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# Travel Guide

## San José, Costa Rica

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© Gonzalo Azumendi/Getty Images





## Quick view San José

San José, the capital of Costa Rica, is the country's economic, political and cultural center. A university city with a population of around 340 000, it's a lively metropolis set amid the delightful scenery of Central Valley and conveniently placed for transportation purposes on the Panamericana dream highway. In its golden age of coffee in the 19th century, the country created the basis for its wealth and political stability.

The positive development of Costa Rica and its capital continues to this day – and that includes the restoration of antique wooden mansions in Barrio Amón and the revitalization of inner-city parks and gardens. Thanks to its culture – and in particular its music – scene, San José is becoming increasingly popular with young travelers. San José has a pleasant climate all year round and boasts some architectural gems, such as the Teatro Nacional (national theater) and the Correo Central (central post office). It is also the starting point for trips to beaches on the country's Pacific and Caribbean coasts and also to nature reserves, where visitors can look forward to spectacular volcanic craters, and rainforest and cloud forest trails.



## Costa Rica General knowledge

### Country overview

Costa Rica is considered the showcase country of Latin America and a safe and peaceful travel destination. The capital city, San José, is the economic and political centre of the country. In addition to tourism and agriculture – mainly banana and coffee plantations – the high-tech industry is another major economic sector of Costa Rica. More than a quarter of the country's land is protected, either as a national park, biosphere reserve, UNESCO World Heritage site or Indian reservation. The tropical paradise has rainforests and cloud forests, beautiful beaches along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, and active volcanoes in the cordillera mountain range. Most visitors come for ecological activity or nature-based adventure holidays.

It's no wonder then that trekking through the rainforests, kayaking and rafting tours, and wildlife observation are highly popular activities. The eastern coast offers a laid-back, Caribbean-style pace of life, while on the western coast, the Nicoya peninsula is a popular destination thanks to its beautiful beaches. Among the most-visited attractions in Costa Rica are the Poás volcano, the Irazú national park and volcano, the canals of Tortuguero in the wetlands in the north-east of Costa Rica, the Monteverde reserve near Santa Elena, and the Manuel Antonio national park on the Pacific coast near Quepos.

### Geography

Costa Rica lies on the Central American land bridge between North and South America. The country borders Nicaragua in the north, Panama in the South, the Caribbean in the east and the Pacific Ocean in the west.

The country is lined from north to south by the volcanic mountain ranges of the Cordillera Central and the Cordillera de Talamanca. The highest mountain in Costa Rica is Cerro Chirripó Grande at 3820 metres above sea level. San José, the capital city, is located on the central plateau.

## General knowledge

**Key facts**

Population: 4.9 million (2017)

Population density (per sq km): 84

Capital: San José

**Language**

The official language is Spanish.

**Currency**

1 Colón = 100 Céntimos.

Currency sign/abbreviation: CRC (ISO code).

Banknotes are available in the values 50,000, 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 2,000 and 1,000 colones, and coins in the nominal values 500, 100, 50, 25, 10 and 5 colones.

**Electricity**

120 volts AC, 60 Hz. Plug socket types A and B. Adapters required.

**Public Holidays**

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

**2020**

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2020

Día de San José (St. Joseph's Day): 19 March 2020

Semana Santa (Maundy Thursday and Good Friday): 9 and 10 April 2020

Día de Juan Santamaría (Anniversary of the Battle of Rivas): 11 April 2020

Día del Trabajo (Labour Day): 1 May 2020

Annexion de Guanacaste (National holiday, Guanacaste Day): 25 July 2020

Virgen de Los Angeles (Feast of Our Lady of the Angels): 2 August 2020

Asuncion/Día de la Madre (Ascension Day/Mother's Day): 15 August 2020

Día de Independencia (Independence Day): 15 September 2020

Día de la Raza (Columbus Day): 12 October 2020

Día de los Muertos (All Saints' Day): 2 November 2020

Concepción Inmaculada (Feast of the Immaculate Conception): 8 December 2020

Navidad (Christmas Day): 25 December 2020

**2021**

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2021

Día de San José (St. Joseph's Day): 19 March 2021

Semana Santa (Maundy Thursday and Good Friday): 1 and 2 April 2021

Día de Juan Santamaría (Anniversary of the Battle of Rivas): 11 April 2021

Día del Trabajo (Labour Day): 1 May 2021

Annexion de Guanacaste (National holiday, Guanacaste Day): 25 July 2021

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Día de los Muertos (All Saints' Day): 2 November 2021

Concepción Inmaculada (Feast of the Immaculate Conception): 8 December 2021

Navidad (Christmas Day): 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.



## Travel etiquette

### How to fit in

#### Social Conventions

Costa Rica is home to almost five million people, including many immigrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Colombia. Most are practising Catholics, so religious rituals and holidays are still a part of everyday life today. School is compulsory for nine years, so illiteracy is rare. Children are welcome everywhere.

#### Clothing

In business environments, smart and fashionable clothing is expected, but in the private sphere, it is more relaxed. However, women should take care not to show too much skin. Swimwear should only be worn at the pool and the beach.

#### Photography

When encountering wild animals, please behave as recommended in the video published by the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy #stopanimalselfies.

#### Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in hotels, restaurants, bars, buses, parks, markets and on beaches.

#### Tipping

In hotels and restaurants it is customary to tip ten percent.



## Health

### Health

#### Food & drink

Due to the risk of intestinal infection, caution with drinking water and food hygiene is advised. Only use bottled water for drinking and cleaning your teeth. On purchase, check that the original packaging is properly sealed.

#### Other Risks

A number of insect-borne diseases are found in Costa Rica. This includes diseases such as the Zika virus, malaria, dengue fever, chikungunya and leishmaniasis. Effective protection against insects, such as mosquito nets, full-length clothing and insect repellent spray, is therefore advised.

Caution is advised when swimming in the sea, as strong currents and waves can be dangerous even for experienced swimmers. The best option is to consult the locals about the current level of risk. If taking part in adventure activities such as rafting and trekking, be advised that safety regulations do not always meet European standards and proceed with caution.



## Phone calls & Internet

### Phone calls & Internet

#### Telephone

**Country code:** +506

#### Telefon

The telephone network in Costa Rica is extensive and reliable. Public telephones usually function with telephone cards.

#### Mobile telephony

GSM 850 and 1900. Dual-band devices are required, but the roaming charges for using them can be high. It is cheaper to buy a pre-paid mobile phone or SIM card at the airport or in one of the many phone shops. Providers include Kólbi (kolbi.cr), Claro CR (claro.cr) and Movistar (movistar.cr).

#### Internet

Internet cafés exist in the larger cities. Most hotels offer their guests Wi-Fi Internet access. Internet providers in Costa Rica include Kólbi (kolbi.cr), Claro CR (claro.cr) and Movistar (movistar.cr).



## Top 10 sights Top 10 sights in San José

### Teatro Nacional (National Theatre)

This magnificent building, modelled after the Paris Opera, was opened in 1897 and was to serve as a suitably sophisticated location to experience European culture. Even today, the theatre is considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the country, and outside of show times, it can be viewed on guided tours. Also recommended is a visit to the Belle Époque café, which has an extensive speciality menu.

Avenida Central [www.teatronacional.go.cr](http://www.teatronacional.go.cr)  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-201 011 00

### Museo Nacional (National Museum)

The National Museum moved into the former Bellavista barracks after the dissolution of the Costa Rican military in 1949. Today, the exhibitions rooms are accessed via a butterfly garden. The thematically arranged exhibition documents the history of the country in several rooms, ranging from the pre-Columbian era and colonial times to the present.

Cuesta de Moras/Plaza de la Democracia  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-22 57 14 33

Opening times:  
Tue – Sat 0830 – 1630  
Sun 0900 – 1630  
[www.museocostarica.go.cr/](http://www.museocostarica.go.cr/)

### Museo del Oro y Numismática (Pre-Columbian Gold Museum)

The Banco Central museum complex is located on multiple floors below the bustling Plaza de la Cultura. This includes the modernly designed exhibitions of the Pre-Columbian Gold Museum. The museum displays cult objects and jewellery

from pre-Columbian times, as well as coins up to 500 years old and bank notes, the oldest specimens of which originate in the 19th century.

Plaza de la Cultura  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-22 43 42 02

Opening times:  
daily 0915 – 1700  
  
[museosdelbancocentral.org/en/](http://museosdelbancocentral.org/en/)

## Parque Nacional

The National Park must be the most beautiful green space in San José and is home to a wide variety of plant and bird species. Locals enjoy using the wooden pavilions and picnic tables. There are several memorials in the park in honour of historic events and individuals from Latin America, including the large Monumento Nacional in memory of the battles for independence at Santa Rosa and Rivas in 1856.

Avenidas 1/3, Calle 15/19  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel.: +506-25 47 62 72

## Museo de Arte Costarricense

The most important art museum in Costa Rica has been housed in this former airport building at the entrance to the Parque La Sabana since 1978. The permanent exhibition displays paintings and sculptures by Costa Rican artists from the 20th and 21st centuries; there is also a changing programme of temporary exhibitions to see.

Calle 42  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-22 56 12 81

Opening times:  
Tue – Sun 0900 – 1600  
  
[www.facebook.com/Museo-de-Arte-Costarricense...](http://www.facebook.com/Museo-de-Arte-Costarricense...)

## Barrio Amón (Amón district)

The Amón district is located north-west of the Parque Morazan, roughly between Avenidas 7 and 11. Before the houses became derelict, the area was once inhabited by coffee barons, bankers and politicians. Thanks to a revitalisation and traffic calming project, the district was restored into a desirable area to live. Many beautiful boutique hotels have opened in the renovated historical buildings.

Avenidas 7/11  
San José  
Costa Rica

## Museo de los Niños

The Children's Museum, housed in the former central prison, was the first interactive museum in Latin America at the time of its opening in 1994. Today there are 40 rooms with cultural, scientific and technical topics to playfully explore. The building is also home to the National Gallery.

Calle 4/Avenida 9

Opening times:

San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-22 58 49 29

Tue – Fri 0800 – 1630  
Sat, Sun 0900 – 1700

[www.museocr.org/index.php?cccc=Museo-de-los-...](http://www.museocr.org/index.php?cccc=Museo-de-los-...)

### Mercado Central (Central Market)

This market hall and the stalls in front and behind are where Josefinos, the locals, go to shop. You can buy everyday necessities like fruit, vegetables, meat and fish, but also saddles and snakeskin boots. In the centre of the market hall, there are several small snack vendors who offer cheap and fresh local specialities.

Avenida Central/Calle6/8  
San José  
Costa Rica

Opening times:  
Mon – Sat 0600– 1800

### Parque Nacional Braulio Carillo (Braulio Carillo National Park)

The national park is located around 20 kilometres north of San José. It is divided into two areas: On the western side are the volcanoes Cacho Negro and Barva, whose main crater lies at an altitude of almost 3000 metres. On the eastern side is the aerial tram, which takes visitors on a one-hour ride through the evergreen jungle canopy – an unforgettable experience.

North Of San Jose 19 km  
San José  
Costa Rica

Opening times:  
daily: 0800– 1530

[www.sinac.go.cr/EN-US/ac/accvc/bcnp/Pages/def...](http://www.sinac.go.cr/EN-US/ac/accvc/bcnp/Pages/def...)

### Río Pacuare

At Río Pacuare, around 120 kilometres west of San José on the road to Puerto Limón, there are several jungle lodges and rafting stations, where you can travel through the luscious landscape of the rainforest over white-water rapids. Good fitness and a little practice are prerequisites for these adventure tours.

10107 Tres Equis de Turrialba  
Costa Rica



### Shopping in San José

#### Key Areas

Today, as in times gone by, Costa Ricans shop for fruit, vegetables and other food in *pulperías*, typical corner shops that can be found on every street and are often open until late in the evening. In the centre of San José, several sections of road have been closed to traffic and converted into pedestrian areas. The most important of these is the Avenida Central, home to branches of international chains, boutiques and specialist shops. Outside the centre, there are exclusive

shopping opportunities on the Avenida Escazú.

### Markets

The biggest market in San José is located in the halls of the Mercado Central and the surrounding area. Here you can buy everyday necessities like fruit, vegetables, meat, fish and shoes, and even saddles and snakeskin boots. In the centre of the market hall, there are several small snack vendors who offer exceptionally cheap and fresh local specialities. In Aranjuez, north of the centre, the *Feria Verde* takes place on Saturdays (Sat 7–12:30; [feriaverde.org](http://feriaverde.org)), a trendy market that sells organic products as well as arts and crafts. At the Mercado Nacional de Artesania (Avenida Segunda), you can find ceramics, wood carvings, leather goods and other hand-crafted objects made in Costa Rica. Around the Museo Nacional (Avenida 2/Calle 15) too, you can find a large number of stalls selling everyday essentials and souvenirs.

### Shopping Centres

The San Pedro Mall ([tumallsanpedro.com](http://tumallsanpedro.com)), east of the centre, is the largest shopping centre in the country. It has four floors with a wide variety of shops, as well as leisure activities, cafés and restaurants. Other large shopping centres include the Multiplaza Escazú ([multiplaza.com](http://multiplaza.com)), the Mall Real Cariari ([plazarealcariari.com](http://plazarealcariari.com)) on the road to Alajuela and the Terra Mall on the road to Cartago ([terramall.co.cr](http://terramall.co.cr)).



## Restaurants

### Restaurants in San José

The staple ingredients of Costa Rican cuisine are beans, sweetcorn and rice. These feature in the national dishes of gallo pinto and casuado, of which there are many different variants: For example, they can be eaten with or without sour cream, meat or plantain. In San José, there are eateries in all price classes. The cheapest place to eat is at sodas – small snack vendors that are usually family-run – and at the markets, including the Mercado Central. Many restaurants cater to the tastes of North American visitors (particularly the chain restaurants around the Paseo Colón), but even in San José, there is a strong sense of tradition and typical Costa Rican dishes are served with a modern twist. Many of the more interesting restaurants are in the Barrio Escalante.

### Saga

A gourmet mile has developed along the Avenida Escazú, west of the city centre. The most elegant of the many restaurants there is the Saga, which serves Mediterranean-inspired dishes.

Avenida Escazú  
11856 San José  
Costa Rica

Price: Luxurious

### La Cultura Gran Hotel Costa Rica

The Gran Hotel's in-house restaurant also welcomes guests from outside the hotel. The menu features fresh and beautifully prepared international cuisine with local flair. The terrace offers a beautiful view over the city.

Avenida 2/Calle 1/2  
San José  
Costa Rica

Price: Luxurious

## Esquina de Buenos Aires

The interior of this inner city restaurant is reminiscent of Latin America in the 1930s, with a lot of dark wood, elegant accessories and waiters in classic uniforms. This is accompanied by a menu featuring all kinds of steaks as well as pasta dishes and a large selection of wines.

Calle 11/Avenida 4  
San José  
Costa Rica

Price: Moderate

## Tin Yo

The dining rooms of this restaurant are themed by region – for example, there is a Chinese and an Indonesian room. Guests can order Asian dishes throughout the restaurant, and even vegetarians will not be disappointed.

Calle 11/Avenida 6/8  
San José  
Costa Rica

Price: Moderate

## Kalú

This café near the Parque Morazán has established itself as a meeting point for creative people from around the globe. It offers sandwiches, salads and burgers, including many vegetarian and vegan dishes. Readings and concerts often take place in the evening.

Calle7/Avenida 11  
Barrio Amón  
San José  
Costa Rica

Price: Budget



## Nightlife Nightlife in San José

The nightlife of San José is clustered predominantly to the south of the Parque Central, in the university district of San Pedro and in the Centro Commercial El Pueblo in Barrio Tournon. There you can find jazz cafés, salsa discos and clubs, as well as student theatres and simple bars.

## Steinvorth

The Steinvorth house, built in 1907, is one of the classic locations in San José nightlife. For many years it was occupied by a music club; nowadays, it operates as an art gallery. However, concerts still take place regularly and the café bar still serves as a meeting point for night-time revellers.

Calle 1/Avenida 0/1  
San José  
Costa Rica

## La Avispa

This club is a meeting point for the LGBTQ+ community. There the party never stops and you can often find concerts or themed parties mid-week.

Calle 1/Avenida 8/10  
San José  
Costa Rica

### Jazz Café San Pedro

This bar is home to jazz, blues, R&B and Latin American folk, played mostly live on its small stage. Although the club has a capacity of only 220 people, it still attracts famous musicians. A second jazz café is located in San Rafael de Escazú.

Contíguo al Banco Popular, San Pedro  
de Montes de Oca  
San José  
Costa Rica

### Vertigo im Centro Colón

The top address for techno and house is located in the Centro Colón office block. The club has space for more than 800 guests on two dance floors.

Paseo Colón Calle 38/40  
San José  
Costa Rica

### El Cuartel de la Boca del Monte

Students and other young people have congregated in this bar since the 1980s. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, there is usually a live band playing, and events often take place on other days too.

Avenida 1/Calle 21/23  
Barrio California  
San José  
Costa Rica



## Calendar of events Calendar of events

### Art City Tour

This event, a kind of “Long Night of Art”, takes place every three months. Then museums and galleries open their doors for a vibrant cultural programme. A shuttle bus runs between the different event venues. The exact dates can be found on the website of the organiser.

**February, May, July and October 2020**

Venue: Various venues in San José

### Semana Santa

The Easter festivities are one of the most important times of the year. On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, the city comes to almost a complete standstill – except for the procession and worship services. These, however, are particularly grandiose and imaginative; even the ensemble of the Teatro Nacional gets out on

the street.

**April 5 - 11, 2020**

Venue: Various venues in San José

## Festival Internacional de las Artes

This large cultural festival takes place every year in Costa Rica, with an international focus in even years, and a national focus in odd years. The almost two-week programme includes music, lectures, dance performances and concerts.

**April 2020**

Venue: Various venues in San José and all over Costa Rica

## Fin del Año

The end of the year is celebrated abundantly between Christmas and New Year. Spectacular costume parades, horse shows and bull fights take place in the city.

**December 25, 2020 – January 1, 2021**



## Hotels Hotels in San José

San José is the centre of the country and almost all visitors will pass through at one point or another. From small guest houses to international chain hotels, accommodation is available in all price classes and levels of luxury. In the centre, it can get very lively at night. Otoya and Barrio Amón are quieter areas, where many boutique hotels have recently opened in the renovated historic buildings.

### Hotel Grano de Oro

This luxury hotel, which is housed in a historic building from 1910, is considered one of the best hotels in Central America. The opulent interior in a colonial style harks back to the time of the coffee barons. The courtyard terrace, which is in use by the hotel's outstanding in-house restaurant, is particularly beautiful.

Calle 30, Avenida 2/4  
San José  
Costa Rica

Category: Luxurious

### Casa de las Tias

This little hotel is situated in the middle of a beautiful park, around six kilometres east of San José city centre in San Rafael de Escazú. The rooms are decorated with artwork by local artists. This charming establishment is recommended for everyone looking for a comfortable, quiet and authentic Costa Rican stay.

Del cruce Escazu-Santa Ana  
San José  
Costa Rica

Category: Luxurious

### Hotel Don Carlos

This boutique hotel in the up-and-coming Amón district offers double rooms, family rooms and suites. It occupies one of the elaborately renovated wooden houses there. The reception can arrange tours of San José, and trips to Tortuguero and the Irazú volcano.

Calle 9/19, Avenida 9  
Barrio Amon  
San José  
Costa Rica

Category: Moderate

### Hotel Alameda Cariari

This boutique hotel is located in a villa district near a golf course between Alajuela and San José. The ten rooms are bright and comfortably furnished, and the hotel also has an outdoor pool. The location and facilities make this hotel ideal for guests who want to relax before or after a long flight.

Casa 22/Calle Miraflores Bosques de  
Doña Claudia  
Ciudad Cariari, Asuncion  
San José  
Costa Rica

Category: Moderate

### Capital Hostel de Ciudad

This friendly and modern hostel near the Parque La Sabana is a popular choice for young guests and families. There are both ensuite rooms and dormitories with a shared bathroom. A well-equipped kitchen is available for all guests. Breakfast is included in the price.

Avenida 16A  
San José  
Costa Rica

Category: Budget



### GEO Tip Discover diversity

powered by **GEO**

#### Discover Costa Rica's rich diversity at the market

Feria Verde, the popular organic farmers' market, takes place every Saturday in San José. Farmers, cooks and artists head to Plaza Mayor in the morning to ply their wares and services. You can discover all the country has to offer on a single tour of the market: organic coffee, artisanal chocolate and a wealth of tropical fruits – the selection is vast and even includes jewelry and clothing. Local musicians round off the experience by providing a live soundtrack to the market.

Website

Open:  
Saturday: 0700-1230

Mehr auf GEO.de

<https://www.geo.de/reisen/reiseziele/11672-bstr-fotogalerie-naturwunder-costa-rica>



Best of...  
... Coffee



Roman Pawlowski

Coffee used to play the role tech companies play today in Costa Rica: of foreign exchange earner, image creator and job engine. In its golden age of coffee growing in the 19th century, the once poor country created the basis for wealth and political stability. More recently, in 1989, a law was enacted to guarantee the consistently high quality of the coffee produced, which stipulates that only Arabica beans may be grown – in mild temperatures and mostly at higher altitudes. Our guide to the coffee trail in and around San José.

## Café Franco

From among the nearly 400 locally grown coffee varieties, César Madriz picked just 14 for the café he recently opened in the trendy gastronomic district Escalante. He personally roasts the beans once a week. The 27-year-old barista learned his trade from his coffee producer father and runs the Franco alongside his business partner, Brandon Mais, who hails from San Francisco. The café has a pleasantly loungy atmosphere with a modern jazz soundtrack, laurel-wood tables and an exquisite little flower shop in the middle. It also offers tasty confections from its own bakery to accompany your *cafecito*, which comes in the form of espresso, cappuccino or macchiato from the machine or classic black from the Chemex, a special glass carafe for a slow-pour and drip method that coaxes more flavor from the beans. If you like the sound of a one-hour coffee workshop, drop a line to [info@franco.cr](mailto:info@franco.cr).

Avenida 7, Casa 3166  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-40 82 70 06

Opening times:  
daily, 0700-0900

[www.facebook.com/FrancoRestaurante](https://www.facebook.com/FrancoRestaurante)  
CR/

## Espíritu Santo Coffee Estate: Coffee tour

While on a visit to Germany two years ago, one thing in particular struck Vera Rojas Morales: "The Germans drink so much coffee!" Because it usually tastes "bitter and strong," they often sweeten it, although "good coffee needs no sugar," says the Espíritu Santo manager. Good coffee is what you get when, as in Costa Rica – and therefore also on her coffee plantation – the coffee ripens on volcanic soil, where it can develop a balanced acidity and fruity notes. Rojas Morales took

over the more than 100-year-old estate in the hills of the tiny village of Naranjo from her father. It encompasses 2300 small farms, often run by women, who bring their harvests to a cooperative. There, the beans are only fermented and then sold “green” to countries all over the world, where they will later be freshly roasted – at Starbucks, for example. Every step, from cultivation to sale (shop!) is described and illustrated on the coffee tour, which includes tastings. Visitors also learn that the estate has already met the official national target for 2021, which is to ensure 100-percent climate-neutral operation.

Naranjo, Province Alajuela Costa Rica Approx. 50 mins northwest of San José Tel. +506-24 50 38 38	Coffeetour: daily 0800/0930/1330 and 1500  espiritasantocoffeetour.com/?lang=en
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## Alma de Café

All of them – , from “Ike” Eisenhower, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro to Helmut Kohl and the Dalai Lama – wanted to experience it, the “soul of coffee” at the National Theater of Costa Rica, a building funded by the coffee aristocracy. Sitting at a Viennese-style coffeehouse table beneath a magnificent ceiling fresco, you will be served the country’s most famous beverage – from one of seven provinces, according to your preference. But first, it’s worth taking a look around the building and especially at a large mural dating from 1897, which is considered part of the nation’s identity even though it contains three errors: a banana plant growing the wrong way up and a white-skinned coffee picker on a plantation that’s right beside the ocean.

Café at the Teatro Nacional Avenida Central, 5015-1000 San José Costa Rica Tel. +506-20 10 11 00	Opening times: daily 0900-1800 (except Sundays)  www.teatronacional.go.cr/Cafeteria
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## Kuö Spa for a coffee body scrub and wrap

Coffee isn’t just an enlivening beverage, it perks us up on the outside, too. In the tasteful, tranquil surroundings of the Kuö Spa in the grounds of the Marriott Hotel, hotel guests and other visitors (please arrange an appointment) can let themselves be cocooned in the aromatic powder (body wrap) or treat themselves to a coffee body scrub. The coffee grounds come straight from the neighboring coffee plantation and are supposed to cleanse the skin (*kuö* in the indigenous language Cabécar) and nourish it with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. For a fresh, lively look rather than a caffeine-induced flush, maybe after a long flight.

Marriott Hotel San José La Ribera de Belén Heredia Costa Rica	www.kuospa.com/
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## Café Central at San José’s Mercado Central

Virtually everything *colones* (the local currency) can buy has been on sale at the central market in San José since 1880 – even livestock in the early days. For decades now, Costa Rican coffee has been on sale at the corner stand of the Café

Central, right across from the entrance to Avenida 1. Just follow your nose and the promising rattle of the roaster as it constantly turns out freshly browned beans. Barista Patricia and the rest of the staff know all the nuances of the different varieties: What's it to be? A mild, aromatic *café negro* from the Tarrazu highlands, or an intense caracolillo brewed from small, snail-shaped beans? Patricia first pours the coffee into a small pot of hot water and then lets it trickle through the traditional *chorreador*, a kind of cotton sock suspended from a wooden stand. Chorreadors can be purchased at the café as well as from market stalls selling household goods.

Café Central  
Mercado Central  
Avenida Central, bzw. Av. 1  
San José  
Costa Rica

### Café Rica – Coffee liqueur from Salicsa

Café Rica (rich coffee) is to the *Ticos*, as Costa Ricans call themselves, what Kahlúa is to the Mexicans: a sweet, highly potent coffee liqueur made with genuine Arabica. Café Rica has been around since 1978, when it was first created by Edward Drew, a Jamaican and a keen cook who had relocated to his mother's native country. The success of his company, Salicsa, and of its Golden Cream is founded on this very palatable beverage. The cream liqueur contains plenty of Café Rica, but unlike its Irish counterpart, Baileys, no chocolate extract. Café Rica makes a fine last-minute souvenir from the Duty Free Shop at Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José.

Salsas y Licores de Costa Rica      [www.salicsa.com/](http://www.salicsa.com/)  
Escazú, Apdo 264-1017  
San José  
Costa Rica  
Tel. +506-22 89 41 21

### Finca Rosa Blanca boutique hotel

To escape the hubbub and the congested streets of San José and enjoy the rich natural countryside close to the capital, check in at this country inn at the heart of an over 120 000-square-meter organic coffee plantation, where the coffee "cherries" are left to ripen at their leisure in the shade. From the infinity pool, which is fed by the hotel's own spring, you can look across to volcanoes and down into Central Valley and San José. The 13 suites with their whitewashed walls, intricate Gaudí-style arts and crafts and ample terraces amid lush greenery invite you to linger longer. And there's more: The fusion dishes made from ingredients grown in the hotel's own organic gardens and served at the El Tigre Vestido restaurant as well as a guided tour of the plantation are sure to give you a lasting "coffee baron" feeling.

Finca Rosa Blanca      [www.fincarosablanca.com/](http://www.fincarosablanca.com/)  
3009 Santa Bárbara  
Costa Rica  
Approx. 50 minutes from San José and  
just under 30 from the airport  
Tel. +506-22 69 93 92