



Learn Your World: Costa Rica

Career Development



To support your global practice, ACC Docket offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



Economy

GDP (purchasing power parity in USD)
US\$85.781 billion (2017 estimate)

Population

4,857,274 (2017 estimate)

Corruption

According to Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index, Costa Rica ranked 38th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) out of the 180 countries surveyed.

Additional Resources

Thinking about establishing operations in Costa Rica?

[Official International Commerce Promotion Agency](#)

[Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency](#)

[World Bank's Doing Business Report](#)

Deloitte's Investor Guide

[Seeking products or services?](#)

[Costa Rica's official tourism website](#)

Costa Rica is famous for its beaches and rainforests and, if you're lucky enough to visit for work, you should surely see those in person while you're in the country. But before it's time for fun, it's time for business.

Save the floral printed shirts for vacation. Most business is conducted in the capital, San Jose. Located in a mountainous valley in the country's interior, the capital sits about 2,000 meters above sea level, keeping it at a comfortable 75 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Most business meetings require business casual dress, and some more traditional institutions/meetings (e.g., banks, government

offices, BODs) prefer a more formal approach. It's best to err on the side of caution. After meeting your business partners, and judging by their age and industry, you may find more informal attire will work.

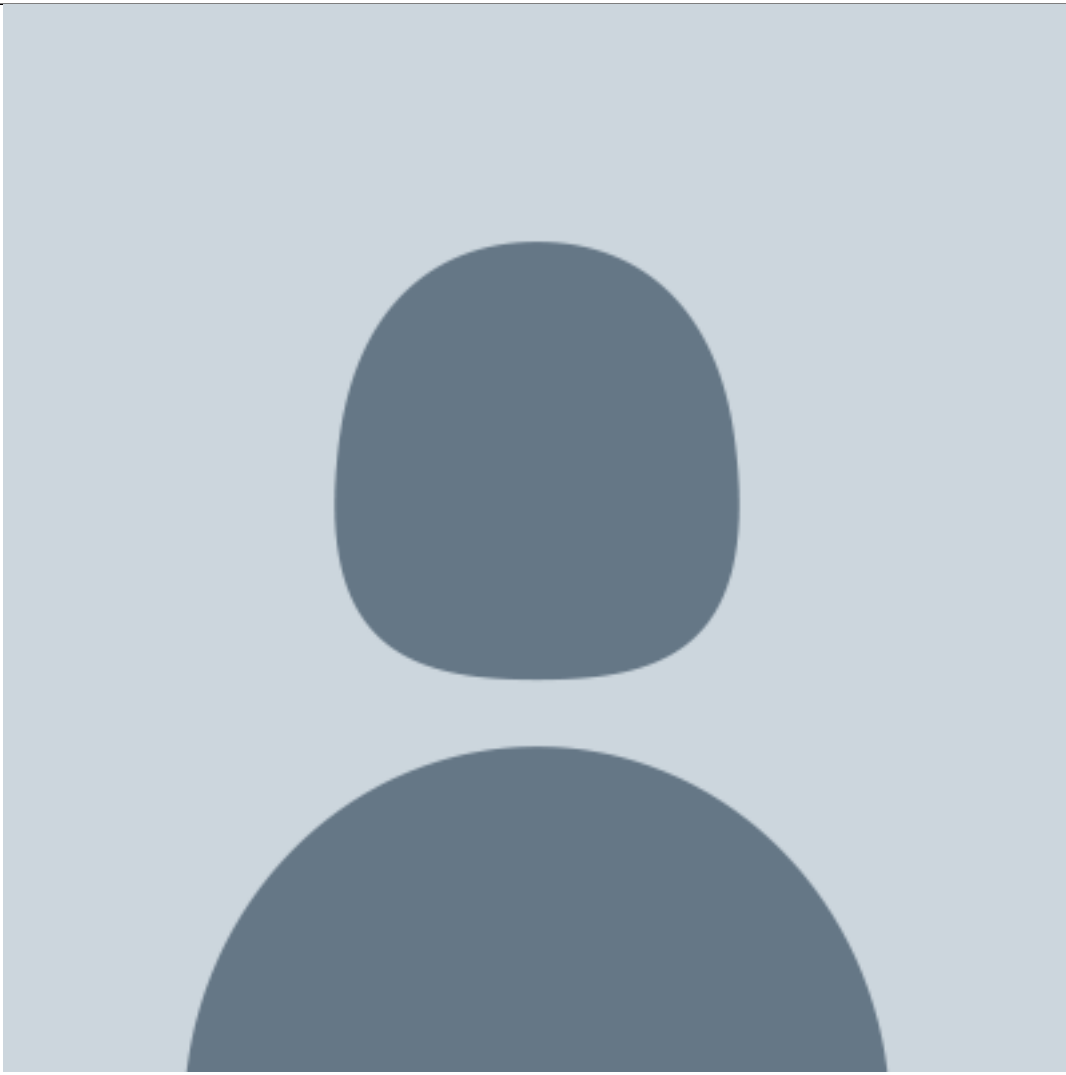
Costa Rica operates on "tico time," a reference to the citizens of Costa Rica, also known as "ticos." It's best to build a 15-minute window into any business meeting, as the other party may delay, similar to the concept of "fashionably late." Handshakes are standard greetings, and a peck-on-the-cheek is common among Latin Americans, although a wait-and-see approach may be best for obvious foreigners.

Meetings usually start with small talk. Ticos are usually quite chatty and friendly so humor can be a great icebreaker. Soccer, or fútbol, is also a great topic of conversation. Costa Rica did well in the last World Cup and is seeking to build off that performance for this summer's tournament. Keylor Navas, the goalkeeper for the Costa Rican national team and the Spanish club Real Madrid, is one player worth mentioning to show your knowledge of the sport.

If you are having a meal with the meeting, ordering beer or wine wouldn't raise any eyebrows — unless it's breakfast. At that time, it is best to stick with gallo pinto, a traditional dish made with rice and black beans and topped with a variety of options, including melted cheese, tortilla, and eggs. Most international cuisine can also be found in San Jose.

Once business meetings are completed, it's time to experience Costa Rica's pura vida, or simple life, on a beach, by a volcano, or in a cloud forest.

[Daniel Perez](#)



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