

*For God so loved
the world...
shouldn't we?*

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***Praying for the World
One Country at Time***



**Costa Rica
October 9, 2011**

Costa Rica

Full Name

Republic of Costa Rica

Capital

San Jose



Location

Central America, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean, between Nicaragua and Panama.

Leadership

Democratic republic. President Laura CHINCHILLA Miranda (since 8 May 2010), the country's first woman to be elected president.

Overview

Costa Rica, which means "Rich Coast" is the only Latin American country included in the list of the world's 22 older democracies. For decades Costa Rica has stood out for its stability and its citizens enjoy one of the highest life expectancy levels in the Western hemisphere and better living standards than most of Central America. In 1949 Costa Rica constitutionally abolished its army. The country is frequently referred to as "Switzerland of Central America" and its main source of foreign exchange is tourism. Its tropical forests are home to a profusion of flora and fauna, including 1,000 species of orchid and 850 species of birds, such as macaws and toucans. Despite its small size, Costa Rica houses 6% of the existing biodiversity in the entire world and around 25% of its territory is in protected national parks and protected areas, the largest percentage of protected areas in the world. Thanks to its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and nature conservation programs, Costa Rica is considered one of the greenest countries in the world. Costa Rican culture is in many ways a reflection of its racial diversity. The predominant influence has long been European, which is reflected in everything from the official language -- Spanish -- to the architecture of the country's churches and other historic buildings. The indigenous influence is less visible, but can be found in everything from the tortillas that make part of a typical Costa Rican meal, to the handmade ceramics sold at roadside stands.

Religion

Roman Catholic 76.3%, Evangelical 13.7%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.3%, other Protestant 0.7%, other 4.8%, none 3.2%



Population

4.6 million

Economy

Traditionally dependent on coffee, banana and beef exports, Costa Rica has diversified its economy. In recent times, pharmaceuticals, financial outsourcing, software development, and ecotourism have become the prime industries in Costa Rica's economy. Costa Rica's impressive biodiversity makes it a key destination for ecotourism. Prior to the global economic crisis, Costa Rica enjoyed stable economic growth. Foreign investors remain attracted by the country's political stability and relatively high education levels, as well as the fiscal incentives offered in the free-trade zones; and Costa Rica has attracted one of the highest levels of foreign direct investment per capita in Latin America.

Prayer Concerns

Costa Rica has been used as a transit point for South American cocaine and there have been allegations of government corruption. The country faces the fourth-highest inflation rate in Latin America, high levels of bureaucracy, and poverty remains at around 15-20%. Indigenous people live in reserves which often lack access to schools, health care, electricity, and potable water. Their rights are often violated. Illegal immigration from Nicaragua has become a problem as it places heavy demands on the social welfare system. Human trafficking, especially in children, is an issue.