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EL RESIDENTE

July
August
2022

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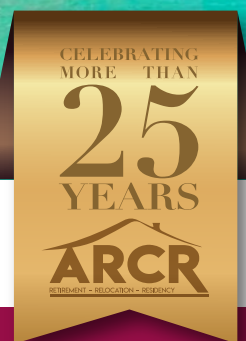
Bocas de Toro Panama



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This magazine has been published every two months since 1995 as the official communications media of ARCR Administration. Our organization provides service to thousands of foreigners who have chosen Costa Rica to reside for short periods or for permanent residence.

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Editor's Note

Summer is here, officially. It is kind of like summer year-round in Costa Rica, but what summer means here is that we are into the "rainy season," or as the tourist sites call it, the "Green Season". No matter which term you prefer, it is a good time to enjoy the warm weather and possibly take a day (or two) trip somewhere.

Dara Proctor has given us an article about a destination that is ideal for that short trip that we might not have considered six months ago. It's especially good if you have to make a border run to renew your Visa. So, check out the Destinos article in this issue. It may be an alternative place to go for a few days of vacation.

Summer also means there are a couple of important things to think about that we don't have to consider the rest of the year. First, if you have any open spaces around your home, check for things that can retain the rain. In this semi-tropical country we need to be aware of mosquitoes – they can transmit Dengue and other illnesses you don't want to have. Making sure there are no puddles or standing water nearby is a positive health measure.

Second, it is a good time to change the windshield wiper blades on your vehicle; you don't want to be driving and get caught in sudden rain and not be able to see the road and other traffic around you clearly. Particularly at night! Replacing the wipers is a cheap and effective way to increase your driving safety.

All done? And it's raining outside? Settle back and enjoy this issue of El Residente. No wiper blades are needed here!

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ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

EMPLOYMENT IN COSTA RICA According to the online newspaper Tico Times, on June 3, 2022, the Costa Rican government announced a new initiative called “We’ll Let You Work.” The initiative was written by the administration of the new President of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Chaves.

Among several other forward-thinking steps being taken to improve government functions, it is designed to reduce the burdens on businesses and citizens and seeks to reduce or eliminate unnecessary obstacles, requirements, and paperwork which impact the generation of jobs.

The administration believes that allowing people to work is the only way to reactivate the economy. To advance that concept, the appropriate departments are exploring actions to reduce or eliminate the impediments that affect business development. Officials have asked the private sector to specify specific complications and propose solutions to them.

The initiative is aimed at the business sectors, which include micro, small, medium, and large companies. No mention was made about changing the laws restricting certain individuals from being employed in Costa Rica.

MERCEDES-BENZ RECALL Mercedes-Benz has announced it is immediately recalling 993,407 older vehicles due to a potential problem with the braking system. Vehicles subject to the recall are SUV series ML and GL and the R-Class minivans, built between 2004 and 2015. The recall is worldwide.

CAJA SYSTEM HACKED In the early hours of Tuesday, May 31, 2022, it was discovered that the computer systems of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS, aka “CAJA”) had been hacked. When the attack was discovered, an immediate disconnection of all computer systems was ordered as a preventive measure. The shutdown resulted in those attempting to make CAJA payments having them refused. Health care services were not interrupted and the computer systems have been returned to partial operation..

NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST REQUIREMENT CANCELLED On June 12, 2022, the CDC rescinded the order requiring all U.S. citizens boarding a flight to the United States to show a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19.

The requirement for non-U.S. citizens traveling to the United States to provide proof of vaccination is still in effect. Non-U.S. citizens should review the entry/exit requirements on the COVID-19 information page before traveling. Go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html> or check the local U.S. Embassy website at: <https://cr.usembassy.gov/vaccine-mandate-air-travelers/>

4TH COVID-19 SHOT AUTHORIZED FOR SOME The Costa Rica CNVE (National Commission on Vaccination and Epidemiology) has approved a second booster shot, a fourth COVID-19 vaccine injection, for persons 50 years of age and above. The fourth dose can be given four months after the third and is not mandatory. The booster is also authorized for children 12 years old and older who are immuno-suppressed.

NEW ADVANCE DIRECTIVE LAW On May 31, 2022, the “Law for Anticipated Will” was created; the LAW 10.231 LEY DE VOLUNTADES ANTICIPADAS is a “Do Not Resuscitate or Intubate” directive. The law was designed as an Advanced Directive which provides a legal process for a person who is in full control of their faculties to express their wishes regarding any medical interventions which a team of health professionals could carry out to safeguard the life of the person, or their vital functions, at a time when they are unable to communicate their wishes. The directive notice expresses the person’s desires in advance of the need for those interventions. It must be in writing in a declaration of advance directives to be valid in a situation where the individual cannot express it. Under no circumstances is such a declaration to be interpreted or practiced as some type or form of euthanasia.

DESTINOS

by Dara Pastor



Bocas del Toro, Panama

We were so focused on Costa Rica that Panama wasn't even on our radar, but when some friends invited my husband and I to join them on a trip to Bocas del Toro, we said, "Why not?"

Having very little in the way of expectations, upon our arrival we more than pleasantly surprised. Remember those stunning photos of bungalows built on posts over the water on Fiji that you've seen in travel magazines? If you thought they looked enticing but weren't interested in the price tag or the ten-hour flight required to get there, consider Bocas del Toro. Located on an archipelago

right here in Central America, it is a fraction of the price. As well as the picturesque accommodations on pilings over the water, think of calm, quiet islands with azure, tepid waters ideal for snorkeling over coral and among tropical fish, and pristine jungle. Bocas del Toro is perfect for anybody looking for a unique, adventurous, off-the-beaten-path stay.

Getting to Bocas del Toro may seem a little daunting at first, but there is a mostly hassle-free way to make the trip; through Puerto Viejo de Talamanca on the southern Caribbean coast. (See the Destinos article in the May / June issue for more information about the

two Puerto Viejos. Ed.) Puerto Viejo is a great launching pad for a trip to Bocas del Toro.

To get to Puerto Viejo, most people will go through San Jose, Costa Rica's capital city in the Central Valley, either by car or bus. If you are driving, the trip can be most of a full day's journey due to the long windy road and construction, so I recommend planning on staying at least one night in Puerto Viejo. Even better, stay a couple nights to enjoy what Costa Rica's Caribbean coast has to offer, including great food, beaches, and national parks.

While, as the crow flies, the distance from Puerto Viejo to Bocas del Toro is only about 40 miles, completing

the journey, including the border crossing, can take four-six hours. Therefore, I highly recommend starting early in the day, as early as 6 am, to avoid long lines at the border.

We hired Caribe Shuttle, a local transportation operator, to help us through the whole process. For about \$35 USD per person, the trip with them is well worth it because they pick you up from your hotel in a van and take care of all the logistics for you. (If you have a car, ask your hotel if you can leave it in their lot while you are gone. We stayed at Hotel Banana Azul, which allowed us to park our vehicle for a daily fee of \$10 USD.) The shuttle took about 45 minutes to get to the Panama border. Their driver showed us where





to pay the Costa Rica exit fee, then walked with us across the bridge to the Panama side. You do have to carry your luggage, so pack light. Once in Panama, different Caribe Shuttle employees were waiting for us with another van. They showed us where to find immigration and pay the Panama entrance fee.

The next step was to drive to the town of Almirante, about another 45 minutes away. Almirante is a small but dense port city with many commercial offerings and lots of traffic. It's an area where bananas are grown on a nearby plantation, which are shipped from the port. You'll see huge lots full of containers stacked on top of each other, each full of thousands of bananas waiting to be shipped around the world. It's not a particularly beautiful town, but if you need to pick up something from a hardware or grocery store, you should have no problem.

In Almirante, Caribe Shuttle had tickets for us on a water taxi for the leg to Bocas Town on Isla Colon. Without Caribe Shuttle guides, we would never have found the nondescript dock house where people buy their tickets and get on the boat. The boats were speedboats with a

canopy and bench seating for about 25 people. Our luggage was stored in the covered bow.

When we arrived at one of the Bocas Town's docks, again, the Caribe Shuttle employees were very helpful. They have a small office at the dock building. We had arranged a water taxi through our host, and they offered to help us get to our final destination.

Caribe Shuttle also showed us where to walk into Bocas Town, so before checking in to our rental, we had some lunch at a nearby restaurant, then walked across the street to purchase some groceries. Caribe Shuttle watched our bags in their office while we were gone. If you are staying in a rental with a kitchen, I recommend bringing a supply of groceries because you likely won't want to take the time traveling into town every day, and most water taxis aren't available once it gets dark. If you are staying at a hotel, they often have a restaurant on site.

In Bocas Town, there are several cafes and restaurants which have WiFi, so if you don't have local cell service you can use their WiFi to make a WhatsApp call or send a message. We had lunch at a restaurant, connected



to the internet, and communicated with our host via WhatsApp. We were impressed by the quality of the menu items; my husband had a burger, and I had a vegetarian falafel salad.

Bocas Town is a funky and very walkable section on the southernmost tip of Isla Colon, which caters to tourists and backpackers. There are many cafes, restaurants, small hotels, and tour companies. The streets are arranged in a mostly grid-like fashion and on the edge of town is the archipelago's only airport. Don't expect to see any modern high rises; here you find unique, colorful, and often old, structures built on stilts dotting the shoreline. This is the only part of Isla Colon, or any of the islands, which allows cars.

For a unique Bocas experience, I suggest you book your stay at one of the many rentals or boutique hotels which are built over the water (we booked a one-bedroom, furnished house with a living room, kitchen, bathroom, and a large deck overlooking the water, through Airbnb). The benefit is that you can fall asleep to the soothing sounds of lapping water. You'll find that accommodations in Bocas del Toro are very reasonable, averaging about \$100 USD per night.

Our time in Bocas included a pleasant mix of relaxation and activity. Several days were spent lounging on the deck or in a hammock, reading and napping between dips in the water. On other days we spent snorkeling and exploring nearby areas with the kayak or stand-up



paddleboard that our rental house provided. One of our favorite activities was floating on the lake-like water on a pool float that was at our rental. You can arrange boat tours to various beaches and islands in town or via your host or hotel. Some highlights include the Isla Bastimentos National Marine Park, dolphin spotting, and looking for abundant starfish. If you're willing to try something new, we recommend taking a tour that includes Deep Boarding. If you have ever wondered what it would be like to swim like a dolphin, this is your chance. It may seem intimidating at first, but it's quite easy to get the hang of. It's a great way to enjoy the underwater scenery. We even spotted a shark!

At the end of our one-week stay, we made reservations with Caribe Shuttle online for our return to Puerto Viejo. (Round trip tickets are available if you know the date and times you want to schedule for your return, but there isn't much in the way of savings.) We bought our return tickets only a couple days in advance, once our return plans solidified.

Caribe Shuttle dropped us back off at the Banana Azul hotel around midday, where our car was freshly washed, for an additional \$10 USD. We stayed there another two nights to have a day off from traveling before driving back to San Jose, refreshed and renewed.

Good luck and happy travels!

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ARCR has joined DONATAPA

You Can Help!

DONATAPA is an environmental and social responsibility project of the *Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network*. Their flagship project is focused on generating accessible tourism and recreation spaces for people with disabilities.

The DONATAPA project involves the collection of plastic bottle caps which are used to manufacture plastic wood "boards." That product is used to build walkways and platforms that provide a way for people with disabilities to access and enjoy Costa Rica's beaches.

ARCR has joined this worthwhile project by becoming a collection point and we strongly encourage our members to save the caps from their drink bottles and bring them to the ARCR office. We will get them to DONATAPA.

DONATAPA is a country-wide campaign of the *Costa Rican Accessible Tourism Network* and works through the support of over 370 public and private entities with 220 collection points.



If you'd like to know more about their project, enter DONATAPA in Google or Facebook, or go to their Spanish-language website at:

<https://costaricaturismoaccessible.com/donatapa/playa-accesible/>

OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark

My Word

We all know that learning a new language has pitfalls. Those of us who move here try, or should try, to speak Spanish, and in the process we confuse words which are similar, or forget a word just when we need to use it. And many of those times when we are out in the culture we end up in one of those verbal huecos, afraid to speak because we're sure we will make some stupid mistake and the whole world will hear about it and laugh.

And some errors are indeed laughable. But it happens to everyone and it's easy to make mistakes when so many words sound alike: Fui and fue (I went, he/she went), pala and palo (shovel and stick), internar (admit) and interrarr (bury). That's the one that tripped me up when I was telling someone about a neighbor who was sick with pneumonia and said that she went to the hospital, and they buried her.

When I was a newcomer here I made lots of errors. One time when I was on my way to shop, a neighbor asked if I would pick up a sack of flour (harina) for her. I thought she said sand (arena) and said it would be too heavy for me. She said I should just get a kilo. I said where can I get a kilo sack of sand? She said in the grocery store on the shelves. By sifting through all this talk we got it straightened out and I brought home a kilo of flour for her.

There was no help for a Gringa friend married to a Tico, either. Her mother-in-law asked her to bring home some bones (huesos) from the market to make soup. In town she went all around the stalls in the market asking for holes (huecos). Nobody had any. Her mother-in-law found that hard to believe.

Even after many years in Costa Rica I can still get it wrong. When I went for my booster shot for the Covid 19 the nurse asked where I'd had my first two shots? "In the clinic in Carillos," I told her. The nurse sighed and shook her head, "Right arm or left arm?"

And the time I went eagerly searching for a 100 meter fountain (fuente) that someone told me about, it

turned out to be a less than exciting 100-meter bridge (puente).

Mixing words from different languages always leads to confusion. I was telling a friend about something I'd read on Deutsche Welle, the German internet news source and I could tell from the look on his face that something was wrong. Then it occurred to me, welle in German is a wave, like a radio wave. In Spanish, the word huele, which is pronounced like welle, means "it smells".

Pronunciation is critical in using a new language. One woman I know was in a restaurant and asked for a beer (cerveza) and they brought her the key to the restroom (servicio). Recently I called a shop in Alajuela for directions and the woman told me it was 50 meters north of Best Boohies. I'd never heard of the place even though the woman assured me that it was a well-known shoe store. When I located the shop, it was 50 meters north of Best Buys. The woman had used the Spanish pronunciation for the English name.

English is confusing too. A Costa Rican friend visited New York and when she came back she told me how impressed she was with the skyscrapers (rascacielos), but she had a hard time finding the train to Flooshing. I found these instructions for foreigners driving a car through Mexico. "The car is drive by the owner, his wifes and old sons."

Both English and Spanish are flexible and change from country to country. I invited my English student to come along to visit a British tourist in her RV, who proudly showed us around. She had learned Spanish in Spain so we should have had no trouble understanding each other, right? "This is the cooker," she said. "The stove," I explained to my student. "Yes, the estufa," said the English woman. "The cocina," I translated. There's Spanish Spanish, and there's Costa Rican Spanish.

Years ago I had a class of three students who wanted to learn English and I could easily understand their confusion over similar words: T-shirt and teacher, kitchen and chicken. Similar actions also cause

misunderstandings and one of the students came rushing into class, all excited with the news, "We were killed this morning". It was a robbery.

Or on a plane heading to Miami we passengers had to fill out some customs forms, and the woman next to me asked to borrow my pluma (feather). Although that is a correct word for pen, it is not used in Costa Rica; here it is lapicera. In my Spanish classes back in the states I learned that a snake is a serpiente. In Costa Rica, however, the word used is culebra. A friend from Paraguay asked if there were viboras where I live. "Yes, there are; there is a serpiente-culebra-vibora that likes to sun itself on my gate, which means I have to tickle it with a leaf to make it slither away when I want to go out or come in."

Costa Ricans say "regaleme" when they want to buy something, even though the word indicates a present or gift. Two university grad students were in Panama and went to lunch in a restaurant, Regaleme dos hamburgers, one of them ordered. "You have to pay for them," the waitress told him.

Even professionals can get caught mashing up the language, as happened to the news director of one of Costa Rica's major TV stations. She meant to say that the Red Cross sent (mando) the victim to... but instead said that the Red Cross killed (mató) the victim, which left her trying to overcome the giggles. The camera unexpectedly cut away for a commercial.

All this is to remind us that we never really master a language. Look through an English language dictionary and see how many words you don't know. And then there are all the new words that enter the vocabulary every year, a kind of an invasive species from the internet or modern culture. So, don't be shy about using your new Spanish when you are out in the community; just smile and do your best. We all learn from our mistakes, and nobody will blame you for yours.



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BY THE HIGH SEAS

by Christine Monteith



Flower Walk

June, in this La Niña year, is a month that alternates between sunshine filled skies and skin-drenching rains. Around the Golfo Dulce where I live, I've observed that rain falls in a range of moods. It can begin with a light mist that gently coats every surface, then deepen into a slight drizzle before the winds from the Pacific rush over the jungle canopy, twisting the tree tops with a driving precipitation that hits our house in horizontal waves. Sometimes thunderheads over the open water shoot forks of lightening with a forewarning of light spatters, which change to vertical downpours

of raindrops that hammer the roof so hard that Ben and I can't hear each other speak. The whims of the precipitation are as shifting as the clouds racing across the sky.

Sometimes the sunshine and rain play a game where every few hours they alternate, making hanging laundry a gamble. I look north across the Golfo Dulce and see clear skies, then look to the southwest to see dark, glowering clouds. Holding a basket with damp clothes I ask myself, "Am I feeling lucky?"

This morning we awoke to the last drops of a soaked dawn where the clouds revealed slashes of blue. Always in the hope of a sunny break, I set off with my dogs on my morning walk. During this bi-polar season the rich warmth of the sun, balanced with the nourishing showers of rain, provides the perfect conditions for the growth of wild flowers. Most of the year the roadside is edged with dense layers of green, the plants proffering a

display of leaves ranging from the delicacy of frilly lace to prehistoric looking ferns as wide as an elephant's ear. In a monotone of green I am delighted to catch a splash of color as seasonal blooms peek from the foliage.

Our neighborhood road, like 70% of roads in Costa Rica, consists of loose gravel that melts to mud in the rainy season. Our road shoots off the main road, designated as Highway 621, though "highway" is an optimistic term for a road with potholes so deep that locals place banana plants in the ruts to warn oncoming traffic. It, like hundreds of roads in rural Costa Rica, is listed on Google Maps as "Unnamed Road."





From the highway, our unnamed road meanders about two kms. up the crest of a ridge and peaks at a gate constructed, in typical Tico style, of barbwire and tree branch poles. Passing through this gate a narrow lane descends through a beautiful forest of towering tropical hardwoods to end in a small palm plantation.

Walking this route almost every day, I am interested in any small change. Today, along the edge of the road, I see long green stems supporting the brilliant purple orchids called La Guaria Morada, Costa Rica's national flower. The stems reach above my head with the blooms smiling down at me.

Every few hundred steps there are narrow lanes leading to my neighbors' homes. Living at the end of one of these lanes is an extended family of Ticos who arrived here to homestead in the 1970s. The family, with nine sons and one daughter, lived under a tarp covered ranchito with only creek water and no electricity until 2006 when an expat couple paid to have power lines run in for their home.

Working diligently over the decades, the sons have farmed and built homes for their families. Now the third generation is graduating from colegio (high school) and attending university. Their friendship and generosity in sharing their deep knowledge of this land has allowed Ben and I to enjoy the fruits (bananas, pineapple, coconut, pejibaye, costañá, carambola) of our labor. This bright and resilient family are careful custodians of the earth and, like the orchid, are not looking to attract attention but are content to stand tall and share the beauty of the land.

Further along in the tropical hardwood forest I spot some Malaysian Red Ginger. With its fiery red plumes it is a bold and eye-catching contrast to the surrounding undergrowth. And, like some of our neighbors, it is a transplant from distant lands.

There's a half dozen of us from North America who have discovered this tranquil, off-the-beaten track, locale. We've built our forever homes with expansive view decks and

plumbed with hot water. Ben and I are the only gringos who live here full-time now. Another couple who lived here for many years recently moved to the mountains above San Isidro in Perez Zeledon, "to be closer to civilization." We've been here almost five years and I feel comfortable enough with Spanish that I can stop and chat with my Tico neighbors to catch up on the news. And a couple of them enjoy chatting with me in English.

When I hear the distant thrum of a rain squall I stop to listen. It is a wall of sound that announces its relentless approach up the hillside. From experience I know that this rain will drench me to the skin, so it is time to turn back

to home. I think to myself, sometimes introduced non-native species are invasive, and sometimes the transplants will complement or enhance the environment. We have put down roots and make every attempt to be good neighbors and for our efforts we, like the Malaysian Red Ginger, have been welcomed and are thriving. We share the spirit of the custodians of our "Unnamed Road", a place which offers a natural environment for wild flowers, of all kinds.

Christine has had the good fortune to live, work, and travel around the world, and now is happily ensconced in tropical tranquility near the Golfo Dulce with one husband, two dogs, and four hens.

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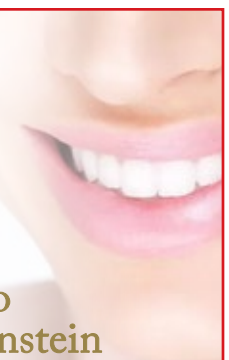
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SENIOR LIVING IN COSTA RICA

by Katya de Lusía

Comfortable in My Own Skin



The author looks at some of the changes we encounter with aging – Ed.

I was 6-feet tall, slim and beautiful when I was young; since childhood I had heard how pretty I was. Most of my life I never paid much attention to my looks and in my teens I was a flower child not using makeup or having much interest in fashion. Oh, I would dress up occasionally, but mostly I lived comfortably in blue jeans and t-shirts, only using a little eyeliner once in a while.

In my 20's I was offered a modeling job by an agency in New York City. I turned it down; I did not want to focus my life on my looks. Besides, if I had excepted their offer, I would have to limit my food, not party

as much as I liked, and heaven forbid I should get a pimple. The job came with far too much responsibility for maintaining my skinsuit. Being comfortable in my own skin was just the way I was when I was younger. And even into my 50's I took my appearance for granted.

But, after falling and breaking a hip, I started to notice changes in my body. Before then I was still active and my energy was pretty much the same as when I was younger. But, after my injury, that all came to a screeching halt; I couldn't walk and the person in the mirror had become a stranger. My reflection revealed wrinkles, a turkey neck, grey hair,

and sagging skin. My stomach, which had been so flat all my life, now reminded me of a 6-month pregnancy. My skin had become speckled like a leopard and scaly like a molting snake, and my butt and breasts had succumbed to gravity. This was my new reality.

The image in the mirror wouldn't let me stop thinking about how old I had suddenly become, wondering how age had snuck up on me without my noticing. Inside I didn't feel older, but my skinsuit was making it obvious.

For some, as we turn into "seniors", being in our own skin becomes uncomfortable; it doesn't seem like our familiar body anymore. In our mind we didn't notice the years passing, but then something we always thought of as only happening to "old people" happens to us. And we begin to wonder, am I now so frail that just falling will cause significant damage to this physical machine that had up to now worked so well?

Sometimes physical trauma creates the necessity to reassess one's life. It did for me. I had to give up living on the isolated farm I had been on before the accident because I couldn't walk the mountain path to it anymore. All my life being physically active had been

a no-brainer. Long-distance biking, hiking, riding horses, and the energy it took to raise three children as a single mother had now become a part of my past.

So okay, what do I do about it? All I can!

I recently re-started my daily painful, but rewarding, walking and, besides the physical activity, I changed my diet. I'm still without medications but I take natural supplements and herbs to keep the aging organs working as best they can.

I found that getting comfortable in my own skin at an advanced age takes work, unlike in my youth when I just took it for granted. Now, as I go through my daily life, I wonder how much time I might have left and seek ways to maintain my health as much as I can during that time. Personally, I don't want to live to a ripe old age; I'm already ripe enough, thank you.




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LEGAL UPDATE

by Rómulo Pacheco



So You Are Moving to Costa Rica

If you are moving to Costa Rica, there are some important things for you to consider.

Making a move to a new country is never easy, so one of the first things you should do is find a good source of information to keep you safe and assist you in navigating all the unique requirements and laws the country has in its legal, tax, real estate, and migratory systems. There are several good sources available, but naturally, I would recommend ARCR, which has over 25 years of experience in such matters. Regardless of who you choose, several key things must be taken into account from the beginning.

If you are going to apply for residency, you should bring the following documents from your home country:

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

This document should be newly issued, that is not older than six months at the date of its presentation to

Immigration here. And, it will be required to have been apostilled (certified accurate by the Foreign Affairs Office or the Office of the Secretary of State of the state/country in which it was issued.)

POLICE CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK:

This document is sometimes slow to be processed so you should start obtaining it well before your departure. For U.S. citizens, the only acceptable background check Costa Rican Immigration will accept is one issued by the U.S. FBI. It must be no more than six months old to be valid.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE:

If you are coming with your legal spouse, you need to be able to demonstrate your official marital status. To do that, you will need the marriage certificate. And

remember, it too, cannot be older than six months and must be apostilled.

(If your country does not apostille documents because they are not a member of the Hague Convention, then you will need to go a different route. That is, to have the documents certified by the Foreign Affairs Office in your country and then by the Costa Rican Embassy or Consulate located in that country. An example of the need for this alternate process is Canada, which does not apostille documents.)

These three documents are essential and will be required for any type of residency procedure on which you decide. But be aware, there are more documents which will be required. They vary depending on the type of residency being applied for. Thorough knowledge of the requirements is why your first step should be to identify an experienced and qualified person or organization to assist and guide you through the residency application process.

If you intend to bring money into Costa Rica, to buy a property or build a home, for instance, there are some requirements that you must meet:

LETTER OF GOOD STANDING

This letter is a certification of the history of your financial activities with your bank over the years.

You will also have to provide additional documentation (apostilled) regarding the origin of the funds that you are moving to Costa Rica. (The use of an escrow account for real estate proceedings may be a good idea; they take care of all the documentation for a relatively small fee.)

Remember that even if you are successful in opening your Costa Rican bank account, as long as you are not a resident you will not be able to make wire transfers from that account to any other accounts, including utilities, or to another service to which you would like to transfer money. Also, no one will be able to transfer money into your account. You will only be able to deposit the maximum allowed amount in that account (USD \$1,000 per person per month – a couple can make two separate \$1,000 deposits) for money to withdraw cash to pay daily expenses. Those withdrawals can only be made via a live teller or ATM. (It is also a good idea to maintain a foreign bank account which allows you to make international cash withdrawals via local ATM machines until your residency has been granted.)

When you have applied for your residency, but it has not yet been approved, and you need to go out of the country,

remember that you will be treated just as any other tourist; you will be able to go and come as you please but you must always be able to present a valid ticket out of Costa Rica upon your return.

Be aware that when you buy property of any type, you will need the services of a Notary Public. Notaries in Costa Rica are used differently than you may be familiar with in your home country. In Costa Rica, Notaries are the key link in a complex system that records the ownership of real estate, cars, motorcycles, boats, corporations, intellectual property, liens, mortgages, and such, in the National Registry. The system requires all registrations of ownership be accomplished only through a Notary Public. Therefore, a Notary is required for any transaction.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at:

Rómulo Pacheco

Attorney at Law, Notary Public

Pacheco, Marin, and Associates:

(506) 2220-0055, (506) 2290-1074

romulo@residencycr.com

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service@arcr.cr to arrange
your appointment.**



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Useful Numbers

United States of America Embassy

Phone: (506) 2519 2000

Address: Vía 104, Calle 98, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

American Citizens Services: (506) 2519-2590

Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

Duty Officer (after business hours): (506) 2519-2000
(Dial zero and ask for the Duty officer)

United Kingdom Embassy

Phone: (506) 2258 2025

Address: Edificio Centro Colón, Paseo Colón, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

Address: Sabana Sur, Edificio Oficentro Ejecutivo, atrás de la Contraloría, San José, 1007, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Web site: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Email: sos@international.gc.ca

Emergency phone: +1 613 996 8885 (call collect where available)

French Embassy

Phone: (506) 2234 4167

Address: A022, San José, Curridabat

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Email: a.m.bafrcr@gmail.com

Spanish Embassy

Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Email: emb.sanjose@maec.es

Emergency assistance: (506) 6050 9853

Venezuelan Embassy

Phone: (506) 2220 3704, 2220 3708

Address: San Pedro, Los Yoses, 50 metros antes de finalizar la avenida 10.

Email: embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve and embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com

Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., 1:30 – 3:30 p.m..

CONFUSED BY THE METRIC SYSTEM?

Need to know how to convert common measurements used in Costa Rica to Customary US Standard measurements? Use the handy conversion chart below!

Milliliters × .034 = Fluid Ounces

Kilograms × 2.205 = Pounds

Millimeters × .039 = Inches

Meters × 3.28 = Feet

Square Meters × 10.764 = Square Feet

Square meters × 10,000 = Hectares

Hectares × 2.47 = Acres

Kilometers × .62 = Miles

Centigrade × 1.8 + 32 = Fahrenheit

Liters × .264 = Gallons

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

Want a pocket version of some of the above conversion formulas?
Ask for one at the ARCR Reception Desk. It's FREE!

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FROM THE EMBASSIES



ASK ACS

Crisis Abroad: Thirty Tips To Be Ready!

Many disasters and hazards can affect where you travel or where you live overseas. The U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica recommends that you have a plan and practice it often. Here are 30 tips to be ready.

What can I do to prepare before I travel or live overseas?

1. Learn about the [country](#), including visa requirements, entry/exit requirements, local laws, customs, road safety, and medical care in the countries where you will be.
2. Check for State [Department Travel](#) Advisories for your destination(s).
3. [Apply](#) several months in advance for a new passport. If you already have one, it should be valid for at least six months and have two or more blank pages, depending on your destination(s). Otherwise, some countries may not let you enter.
4. Some prescription drugs, including narcotics and some U.S. over-the-counter medications, are illegal in other countries. Check with the [embassy of your destination\(s\)](#) about regulations and documentation before you travel.
5. If you are traveling alone with children, foreign border officials may require custody documents or notarized written consent from the other parent. Check with the [embassy of your foreign destination\(s\)](#) before traveling to see what you may need.
6. Before going abroad, notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel and check exchange rates. For information about using cash, debit/credit cards, and ATMs overseas, read information about your [destination\(s\)](#). Make two copies of all your travel documents in case of emergency. Leave one copy with a trusted friend or relative at home and carry the other separately from your original documents. To help prevent theft, do not carry

your passport in your back pocket, and keep it separate from your money.

7. Review recommendations for vaccinations and other health considerations from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).
8. Many countries do not recognize a U.S. driver's license, but most accept an International Driving Permit (IDP). You may also need supplemental auto insurance. Read more about [driving and road safety abroad](#) before you go.
9. Keep the contact details for the nearest [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) with you and put the Department of State 24/7 emergency numbers in your phone: 888-407-4747 or 202-501-4444.
10. Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP) to receive important safety and security messages and make it easier for the U.S. Embassy to locate and assist you in an emergency.

Should I buy emergency evacuation or health insurance?

11. Evacuation for medical treatment or to leave a crisis area in another country can cost more than \$100,000. You should strongly consider purchasing [evacuation insurance](#) in case of emergency overseas.
12. Many foreign medical facilities and providers require cash payment up front and do not accept U.S. insurance plans. Medicare does not provide coverage outside of the United States. Check your U.S. health care policy to see if it will cover you overseas. If not, consider buying supplemental insurance. Make sure the insurance you purchase covers any special medical needs or risks you anticipate on your trip.
13. Trip interruption or cancellation, flight delays, lost or stolen luggage, and other unexpected travel costs can add up. Check with your credit card and homeowners insurance companies to see if they provide coverage. If not, consider [additional insurance](#).

How do I prepare for a crisis if I am overseas?

14. Have a two-week supply of food and water for each member of your household – don't forget your pets! A crisis can make it impossible to leave your home or make the local water undrinkable.

15. Your emergency kit should include your passports, birth abroad certificates for children born overseas, cash in the local currency, a card with local translations of basic terms, and an electrical current converter. If you have pets, be sure to have their vaccination records.
16. Households with infants and young children should plan for food and supplies, such as diapers and wipes, formula or baby food, and a change of clothing.
17. If you take medication, make sure to have at least five days' worth at any given time – if you can, have enough for two weeks beyond your scheduled trip and have a copy of your prescriptions handy.
18. If you use assistive or medical devices that require a power supply, be sure to find backup power or other ways that will sustain your device or equipment during a power outage.
19. Make sure you have health insurance whenever you are traveling abroad. For more information, see [Insurance Providers for Overseas Coverage](#).

How can I stay in contact during a crisis with family and friends?

20. Keep a list of your emergency contacts handy in electronic and non-electronic forms and create a communication plan for reaching family and friends in the event of a crisis.
21. Phone lines are usually affected during a crisis. Think about other ways to communicate. For example, update your social media status often and send messages as regularly as possible to let friends and family know how you are doing.
22. U.S. cell phones do not always work overseas, especially when phone services are overwhelmed by a high volume of calls. Try sending your loved ones a text message – it is more likely to get through if you are in Wi-Fi range, even without local cell phone service.
23. Some social media sites allow people to “check in” after a crisis. If you are in or near a crisis location, make sure to “check in” on social media. Many sites allow you to send a private message, but you might want to post a public message so that others who might have information are able to see your message and respond. If you do post a public message, keep it general – remember, too much information can play into the hands of identity thieves and scammers.
24. Make sure that at least one friend or family member in United States has contact information for a friend, neighbor, or another family member where you are. If someone from back home is unable to reach you, they will know someone who they can reach to make sure you're OK. Check the travel.state.gov website for additional information – during a large-scale crisis, the State Department may set up a crisis-specific email address which allows us to collect information more quickly when there are a large number of requests for assistance. In the event of a crisis, the U.S. embassy or consulate in the affected country works to identify and locate U.S. citizens needing assistance with help from local authorities.
25. Many of our U.S. embassies and consulates, along with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, use social media to provide information – connect with us! [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

What can I do to be safe during a crisis?

26. Have an exit strategy! Know how you'll get out of harm's way without needing to rely on assistance including the U.S. government – a crisis may prevent or delay emergency responders' ability to get to you and there will be many people needing help.
27. Be sure you know more than one way to get towards safety – the crisis event may make some roads impassable or unsafe, and follow instructions from local authorities about security and evacuation. Doing so could save your life.
28. Monitor local radio, television, and other sources for updates. Costa Rica has several online news outlets that provide information in English. Situations can change quickly, limiting the time you have to get out.
29. Contact the nearest [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) if you need emergency help. Please keep in mind that this will not alert emergency responders – if you need emergency medical attention or police assistance, contact the local authorities directly if you can.
30. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and NOAA have additional tips on [HYPERLINK "https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes"](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes> and [HYPERLINK "https://www.noaa.gov/hurricane-](https://www.noaa.gov/hurricane-)



CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS?

With the Hurricane season upon us, it is an opportune moment to consider our personal preparations for the unexpected. Crises can be defined as an event that interrupts our ability to conduct our lives as usual. This could be the hurricane we have already mentioned but could encompass flooding, earthquakes, political unrest, and countless other scenarios.

In our personal lives, we should think about how we respond when the things we need to cope with day-to-day disappear. In Costa Rica, we have lots of practice in dealing with, for a short while, during power cuts and water outages! Many houses have a supply of candles, a portable gas hotplate, torches, and a backup water container (be that 10 liters or 1000). With that level of experience to fall back on, it becomes easier to envisage how we could cope if the outage stretched into several days or a week. That is the sort of preparedness we might need in the aftermath of a hurricane or an earthquake.

We might also be thinking about having certain key items ready in a bag (often called a 'grab bag') if we need to leave home in a hurry. This can include things like a first aid kit, specific prescription medication, a torch, batteries, key documents, and spare clothing.

If you are a resident of Costa Rica, the CR government will be leading in protecting you and all the other people in the country, but you will also be keen to hear from your Embassy. There is a useful guide on www.gov.uk. Search: "What to do if you're affected by a crisis overseas." Key messages are:

- Make contact with your family and friends.

Check FCDO travel advice on www.gov.uk. Search: "Costa Rica Travel Advice" and subscribe to email alerts for updates.

- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.
- Follow the advice of the local authorities (unless our travel advice advises differently).
- If you need consular assistance, call the FCDO on (+44) (0)207 008 5000 or the Embassy direct on (+506) 22582025
- We can offer a range of channels for you to request help (by phone, the internet or SMS) – we'll advertise these widely at the time.

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ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling



11 Smart Steps for Hiring a Contractor

If you have been shopping for a house in Costa Rica you have probably found out that the perfect house does not exist. Unless you are looking to buy brand-new construction, the houses you may have seen are probably outdated, may have structural damage, or are not up to your standards for some other reason. So, you might be wondering, is it possible to remodel a house in Costa Rica within your budget? And if so, how can I find the right contractor?

Remodeling can be stressful and intimidating, especially if you don't speak the language, don't know what building materials are available, and maybe have never remodeled a house before. So, what precautions do you

need to take to hire a contractor to do your remodel to minimize your stress and avoid running into all kinds of trouble? Here are eleven tips on getting the right contractor and achieving the remodel that will result in the home of your dreams.

One note before getting started, you need to realize that it is not always possible to get a bid from a contractor for a remodeling job before you make an offer on a house for sale. You might have to get just one or two estimates, which can give you a general idea of how to negotiate the price of the home with the seller. Discuss how to tackle this issue with your real estate agent before you negotiate a price that is too high, or you could end up

spending much more money on the remodeling than you can recover.

Remember, there is no Better Business Bureau, HomeAdvisor, or Houzz in Costa Rica which can give you a list of reputable contractors. Of the over 500,000 contractors here, the majority do everything – they do not specialize in certain areas. So, it is not just a matter of hiring a contractor who promises to deliver a good job; it is necessary to make sure you find one that will use the right subcontractors who will do the work to your standards and taste. For that reason, I propose the eleven following steps be taken before hiring a contractor in Costa Rica:

1. MAKE A LIST

Before you purchase the home that you fell in love with, make a complete, thorough, and detailed list of changes that you would like to make.

2. GET AN INSPECTION

Hire a home inspector to not only do a general home inspection, but one which will include a separate section of their report to address your list of desired upgrades. And will then tell you if those renovations are possible without the risk of running into significant problems.

3. GET RECOMMENDATIONS

Ask your home inspector, your real estate agent, your lawyer, and everyone you know for recommendations on contractors that have done renovations like those you are looking for. Ask around on Facebook. Find out which contractors are qualified to remodel a house to your standards. Not all contractors in Costa Rica will understand what you are looking for, and their standards may be different from yours.

4. INTERVIEW CANDIDATES

Meet face-to-face and interview the contractors that come with great recommendations. See which ones show up on time, determine if you can communicate with them well, and get a feel for whether you could get along with them. Ask them how many projects they work on at the same time, how many employees they have, and whether they work with subcontractors for each specialty. Also, ask for a list of previous clients and financial references. This will give you a good idea of those you will be able to work with and those you won't.

5. DON'T CHANGE ANYTHING ON YOUR LIST

It is always tempting to add to or change the renovations you put on your list, but don't. Stick to your original list of renovations so that every contractor can come up with a quote for the same job. Make sure your list carries all sizes and types of material, brand names, etc., you want to be used so you won't end up with different results.

6. ASK SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

When you interview the contractors you think are best for the job and ask them to make a bid on your project, instruct them to include the prices specifically for the following:

Demolition and trash removal

Walls, floors, and ceilings in concrete AND drywall

Tiling

Plumbing

Electrical work

Painting

Materials used

Also ask:

Is your bid fixed or an estimate?

Who are your suppliers?

Can you give references and show examples of past jobs done?

Can I meet your foreman?

Depending on the size of the project, would you get permits from the municipal engineering department for the remodel?

7. WHEN TO START

Ask each contractor when they can start on your project and how long it will take to finish.

8. THE DECISION

You will see that most contractor's bids will be totally different from each other. Before making a decision, follow up on the references given by each one; call their clients and, if possible, review the work done in person, if their clients will allow it. Double-check with their customers and ask if any shortcuts were taken on

any of the bids. And DO NOT hire the contractor with the lowest bid just because it is the lowest.

9. THE DOWN PAYMENT

Expect to pay 10 to 20 percent down to get started. If a contractor asks for 50 percent down, see it as a red flag. Costa Rican contractors usually do not have any working capital and will work with your money. Therefore, it is important to make payments in stages, but never pay more than necessary. It is important for you to require a contractor to always finish one stage and pay their subcontractors before going to the next one. If you don't, before you know it, all the money for that stage will have been spent and you'll be over your head with unfinished projects everywhere. ALWAYS leave 10 to 20 percent to be paid to the contractor when he tells you the job is "finished", for obvious reasons.

10. DEALING WITH EXTRAS

If, during the project, any changes, upgrades, additions, or extras come up, treat them as a separate building stage and budget them on an individual basis, not as part of the original contract. Be clear with the contractor that the


charges for all extras, changes, etc. will be paid separately, not included in the master bid payments.

11. THE CONTRACT

Once you have done your due diligence and decided on which contractor you want to hire, ask your attorney to draw up a contract for the job. Have it be as detailed as possible; include start and completion dates, the detailed projected costs offered in the bid, the payment schedule, and the details of the materials to be used. IMPORTANT: Do not forget to have the attorney include requiring the contractor to obtain lien releases (which protect you if he doesn't pay his bills) from all subcontractors, suppliers, and tax and insurance authorities.

If you follow these eleven steps for hiring a contractor, you should be able to finish your project without any major setbacks. I wish you a happy remodel.





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DESIGN WISE

by Shelagh Duncan



Pets at Home

We love our homes; we want them to be stylish and comfortable, chic and cozy. We love our pets too; they are so very much a part of our lives that we incorporate things into our homes like pet doors, pet beds, etc., to make them more comfortable. However, the other side of the coin is that owning a pet can significantly increase the wear and tear on our furniture and our homes. Let's explore some ways to make our homes more pet-friendly while keeping them and us happy.

It's universal; our pets love our sofas! If your pet insists on sharing the couch, selecting a microfiber upholstery fabric

may be a good choice. It is strong and resilient, easy to clean, and perfect for pet-friendly sofas. A good idea might be to add a pet blanket made from the same good quality, thick microfiber; it will also stand up to a great deal of use and misuse. Put it over the sofas and chairs your pets like to sleep on, and maybe one on the bed if you know they jump up there too. These covers are easily washed and can greatly reduce stains and fur build-up on your furniture as well as protecting it from claw catches and tears.

The fact is that most dogs smell. They are pack animals so smell is important to them – but not for your sofa. Bathing Fido often is a good idea, if you have the space.



Have you considered installing a dog cleaning station? These are incredibly useful – imagine, after a trip to the beach or a muddy walk in the rainy season, being able to clean them off before they get into the house! Think about adding one outside or even in your laundry room, if space allows. Install a hand shower and raised “tub” to reduce back stress (yours, not theirs!) and, if your pooch is small or getting on in years, adding a couple of steps will help them climb up there.

Encouraging them to use their own beds rather than our furniture is always challenging. Cat condos and cat trees covered with carpet or wound with rope are great for our feline friends. Super-useful are dog beds that do double-duty as end tables. Remember, cats like high places where they can survey their kingdoms and sleep, so keep that in mind as you plan for them – two or even three different locations will give them the variety they need.

Give your pet their own feeding area in the “people” area. Make it somewhere off the floor so it’s not likely to be



kicked over easily. For instance, you can add a built-in feeding station under your kitchen island. It could include a sleeping area and storage for those food bags too. For indoor cats, there are imaginative litter tray covers that disguise and hide the pan while still allowing your kitty access. Some of these are simple do-it-yourself projects, like converting an old console TV or a suitcase. Or, you can ante up and buy the designer variety.

Speaking of designer items, there are designer dog houses that are out of this world. Really cool and often outrageous pet pads look like palaces or pagodas, Swiss cottages or haciendas with bone-shaped pools. There is even a Mini-RV (a pooch-sized Airstream!).

We have come a long way from the days of color-coordinated bandanas. We now have designer duds for our friends (pet paraphernalia is big business!). For dogs, there are booties to keep their feet clean and dry, Doggles, to protect their eyes when they stick their heads out of the car window, Superman costumes, life-vests,

and reindeer antlers for Christmas. Cats have – well – catnip mice and balls with bells inside. But, no matter what they are, we love and pamper our pets, almost as if they were human.

Sometimes our pets “talk” to us, but it’s not always easy to understand what they are saying. So here’s a light-hearted look at what they might be telling us if we asked them to change a light bulb:

Afghan: “Light bulb? What light bulb?”

Golden Retriever: “The sun is shining, the day is young, we’ve got our lives ahead of us, and you’re worrying about a burned-out light bulb?”

Toy Poodle: “I’ll just blow in the Border Collie’s ear and he’ll do it.”

Border Collie: “Right away! And I’ll also replace any wiring that’s not up to code.”

Dachshund: “I can’t reach the stupid lamp!”



Rottweiler: "Go ahead! Make me!"

Shih Tzu: "Pul-leeze, dahling. I have servants for that kind of thing."

Labrador: "Oh, me, me!! Pleeasze let me change the light bulb! Can I? Can I? Huh? Huh? Please can I?"

Malamute: "Let the Border Collie do it. You can feed me while he's busy."

Cocker Spaniel: "Why change it? I can still pee in the dark."

Doberman Pinscher: "While it's dark, I'll sleep on the couch."

Mastiff: "Mastiffs are NOT afraid of the dark."

Hound Dog: "Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z"

Chihuahua: "Yo quiero Taco Bulb."

Pointer: "I see it! There it is! Right there!"

Greyhound: "It isn't moving. Who cares?"

Australian Shepherd: "Put all the light bulbs in a little circle."

Beagle: "Light bulb? That thing I ate was a light bulb?"

Siberian Husky: "Light bulb? I ate the light bulb and the lamp, and the coffee table, and the carpet under the coffee table, and the..."

All Cats: Yawn. "Who cares? I don't need the light to see."

Until next time... Shelagh

Royal Palm Interiors - Next to the BCR in Uvita - 2743-8323 - www.royalpalminteriors.com

Shelagh Duncan is on vacation in Europe. This is a reprint of her November/December 2018 article. Ed.



PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

"Are You Able To Be Happy Only When the Sun Shines?"

Rupert Spira, Spiritual Teacher

Can you also be happy when it "rains"? That's a crucial life skill not only in the rainforest but everywhere in life. And a big part of that skill lies in understanding how we make ourselves unhappy. Yes, we create some of our own "rain," our own unhappiness.

Many think our moods depend entirely on the external conditions of our lives; good conditions, good feelings. We feel happy when our conditions meet our needs and satisfy our wants. But when there's a gap between what we want, need, and the conditions that we experience, we feel frustrated, disappointed, deprived, unhappy. Seems simple, right? So how, then, do we impact our own happiness and unhappiness?

The physical condition of sunshine does not automatically, entirely on its own, produce happiness, nor does rain automatically produce a downhearted mood. Our happiness, or unhappiness, is controlled by the way we PERCEIVE, by the way we SEE, our conditions. Our feelings are not a simple matter of Stimulus-Response, like a doctor testing our reflexes with a tap to the knee.

Consider this; it's a beautiful day. The sun is shining gloriously, but we're unhappy. How can that be? It's because sunshine is not what we most need today; we need the good news that our loved one's surgery went well. Likewise, rain may not bring us down. Why? Because our loved one's surgery was a complete success. We got what we most needed, even though the weather was bad.

When our most important needs and wants are met, we feel happy regardless of the other conditions of our life. Conversely, when they're not met, we feel unhappy, even though the other parts of our life are doing great. Again, the point is that weather conditions alone do not determine how we feel, it's a matter of how we judge

those conditions in terms of our overall needs. So WE play a key role in our happiness and unhappiness. Our thoughts, assumptions, expectations, habits, and beliefs influence our judgments about our life situation, and that judgment is the direct cause of our mood.

HOW WE IMPAIR OUR OWN HAPPINESS

It's easy to see that how we treat others impacts their happiness. If we treat them with kindness, respect, and consideration, they will feel good in our presence. How we judge, "treat" our own experiences also impacts our happiness. I'll use a much anticipated, planned day at the beach, spoiled by rain, as an example to demonstrate those factors. Many factors operate unconsciously, so we are unaware of their power and think that the condition alone decides how we feel. There are many, and here are a few to think about.

Exaggerating the Negative – "I got screwed out of a well-earned day off."

It's raining too hard to go to the beach and, understandably, you feel disappointed, let down, frustrated, unhappy with this outcome. You react by thinking, "This is just awful, terrible".

Notice the EXTREME words used to describe how you feel: "awful, terrible, screwed." Yes, it FEELS like that, but is it REALLY that bad? Those words both reflect how you feel and make you feel even worse. On top of the missed beach day, you added to your unhappiness by depicting the situation as entirely negative. Those are not perceptions that will leave you happy. They are more likely to reduce your happiness even more;

EXAGGERATING the setback and turning it into a CATASTROPHE doesn't help anyone recover from the disappointment.

Taking the Setback Personally – “Nature screwed me out of a day I was really needing. That's not fair. I was really looking forward to it. I earned it.”

Again, this may be how you feel, but is it how things really are? OK, you've been working hard and needed, even deserved a reward, but did nature really deliberately deny you that payoff? It may feel like that, but to construe it that way adds to your disappointment. A conflict between you and the cosmos is not a happy place to be, and if that becomes your working assumption about your relationship with nature it would make YOUR world a hostile place. The impact on your happiness? Not good.

Seeing oneself as a VICTIM of circumstance, that you are the recipient of an injustice and are being “screwed” by the negative aspects of your conditions, adds feelings of unfairness. That typically produces anger and resentment, feelings that make happiness almost impossible.

Self-criticism – “What an IDIOT I am! I should have checked the weather report before I made plans. What's wrong with me?”

In addition to disappointment about the missed day at the beach, negative feelings about yourself have

now been included. You're unhappy about the day and also unhappy about who you are. You've added a negative judgment about your intelligence and competence to the rain. Is that going to leave you happy? Not likely.

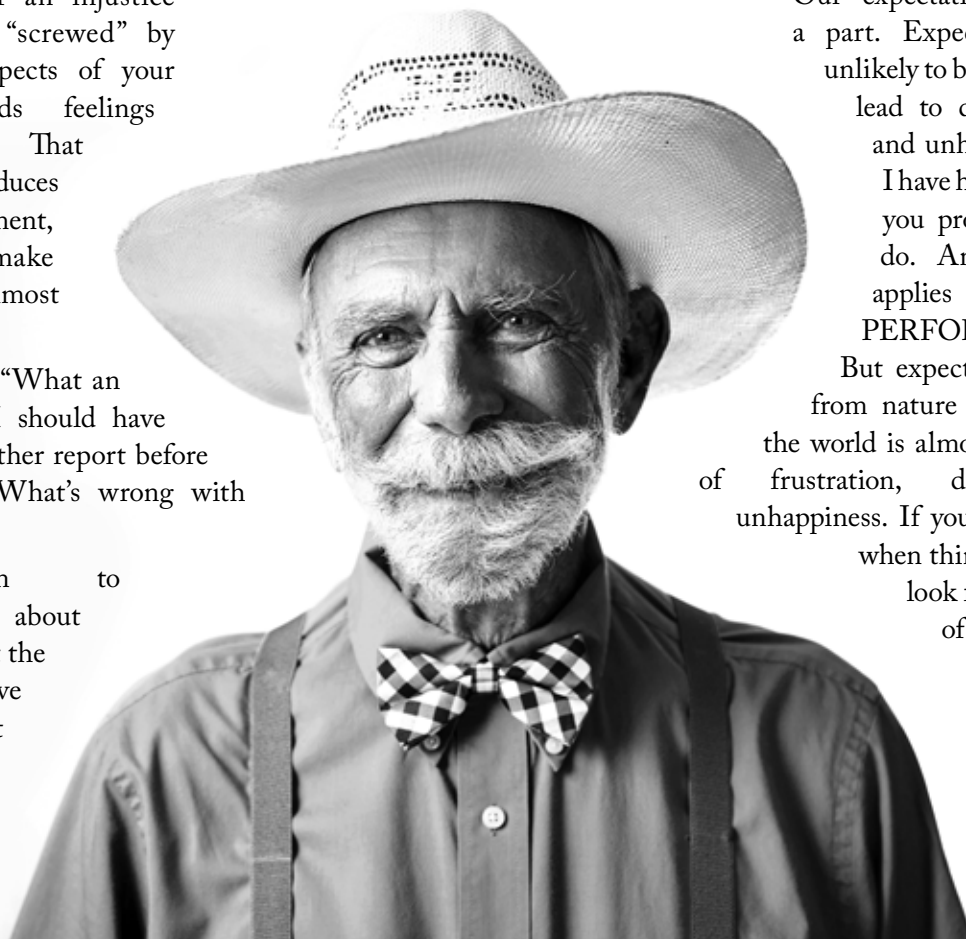
**A good life is
when you assume
nothing, do more,
need less, smile
often, dream
big, laugh a lot
and realize how
blessed you are.**

Perfectionism – “I had the PERFECT beach day planned. It was going to be AMAZING.”

With an attitude that things should be perfect, even if it didn't rain and the day occurred as planned, there would still have been something that failed to meet your expectations of perfection. Nothing can be perfect, meaning “completely without flaws.” Have you ever, will you ever, find that in this life? Watch for the impact that your descriptions and expectations of reality have on your mood. Again, conditions alone don't determine happiness.

Our expectations also play a part. Expecting what is unlikely to be delivered will lead to disappointment and unhappiness. “But I have high standards”, you protest. Yes, you do. And when that applies to how you PERFORM, go for it.

But expecting perfection from nature or the rest of the world is almost a guarantee of frustration, disappointment, unhappiness. If you're only happy when things are perfect, look forward to a lot of unhappiness.



Entitlement – “The world owes me, people owe me, life owes me...”

An attitude of entitlement does not bind the cosmos in indebtedness to you, but it does set you up to being harshly rebuffed. Others do not readily submit to such demands and expectations; they see those attitudes as a put down. Life and the world are not even listening to those claims.

When our sense of entitlement is not met with the satisfactions we expect, we multiply our unhappiness. Not only did it rain, we are also likely to hear a big “screw you” in the denial of our wants and needs. The cosmos does not share one’s grandiose self-image, and not only are we denied the day at the beach we felt was owed us, we also suffer a blow to our sense of self. A double dose of unhappiness.

HOW CAN WE ENHANCE OUR HAPPINESS?

Can anything be done to avoid such contributions to our own unhappiness? Absolutely!

Taking each self-inflicted blow to our happiness in turn, there are a number of ways to enhance rather than diminish our sense of well-being.

Be Real – If exaggerating the impact of situations reduces happiness and increases unhappiness, then having a realistic assessment will facilitate happiness’s restoration. Admittedly, it may FEEL “awful” to be denied a beach day by rain, but is it REALLY awful? “Disappointing, frustrating,” yes! “Awful,” no.

Don’t exaggerate the negative nor overstate the positive. It’s neither “awful” nor “the greatest day of my life.” Hyperbole does not produce happiness, and we can’t fool ourselves for long. ACCEPTING disappointment AND acknowledging the realistic positive does generate some joy. For example, “Yes, this is a letdown, but it’s NOT the end of the world;

we live in Costa Rica, after all. There will be other opportunities to hit the waves, and those waves may actually be better because of this rain.” Avoid the exaggerated negative. See the realistic positive.

**To be happy in life
you must:**

**Let go of what's
gone, be grateful
for that remains,
and look forward
to what is on the
way!**

Don’t Take the Impersonal Personally – Is the rain deliberately directed at making you unhappy? Come on now! Yes, you can FEEL that way, but is it truly that way?

Don’t Make Everything About You – Checking the weather report before embarking on an outing is, USUALLY, a good move, but not always. The promise of sunshine may clash with the reality of rain. If scientifically based meteorologists can get it wrong, so can Randy and Renee Retirees. Exercise caution in making decisions AND recall that no one can access all the relevant data or predict the future.

See the Inherent Imperfection of Perfectionism – How likely is it that anything or anyone can be “perfect”? Notice the imperfection in that question? Excellence is a better goal to strive for; it is more attainable. And, it can meet your needs for high performance WITHOUT driving yourself bananas in its pursuit. Have you ever really encountered perfection? Or something that came close enough that you could comfortably relinquish the pursuit? Strive for your best and discover that that is usually more than good enough; something with which you can be happy.

Be Happier by Learning to Be Happy With What is – Yes, we’re entitled to a paycheck after putting in the work, good results after making an effective effort, rest after a long day. Those things happen NOT because of our “inherent qualities”, but because of our investment of time, energy, expertise. Prince Charles may be “entitled” to the throne of Great Britain because of who he is. The rest of us living in the real world have to earn our “keep.” A satisfaction Charles will never know. So there! Prince of Wales!

Yet another way to create happiness and avoid unhappiness is to ACCEPT what is and what cannot be changed. Being at war with reality is a losing proposition, sure to leave you unhappy. Being at peace with what is defines the very essence of happiness. Give it a try.

A final thought: Unhappiness is ALWAYS, "I don't want what is, I want something different." -Rupert Spira

Tony Johnson is a retired university mental health counselor. There's experience, not just "book learning", behind these suggestions. johnson.tony4536@gmail.com



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CLUB CORNER

Due to COVID-19 many groups and clubs in this listing have suspended meetings. Interested persons should contact their groups to determine the status of their group. Group leaders should contact El Residente with information for this section to be updated. Clubs whose listings are not updated will be deleted from future listings.

Organizations are invited and encouraged to post their group activities, information, meeting schedules, and notices of special events FREE in the ARCR Facebook account. Go to www.facebook.com/ARCR123

► Alcoholics Anonymous

Groups meet daily throughout the country; times and places change frequently. Schedules for meetings and their locations can be found at: www.costaricaaa.com.

► Al-Anon

English language meetings open to anyone whose life has been/is affected by someone else's problem with alcohol. Meeting information can be found at: www.costaricaaa.com. Family Resources.

► American Legion Post 10-Escazú

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 12 noon at the Tap House, Escazú Village, Escazú. If you wish to attend please call: 4034-0788, or email: commander@alcr10.org or visit our website at: www.alcr10.org. If you need directions, call Terry Wise at: 8893-4021.

► American Legion Post 12-Golfito

Information can be obtained from Pat O'Connell, 8303-0950

► American Legion Auxiliary

The Legion Auxiliary meets the second Saturday of each month, at 1p.m. in Moravia. Contact Doris Murillo at: 2240-2947.

► Amigos of Costa Rica

A US-based non-profit organization established in 1999. As an advocate for philanthropy in Costa Rica, it contributes to the well-being of Costa Rica by connecting donors resources with vetted non-profit solutions. US Government tax-payers donations are deductible. For more information go to: www.amigosofcostarica.org or email to: emily@amigosofcostarica.org.

► Atenas Bridge Club

Informal, friendly duplicate games. Classes at 11 a.m., games at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays. New members welcome. For more information, visit the website at: www.atenasbridgeclub.com or email to: atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com.

► Birding Club Costa Rica

A private group that travels around Costa Rica to observe and identify the 900+ species of birds found here, learn about different parts of the country, and enjoy the company of like-minded and interested people. For more information, visit the website: www.birdingclubcr.org or email to: info@birdingclubcr.org.

► Canadian Club

Canadian Club welcomes everyone to join us for our monthly luncheons and at our special annual events. No passport required. There are no fees or dues to pay, just sign up with your email address and we will keep you informed of Canadian events. For information go to Facebook: Canadian Club of Costa Rica, or email Pat at: canadianclubcr@yahoo.com to sign up.

► Central Valley Golf Association

Meets every Tuesday morning between 6-7 a.m. at the Valle Del Sol golf course in Santa Ana. Both individual and two person events with different formats every week. We invite all men and woman with all handicaps to join us and enjoy golf on a picturesque course. No membership required. For more information, contact: Larry Goldman 8933-3333, email to: nylarryg@yahoo.com.

► Costa Ballena Women's Network

Begun in Ojochal with a handful of expat ladies, our focus is networking, community, business, and social activities as well as offering an opportunity to meet new people. Monthly lunch meetings held the third Saturday of each month through a variety of social activities at various restaurants with guest speakers talking on interesting topics. For more information please email: cbwn00@gmail.com.

► Costa Rica Writers Group

Published authors and writers, newbies, and wanna-bes make up this group. Dedicated to helping and improving all authors' work with resources for publishing, printing, editing, cover design; every aspect of the writing process. Third Thursday, January through November, Henry's Beach Café, Escazú, 11 a.m. Contact: bbrashears0@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page, Costa Rica Writers Group.

► Democrats Abroad Costa Rica

Provides information about voting in the US and voting issues of interest to US citizens living in Costa Rica. For more information or to join, email: democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com or visit our website at: www.democratsabroad.org/cr Register to vote absentee at: votefromabroad.org

► Domestic Animal Welfare Group Costa Ballena

DAWG is a volunteer run, non-profit organization focused on animal advocacy in the Costa Ballena region of Costa Rica with

a goal of eliminating the abuse and abandonment of domestic animals in Costa Ballena. We stress education, spay and neuter. Donations are our lifeline. For information visit the website at: www.dawgcostarica.org or email to: dawgcostarica@gmail.com.

► First Friday Lunch

Each month on the first Friday of the month ARCR sponsors a First Friday Lunch at 12 p.m. All are invited to join ARCR officers and others for an informal lunch and BS session. No RSVP or agenda, just good food and meeting new and old friends. Attendees are responsible for their own food and drink expenses. Meetings are at the Chinese restaurant, Marisqueria Mariscos Vivo, located behind the Mas x Menos grocery store located across from the Nissan Dealer near Parque Sabana. Call ARCR (2220-0055) for directions.

► Little Theater Group

An English-speaking theater group located in Escazu. Website: littletheatretegroup.org Email: info@littletheatretegroup.org Whatsapp: 8708-2607

► Marine Corps League

Meets the second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. at the Tap House in City Place Mall in Santa Ana. We are looking for new members. Former Marines and Navy Corpsmen can be regular members. All other service members are welcome to join as associate members. For information call Andy Pucek at: 8721-6636 or email: andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com.

► Newcomers Club of Costa Rica

(For Women) The Club, in existence since 1980, promotes friendship and support among members, mostly expats in Costa Rica, through conducting a variety of social and recreational activities. Meetings are held from September to May, interest groups meet year-round. General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. every first Tuesday of the month. For more information go to our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/newcomers.org/> or email to: newcomersclub.costarica@gmail.com.

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

Formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make positive contributions to our local community. The PZIWC meets for lunch on the second Tuesday of each month, hosts Ramblers Day on the third Tuesday of each month, and has a Games Day on the fourth Tuesday of each month. For more information, please send an email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com or visit our web site at: www.pziwc.org.

► Professional Women's Network

PWN provides its members with opportunities to network with other professional women with the goal of aiding personal and professional development of entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. PWN sponsors service and outreach programs to "give back" to the community. Meeting schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Sarah Joy at

8868-6990 or email us at info@pwncr.com The PWN website is: <http://www.pwncr.com>

► Quepos-Manuel Antonio Writers Group

The QMAWG is a group of aspiring and accomplished writers living in the Central and South Pacific Coast area who meet to expand their skills, share resources, and support and socialize with others with an interest in writing. Meetings take place on the second Sunday of each month at 12:00 p.m. at El Avion restaurant in Manuel Antonio, and includes a presentation and Q&A session, followed by a luncheon and social exchange. For more information, email Bob Normand at: bob@bobnormand.com

► Radio Control Sailing Club

Meets at Sabana Park Lake. For information email Walter Bibb at: wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com.

► San Vito Bird Club

A community based birding/nature group centered in the diverse southern zone of Costa Rica. We also facilitate nature education to local elementary schools through Cornell University's Bird Sleuth program. Twice monthly bird walks through the Wilson Botanical Garden and other sites are open to all; binoculars available as needed. Please visit our website: www.sanvitobirdclub.org or email: eltangaral@gmail.com for more information.

► Wine Club of Costa Rica

Social group. Monthly Meeting, Mainly Escazú Email: costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com

► Women's Club of Costa Rica

The oldest, continuously operating, philanthropic organization for English-speaking women in Costa Rica. The club is focused on serving community needs, particularly on children's needs. Along with its philanthropic fundraising activities, WCCR also hosts regular lunches, teas, and many special interest groups. Guests are welcome. Information and a calendar of events can be found at: www.wccr.org.

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Open to men too. Meetings in English in Heredia, Spanish in San José, and English/Spanish in San Ramon. We work on peace and human rights issues. Call Mitzi: 2433-7078 or write us at: mitzstar@gmail.com.

NOTICE: Club officers should review the contact information for their clubs and make sure it is up to date.

Send any changes or corrections to: service@arcr.cr subject line; Club Corner, and post them on the the ARCR Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ARCR123.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Important dates in Costa Rica:

25 July

Monday, Guanacaste Day
National holiday

2 August

Tuesday, Our Lady of Los
Ángeles, Non Compulsory
Payment

15 August

Monday, Mother's Day
National holiday

24 August

Wednesday, National Parks
Day, Observance

Funniest One Liners

Money can't buy happiness,
but it sure makes misery
easier to live with.

I discovered I scream the
same way whether I'm
about to be devoured by
a great white shark or if a
piece of seaweed touches
my foot.

Some cause happiness
wherever they go. Others
whenever they go.

Why did the man fall down
the well? Because he
couldn't see that well!

There's a fine line between
cuddling and holding
someone down so they
can't get away.

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