

ttg

TRAVEL TRADE GAZETTE
SUPPLEMENT

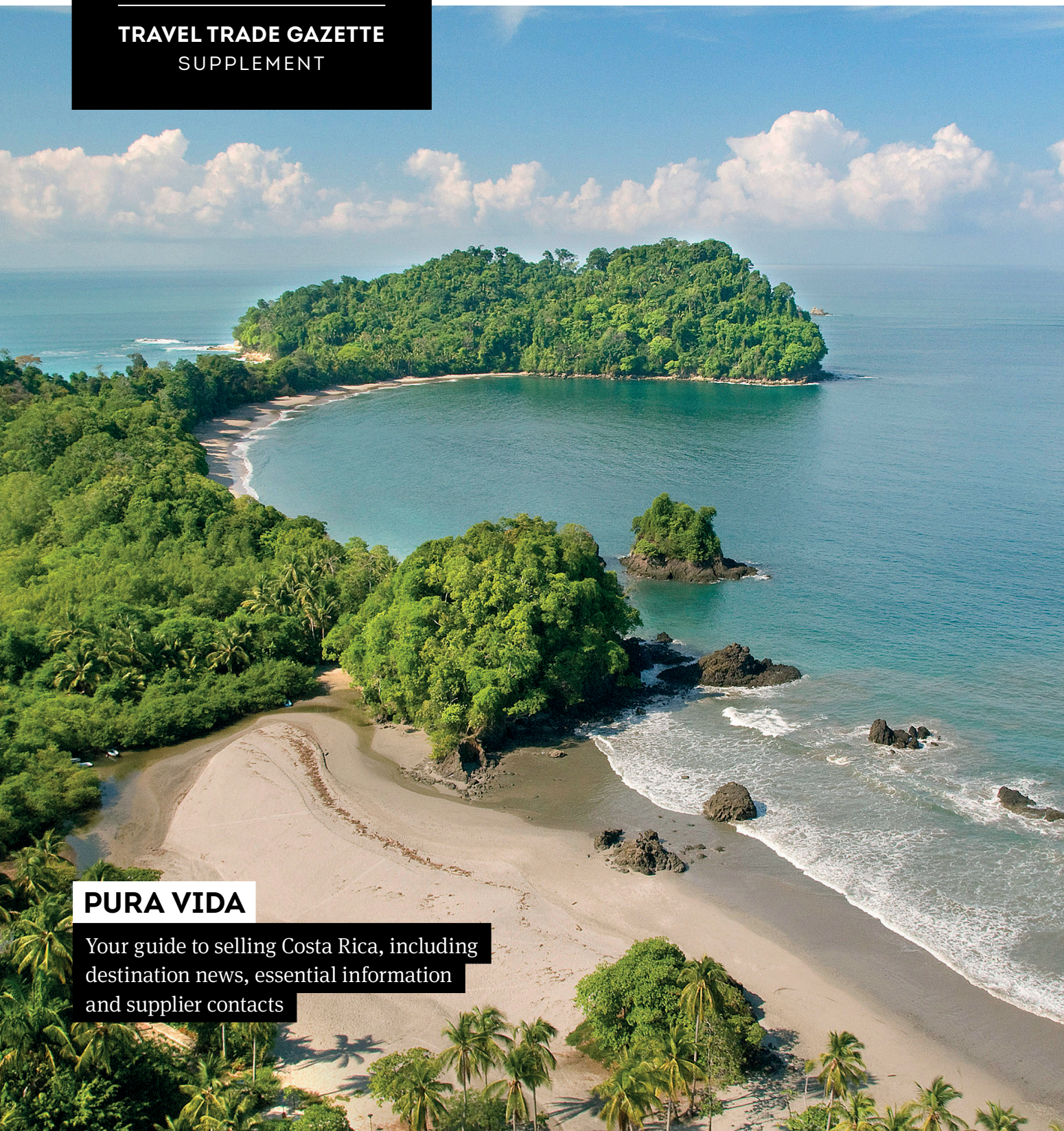
FOR SMARTER, BETTER, FAIRER TRAVEL

COSTA RICA

FEBRUARY 2022

PURA VIDA

Your guide to selling Costa Rica, including destination news, essential information and supplier contacts



WELCOME



It's true what they say – the best things really do come in small packages! What often surprises travellers to Costa Rica is the size of the country. A fifth the size of the UK, our country packs a punch when it comes to diversity. On a two-week holiday, visitors can travel from the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, taking in the incredible variety of landscapes en route.

Home to 6.5% of the world's biodiversity, but accounting for only 0.03% of its land mass, amazing wildlife can be seen everywhere you go. Sightings of famous locals such as the red-eyed frog and two- and three-toed sloths are part and parcel of most trips to Costa Rica. Once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to welcome newborn green turtles to the world, or watch mother whales teach their offspring to swim in the Pacific, make holidays to Costa Rica truly unforgettable.

In Costa Rica, 28% of the territory is protected through national parks, protected areas, biological reserves and private reserves, and the landscapes range from lush green rainforests and mountain ranges to active volcanoes and cloud forests.

Costa Rica is a natural playground. Visitors zip line above the tree tops, ride class-six rapids on rafting trips and abseil down waterfalls, before retiring to luxury eco-lodges to get some rest and waking up for a morning yoga session in the rainforest. Every region of Costa Rica has a different culture and climate, as well as unique flora and fauna.

British visitors have discovered a unique and special destination that offers nature, wildlife, adventure and off-the-beaten-track experiences. Before the pandemic, the UK was our largest European source market – UK visitor numbers grew every year since 2016. The UK is a key market to us, and with the help of our UK travel trade we are already seeing numbers once again increase.

After Covid, we want to position our country as an “aspirational” destination; a sanctuary with no real crowds and where the vast majority of activities take place safely outdoors.

We invite you to discover the Pura Vida lifestyle with us!

GUSTAVO ALVARADO CHAVES
Tourism Minister of Costa Rica



INTRODUCING THE PURA VIDA PLEDGE

By supporting Costa Rica's Pura Vida Pledge, the travel trade can play an active part in preserving our planet and the communities that live here

The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT) is proud to launch the Pura Vida Pledge. This is a promise to educate visitors and the travel trade as to the real meaning of responsible tourism, as well as the actions that they or their clients can take to make a true difference to the local communities in Costa Rica.

The phrase “pura vida” is a mantra for Costa Ricans, meaning “pure life” or, even more so, “full of life” – it symbolises the Costa Rican mindset of energy and positivity that awaits visitors. The country's commitment to the environment is a way of life.

Costa Rica was presented with the first-ever Earthshot Prize award in 2021, granted by The Royal Foundation to encourage change and to help protect the planet. The country won the prize for the “Protect and Restore Nature” category and is encouraging visitors to take one of five Pura Vida Pledge actions to ensure their holiday to the country is as “pura vida”, sustainable and responsible as possible.

By taking the following five Pura Vida Pledge actions, agents and clients can be confident that they are making responsible choices while enjoying the country's volcanoes, beaches and wild landscape.



CHOOSE COMPANIES WITH CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The CST is a pioneering programme launched by Costa Rica in 1997 and backed by the UNWTO that awards local companies following thorough sustainable practices. Its purpose is to make sustainability a reality, practical and necessary in the country's tourism industry. More than 400 tourism companies across Costa Rica are CST certified, including hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and tourism attractions. UK travel agents and tour operators are encouraged to choose companies that have the CST certification when creating Costa Rica itineraries.



CARBON-OFFSET THE HOLIDAY

With already 29% of the country's energy sources renewable, Costa Rica has set out to create a positive, innovative and inspiring vision of the future. The Costa Rica Tourism Board has partnered with the National Forestry Financing Fund (Fonafifo) to fight against carbon footprint. This means travellers can log into an online tool to easily calculate the carbon emissions of their flight and then make a payment that Fonafifo will invest in different environmental projects across the country.



ENGAGE IN VOLUNTEERING

Supporting local communities either through rural tourism or voluntary programmes has a very positive impact. The Social Progress Index (SPI) is a measurement tool to understand the wellbeing, opportunity and

basic human needs of the Costa Rican society, while simultaneously promoting social progress. SPI research evaluating the quality of life of Costa Ricans in areas where there is tourism revealed there is higher quality of life in those areas than in zones where tourism services do not exist. Therefore, the Costa Rica Tourism Board is aiming to spread the opportunity.

Travel agents are encouraged to create itineraries focusing on different parts of the country, away from the well-known hotspots, as well as encourage visitors to be more hands-on during their visit to Costa Rica. From community development and conservation programmes to working with animals and even teaching English, visitors will find an increasingly wide array of interesting and exciting volunteer opportunities that will make their holiday truly memorable.

RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

The Pura Vida Pledge is asking visitors to make a conscious effort to respect the environment before it's too late. Simply visiting a destination that promotes sustainability and eco-tourism such as Costa Rica is benefiting the world. The Pledge encourages local businesses to become more sustainable and Costa Rica prides itself on being one of the few countries in the world regenerating rainforests that are key to biodiversity – as highlighted by David Attenborough in his documentary *A Life On Our Planet*.



PROMOTE QUALITY ASSURANCE

Costa Rica's sector-wide recovery efforts – including 16 health protocols for the safe reopening of popular tourism areas – are recognised by the World Travel & Tourism Council. In July 2020, the organisation gave Costa Rica its Safe Travels stamp, which is the world's first global safety and hygiene stamp allowing travellers to identify destinations and businesses that have adopted the global standardised health and hygiene protocols. At present, 73 Costa Rican businesses have been given the stamp. The scheme sends a strong message that Costa Rica's tourism businesses take their hygiene seriously, and are committed to maintaining these high standards as a new normal.



When planning a client's trip to Costa Rica, we encourage you to support the Pura Vida Pledge. More info at puravidainiversity.co.uk

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PURA VIDA PLEDGE, ACCESS THE FULL LIST OF CST PARTNERS OR USE THE FONAFIFO TOOL, VISIT PURAVIDAUNIVERSITY.CO.UK

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

LOCATION

Situated in the heart of Central America, Costa Rica has the Pacific Ocean on its west coast and the Caribbean Sea on its east coast



POPULATION

There are 4.5 million citizens living in Costa Rica



LANGUAGE

Spanish and English are spoken widely, with the majority of tour guides speaking good English



CURRENCY

In Costa Rica the local currency is colones but US dollars are accepted in most places



TIME DIFFERENCE

Costa Rica is six hours behind the UK and Ireland



NATIONAL PARKS

In Costa Rica, 28% of territory is protected through national parks, with landscapes ranging from dry forests to rainforests and cloud forests



WILDLIFE

Costa Rica is home to 6.5% of the world's biodiversity



GREEN TURTLES

Green turtles can be spotted nesting on the coasts between July and October



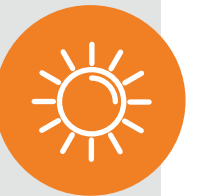
HUMPBACK WHALES

Between the months of December and March, visitors will likely spot humpback whales migrating back to the warm waters of the South Pacific



SUMMER

The green season in Costa Rica's Pacific and Central Valley regions runs from April to October, offering sunny mornings and tropical showers in the afternoons, while the Caribbean region promises lots of sunshine during this period



WINTER

The dry season in the Pacific region runs from November through to March, providing plenty of striking sunsets, cool evenings and clear skies



HOW TO GET THERE

British Airways flies non-stop from London to San Jose International (11 hours), while other airlines including Lufthansa, Air France, Iberia and KLM offer indirect services



ACTIVITIES

The country is mother nature's playground - from zip-lining, hanging bridges and horse riding to surfing and white-water rafting, there's something for everyone



BEST TIME TO GO

Costa Rica is a small country enjoying many different microclimates, so the destination's weather makes it enjoyable year round



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COSTA RICA, TAKE THE ONLINE TRAVEL AGENT TRAINING AT PURAVIDAUNIVERSITY.CO.UK

MONTEVERDE

Monteverde Biological Reserve is a breathtaking biological reserve famous for its cloud forest that's home to humming birds, vibrant orchids and many other plant and animal species. Visitors can enjoy this unique opportunity to get close to nature by taking a canopy bridge or go horse riding.



ARENAL VOLCANO

La Fortuna is home to the famous Arenal volcano, known for adventure activities such as zip-lining, biking, horse riding and hiking. Visitors can see water plummet from the forest into a tranquil pool at La Fortuna Waterfall and enjoy a number of natural hot springs.



HEREDIA

Located just a 25-minute drive out of the city, Heredia is home to the famous Costa Rican coffee. Finca Rosa Blanca is a luxury eco hotel on a sustainably forested coffee farm where visitors can take a tour to see how coffee is still harvested traditionally, as well as take coffee-tasting classes.

SAN JOSE

Clients can fly direct to San Jose International Airport in the destination's capital, San Jose. Many of Costa Rica's most popular museums and restaurants championing farm-to-table cuisine are in this urban setting. Explore the city with walking, bus or self-drive tours.



TORTUGUERO

Surrounded by waterways and mangroves, Playa Tortugero is a tropical paradise and four species of sea turtles nest on the coast here. Tortugero national park is joined to a town with the same name where visitors can find the beach.



NICOYA

The Pacific coast is known for fresh seafood, beaches, marine life and wellness retreats. The Nicoya Peninsula has all this, plus some of the world's best surf schools.



MANUEL ANTONIO

One of the country's most famous national parks is Manuel Antonio. It's the perfect place to encounter white-faced and squirrel monkeys, a variety of bird life, two- and three-toed sloths, iguanas, frogs, butterflies, crabs and much more.

UVITA

Uvita is home to Marino Ballena national park and the "whale tail" natural phenomenon. Travellers can often see the real thing between December and March when the humpbacks visit.

CORCOVADO

Located on the Osa Peninsula, Corcovado national park is the largest of Costa Rica's parks and home to 3% of the world's biodiversity. *National Geographic* defines it as "the planet's biologically richest place". This South Pacific region is a haven for those looking to experience the unspoiled beauty of Costa Rica.



LIMON

The Caribbean coast differs from other areas of Costa Rica because it is heavily influenced by Afro-Caribbean culture, which comes through in the many eclectic dishes and drinks found in the region. Limon is the largest city on the country's Caribbean coast and is the host of Limon Carnival, which commemorates Culture Day and is held annually during the week of 12 October.



TURRIALBA

The rural town of Turrialba offers a picturesque glimpse into traditional Costa Rican homes, large coffee plantations and dairy farms. Visitors can spend their days horse riding with Sabaneros (Costa Rican cowboys), taking cooking classes at a hacienda or dipping into the natural hot spring pools.



SAN GERARDO DE DOTA

San Gerardo de Dota is about three hours south of San Jose and famous among the world's birdwatching community for its year-round sightings of the resplendent quetzal – a species considered the beauty of Costa Rica. This is a much quieter alternative to other areas of cloud forest in Costa Rica.



STRIKING SPOTS

Costa Rica's key tourism destinations span two spectacular coastlines and a lush interior

EXCURSIONS

SUPPLIER	LOCATION	CONTACT
Hacienda El Viejo Wetlands: 5,000 acres of Wildlife Private Refuge, which protects the habitats of many species of colourful birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and a wide variety of flora.	Guanacaste	W: elviejowetlands.com E: info@elviejowetlands.com
Mistico: The Mistico Park, which crosses the highland and lowland forests, is made up of three trails that feature hanging bridges and showcase the natural diversity of Costa Rica to hikers.	Arenal	W: misticopark.com E: johnny@misticopark.com
Sensoria: The Sensoria lands offer a true tropical rainforest experience featuring a vibrant eco-system of animals and plants that represent up to 3% of the world's biodiversity.	Alajuela	W: sensoria.cr E: fmadrigal@sensoria.cr
Sky Adventures: Costa Rica Sky Adventures has a wide selection of tours in Monteverde and Arenal. From zip lining to nature hikes, its wide variety of adventures are available for all types of visitor.	Alajuela	W: skyadventures.travel E: sostenibilidad@skytrek.com

ACCOMMODATION

SUPPLIER	LOCATION	CONTACT
Andaz Costa Rica Resort: Visitors can relax, reconnect, recharge and stimulate their senses at this luxury resort. It offers three beaches, world-class golf, an extensive activity programme and distinctive dining experiences within a pristine 1,400-acre private peninsula.	Guanacaste	W: hyatt.com E: gscenter.papagayo@andaz.com
Cristal Ballena Boutique Hotel & Spa: This beautiful four-star boutique hotel is located near Uvita and the Marino Ballena national park on a hill between the Pacific Ocean and rainforest-covered mountains.	Puntarenas	W: cristal-ballena.com E: info@cristal-ballena.com
El Silencio Lodge & Spa: Located in the rainforest canopy near the Poas Volcano, El Silencio Lodge & Spa is a sustainable yet luxurious retreat for travellers who seek authentic experiences and a connection to nature.	Llanuras del Norte	W: elsilenciolodge.com E: info@elsilenciolodge.com
Hotel Hacienda Guachipelin: Located next to the Rincon de la Vieja national park, this hotel is a comfortable respite to relax in. Offering standard rooms to suites, all include air conditioning and free Wi-Fi.	Guanacaste	W: guachipelin.com E: info@guachipelin.com
Hotel San Bada: Hotel San Bada is just a few steps from Manuel Antonio beach, where guests can relax next to nature with spectacular views.	Puntarenas	W: hotelsanbada.com E: info@hotelsanbada.com
Lagarta Lodge: At this hotel, guests can explore the nature reserve of Reserva Biologica, relax in their spa or savour the magnificent views of the Pacific Ocean from their pools.	Guanacaste	W: lagartalodge.com E: marvin.fernandez@lagartalodge.com
Parador Resort & Spa: Parador Resort & Spa is the epitome of "responsible luxury". It sits atop Punta Quepos promontory and is surrounded by 12 acres of wildlife-rich tropical rainforest.	Puntarenas	W: hotelparador.com E: recursoshumanos@hotelparador.com
Playa Nicuesa Rainforest Lodge: Immersed in the Costa Rican rainforest and fronted by calm Gulf waters off the Pacific Ocean, Playa Nicuesa eco-lodge is accessible only by boat and offers a truly unique experience.	Osa Peninsula	W: nicuesalodge.com E: info@nicuesalodge.com
Selva Bananito Lodge: Nestled in the Talamanca Mountains on Costa Rica's Caribbean slope, this private eco-reserve is an important transition area to the International Park La Amistad.	Limon	W: selvabananito.com E: reservas@selvabananito.com
Tango Mar Beach Hotel and Spa: This hotel offers the intimate exclusivity of a small, deluxe beach resort but also contains a vast 150-acre jungle.	Puntarenas	W: tangomar.com E: info@tangomar.com

FOR MORE ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS GO TO VISITCOSTARICA.COM