: 2685-5667
 2685-5267 / 2686-6760
 Regional AC Tempisque:
 2686-4968 / 2686-4970

Address: Canton of Santa Cruz, Cabo Velas and 27 de Abril districts, 8 km from the community of Matapalo and 20 km from Tamarindo by road or 5 km by crossing the estuary.

How to get there:



Acces: the beach has two official entrances: Caseta #1, at the MINAE offices, and Caseta #2 at the edge of the Tamarindo Estuary.



Recommendations

- Do you want to see leatherback turtle nesting? It is recommended to visit between **October 20 and February 15**.
- December to April** (dry season) is recommended to enjoy the sun and the beach.

What to bring

- Cap and sunglasses
- Fresh clothes
- Camera
- Walking Shoes
- Hydration
- Sunscreen
- Repellent
- Snacks

More information here:

[Protected Areas](#) [Las Baulas](#)



The refuge protects the world's main nesting and reproduction site for olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). Thousands of turtles lay their eggs all at once at various points throughout the year along this 7 km beach, in waves known as arribadas. Arribadas occur throughout the year, with 15,000 to 200,000 females arriving once or twice per month.

This natural spectacle only occurs on nine beaches worldwide, and Ostional is the second-most important beach globally, after Playa Escobilla in Mexico (Spotila, 2004).

Turtle egg management is part of sustainable development, because the community itself protects and maintains the turtle habitat.

Recommended activities:

- Night/day tour to observe turtle nesting.
- Day tour through the Tamarindo estuary.

Since the refuge has no lodging facilities, visitors generally stay in the area (Ostional, Nosara, San Juanillo or Sámara and other nearby places, where there are also restaurants and sodas).

Services



Since the refuge has no lodging facilities, visitors generally stay in the area (Ostional, Nosara, San Juanillo or Sámara and other nearby places, where there are also restaurants and sodas).

To enter the beach during the hatching season, an accredited guide must be present. If you are travelling by vehicle, you must leave it on the public road.

What to bring



If you go at night, do not wear reflective clothing. If you are carrying a flashlight, ask a guide how and when to use it to cause the least impact on the environment, since light can influence the behavior of the animals. It can scare the turtles and they may even abort the nesting process, leaving the eggs uncovered and at the mercy of a predator.

National Wildlife Refuge
Ostional

The arribada of the olive ridley turtle is a spectacle you must see at least once in your life!

How to get there

1. From San José, go to Limonal directly via Route 1 or else on Route 27, followed by Highway 23 and Route 1 to Limonal. In Limonal, take the road over the Puente de la Amistad until you reach Nicoya. In Nicoya, take the road to Sámara and Nosara. When you reach Sámara, turn left towards Nosara for about 26 km, passing through Barco Quebrado, Garza, Guiones and Pelada until you reach Playa Ostional, Costa Rica. This route requires a total of 6 hours from San José.
2. From Liberia or Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport (LIR), drive south to Santa Cruz, and from there turn off to Nosara, passing through 27 de Abril, Playa Lagarto, Frijolar, Pitahaya, Azul and San Juanillo until you reach Ostional beach.



It is recommended that the vehicle be a 4x4.



By bus: The San José - Nosara route takes 5 to 6 hours, from Nosara, take a cab or drive to Playa Ostional, approximately 10 minutes (Alfaro company, +506 2222-2666 / +506 2682-0297). It is recommended to purchase your ticket at least one day in advance to secure your space.

You can also take a bus on the San José-Santa Cruz route, which takes 5 to 6 hours. (Tralapa, +506 2221-7202 / +506 2680-0392), and take another bus on the Santa Cruz - Ostional route, which takes about 3 hours (however, this bus cannot make trips in heavy rain).



More Information
Palo Verde NP: 2200-0125
RNVS Ostional Offices: 2682-0400
Regional AC Tempisque: 2686-4968 / 2686-4970



Address: The refuge is located on the 200 m strip of beach between Punta India and the mouth of the Río Nosara and includes the town of Ostional. It belongs to the canton of Santa Cruz, in the province of Guanacaste.

More information here:

- [Protected Areas: Ostional](#)
- [Video Ostional](#)
- [RNVS Ostional](#)
- [Vamos a Turistear](#)

Sustainable use of olive ridley turtle eggs

Turtle egg management is part of sustainable development, because the community itself protects and maintains the turtle habitat, and in turn is allowed to sell a percentage of the eggs for their economic benefit.

The egg extraction project has been in operation since 1987 and is managed by the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de Ostional (ADIO). The population, in an organized manner, is in charge of collecting and selling the eggs. Only eggs produced during the first two days of each arribada are collected, since they have a nearly 100% probability of being destroyed by the same turtles that continue to arrive.

Before venturing out, call the refuge office to make sure there is activity:
2682-0400 / 2682-0937

More information here:

- [Protected Areas: Ostional](#)
- [Ostional: Ridley turtle's main nesting site](#)

Eggs

[Costa Rican legislation recognizes and legitimizes the sustainable use of Kemp's ridley eggs](#)

Photo: Roberto Ramos

Certified Tours

The refuge administrators recommend attending an arribada with certified community guides. Some contacts include:

- 6005-4207:** independent guide;
- 2682-1229:** local guides from the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de Ostional (ADIO);
- 2682-0428:** Ostional Local Guides Association

What to bring?



If you go at night, do not wear reflective clothing. Light can influence the behavior of the animals. Therefore, if you are carrying a flashlight, ask a guide how and when to use it.

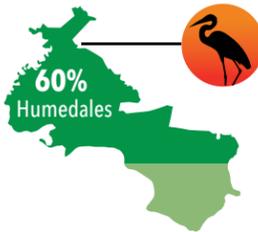
National Park

Palo Verde

A bird sanctuary with water mirrors

This park is made up of lagoons and mangroves that drain into the Río Tempisque. It is a sanctuary for thousands of aquatic birds, both migratory and non-migratory, which is what led the park to be declared a Wetland of Importance under the Global Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR).

Within the park is the 2.3-hectare Isla de Pájaros (Bird Island), located just offshore from the park. The island is incredibly important, since it is home to the country's largest colony of the black-crowned night heron and is one of the most important waterfowl nesting islands in Central America. It is also the habitat of three species of endangered waterfowl:



343 bird species, representing 37% of Costa Rica's total avifauna.



Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)



Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*)



Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)



Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

Photos: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo

Activities

- Birdwatching tours and landscape viewing. From September to March, thousands of herons, egrets, grebes, ibises, ducks and northern jacanas, flock to the lake and neighboring areas to feed and reproduce.
- Hiking

Services

- Drinking water
- Restaurant
- Restrooms
- Information
- Lodging
- Paths
- Lookout
- Cafeteria
- Parking
- Microscopes

Entry Fees

National visitors and residents over 13 years of age.	₡1000
Secondary students	
Foreign	\$12

Credit cards accepted

How to get there

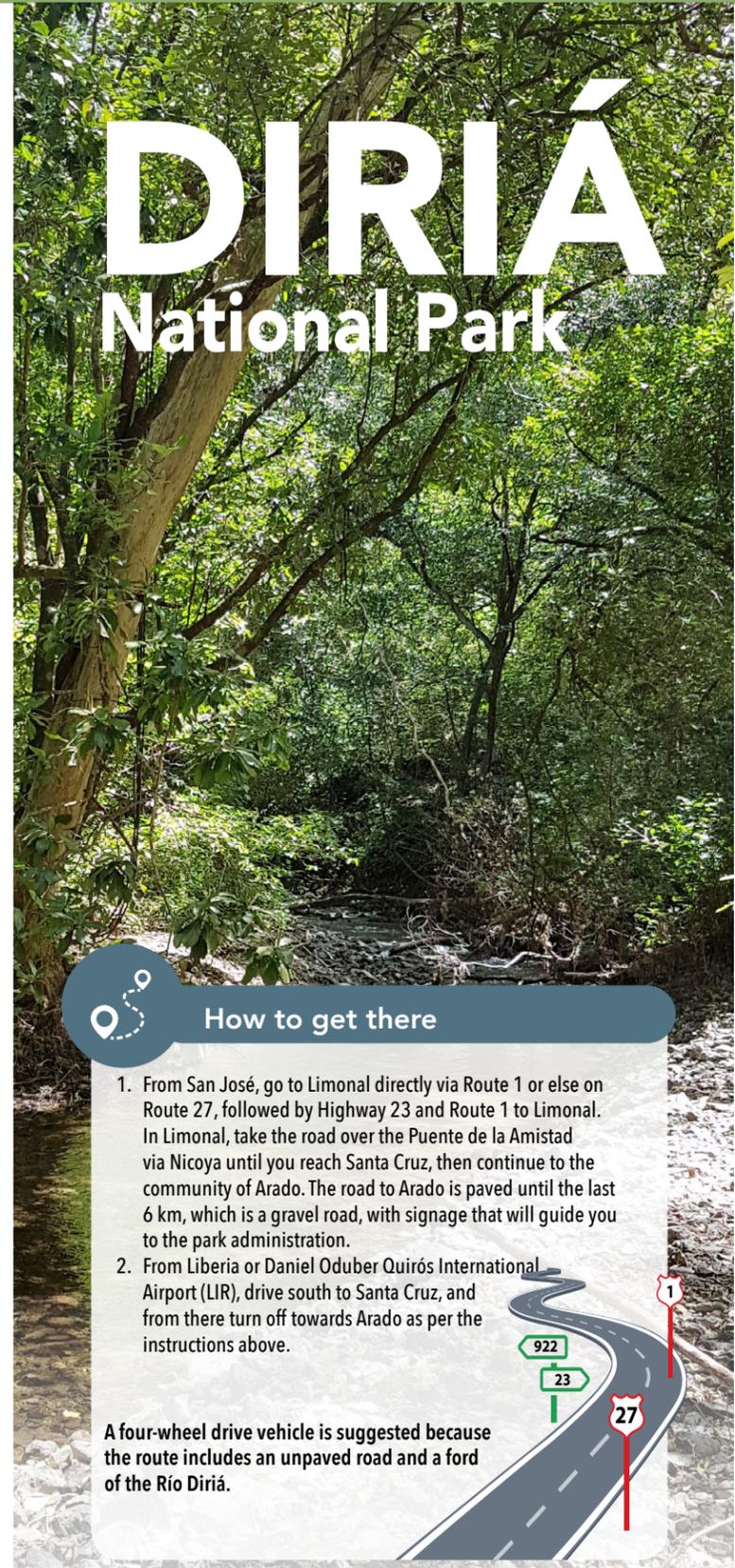
- From San José, travel to Bagaces along Route 1 until you reach Highway 922.
 - From San José to Bagaces via Route 27, turning off on Highway 23 and then to Route 1, then Highway 922 to the destination.
 - From Liberia on Route 1 to the turnoff for Highway 922.
-

More information
 Palo Verde NP: 2200-0125
 Bagaces Subregion: 2671-1455 / 2671-1290 / 2671-1062
 Regional AC Arenal-Tempisque: 2695-5908 / 2695-5180 / 2695-5982

Address: 20 km southwest from the CCSS Clinic of Bagaces. It is located in the Province of Guanacaste, between the Bebedero River and the Tempisque River; approx. 30km west of the city of Cañas.

More information here:
[Protected Areas: Palo Verde](#)
[Parque Nacional Palo Verde, Guanacaste](#)

No pets



DIRIÁ National Park

How to get there

- From San José, go to Limonal directly via Route 1 or else on Route 27, followed by Highway 23 and Route 1 to Limonal. In Limonal, take the road over the Puente de la Amistad via Nicoya until you reach Santa Cruz, then continue to the community of Arado. The road to Arado is paved until the last 6 km, which is a gravel road, with signage that will guide you to the park administration.
 - From Liberia or Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport (LIR), drive south to Santa Cruz, and from there turn off towards Arado as per the instructions above.
-

A four-wheel drive vehicle is suggested because the route includes an unpaved road and a ford of the Río Diríá.

More information here:
[SINAC](#)
[Dirí National Park](#)

Protects the aquifers of the region, which make up a large basin that drain into the Diríá, Enmedio, Tigre and Verde rivers originate, which are of vital importance for the Guanacaste region. Its biodiversity is rich because it is part of the biological corridor alongside other important refuges of the region, which permanently links the forested areas of the southern and northern Pacific regions. In the upper part of the forest, the only remnants of the tropical cloud forest that once covered the highlands of the Nicoya Peninsula remain.

Birds are abundant in the area, with at least 134 distinct species identified. These include the long-tailed manakin, black guan, turquoise-browed motmot, and several species of hummingbird. In certain seasons, the trill of the three-wattled bellbird can also be heard. We can also observe several mammals here, including the white-faced capuchin, agouti, deer, coatis and coyotes. The most common amphibians and reptiles are iguanas, frogs, various species of non-venomous snakes including the boa constrictor, as well as venomous snakes including rattlesnakes and coral snakes.

Services

- Drinking water
- Showers
- Restrooms
- Lookout
- Lodging
- Picnic Area
- Camping Area

Activities

- Hiking
- Observing flora and fauna

Entry Fees

Nationals	₡ 600
Students	₡ 200
Foreign	\$6

- Gorra y lentes oscuros
- Fresh clothes
- Camera
- Walking Shoes
- Hydration
- Sunscreen
- Repellent
- Snacks

More Information Tempisque CA Regional: 2686-4968 / 2686-4969/ 2686-4970

- No weapons allowed
- Keep within trails
- Do not pollute
- No pets
- It is not allowed to enter under the drug effect
- Do not extract plants or rocks

This is a park that requires a medium level of fitness, so it can be visited by families who enjoy walking.

Photo: Roberto Ramos

Barra Honda National Park



Barra Honda is the largest known cave system in the country. The geology of Cerro Barra Honda, a mountain 300 meters tall, shows that it was once a system of reefs that emerged from the sea due to an upswell in the tectonic plates some 60 million years ago. These reef formations were shaped by blue and green algae that formed calcium deposits, as well as sponges, sea urchins and foraminifera, tiny marine protozoans with a calcareous shell.

It is one of the many rounded limestone hills located in the province of Guanacaste, and the only one in the region that has been studied to date and shown to possess large caverns with significant decorations. Another important element of this area is its capacity as an aquifer reserve for the surrounding inhabitants.

To visit the caves, first hire a guide authorized by the administration and rent the equipment provided by the wilderness area.

People with conditions such as hypertension, vertigo or claustrophobia are not recommended to descend into the caves.

Services



More information

Barra Honda NP: (506) 2659-1551
Tempisque CA Region: 2686-4968 / 2686-4970

Dirección: It is located in the province of Guanacaste, 22 km northeast of the city of Nicoya. The park is made up of the Barra Honda hill and other surrounding hills. There are grocery stores in Barra Honda and the closest cities are Nicoya and Carmona, where you can find hotels, restaurants and markets.

How to get there

1. From San José, go to Limonal directly via Route 1 or else on Route 27, followed by Highway 23 and Route 1 to Limonal. In Limonal, take the road over the Puente de la Amistad toward Nicoya. When you arrive at the entrance of Nicoya, take the road east of the traffic lights, towards the community of Santa Ana (16 km) until you reach the entrance to the town of Barra Honda. The road is paved, though the last 6 km is a gravel road.
2. From Liberia, head to Santa Cruz and Nicoya. When you arrive at the entrance of Nicoya, take the road east of the traffic lights, towards the community of Santa Ana (16 km). The road is paved, though the last 6 km is a gravel road.

What to bring?



Normal visiting hours:

Seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (visitor service for information and reservations)

Opening hours to visit the caves:

From 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (descent).

Safety measures:

On the trails and the lookout point:

- Use the sites only for their intended purpose.
- Don't leave the trails.
- Follow the recommendations of the guides.
- At the lookout point, do not climb on the railings.

In the cavern:

- Respect the guides' working area, only one person at a time.
- Follow the recommendations of the guides.
- Walk on the designated paths inside the cave.

Entry Fees

National visitors and residents over 13 years of age. Secondary students	¢1000
Foreigners	\$12
Tour to the caves, includes official entrance, guide and equipment.	nationals \$19 foreign \$29



Camaronal Wildlife Refuge

Located in Zapotal de Nandayure, the Camaronal Refuge is popular because it is a nesting site for four sea turtle species: leatherback, black, hawksbill and olive ridley, which hatch during different times of the year. However, the most common are the olive ridley and black turtles, since the hawksbill and leatherback turtles are endangered. Uninhabited Playa Camaronal has gray sand and blue water, stretching over 3 km between the mouth of the Río Ora in the west and the cliffs of Punta Camaronal to the southeast of the beach.

The turtle nesting process is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, an opportunity that captivates locals and foreigners alike. It is a natural spectacle that offers the opportunity to see live the arrival of these majestic reptiles to the beach; the size, variety and quantity that can be observed under the moonlight and the starry sky is truly impressive.

When to visit?

During Costa Rica's rainy season, from May to November, is the best time to see sea turtles.

Hours of operation: 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Because adult sea turtles only lay their eggs at night, tour guides must be hired outside of visiting hours.

\$40 is the approximate cost of hiring a guide.

- 4 species of sea turtles:
 - Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*),
 - Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*),
 - Olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*),
 - Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

May 2, 1994 the Camaronal Wildlife Refuge was created to protect mangroves and wildlife, including the four species of sea turtles.

Its beautiful waves make it a great destination for surfers. The largest wave ever recorded on the beach reached about 20 m. It also offers many recreational tourist activities such as fishing.

It has exuberant vegetation, with mangrove vegetation predominating, as well as trees including Madero Negro de Montaña (*Lennea viridiflora*), el Corteza Amarilla (*Tabebuia chrysantha*), el Guácimo (*Guazuma ulmifolia*), el Guapinol (*Hymenaea courbaril*), entre muchos otros.

Fantastic for birdwatching with species such as hawks, cranes, herons, tiger hummingbirds and green kingfishers. There are also other animals such as iguanas, armadillos and monkeys.





Sighting hours:
from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.



You must be accompanied by a guide accredited by INA, MINAE or SINAC for wildlife watching.



The maximum group size is 14 people and the minimum is one person, you need to call a few hours before your visit to reserve your space.



Wildlife watching consists of observing turtles from their arrival to the beach, as they dig holes, lay eggs and return to the sea, a process that generally takes one hour. When nesting, a turtle can lay an average of 80 to 120 eggs.



Price for Costa Rican nationals: ₡1.600.
Price for foreign: \$10.

Location:

South side of the New Catholic Temple, Nicoya, Guanacaste.

For reservations:

(506) 8818-3909 o 8573-5297

Tempisque Conservation Area (ACT)

Regional Office, Nicoya

(506) 2686-4967 act.info@sinac.go.cr

Phone number of the Camaronal Wildlife Refuge Ranger Station

(506) 2656-2080

Tempisque Conservation Area (ACT)

(ACT): +506 2686-4967 / +506 2686-4968

Links

gocostarica.co.cr
costaricainfolink.com

periodicomensaje.com



How to get there



By car

From San José take the Interamericana Norte until you reach Limonal. Turn left at the Tres Hermanas Restaurant and cross the Puente de la Amistad, then take the road until Nicoya. Once you arrive in Nicoya, head south towards Sámará, continue to Carrillo and then take the turnoff to the right towards Playa Camaronal. This road is very steep and includes a ford of the Río Ora. Only vehicles with four-wheel drive will be able to reach it. During the rainy season, drivers will need to take an alternate route that starts at Estrada Rávago, near Playa Carrillo, to reach Playa Camaronal. It is a very scenic trip that exemplifies rural Costa Rica. This route requires a total of 6 hours from San José.

From Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport (LIR), drive south to Nicoya, and from there turn off toward Sámará, passing through Hojanca. From there, head south to Sámará, continue to Carrillo and then take the turnoff to the right to Playa Camaronal. This road is very steep and includes a ford of the Río Ora. Only vehicles with four-wheel drive will be able to reach it.

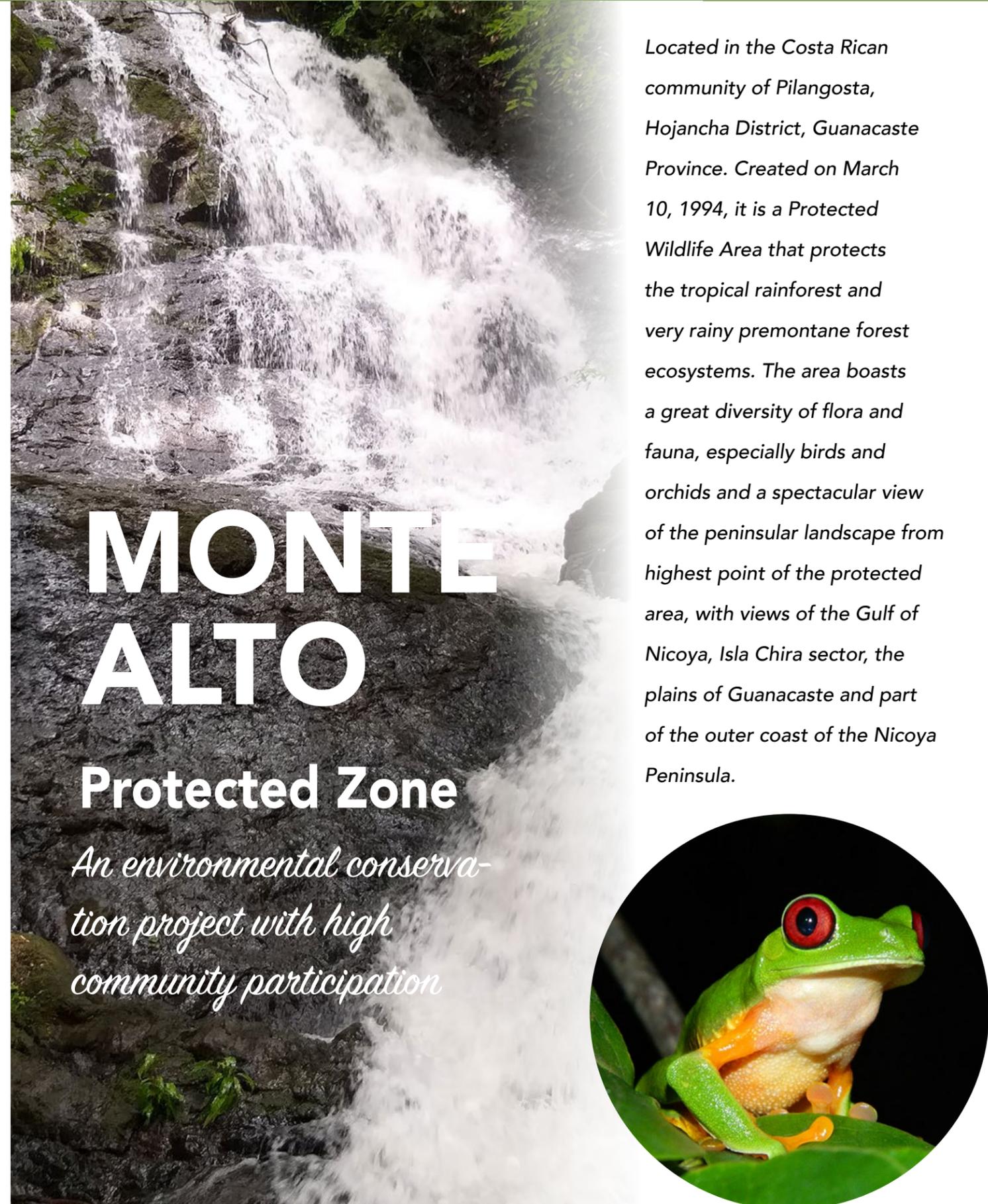


By bus

You can take a bus from San Jose to Samara, which takes 5 to 6 hours, and then a bus from Samara to Carrillo, which takes an hour and a half (Terminal Alfaro, +506 2222-2666), and from there you can take a cab or rent a car and drive to Playa Camaronal, as there are no buses. The drive can take about 15 minutes. It is recommended to purchase your ticket at least one day in advance to secure your space. With prior notice, an official from the refuge will pick you up at the last stop in Carrillo and take you to the Camaronal Wildlife Refuge.

By plane

You can also take a flight between Juan Santamaría airport and Samara or Carrillo, with daily departures on Sansa or Aerobell Airlines. With prior notice, an official from the refuge will pick you up from Sámará or Carrillo and take you to the Camaronal Wildlife Refuge.



MONTE ALTO

Protected Zone

An environmental conservation project with high community participation

Located in the Costa Rican community of Pilangosta, Hojanca District, Guanacaste Province. Created on March 10, 1994, it is a Protected Wildlife Area that protects the tropical rainforest and very rainy premontane forest ecosystems. The area boasts a great diversity of flora and fauna, especially birds and orchids and a spectacular view of the peninsular landscape from highest point of the protected area, with views of the Gulf of Nicoya, Isla Chira sector, the plains of Guanacaste and part of the outer coast of the Nicoya Peninsula.



Monte Alto Protected Zone

[Return to map](#)



Flora y fauna

The avifauna present in this area and in the Monte Alto nature reserve is made up of terrestrial (non-aquatic), migratory and resident species, with the latter being the most common.

Within the reserve we can find rare species such as the barred hawk (*Leucopternis princeps*) and the yellow-bellied sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), both of which have only been seen once. A variety of mammals is present, including bats.

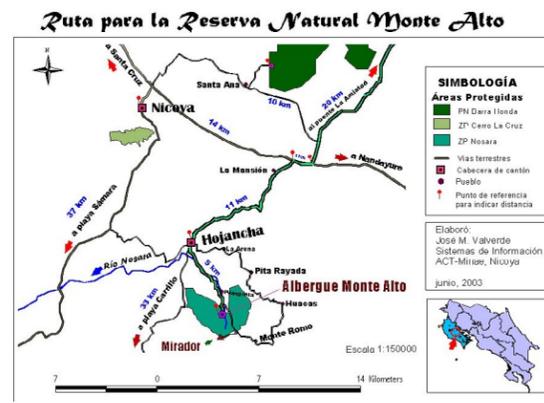
The reserve has a high floristic richness despite the alterations caused by humans in the past. This richness is extremely important for the avian fauna because the nesting season coincides with the availability of fruits.

The exuberant vegetation includes about 70 species of orchids, including a species of shrub that is new to science (*Stemmadenia hanna*). The Hojancha tree (*Cleidion castaneifolium*).

How to get there?

Route 1: San José - Río Tempisque Bridge - La Mansión de Nicoya, Hojancha, Pilangosta. Distance 217 km

Route 2: San José - Liberia - Nicoya - La Mansión - Hojancha - Pilangosta. Distance 300 km



Services

-  Talks
-  Restaurant
-  Lodging
-  Guided Hiking

Activities

-  Bird watching
-  Hiking
-  Visit nearby attractions
-  Specialized talks
-  Orchid path

Reservations:

-  Tel. 2659-93-47 ó 2659-83-57
-  reservamontealto@gmail.com
-  facebook.com/reservamontealto/

What to bring

-  Cap and sunglasses
-  Fresh clothes
-  Camera
-  Walking shoes
-  Hydration
-  Sunscreen
-  Repellent
-  Snacks

 **Hours:**
M-S 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Entry fee:
¢1000 nationals and \$5 foreigners (VAT included)

Directory of Services

Guides certified by the Costa Rican Tourism Board

There are many advantages to hiring a certified tour guide. You can get more information and details about the natural, cultural and historical surroundings in your own language, which you might miss when traveling alone. In addition, you can learn more about the costarriqueños, the sayings of the local Ticos. Tour guides can help you save time and make the most of it. They are excellent at detecting animals and birds in hidden places or in the middle of the forest. We invite you to choose any of the following certified tour guides that best suits your needs, among more than 2,500 available in different specialties.

[Directory of Certified Guides here](#)

We want you to know every corner of our beautiful country. Travel like a local and enjoy your trip safely, taking into account the following recommendations:

Some travelers require a visa to visit Costa Rica. Remember to check the list of countries before purchasing your ticket and verify the entry requirements for the country where your passport was issued.

Costa Rica is a place where nature abounds and adventure awaits you. Just remember:

- Book tours offered by authorized travel agencies.
- Always check local weather conditions and forecasts before heading out on a tour.
- Make sure that the tour guide provides you with safety instructions and the rules of the activity before starting a tour.
- Make sure that the company has an operating permit issued by the Ministry of Health, insurance policies and certified tour guides.

Information on roads and airports

Lugar	Contact
Tobías Bolaños International Airport, Pavas. San José.	Tel.: 2232-28201/ 2232-7330
Juan Santamaría International Airport, Flight information.	Tel.: 2437-2626
Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport, Liberia Guanacaste. Administration and information	Tel.: 2668-1010
Private tourist transportation	
INTERBUS Offices in: La Fortuna Puerto Viejo, Limón Tamarindo Sámara Sama Teresa	Tel.: 4100-0888 www.interbusonline.com reservations@interbusonline.com Tel.: 2479-7074 Tel 2750-2145 Tel.L 2653-4374 Tel: 2656-0606 Tel 2436-2084
GRAY LINE Costa Rica	Tel.: 2220-2126 2291-0756 www.graylinecostarica.com info@graylinecostarica.com
Air Transport	
SANSA	Tel.: 2290-4100/2290-4400 sansareservations@taca.com www.flysansa.com
Aerobell Hangar #2	Tel. 2290-0000 Pavas Aiport www.aerobell.com
Departures from Juan Santamaría International Airport.	
Air Taxi Centroamericano AVIONES TAXI AEREO S.A	Ph: (506) 2431-0160/ (506) 2431-0293 reservations@airchartercentralamerica.com Pavas Airport www.tacsa@racsa.co.cr
Paradise Air Pavas Airport	Tel.: 2231-0938, 2296-3600. www.flywithparadise.com
Helicópteros	
Aensa	Tel.22321248 www.aerotourscr.com
Helicópteros de CR Nicoya	Tel 2675-5094
Golfito	Tel.2789-8098
Sarapiquí	Tel.2764-4600
Rural Tourism	https://www.visitcostarica.com/es/costa-rica/things-to-do/rural-tourism

[To learn about COVID 19 protocols, enter here](#)

TOURISM COMPANY WITH DECLARATION (DT) AND SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATE (CST)

Thematic Activity				
Company	Telephone	E-mail	Web page	Address
ACTIVIDAD TEMÁTICA FUNDACIÓN MONKEY PARK	2653-8032	info.fundacionmonkeypark@gmail.com	www.monkeyparkfoundation.org	PORTEGOLPE, KILOMETRO 18, CARRETERA FLAMINGO, TAMARINDO
TEOSINTE LIMITADA	26530090	tamspf@racsa.co.cr		TAMARINDO
DREAM CHASSER TOUR OPERADOR LTDA	26532125, 60455858	party@dreamchasertamarindo.com; party@dreamchasertamarindo.com		SANTA CRUZ, TAMARINDO, CALLE REAL, FRENTE AL HOTEL PASATIEMPOS DIAGONAL AL BANCO NACIONAL
Aquatic recreational activity				
Surf				
SURF AND PADDLE BOARD: KELLY'S SURF SHOP	2653-1355	info@kellyssurfshop.com	info@kellyssurfshop.com	Contiguo a Economy Rent a Car, Tamarindo
SURF SHOP	2653-2967	info@neptunofsurfshop.com	www.neptunofsurfshop.com	Local # 11, Centro comercial Sunrise Tamarindo
Fishing				
FLAMINGO SPORT FISHING	8389-5962	info@flamingosportfishing.com	www.flamingosportfishing.com	1.5 km al norte de la escuela de Matapalo
COYOTE SPORT FISHING	8840-3123	coyotesportfishingcr@gmail.com		2 km del cruce de Villarreal, finca Refundores
PESCA DEPORTIVA, SNORKELY SURF COYOTE SPORT FISHING	8363-3509	info@tirimbina.org	www.coyotesportfishingtamarindo.com	2 km del Cruce de Villarreal Finca Refundores
PESCA DEPORTIVA GAME FISHER CHARTERS	8828-2287	info@gamefisher2.com	www.gamefisher2.com	Costado norte de la Suite Presidencia Playa Flamingo
Diving				
BUCEO Y SNORKEL TAMARINDO DIVING	8583-5873	info@tamarindodiving.net	www.tamarindodiving.net	Frente al Hotel Best Western Tamarindo Vista Villas, Tamarindo
BUCEO: AQUACENTER	88777420 83524031	info@aquacenterdiving.com	www.aquacenterdiving.com	100 norte de la rotonda Flamingo.
TAMARINDO DIVING		info@tamarindodiving.net		Frente al Hotel Best Western

Links to videos of interest South Guanacaste:

- [Somos Hojancha Cantón](#)
- [Somos Matambú](#)
- [Somos Monte Romo](#)

- [Somos Huacas](#)
- [Somos Puerto Carrillo](#)
- [Somos Hojancha Distrito Central](#)

Catamaran

TOUR EN CATAMARÁN MAÑANA Y TARDE: CHASSER TOUR OPERADOR	2653-2125 8532-3849 8449-4067	party@dreamchasertamarindo.com	www.dreamchasertamarindo.com	TAMARINDO CALLE REAL FRENTE AL HOTEL PASATIEMPOS DIAGONAL AL BANCO NACIONAL
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PARASAILING: PANACHE SAILING	2573-0450	info@panachesailing.com	www.panachesailing.com	250 M ESTE DE HOTEL BAHÍA DEL SOL PLAYA POTRERO
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TOURISM COMPANY WITH DECLARATION (DT) AND SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATE (CST)

AgeTravel Agencies

Company	Telephone	E-mail	Web page	Address
TAMARINDO TRANSFERS & TOURS	2653-4444	reservations@tamarindoshuttle.com	www.tamarindoshuttle.com	CENTRO COMERCIAL GALERÍAS DEL MAR LOCAL # 1 TAMARINDO.
AGENCIA DE VIAJES PININOS ADVENTURES	8903-1171	info@pininosadvetures.com	www.pininosadventures.net	COSTADO NORTE DE LA PLAZA DE DEPORTES DE HUACAS
AGENCIA DE VIAJES MARLIN DEL REY	2653-1212	reservas@marlindelrey.com	www.marlindelrey.com	FRENTE AL HOTEL TAMARINDO CC PLAZA TAMARINDO LOCAL 8
AGENCIA DE VIAJES BLUE WATER ADVENTURES TOURS	26534668	info@bluewateradventurestous.com		TAMARINDO PACIFIR PARK LOCAL C-6
MYTANFEET LTDA	21010970	services@mytanfeet.com; hello@mytanfeet.com		RANCHO VILLARREAL, LOTE 72, VILLARREAL
AGENCIA DE VIAJES NATIVE'S WAY COSTA RICA	22447847	info@nativesway.com		100 METROS OESTE DEL BANCO NACIONAL
TEMPISQUE ECOTOURS	84530516, 83195641	info@tempisqueecotours.com	https://tempisqueecotours.com/	FRENTE AL REDONDEL DE TOROS DE PUERTO HUMO, SAN ANTONIO, NICOYA, GUANACASTE

Lodging

CABINAS LAS OLAS	2652-9315	info@cabinaslasolas.com	www.cabinaslasolas.com	PLAYA AVELLANAS, 25 KM AL SUR DE TAMARINDO
ANGELES ECOLODGE	2658-0502	info@angelsecolodge.com	www.angelsecolodge.com	DEL CRUCE 27 ABRIL 5KM NORTE, ENTRE LAS DELICIAS Y RIO SECO CARRETERA A PLAYA JUNQUILLAL
BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA LOS ALTOS DE EROS	8850-4222	info@losaltosdeeros.com	www.losaltosdeeros.com	CAÑAS FISTULA FRENTE AL SABANERO 2KM AL SUR
HOTEL LAS TORTUGAS	2653-0423	yohanapaniagua@yahoo.es info@lastortugashotel.com	www.lastortugashotel.com	PLAYA GRANDE DE MATA PALO, SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
HOTEL PLAYA NEGRA	2652-9134	hotelplayanegra@ice.co.cr	www.hotelplayanegra.com	PARAÍSO DE SANTA CRUZ 4 KM CARRETERA AVELLANAS

HOTELS

NAME	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
HOTEL VILLA BAULA	2653-0493 2653-0644	-	www.hotelvillabaula.com CONTIGUO AL ESTERO, PLAYA GRANDE, CABO VELAS SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL REAL DE PINILLA (JW MARRIOTT GUANACASTE RESORT Y SPA)	2681-2000, 2681-2204	guido.barrientos@r-hr.com; mauricio.moscoso@ marriott.com; jesus.gonzalez@r-hr.com; denis. jaen@r-hr.com	HACIENDA PINILLA, FRENTE A PLAYA MAN- SITA, SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
BOUTIQUE HOTEL Y SPA LOS ALTOS DE EROS	8850-4222	calvinh_03801@yahoo.com; info@losaltos- deeros.com	1 KM SUR DE CAÑAFÍSTULA, 27 DE ABRIL, SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL PUEBLO DORADO	2222-5734, 2653-0008	pueblodorado@racsa.co.cr	TAMARINDO, SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
HOTEL EL JARDÍN DEL EDÉN	2653-0137, 2653-0111, 2653-0142	frontdesk@jardindeleden.com; reservaciones@ jardindeleden.com; administracion@jardin- deleden.com	1KM ESTE, 1KM SUR HOTEL MILAGRO, PLA- YA TAMARINDO, SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
HOTEL CAPITÁN SUIZO	2653-0075, 2653-0353	sfuentes@hotelcapitansuizo.com; sostenibilidad@hotelcapitansuizo.com	800 METROS AL SUR DEL EDIFICIO PACIFIC PARK, TAMARINDO
HOTEL BEST WESTERN TAMARINDO VISTA VILLAS	2653-0114, 2653-0700	info@tamarindovistavillas.com; gerencia@tamarindovistavillas.com	1000 CALLE PRINCIPAL DE TAMARINDO.
APARTOTEL LA COLINA	2653-0102, 2653-0303	lacolinatamarindo@yahoo.com; la-colinatamarindo@yahoo.com	FRENTE HOTEL JARDÍN EDÉN PLAYA TAMA- RINDO SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL TAMARINDO DIRIÁ	2653-0031, 2290-4340	gerenciadeventas@tamarindodiria.com; reservas@tamarindodiria.com; grupodiria@ tamarindodiria.com	PLAYA TAMARINDO FRENTE BNCR SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
CABINAS LAS OLAS	2652-9315, 2233-4455	blueocean01@gmail.com; olassa@racsa.co.cr	PLAYA AVELLANAS, SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL CALA LUNA	2653-1005, 2653-0214, 2653-4629, 2653-0213	cst@calaluna.com; sostenibilidad@calaluna. com; federico@calaluna.com	300 M OESTE DEL HOTEL CAPITÁN SUIZO, TAMARINDO, SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL BARCELÓ LANGOSTA BEACH	2653-0363, 8814-0608	tamarindo.dir@occidentalhotels.com	PLAYA LANGOSTA TAMARINDO SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
HOTEL BEST WESTERN CAMINO A TAMARINDO	2653-6294, 2653-6297, 2653-6818	anisa26@gmail.com; info@bwtamarindo.com; jlbolanos@bwtamarindo.com	3KM DEL CRUCE DE HUACAS CAMINO A TAMARINDO, TAMARINDO, SANTA CRUZ, GUANACASTE
HOTEL ESPLENDOR TAMARINDO	4700-4747	reservas@esplendortamarindo.com	200 ESTE Y 800 NORTE DEL BANCO NACIONAL DE TAMARINDO, SANTA CRUZ GUANACASTE
HOTEL SELINA TAMARINDO	4052-5986	reception.tamarindo@selina.com	PLAYA TAMARINDO, CALLE HACIA PLAYA LANGOSTA
TEN NORTH TAMARINDO		tennorthtamarindo@gmail.com; robert@richcostaccounting.com	SANTA CRUZ, TAMARINDO, FRENTE AL SUPERMERCADO SUPER COMPRO
DRIFT AWAY ECO LODGE		reservations@driftawayecolodge.com; manager@driftawayecolodge.com	GUANACASTE, SANTA CRUZ, PLAYA LAGARTILLO, 25 METROS SUR Y 50 ESTE DE CABINAS LA PLAYA.

NIGHT LIFE

BAR SHARKYS	26534705, 26533705	COSTARICAZIEGLER@HOTMAIL.COM; julirth1334@hotmail.com; ben@sharkysbars. com	DIAGONAL A LA TIENDA ARENAS EN EL CENTRO DE TAMARINDO
BAR PACÍFICO	26534406	pacificobartamarindo@hotmail.com	COSTADO OESTE DE LA ROTONDA DE TAMARINDO

(Megaptera novaeangliae)

Humpback whales in Costa Rica

Costa Rica's Bahía Ballena, Isla del Caño Biological Reserve and Bahía Drake are some of the best places on the planet to catch a glimpse of the humpback whale. These sites are located in the northern and southern Pacific coast of our country. According to National Geographic, Ballena Marine National Park is one of the 10 best places to spot humpback whales. The Guanacaste coast is great as well!

Regardless of whether you're relying on patience or luck, watching humpback whales and their calves jumping and performing acrobatic feats in the ocean is something we should all see at some point in our lives.

Humpback whales travel long distances from their feeding areas in cooler waters, including the polar oceans, to their breeding areas in the warm waters of Costa Rica.

These giants remain in Costa Rica for a total of 10 months per year, with groups coming from different hemispheres in each half of the year. This gives the country the longest humpback whale watching season in the world, thanks to the presence of whales from the northern and southern hemispheres.

Characteristics of the species

Humpback whales (Megaptera novaeangliae) are marine mammals belonging to the rorqual family (Balaenopteridae) of the suborder Mysticeti (baleen whales) and the Cetacea order, which includes whales, orcas and dolphins.

The name "humpback" is due to its distinctive short, stout dorsal fin. Its Spanish name, *ballena jorobada* comes from *joroba*, the Spanish word for "hump".

The scientific name, Megaptera is a compound word consisting of the greek words mega, large and ptera, fin: a reference to the animal's massive pectoral fins, which can reach up to one third of its body length, around 5 meters.

Northern Hemisphere Population

From their feeding areas on the southern Pacific coast of Canada and the entire western coast of the United States, humpback whales migrate to their breeding areas in southern Mexico and throughout Central America. In Costa Rica, they congregate in specific areas (see list on the right of the poster) of the northern and southern Pacific.

December-April (dry season)



The whales that migrate from the northern hemisphere arrive during this period, traveling an average of 5,200 km on their way here and the same amount back to their feeding areas.

Southern Hemisphere Population

From their feeding areas around the Antarctic Peninsula and southern Chile, humpback whales migrate to their calving sites in northern South America, Panama and Costa Rica. In our country, the whales congregate in certain sites in the southern and (to a lesser extent) northern Pacific coast.

July-November (rainy season)



The whales that migrate from the southern hemisphere arrive during this period, traveling an average of 8,400 km on their way here and the same amount back to their feeding areas. This is the longest permanent migratory route of any mammal!

WHERE THEY COME FROM

Migratory movements are part of most whales' annual lifecycle: they spend the summer in their feeding grounds (high latitudes) and migrate to tropical waters (low latitudes) in the winter to reproduce and raise their calves.

Northern Hemisphere

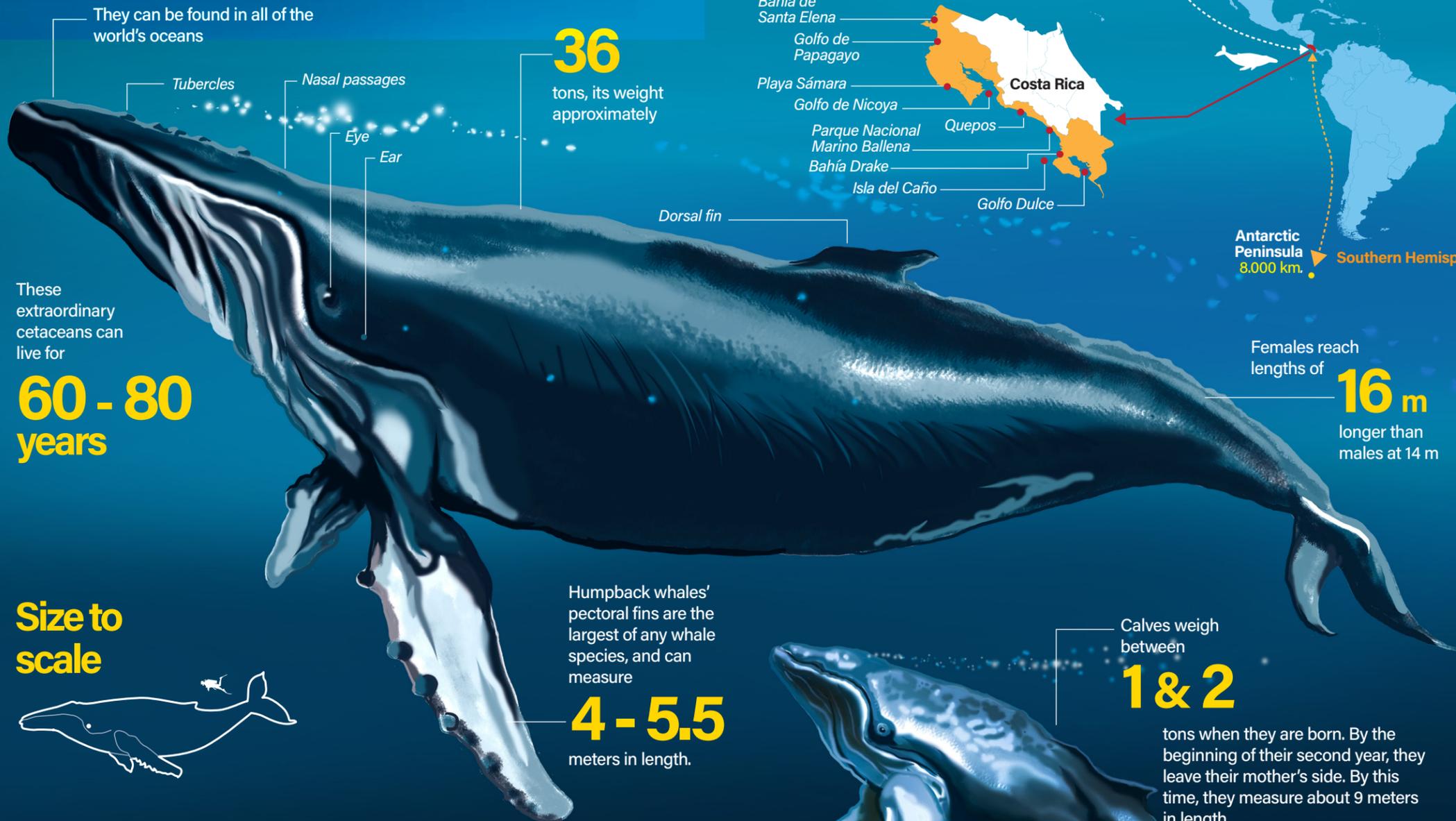
Washington Oregon California 5.000 km.

Antarctic Peninsula 8.000 km.

Southern Hemisphere

Sightings in Costa Rica

- Bahía de Santa Elena
- Golfo de Papagayo
- Playa Sámara
- Golfo de Nicoya
- Parque Nacional Marino Ballena
- Bahía Drake
- Isla del Caño
- Quepos
- Golfo Dulce



They can be found in all of the world's oceans

36 tons, its weight approximately

These extraordinary cetaceans can live for

60 - 80 years

Females reach lengths of **16 m** longer than males at 14 m

Size to scale



Humpback whales' pectoral fins are the largest of any whale species, and can measure

4 - 5.5 meters in length.

Calves weigh between **1 & 2**

tons when they are born. By the beginning of their second year, they leave their mother's side. By this time, they measure about 9 meters in length.

Main areas of sightings in Costa Rica

Whale watching services are available on the following beaches in Costa Rica:



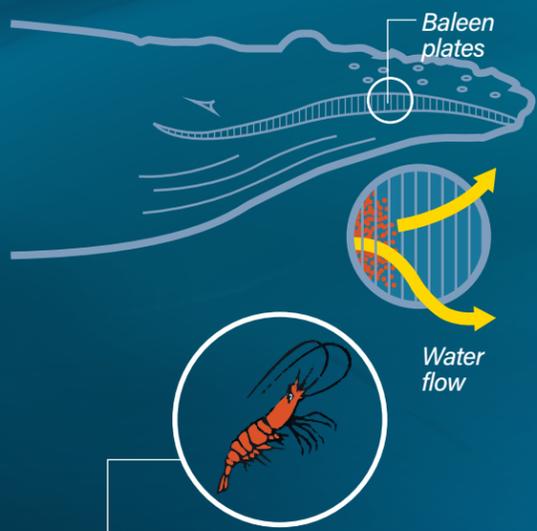
- Cuajiniquil
- Playas del Coco
- Sámara
- Cóbano
- Jacó
- Quepos
- Herradura
- Dominicalito
- Bahía Rincón
- Bahía Ballena/Uvita
- Drake Bay
- Puerto Jiménez
- Playa Zancudo
- Cabuya
- Isla del Caño por Sierpe
- Isla del Caño por Bahía Drake
- Golfo de Nicoya
- Mal País
- Montezuma
- Tambor
- Curú
- Paquera
- Puntarenas
- Isla Tortuga
- Sierpe

What do they do?



FEEDING:

Humpback whales possess between 270 and 440 grayish-black baleen plates on each side of the jaw, measuring 70 to 100 cm in length, which allow them to filter out water in order to obtain their food of krill and small fish.

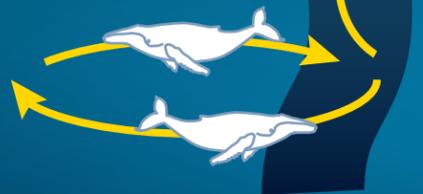


Krill is whales' main source of food. It is a crustacean similar to shrimp, measuring 1-6 cm. Whales can eat **1,400 kg** in a single day.

C Whales open their mouths, capturing the krill. Their baleen filters the water when they close their mouth

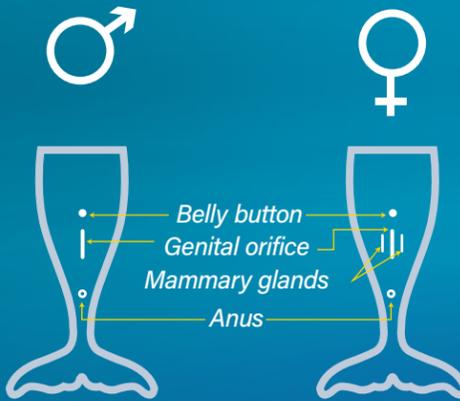
B They begin their ascent quickly

A The whales circle the school of krill, sometimes creating a circular "curtain" of bubbles.



Sex of whales

Both sexes have a genital slit, which contains the penis in males and the vagina in females.



SEXUALITY

Sexual maturity is reached between 6 and 11 years, at a size of between 12 and 14 m. The reproduction period lasts for a period of 4-5 months.

HOW ARE THEY BORN?

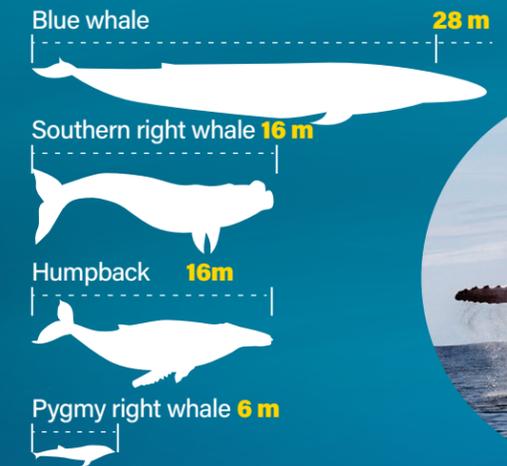
1 The mother whale begins her contractions and the calf starts to leave the mother's body. Calves are born tail-first, not head-first.

2 The umbilical cord breaks off once the calf leaves the mother's body.

3 In order to take its first breath, the calf is helped to the surface by its mother.

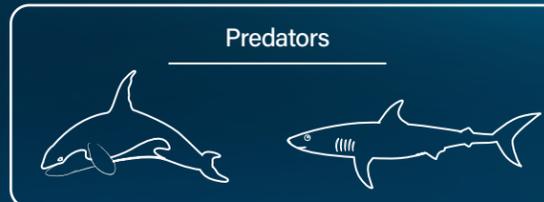
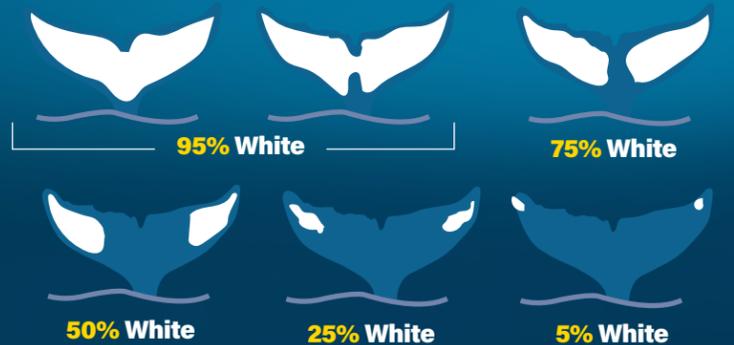
4 The calf consumes between 60 and 70 liters of milk each day.

SIZE TO SCALE:



IDENTIFICATION

Humpback whales can be identified by means of the white marks and the unique pattern of the jagged trailing edge of their tails. This does not change from birth, and allows the identification of individuals. They serve as the whales' "fingerprints" and help to classify whales within a group.



MOVEMENTS ON THE SURFACE



BREATHING:

Whales breathe through their blowhole (nasal orifices) situated in the upper part of their heads. They open and close their nasal passages in order to hold their breath underwater for **up to 45 minutes**. Under normal conditions, whales breathe every 3-9 minutes.

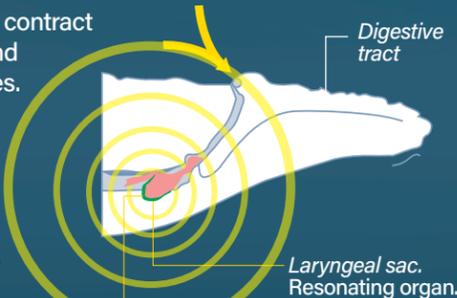
SONGS:

Male humpback whales emit long-lasting sounds called songs during the reproduction period. These can last from 10 to 15 minutes and can be interpreted after a few minutes or repeated continuously for up to 22 hours.

1. The whales contract their throat and thorax muscles.

2. Air flows through the lungs and the laryngeal sac.

3. The alternating expansion and contraction of these organs take air through the U of the larynx (in green), making it vibrate and produce the sound.



Ballena Marine National Park

To protect this valuable site, the government of Costa Rica created Ballena Marine National Park (PNMB) as a sanctuary for these and other marine species including pantropical spotted dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, manta rays, clownfish and mackerel. Isla Ballena is also an important nesting site of the American white ibis. The bird species found in the park also include frigatebirds and the brown booby.



The PNMB is the first Costa Rican protected area created exclusively for its marine resources. It is also the first marine park in Central America (UCR-FUNDEVI 1995/SINAC) and is the eighth-best site for whale watching in the world, according to National Geographic.

- Links:
- www.sinac.go.cr
 - www.youtube.com
 - www.youtube.com/watch
 - mongabay.com
 - www.nacion.com



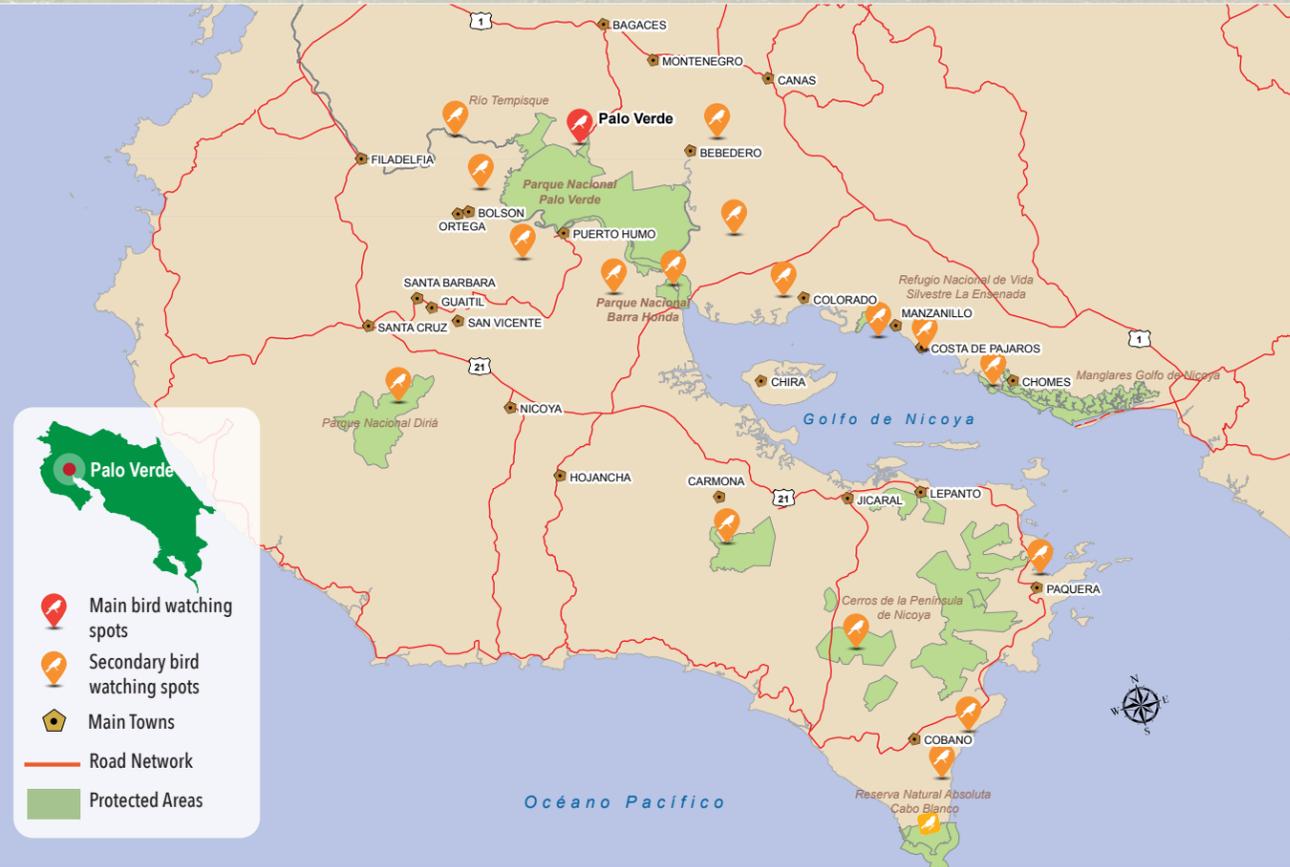
Jabiru
Jabiru mycteria
 Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo

NATIONAL BIRD WATCHING ROUTE COSTA RICA

PALO VERDE



PALO VERDE COSTA RICA



Main birdwatching sites: Palo Verde National Park • Cabo Blanco Absolute Natural Reserve • Curú Mixed Wildlife Refuge • Barra Honda National Park • Tambor Bay and Beach Trails • Tambor Aquifer Recharge Zone • Nicolas Wessberg Absolute Reserve • Karen Mogensen Reserve, Wildlife Refuge • Camaronal • Mangroves of the Gulf of Nicoya • Islas Negritos and Guayabo Biological Reserves • Cabuya and Playa Cedros • Caletas • Ario Mixed Wildlife Refuge • Cipanci National Wildlife Refuge

Secondary bird watching sites: Tambor Beach and Pánica River Trail, also known as "the trail of 100 species" • Biscoyol Waterfall Trail • Delfines Lagoons • Curú Finca Los Monos Nature Reserve • Curú Wildlife Reserve Quesera Beach Trails • Raptor Ridge Lowlands • Raptor Ridge Mid Mountain Trail • Raptor Ridge High Mountain Trail • Vanilla Trail • Tree of Jesus Coastal Trail

National Parks: Palo Verde, Barra Honda, Diria and Marino Las Baulas

Other protected areas: 2 absolute natural reserves (one state, Cabo Blanco, and another private, Nicolás Wessberg) • 4 state national wildlife refuges (Ostional, Tamarindo and Mata Redonda and Cipanci) • 2 semi-private (Camaronal and Werner Sauter) • 2 private (Curú and La Ceiba) • 3 protective zones (Nicoya Peninsula, Cerro La Cruz and Nosara) • in addition to two biological reserves located in the Gulf of Nicoya (Isla Guayabo and Isla de los Negritos)

Wetlands: Riberino Zapandí • Palustrino Corral de Piedra • Cañas River

343 Bird species

1 Endemic species

10 Protected Areas

4 National Parks

3 Wetlands

The Palo Verde node is one of the most biodiverse areas in Costa Rica. It encompasses a rich mosaic of over 15 natural communities, including the deciduous lowland forest, the evergreen forest, the flooded forest, the deciduous limestone hill forest, grasslands and mangroves.

The Palo Verde Node is partially located in the Tempisque Conservation Area and in the Arenal Tempisque Conservation Area, which also contains Palo Verde National Park.

This area is a paradise for birdwatchers, as there are hundreds of species, including the mangrove hummingbird (*Amazilia boucardi*), endemic to Costa Rica, limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*), great egret (*Ardea alba*), boat-billed heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*), northern jacana (*Jacana spinosa*), wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), bare-throated tiger heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*), and the northern crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*). It is a paradise of waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds, raptors, ducks and the most colorful jungle birds. In addition, you can observe dozens of species, such as macaws, caracaras, herons, vultures, sparrow hawks, hawks, parrots, woodpeckers, toucans and kingfishers. The area is also home to the jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*), roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), collared aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*), ferruginous pygmy owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*), white hawk (*Pseudastur albicollis*), king vulture (*Sarcoromphus papa*), long-tailed manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*), thicket tinamou (*Crypturellus cinnamomeus*), gray hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*) and more.

The landscape is dominated by dense tropical vegetation, a consequence of a warm and sub-humid climate. Palo Verde, Barra Honda, Diríá and Las Baulas National Parks are located here.

BIRDS

EMBLEMATIC BIRDS

PALO VERDE



Rainy season

Cairina moschata
Common name:
Muscovy Duck

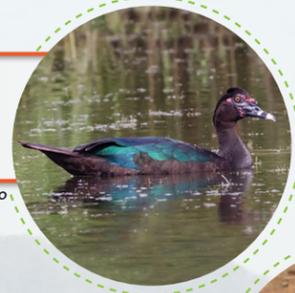


Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo



No data

Dendrocygna bicolor
Common name:
Fulvous Whistling-Duck



Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo



October to February

Amazilia boucardi
Common name:
Mangrove Hummingbird



Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo



Dry season

Platalea ajaja
Common name:
Roseate Spoonbill



Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo



July to September

Rostrhamus sociabilis
Common name:
Snail Kite



Photo: Laurens Alvarado Hidalgo



Fecha de anidación

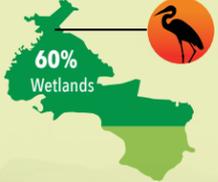
Lomas Barbudal Biological Reserve

It protects a dry tropical forest, rich in insect species. There are an estimated 250 species of bees and 60 species of nocturnal moths. About 130 species of birds have been observed, including the turquoise-browed motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*), the stub-tailed spadebill (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*), the olive sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*), the red widow or elegant trogon (*Trogon elegans*), the yellow widow or black-headed trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*), as well as the great curassow (*Crax rubra*). In the southern sector of the reserve it is common to observe aquatic birds, such as snowy egrets, herons, whistling ducks and others.



[More information here](#)

Palo Verde National Park



343

bird species, representing 37% of Costa Rica's total avifauna

This park is made up of lagoons and mangroves that drain into the Río Tempisque. It is a sanctuary for thousands of aquatic birds, both migratory and non-migratory, which is what led the park to be declared a Wetland of Importance under the Global Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR).



Rainy season
Largest numbers of individuals:
250.000

Dry season
Offers the greatest visibility

Within the park is the 2.3-hectare Isla de Pájaros (Bird Island), located just offshore from the park. The island is incredibly important, since it is home to the country's largest colony of the black-crowned night heron and is one of the most important waterfowl nesting islands in Central America. It is also the habitat of three species of endangered waterfowl:



Black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)



Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*)



Roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)



Fulvous whistling duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

[Protected Areas: Palo Verde](#)

Parque Marino Baulas



Habitat of many aquatic birds. A significant attraction of the beaches here is the leatherback turtle nesting season.

[More information](#)

Diríá National Park



A protected area with a significant value for conservation and ensuring a sustainable water supply. It offers great scenic beauty.

[More information](#)

Barra Honda National Park



Barra Honda is the only park in Costa Rica with a subterranean cave complex. You can observe various species of fauna; birds like the white-throated magpie-jay (*Calocitta formosa*), white-tipped dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) and scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*).

It is also possible to observe coatis, raccoons, agoutis, white-tailed deer and anteaters.

[More information](#)

Ostional National Wildlife Refuge



Protects the olive ridley turtle nesting sites, with up to 200,000 individuals arriving during the rainy season. Birds: scarlet macaws, great curassow, aninga.

[More information here](#)

Cipancí National Wildlife Refuge



Its main attractions include mangroves, estuaries, rivers, forests, scenic beauty and diverse flora and terrestrial and aquatic fauna.

[More information here](#)

For more information visit:

- [ebird.org](#)
- [Museo de Costa Rica](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Lista Oficial de Aves de Costa Rica](#)
- [Unión de Ornólogos CR](#)

BIRD WATCHING IN Costa Rica

For national and international birdwatchers, Costa Rica is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. A country with a small territory of 51,100 km² of land area (0.03% of the world's surface) and 589,000 km² of territorial sea, it has an avifauna with more than 900 species that surpasses all of Europe. Costa Rica is possibly the country with the most bird species and habitat types in the world in relation to the size of its territory.

The diversity of birds is divided into four ornithological provinces: Highlands, Caribbean Slope, North Pacific and South Pacific. Including Cocos Island and its territorial waters.

The country has developed the National Bird Route which is composed of 12 nodes or main birding sites, involving 7 National Parks, 1 National Wildlife Refuge, private reserves and surrounding communities, distributed practically throughout the country and differentiated into 4 Bird Zones: Tropical Dry Forest, Highlands, Caribbean Tropical Rainforest and South Pacific Tropical Rainforest. All of them with a high diversity of bird species that is complemented by the culture, rurality and local communities that are integrated into this route.

Costa Rica has:

- **3 million** migratory birds of prey fly through the sky from August to November.
- **220 species are migratory** and correspond to Nearctic migratory species from North America.
- **19 are globally threatened.**
- **One of the top 5 favorite birding countries in the world.**
- **7 endemic species**, 4 on the mainland, 3 on Cocos Island.
- In total, Costa Rica's bird species constitute **9% of the world's known species.** (Stiles and Skutch, 2007, p. 13-31)

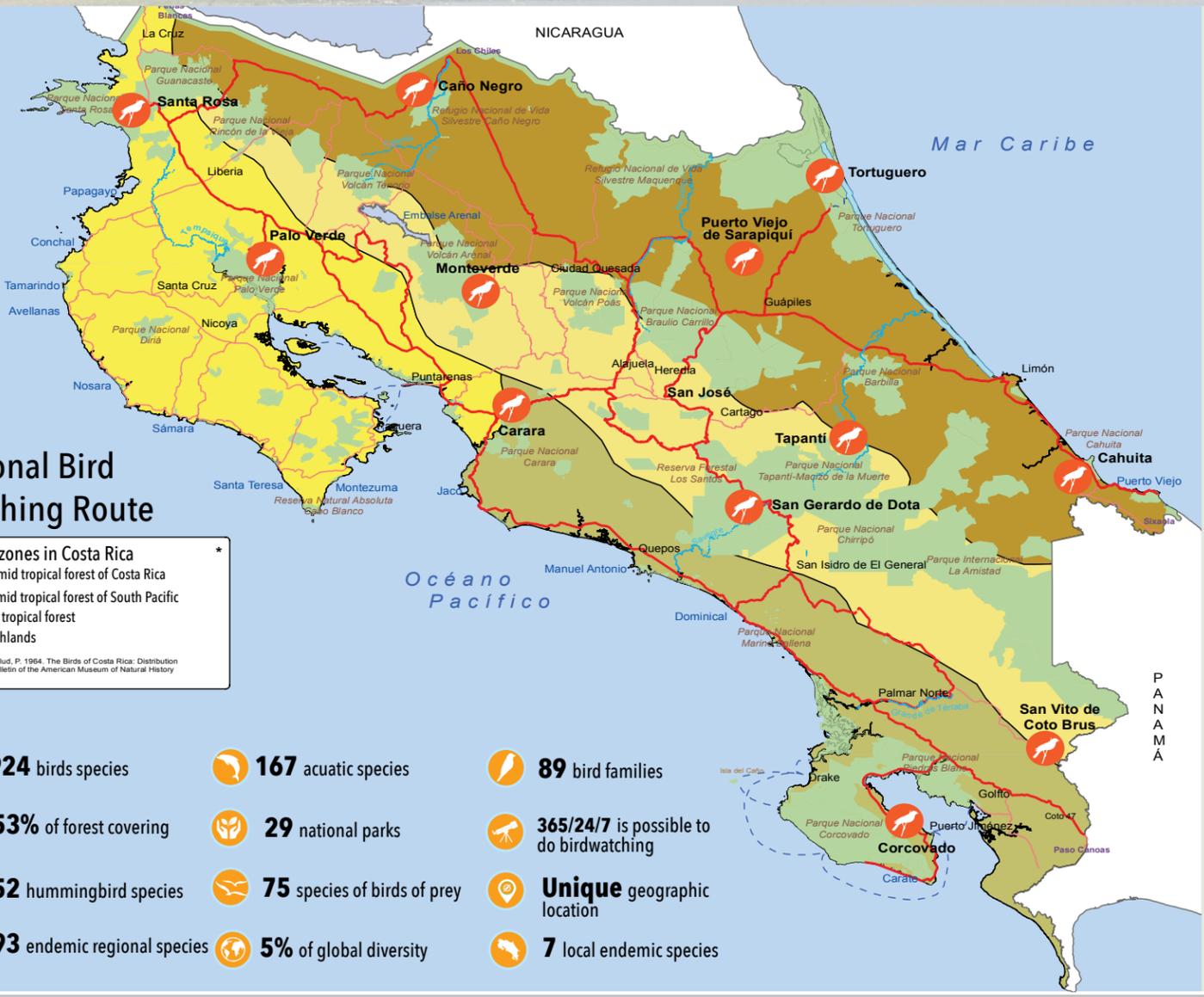
National Bird Watching Route

Birdlife zones in Costa Rica *

- Humid tropical forest of Costa Rica
- Humid tropical forest of South Pacific
- Dry tropical forest
- Highlands

* Adaptado de Stud, P. 1964. The Birds of Costa Rica: Distribution and Ecology. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History 134: 261-295

- 924** birds species
- 167** acuatic species
- 89** bird families
- 53%** of forest covering
- 29** national parks
- 365/24/7** is possible to do birdwatching
- 52** hummingbird species
- 75** species of birds of prey
- Unique** geographic location
- 93** endemic regional species
- 5%** of global diversity
- 7** local endemic species



Créditos

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Photo: Trevor Bernard

Credits

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