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# EL RESIDENTE

November

December

2022

DESTINOS:

## Starbucks Hacienda Alsacia



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

The Holidays are Here, Almost  
The Infamous "Border Run"

The Old Woman in the Mirror  
No THING Can Make Us Happy

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## Check our blog on our Facebook site.

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

**H**appy Holidays! It may seem a little early for that greeting, but this is the last issue for 2022 and our last chance to extend that greeting. *El Residente* survived the office move, so look for us in your email inbox during the first week of January 2023. We'll have more good reading for you then.

The Christmas holidays are coming up soon, and with great pleasure we offer a gift to you; the annual BOOKSHELF, a listing books written by our fellow expats in Costa Rica. There's no gift like a good book and there are many to choose from, including some new releases (they are the ones whose titles are in red). We all know the importance of ordering gifts early, so start now and choose several. Your purchase will also be a gift to the authors. Of particular interest may be Ryan Piercy's new book about his kidnapping here in Costa Rica. Look for the red title, *Diary of a Cryptocurrency Abduction*. (Full disclosure: your Editor had a role in preparing the book.)

Speaking of the holidays, Mitzi Stark gives us some places to go to enjoy the local holiday festivities. Check out her *Out and About* column and start planning for attending some of those events.

If you are one of the many "perpetual tourists" who make a border run regularly, take a look at *Legal Update*; there may be some information for you there – you can be putting yourself in jeopardy!

With all the rain the past few months, Ivo Hendling hits a timely subject in *On the Grid*, where he tells how to protect your property during the rainy season. Hopefully, it is over for this year, but there is always next year, and the time to start preparing is now.

From the staff of ARCR and *El Residente*, we wish you a great holiday season!

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# ACROSS THE BOARD

## Notes and News from the Board of Directors

**ARCR HAS MOVED** As of November 1, the ARCR offices have relocated to new spaces. The new offices are located on the third floor of the Ofimall Building, a part of San Pedro Mall. (a tall, red and white building north of the commercial mall). There is ample free parking, and all services and operations, with the same great people, will be the same. The telephone number, 506-4052-4052, is the primary number to contact the office. (2220-0055 will no longer be valid after October 31.) See the map elsewhere in this issue for directions on how to reach the new location. [WAZE](#) and [Google Maps](#) will also contain the location and directions. Use “ARCR” to access the information.

**CEDULA (DIMEX) CARD RENEWAL** Cedulas (DIMEX cards for expats) for many persons, both Ticos and expats, expired during the pandemic. Immigration was closed for much of the time and, as a result, all expired cedulas were automatically extended until October 2022. But, when Immigration started reissuing the cards, they encountered another problem – they ran out of the plastic material used to create them. Production has now been resumed, but due to the huge volume of persons wishing to renew, appointments are extremely hard to obtain, and appointment dates in February 2023 and later are being given. Expired DIMEX cards remain valid until the date of the holders’ renewal appointment or the extension is canceled. Those with expired DIMEX cards should renew them as soon as possible. ARCR can obtain appointments for members for a small fee. Contact the office if you wish to utilize this service.

### **THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY WILL BE CLOSED FOR AT LEAST THREE MONTHS FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS**

According to the Tico Times, on September 26, MOPET announced that severe damage from heavy rains has caused the Panamerican Highway near San Ramon to be closed for at least three months while emergency repairs are being

conducted. Travelers should be prepared to expect significant delays and consider alternative routes. Other main roads throughout the country have also received damage, so check before planning a trip.

**WCCR DISSOLVED** After 82 years of service, the Women’s Club of Costa Rica has ceased operation, a victim of the Coronavirus and changing times. Formed in 1940 as a charitable organization, the WCCR’s primary focus was raising money for scholarships, to help needy students, and to assist local education programs in obtaining educational materials and supplies.

**CANADIAN CLUB ENDS OPERATION** A long-standing group that served the social needs of Canadian immigrants, the Canadian Club of Costa Rica, has been dissolved.

**FOREIGN HEALTH INSURANCE** ARCR has learned that Jeanette Eaela, who formerly administered Tricare for U.S. military veterans, and other foreign medical insurance programs for Metropolitan Hospital, has joined CIMA Hospital in the same capacity. CIMA now accepts Tricare and other foreign healthcare policies, and Jeanette, who speaks excellent English, has many years of experience in handling foreign insurance claims for expats. She can be reached at 8382-5533.

### **ARCR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS**

For the first time in over two years, the ARCR Board of Directors held a face-to-face meeting in October. The office move and other routine matters were discussed as the group tries to get “back in the groove.” It is the intent of the BoD to fully resume its charitable activities in 2023. If you have any questions or concerns that the BoD should be made aware of, please drop us a line at: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr)  
Subject line: “BoD”

### **EXCHANGE LIBRARY DISCONTINUED**

Sadly, the ARCR book exchange library has been discontinued due to space limitations in the new offices. The existing stock of books was made available to members and/or donated to worthy causes.





# NEW LOCATION



DEAR MEMBERS:

Starting November 01, 2022, our offices will be relocated to **Ofimall 3rd floor at Mall San Pedro, San Pedro, San Jose.**

We will be glad to continue assisting you from Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Phone: (506) 4052 4052

# DESTINOS

By William Duckwall



## Starbucks Hacienda Alsacia

There are many interesting spots to explore within a short drive of San José. Today I am writing about one that my wife and I visited recently – a coffee farm. I suppose every expat and every tourist in Costa Rica has already visited a coffee farm; whenever friends and family visit it's a mandatory excursion. This one, the Starbucks Hacienda Alsacia Coffee Farm, is a little different. An expat resident friend recommended it to us and I confess, my first reaction was tepid – “Hmm, another coffee tour.” But

I've taken this tour twice now, and would welcome an excuse to go again.

I hardly touched coffee until I went to college and needed to stay up all night to finish term papers, entirely due to my own procrastination. My mother was old school and believed that coffee was not for children or adolescents; she had some vague concern about coffee stunting one's growth. In hindsight I think she just didn't want her two sons to be more rambunctious than we already were. Ticos on the other hand, my local





friends, generally can't remember when they started to drink coffee as they started so very young.

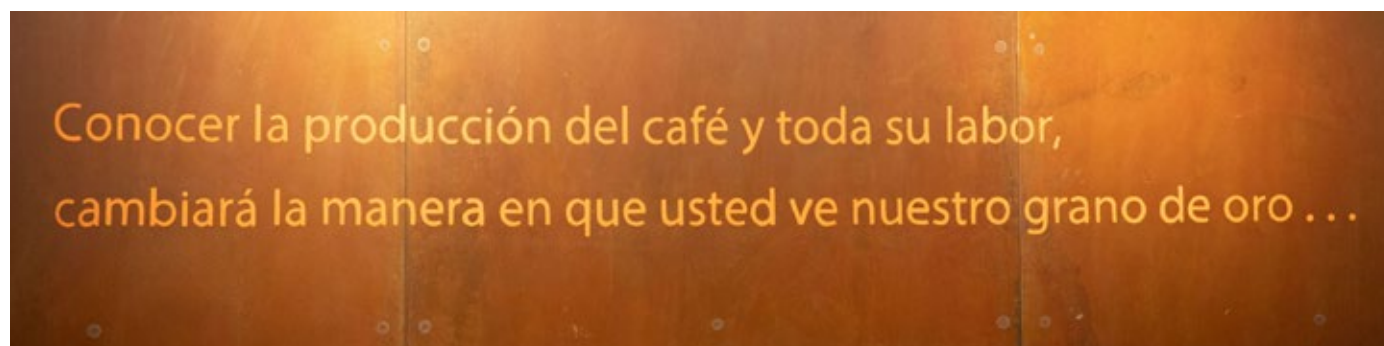
There are two main varieties of coffee, arabica and robusta. Arabica is the variety preferred by most Westerners today, though robusta does have a following. Back when I started drinking coffee, in the 60's and 70's, the main supermarket brands were generally blends of the two varieties. I wasn't very discerning at the time; coffee that had spent all morning in a percolator was still acceptable as I was mostly after the caffeine boost. I think a lot of the country shared that thinking. Any cup of joe was better than nothing, and deficiencies could be masked with enough Cremora and sugar.

My outlook has changed. California has a coffee shop on every block, all serving 100% arabica coffee. In Costa Rica, every restaurant serves good local coffee, and it's

usually 100% arabica. In fact, until recently, growing the robusta variety wasn't even permitted in Costa Rica!

## A HISTORY LESSON

Costa Rican growers were in general agreement to shun robusta, in favor of producing only the higher-priced arabica. It became an official decree in 1988. Thirty years later, in 2018, this changed; growing robusta is now permitted. The ban was repealed in order to promote crop diversification for lowland farmers. Also, by 2018 Costa Rica found itself importing coffee! The limited production of arabica, and its desirability for export, left too little coffee for local consumption. In 2018, 7 million kilograms were imported, which grew to 12 million kilograms by 2020. Coffee consumption is around four kilograms per capita, or about 20 million kilograms for Costa Rica's population of five million persons. Some of the imported coffee is robusta, and



less expensive arabica-robusta blends are now found here in the markets. Given the necessity of importing coffee, the prohibition on growing robusta no longer made sense.

In the 1950's of my youth coffee was more of a commodity, like potatoes or flour. Now the arabica coffee market is more like the wine market, with attention to seasonal weather, variations from farm to farm, and the particulars of aging and roasting,

Arabica grows at higher elevations, generally from 2,000 to 6,000 feet elevation. Robusta can grow in the tropical lowlands, where Costa Rica typically grows pineapples. Robusta is a hardier plant, more disease resistant than arabica, and it gives a higher yield per acre, with a higher caffeine content, nearly twice the caffeine of arabica. But, robusta is more earthy and bitter, described as a more “acquired” flavor, whereas arabica is milder and more aromatic. The big coffee chains in the US, even including McDonalds, serve 100% arabica coffee.

Robusta is popular in Vietnam, which grows mostly that variety. Coffee there is often served with condensed milk. Robusta's lingering bad reputation comes from its use in instant coffee. But robusta has its devotees, who relish the high caffeine levels, and seek out 100% robusta beans which often sport trade names touting their caffeine content, names like Biohazard and Cannonball. I'll just note in passing that Cardiac Arrhythmia hasn't been trademarked yet.

Don't dismiss robusta entirely. Espresso blends often include a sizeable percentage of robusta (for improved crema – the foamy top layer). Also, a quick browse of the internet reveals many scholarly articles about cross breeding the two varieties, with the goal of producing plants with arabica flavor and robusta hardiness. Arabica is *coffea arabica*; robusta is *coffea canephora*. The two are different species, but both in the genus *coffea*. Both originated in Africa (arabica in Ethiopia,

robusta in central Africa – the Congo). It is quite possible that we will all be drinking coffee from one of these hybrids in the coming years.

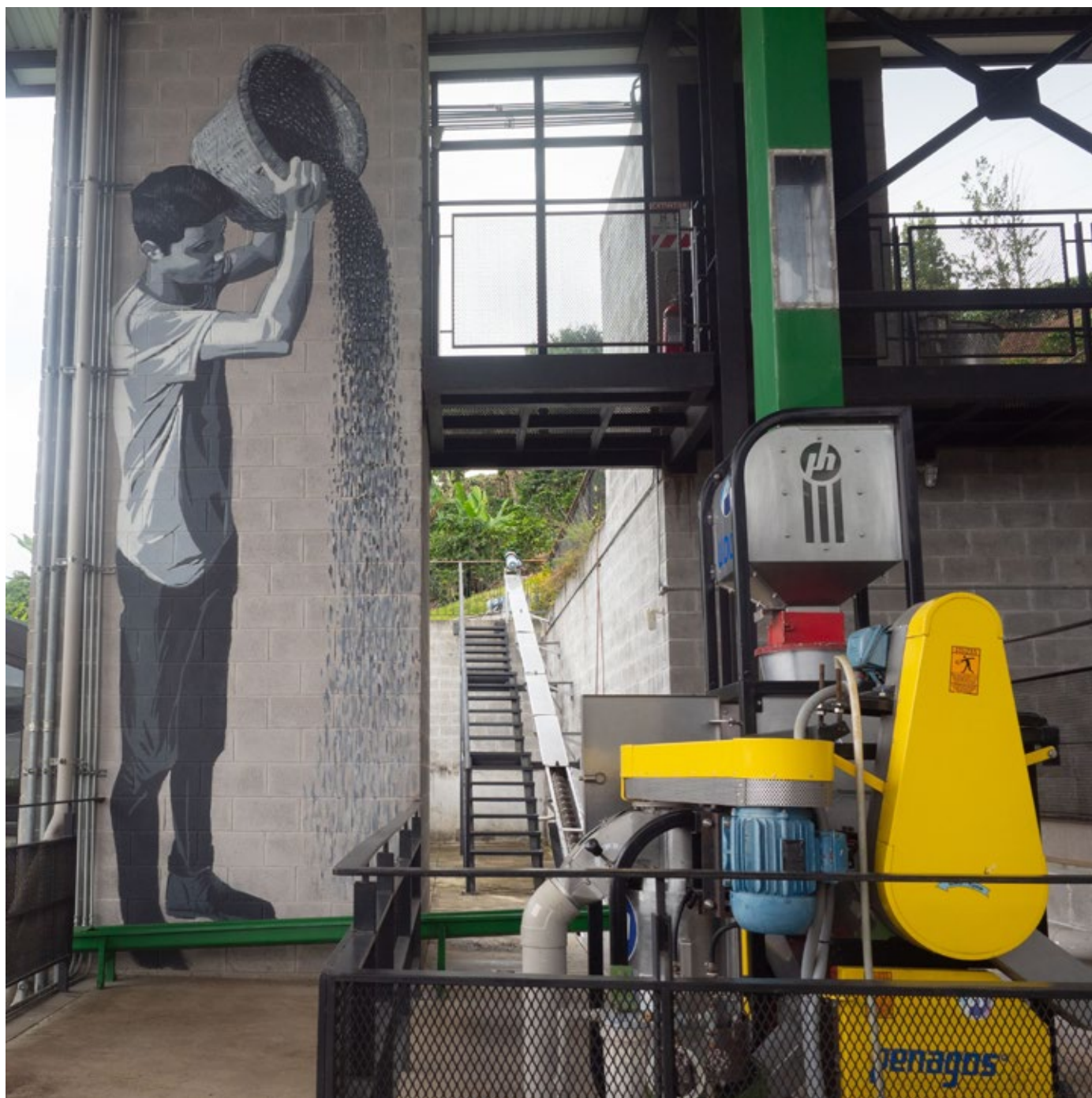
Coffee has played a central role in Costa Rica's history. The first arabica plants were brought in from Cuba before 1800. Exports started at about the time of independence in 1821, and overtook other agricultural exports, tobacco, sugar, cacao, by the end of the decade. The iconic ox carts of Costa Rica were primarily used to transport coffee from the central valley to the port at Puntarenas, a lengthy journey of ten days or more. The profits from the grano de oro, or “golden bean”, brought prosperity, lifted rural farmers out of poverty, and created the wealth that led in the 1890's to the construction of the railroad to the Atlantic, and the National Theater in San José.

## STARBUCK'S HACIENDA ALSACIA

Over the two centuries of coffee cultivation in Costa Rica, gradual improvements in cultivation have steadily improved the crop yield per acre, and the overall production of coffee in the country. The mission of Starbucks' Hacienda Alsacia is to continue and accelerate this evolution: To create best practices to make growing coffee more profitable for small-scale farms, to develop the next generation of disease-resistant, high-quality coffee, and to share information and resources freely with farmers around the world. Think of Alsacia as more of a research and development center, rather than as a farm focused directly on coffee production.

Coffee is very different from most agricultural products; more than 95% of the world's specialty coffee farmers (Starbucks' suppliers) are small operators with less than 12 hectares (30 acres) in cultivation. Many are eking out minimal profits. Hacienda Alsacia is focused on these farmers, trying to keep them in business. (Costa Rica lost about 25% of its roughly





40,000 small coffee farms during the pandemic.) The best approaches to planting, fertilizing, and soil testing are developed and documented here. Additionally, new varieties of coffee are being developed by selective breeding; introducing resistance to disease while improving flavor and yield. Fourteen hectares, out of 240 hectares total, are devoted to their selective breeding program. Starbucks operates another ten or twelve research centers, scattered around the coffee-growing regions of the world, as well as support centers to disseminate this information, and to distribute

seeds for its new varieties, all free to the farmers. To date, fourteen new hybrids have been developed by Starbucks agronomists in Costa Rica.

What is different about this coffee tour is that instead of just a walk in the coffee fields and around the processing equipment, you'll get a deeper look at the details of cultivation and the development of new varieties. The tour goes pretty rapidly, but the guides have a depth of knowledge and they are happy to go into more detail if questioned.





## THE DETAILS

First things first; Finca Alsacia is at 5,000 feet, a little cooler than San José. When you visit you may want a light jacket or sweater. Also, like most coffee fincas, Alsacia is in a volcanic, mountainous area (a little south of Poas), and the final half hour of your drive will be on little twisty roads. Total driving time from San José is about an hour. Tours last one and one-half hours, and start as early as 8 AM, and as late as 3:30 PM. The price per person ranges from \$15 to \$30, depending on age and residency/citizenship status. Tours are offered in English and Spanish. It's best to book online; that will ensure that you arrive when a tour in your preferred language is available. Go to: <https://www.starbuckscoffee farm.com>

The land Alsacia is located on has been a coffee farm since 1970 and was not exactly thriving when Starbucks purchased it in 2013. They revamped the operation, with careful attention to soil testing, fertilizing as needed, and replanting, all with the ultimate goal of sustainably producing coffee in a way that could be replicated by small farms worldwide.

Is organic production possible? The problem is pathogens, the most serious today being a fungus called coffee rust. I asked our guide Mario about rust, and a few minutes later he pulled off a leaf from a plant up the slope that was infected. Parts of the leaf were covered with a rusty colored dust, the spores of the fungus. Untreated, I was told, the fungus can wipe out an entire farm in less than a year. It would be difficult to control without fungicides.

The coffee tour starts with a look at the life cycle of a coffee plant. A seed sprouts in two months. After eighteen months, the plant will be about two feet tall. In three to four years, the plant begins producing "beans". The beans are really a fruit, referred to in the industry as "cherries", as they are red and roughly cherry-sized when ready to pick. A coffee plant will produce for about twenty-five years.

When researchers cross two varieties to produce a new improved strain exhibiting the best traits of both parents, it takes about twelve years of growing, testing, and propagating to actually have enough seeds to begin distribution to growers. Starbucks agronomists started this process in Costa Rica in 2004, and have developed fourteen new varieties which they now supply to farmers.





Another quick internet search reveals that researchers elsewhere are in the early stages of using CRISPR gene editing to produce better coffee plants. However you may feel about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) if you could grow Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee in your garden, you might become a fan. Gene editing could cut some time from the twelve-year development cycle. Still, much of the work of raising a few generations of plants and actually tasting the coffee would remain. CRISPR was not mentioned on the tour, and it would be interesting to know if Starbucks is exploring this option.

The plants produce a profusion of white jasmine-scented flowers, followed nine months later by the ripe cherries. At Hacienda Alsacia, the harvest runs from late October through March. The peak harvest is December through February. Here in Costa Rica, there is one harvest per year. There are a few places in the world, notably Colombia, that can produce two harvests.

The picking is all done by hand, bean by bean, and most of the workers come from Nicaragua. Starbucks pays two to three dollars per basket picked; workers typically pick ten to 20 baskets per day. Their benefits at Alsacia include housing, daycare, medical care, and lately (post

pandemic) bus transportation from Nicaragua to the farm, and then back at the end of the season.

Initial processing, stripping off the flesh of the fruit, is all mechanical and rapid. Then the seeds are dried in the sun, taking four to seven days. The dry seeds are bagged, and allowed to age for at least 60 days, and up to ten months. Finally, the papery husk is removed from the seed, and the beans are sorted on the basis of color and general appearance. Some small operations do the sorting by hand; Alsacia has automatic machinery for the task. The rejects are used to produce caffeine, as an ingredient for other drinks.

The husked seeds go on to be roasted, either locally, or at coffee roasters all over the world. Seven pounds of raw beans reduces to five pounds when roasted.

I did raise one other question during the tour. Years ago, on a coffee tour somewhere, I learned that generally a coffee cherry contains two seeds. Occasionally, a cherry only contains one, and in that case the seed is rounder, like a pea, as opposed to the double beans, which have a flat side where they grow squished together. Supposedly these peaberries have a richer, deeper flavor. When I asked an Alsacia guide about this, he looked at me like I was crazy. In his opinion, it

is a marketing ploy, and not even a professional taster could tell the difference in a blind tasting. This isn't the first time I've fallen for clever marketing.

The tour covers everything from the seed to the field, and all the processing steps, and then on to a small demonstration roaster, and finally a tasting. To my wife's chagrin, our guide encouraged us to slurp the coffee, in order to spray the coffee over all the taste receptors of the tongue. I did my part with gusto.

Much of the tour takes place in or near the visitor center, which Starbucks added in 2017. It includes a terrace café, with tables looking out over a valley planted in coffee, with a lovely waterfall on one side. The coffee served here is from this farm, available at no other Starbucks in the world, and it is top quality. You will kick yourself if you don't allow enough time to relax for an hour on the terrace, sipping a coffee, enjoying the view, and perhaps having a bite to eat. Don't be misled into thinking this is just another Starbucks; this is their showpiece, a far more refined, sublime coffee experience than the standard Starbucks café. A coffee here is a good way to unwind after the drive up, or to fortify yourself before your return home.

I had a café con leche before our tour, made with almond milk – something of a change for me. That particular cup stands out in my mind, both for the location, and the brew itself. The flimsiest pretext will bring me back for another visit.

Incidentally, if you've made it to Hacienda Alsacia, you're less than a half hour away from another notable spot, the Ark Botanical Garden, which includes a plant nursery, a unique restaurant, and a mead brewery. (It may appear as El Arca on local maps.) I'll write more about the Ark in the future. For now, I'll just say that you can have an excellent six course lunch featuring produce grown on the farm, while overlooking the Central Valley. The nursery offers many hard-to-find plants, both culinary and medicinal. It is located lower on the mountain than Hacienda Alsacia, so it is more or less on the way back from Starbucks.

Whet your appetite here <https://theark.green>



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# OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark

## The Holidays are Here, Almost



November and December are months for celebrating. Whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah, the Solstice, or just the end of the rainy season, joy is in the air. With its strong religious background, Costa Rica will make Christmas the focus for November and December, with Santa Claus and Christmas trees sharing space with baby Jesus. Beginning in October, stores set out Christmas displays in anticipation of the buying frenzy. So let's leap into the holiday season with some fun events.

The Lights of San Joaquin de Flores are a beautiful and respectful way to see Costa Rica at Christmas/end of the

year. After two years of being in the dark, we hope to see the full complement of houses and streets lit up with lights, nativity scenes, snowmen, or should we say snowpeople, and reindeer in the area around the church. This section of San Joaquin, known as Cruz Norte, is old and well kept up, so a stroll around the neighborhood is nice anytime, but best on a summery evening. Some houses will have window wells holding miniature winter scenes, and some may have light displays covering an entire house.

Start with the church and grounds. The church will close around 5:30 p.m. and the light display goes on around 6 when it gets dark enough to look its best. What I found



interesting is the reverence; although many people and children mill about it is quiet, as if nobody wanted to spoil the tranquil mood. For those of us who like peace and quiet and hesitate to be out late, this event is perfect. And it's free. Food and trinket vendors can be a nuisance, but sitting with friends in the park across from the church, sharing food and waving our sparklers while watching children and dogs cavort in the grassy expanse, is part of the fun. There are also restaurants and coffee shops in the area.

To make a nice adventure even better, take the evening train from San Jose or Alajuela and get off at the San Joaquin station right across from the church. Trains stop running around 7 p.m., but TUASA buses between Alajuela and San Jose will get you home again. Trains from Alajuela leave the airport station behind Denny's at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. and those from San Jose leave the Atlantic station at 3:30 and 5:30. Not all trains go as far as San Joaquin, so check the train schedule at [www.incofer.go.cr/tren-urbano](http://www.incofer.go.cr/tren-urbano).

The Festival de la Luz, is the lively and colorful Christmas parade in downtown San Jose. It is scheduled for December 17th this year, after a two-year absence for the pandemic. The parade starts at 6 p.m. and moves down the Paseo Colon to 2nd Avenue and up to the national museum. Unbelievably fantastic floats, gymnastic groups, folk dancers, and huge bands, made up of primarily young people from all around the country, will keep you entertained for three hours, at least. Zarcero's 120-member band, which will play again this year in California's Rosebowl parade, will be part of the festivities

You won't want to miss the parade, but dense crowds lining the streets make it hard to see; plus, getting poked with elbows and backpacks and the cold, and traffic jams, can be a problem. To be really comfortable and avoid delays between sets, stay home and watch the parade from your recliner; many of the local TV stations will carry the entire parade, plus commentary and cultural acts. That way you can enjoy the whole event with the convenience of a snack,







a drink, and a nearby bathroom. And, when you've had enough parade, you can turn it off.

Another interesting event is the Hecho Aquí Fair, or 'Made Here' fair which will be held on Dec. 2, 3 and 4, (Friday– Sunday) at the Old Aduana Building on Calle 23, Av. 7. The fair will have about 100 booths with local artists showing products "made in Costa Rica", many from recycled materials, and all of fine quality. There are woven baskets from Indigenous artists, clothes, food products, toys, rugs, and much, much more. The fair is free and opens at 10 a.m.

Take the train if you are coming on Friday from Alajuela, Heredia, Cartago, or any point along the way. The station is only two blocks from the old Aduana Building. Older adults can ride free, and trains are fun. The trains only run during peak hours weekdays and there are no trains on weekends. The last morning train leaves Alajuela's airport station behind Denny's restaurant at 9 a.m., and trains from Cartago leave from the station at 8:30 and 9 a.m. If you arrive early, take a walk around the neighborhood or have a cup of coffee until the fair opens. Check the train schedule at [www.incofer.go.cr/tren-urbano](http://www.incofer.go.cr/tren-urbano).

The city of San Ramon has an unusual and fun event on the night of December 7th called Melcochas de Maria. Melcochas are taffy-type candies made from raw sugar and wrapped in individual papers. The idea is for everyone to go to the homes of anyone named

Maria and demand melcochas, which the homeowner tosses out by the handful to the crowd, sort of like trick or treat. There's a history to this. December 8th is the Catholic feast of the Conception of the Virgin Maria and an important holiday in traditional Catholic countries. Add to that, San Ramon is big sugar cane country and trapiches, or local sugar mills, are still used to make dark sugar cakes and taffy. In the last few years the city has taken over the job of tossing out the melcochas in the park to avoid crowds running from one Maria to another. For anyone living or traveling in the area, join the fun.

With a growing Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica, we have a new custom around December 8th called the Griteria. which comes from the word gritar, to shout. Friends and neighbors greet each other by shouting ¿Que causa tanta alegria? or, what is the cause of such happiness? The other person shouts back La Concepcion de la Virgin Maria, the conception of the Virgin Maria. It's done for fun, and often the greeting is an invitation to get together. In San Ramon the question is answered with las melcochas de Maria.

Christmas Holiday Fairs are coming and there will be many. San Joaquin will hold an artesian fair during the day on Saturday, November 26th, in the plaza across from the church. It is a good reason to visit the town. Because of our early publishing date, it was hard to find information on specific holiday events, but you can



Google navidad 2022 and the name of the area you want, i.e. navidad 2022 belen, or navidad 2022 san ramon, to find holiday events. By mid-November, you will find schedules of fairs, concerts, carols, or villancicos, and food events and children's activities.

Other events. For those who like noise, crowds, hustle, and long lines, there will be the traditional Christmas/end-of-year tope, (horse parade) with some 2,000 horses participating, in San Jose on December 26th. Also there is the week-long festival in Zapote, complete with dizzying carnival rides, lots of food, and tico bullfights (where they don't kill the bull but 50 to 100

young "improvised" cowboys, dubbed improvisados, try to impress their friends by entering the ring with the bull, and running around like a bunch of ants, teasing the bull and hoping to be the one who gets tossed head over butt by a charging, raging two-ton animal). These "fights" are regulated and the bulls are raised for them. Some, with names like Malacrianza, are better known than the president. Animal rights groups have protested against such activities, but most Ticos look forward to the year-end Corridas de Toros.

Happy holidays to all from: [mitzstar@gmail.com](mailto:mitzstar@gmail.com)



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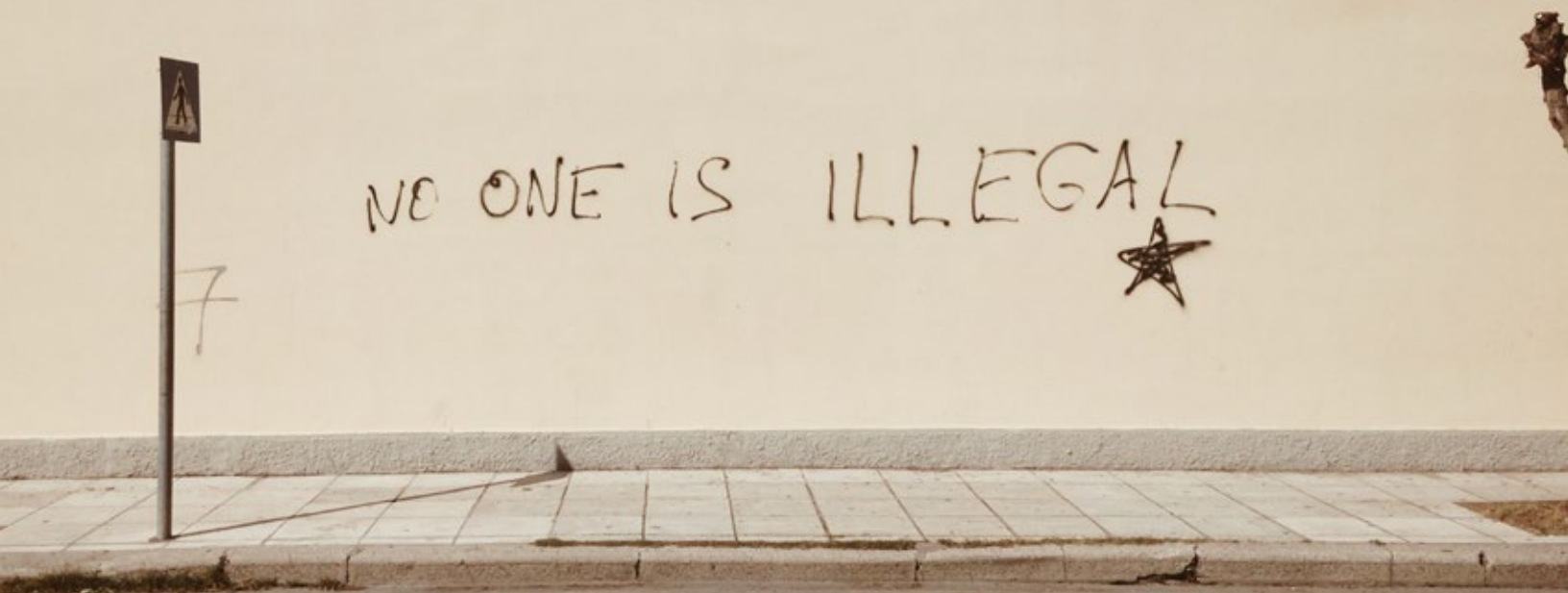
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# LEGAL UPDATE

by Romulo Pacheco



## The Infamous "Border Run"

Many expats come to Costa Rica, fall in love with the place, and plan to start a new life here. They arrange all their U.S. affairs, sell their assets, and make the move, bringing a wife, children, and dog; everybody deserves a little piece of paradise.

This is great, and Costa Rica welcomes them. But, many people who come and make it their home do not do much planning ahead about their migratory status in the country. Then, when they need "information" about renewing their Tourist Visa, they rely on social media groups and the experience of people that have come before them. And some do provide excellent and accurate advice on many things. But one thing we don't often see is people mentioning that relying on border runs to keep them in the country can turn into a bad thing that can destroy their dreams. I will explain how that can happen.

Truthfully, the "border run" is a trick. Persons maintaining their immigration status as a Tourist are tricking the two countries' authorities into believing they are either traveling to or from their home country. That is not illegal, but it is not something that can be legally supported in the long run.

It is essential to keep in mind that the rules for crossing from one country to another can vary, sometimes on a

whim. For example, as has happened before, Panama can require a traveler to have a minimum of USD \$500.00 in their pocket, not a credit card but cash money, before being allowed to enter. And sometimes they don't. Other times they may require proof of exit, like a bus or plane ticket out of Panama. Or both! And then other times they don't want either.

Nicaragua immigration is subject to unexpected decisions from their government too. Sometimes the crossing is easy, as I hear it is right now, and usually, they charge USD \$35.00 to cross. BUT they have asked others for different amounts, up to USD \$150.00! And, at any point, without notice, they can close the border. They have done that many times before.

Then there is the return to Costa Rica. It is usual for someone trying to enter the country to be required to show they have an exit ticket with a departure date within the next 90 days to be allowed to reenter. Previous trips and stamps in their passport, or assertions they "live here" or have family here, won't work – it's a ticket out or nothing.

Therefore, your move to Costa Rica should include a plan for the long-term resolution of your migratory status. Okay, do the border run once, twice, maybe three times, but if this is going to be your home, legalize your

status; show that you are willing to become a contributing member of Costarican society.

Remember, the Tourist Visa entry stamp on your passport is not a right; you have no rights to claim regarding your migratory status because you are supposed to be **ONLY** a tourist and follow the laws regarding tourists. And, as a tourist, the immigration agent can stop your reentry for any reason, including because they do not like how you look that day! They do not have to give you a reason to reject you; they can just do it!

When that happens, you have no resources. If you are trying to return home from another country, and because Costa Rica will not let you in, the authorities could retain you at the border until you can make arrangements to fly back to your country of origin.

That is the gamble you make every time you make a "Border Run."

To avoid that unhappy situation, you should start the legal process of becoming a Resident of Costa Rica as soon as you can.

Most times, residency procedures can be started with just some of the requirements, then build up your file with what is requested. A plus to that is that during the time your application is in the process (En Tramite), you do not need to exit the country; you are welcome to overstay your

Tourist Visa stamp. And, no penalty will be applied if you need to leave with just having your residency file opened by Immigration.

Sometimes people are reluctant to begin the residency process, thinking they don't have all the documents needed or won't qualify. The fact is that often people already have all the requirements they need to start a residency process; they own land or a business and have a pension or money in the bank to support themselves. So, **YES, YOU CAN.**

Our office will help you with the process from the comfort of your couch; we will deliver and retrieve from your doorstep, in any part of the country, all the documents, and forms necessary to create a viable residency application. All you need to do is look handsome for the ID card photo.

Yes, the process is not fast; it might take a year and a half, but what is the problem if you have already decided that this country will be your forever home? Think about it and give us a call. We can even finance the process at zero percent APR if you need.

*Rómulo Pacheco, Attorney at Law, Notary Public*

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# Bookshelf

## LOCAL AUTHORS

Costa Rica is blessed with a large number of expats who are excellent writers, many of whom have published books. ARCR supports those authors and has compiled a listing of some of their works for members to purchase for themselves or as gifts. Check out the brief descriptions below (there are some new additions, titles are in red) and decide which ones you need to add to your library or share with a friend or loved one. Listed alphabetically by author's surname.

## FICTION:

**BLOOD-AXE** Aaron Aalborg (2018) A part satire, part thriller, story about grumpy and bored golfers who start a Viking reenactment group. It spreads worldwide and gets out of hand with the pillaging of an English village. The plot twists and turns through the US and Norway and has a surprise ending in Costa Rica. Available at Amazon.

**DOOM, GLOOM, AND DESPAIR** Aaron Aalborg (2016) A series of darkly humorous short stories to make you think: sex, bloody murders, fierce man-eating animals, fierce man-eating men, suicides, mass extinctions, and the end of the universe are all included. Settings include Costa Rica, Panama, France, the UK, the USA, Heaven, and Hell. Available at Amazon.

**UKRAINE REFUGEES – ECHOES OF WAR** Aaron Aalborg (2022) What can go wrong if you bring them into your homes? Based on real events, the horrific war drives millions onto the streets. Many feel safer abroad. Divorces, murder, fraud, theft, spying and worse, result. Events in Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Berlin, London, New York, Alpine France, and elsewhere are described in graphic detail. Available on Amazon

**SAVE THE BONSAI** Aaron Aalborg (2019) A Japanese, born without gender and rejected by parents and society, lives in angry isolation and modifies plants to kill. Joined by a hacker with a spoof website, "Save the Bonsai," the pair morph into a worldwide

protest movement against the forces of governments. Supported by vegans, terrorists, and fanatics, they are pursued by the CIA and a private security organization hired by a Billionaires Bonsai Club. Worldwide mayhem ensues, humanity destroys itself, and, over the eons, intelligent plants come to rule the earth. Available at Amazon.

**CENSUS: WHAT LURKS BENEATH** Marshall Cobb – two volumes. Available at Amazon.

**Book 1** (2017) When the tortures of the daily routine of big city life become too much, likely driving him to an early grave, a man moves to a farm in central Texas. But the respite there is short-lived when he witnesses a series of odd, evil events; something is challenging his ranking as the top predator on his farm. Or, even worse, he is losing his mind.

**Book 2:** Pacing (2019) In order to save her life, a woman joins The Colony to serve as a reluctant surrogate mother for alien offspring. The alternative – being consumed alive. She is caught between wanting escape and protecting The Colony from discovery by human authorities, while helping it prepare to repel an attack by a second group of aliens that plan to invade and claim earth as their prize.

**RIVER TREE/ARBOL RIO** Marshall Cobb (2018) Children's book. Beginning with a tiny seed, follow a pecan tree through all the stages of its life. This thoughtful, heartfelt book teaches children to cope with endings and reflects on the beauty of new beginnings. The book is also meant to aid those attempting to learn English or Spanish via the



Spanish-language version, *Árbol Río*. Both available at Amazon.

**THE PROMISE OF THE ORB** (The Ascendancy Series Book 1) Marshall Cobb (2018) A boy's troubles began when the water supply dries up and he finds a small glowing Orb in the dried-up river bed. It claims that the world was once awash in peace and prosperity under its rule, and needs help to regain its power. Wanting to help, the boy discovers that there are many different versions of the truth. Available at Amazon.

**THE DISCIPLES OF THE ORB** (The Ascendancy Series Book 2) Marshall Cobb (2020) At thirteen, Peter Davidson has more power than anyone on the planet – except for the alien, Orb, who is reshaping humanity to its vision of perfection. Do Peter and his friends continue to serve Orb, who gave Peter his powers, allow Orb to decimate humans while removing their free will, or should they use them to overthrow their master? Available at Amazon.

**THE ATONEMENT OF THE ORB** (The Ascendancy Series Book 3) Marshall Cobb (2022) The journey that began with the discovery of The Orb in a small river bed comes to its conclusion. Will free-will triumph, or is the known universe fated to live under authoritarian rule? Neither outcome is perfect, as Peter and his friends have already learned the hard way. Available on Amazon.

**WILL OF THE HILL** Marshall Cobb Children's story, two volumes – Available at Amazon

**Volume One** (2017) Will does not like school, his classmate Gertrude, or soap. He does like his best friend Dillon and their comic-book collection, Gertrude finds the collection and decides to blackmail the boys, unless Will can convince Dillon to attend her birthday party. Gertrude's act of blackmail is wholly understandable; she just wants to get her classmates to her party.

**Volume 2 UP, UP AND AROUND** (2018) Punishment for the Gertrude party meltdown was imposed on all involved; they must join the school's debate team. A mysterious rope dangles behind the school and an elaborate plan is hatched. Can Will and his friends solve the riddle of the rope by using the debate team practice as a cover for climbing the rope and finding out what is up The Hill? It will only work if Will, for the first time in his life, can keep a secret.

**EVEN IN EDEN** Albert A. Correia (2014) A young Tico doctor, Gerardo, envisions free medical clinics throughout Costa Rica. His rival, Orlando, wants money and power – and the country's presidency. Thrown together by powerful fathers, driven by strong, beautiful women, they had to clash – and the eruption is felt throughout the Central American nation. Available at Libreria Lehmann, at Amazon, and Barnes and Noble.

**LEGEND OF THE OCEAN QUEEN** Albert A. Correia (2018) Grandpa tells the story of a magnificent old ship which sunk at the start of the Civil War with a cache of eight-hundred pounds of gold in her hold. Legend has it that Captain Micah Fortnight is still aboard, protecting his precious cargo. Available at Amazon.

**GREEK GHOSTS** Helen Dunn Frame (2003) A single mother of an unexpected child leaves her son behind and travels to Greece with her dead husband's secret past fresh in her mind. There, stalked by an international organization and encountering fanatics and criminals, she seeks help from a friend who works for Interpol and Scotland Yard. Available at Amazon.

**SECRETS BEHIND THE BIG PENCIL** Helen Dunn Frame (2014) A fictionalized account of an actual, major scandal. Ralph Carter is haunted by events from his youth which affect his career and personal life. As a buyer for a military organization he finds a domineering boss and an alcoholic associate have sucked him into a corrupt system of kickbacks and defamation. Available at Amazon.

**WETUMPKA WIDOW** Helen Dunn Frame (2016) An epic romance story fired by murder, sex, greed, and manipulation. Sleuths Jennifer Haslett Vandergriff and Lady Sarah Clarke team up after being recruited to resolve a monumental family conflict. Assisted by Alabama and California police forces, the tale takes their crusade to Switzerland where Jennifer's former lover, an Interpol agent, provides international assistance. Available at Amazon.

**TOBY'S TALE** Jennifer Freedman (2022) Toby is a Schnauzer puppy who embarks on a great adventure as he seeks his fur-ever home. It's a difficult life, full of tough choices. He discovers that the big world is full of challenges, excitement, sadness, loneliness and, yes, love and kindness. Many colorful characters — both two-legged and four-legged — play key roles as Toby takes each step of his journey. Available on Amazon and at Semi-Colon Books (Santa Ana).

**TEXTING OLIVIA** Galya Gerstman. (2021) A funny, fast-paced tale of a mother/daughter relationship told through their texts. Fay has done everything opposite to her own upbringing in raising Olivia, but her assumptions about being a good mother are put to the test when she and her husband take a trip to San Francisco to help Olivia move out of her dorm. Available at [pleasureboatstudio.com](https://www.pleasureboatstudio.com), Amazon, and Ingramspark.

**FOREVER HONEY** Lenny Karpman (2021) His love story ends abruptly in tragedy and he struggles and grieves in darkness, pain, and shadowy images from memory. The hole in his heart feels like it will never disappear, but years of finding and connecting the pieces creates hopes, dreams, and ultimate reality. When the last piece falls into place the puzzle completes itself in the comfort of a soft white light. Available at Amazon.

**TRIBUNE MAN** Michael Miller (2021) An adventure set in Oakland, California in 1991, it follows a marketing executive who is suddenly fired and finds himself delivering newspapers in some of the riskiest parts of Oakland, after midnight. The characters face the deadly Oakland Hills Fire, a real-life event that was the worst urban wildfire in US history. Available at Amazon.

**MARIPOSA, A LOVE STORY OF COSTA RICA** Robert A. Normand (2016) Based on the Legend of Zurqui, two young indigenous who lived in a natural wonderland called Costa Rica, circa 1000 AD. Each the favored child of a chief, but of different tribes hostile to each other, they fall in love. They face great difficulties overcoming events between their tribes. Their experiences reflect the mystery and spirituality that is Costa Rica. Available at Amazon.

**AMANDA911** Mark Schreiber. (2021) Sixteen-year-old Iowa schoolgirl Amanda Dizon may be the nation's most unremarkable teenager, until she falls down a well and finds herself instantaneously transformed from irrelevant to influencer. This sly, rollicking story follows Amanda's escapades and sends up the craven, fame-obsessed virtual culture of today's adolescents. Available at Amazon.

**MASTER OF MAGIC** V.L. Stuart (2021) As a child, Elden had a magic power so dangerous few adults could control it. The Brotherhood found him and molded him into a warrior, but he escapes to remake himself and finds Master Verian, who transforms him. True to the Light, Elden returns to the Brotherhood, finding acceptance and stability – until a shadow from the past threatens to take more than his life. Available at Amazon.

## NON-FICTION:

**IS IT JOOK YET? COMFORT FOOD FROM FARAWAY PLACES** Lenny Karpman (2021) Comfort food is any food that makes us feel better. Many favorites we thought were local came to us from other cultures and countries. Learn the origins of eats like hamburgers, hot dogs, fried chicken, and apple pie. Discover the culinary comforts of other people in distant places and enjoy them when you travel, or taste them vicariously. Available at Amazon.

**POLICE STATE USA** Jamie Ligator (2019) In 2007, the author was arrested by Costa Rican police after being wrongfully charged by the U.S. Justice Department. In this book he not only describes his experiences while fighting extradition in Costa Rican jails, but also in various U.S. jails. He exposes the injustices perpetrated by U.S. prosecutors on him and many others through recounting other cases that became famous in the U.S. He contends that malicious prosecutors never get punished when they are found to have acted in an illegal manner. Available at Amazon.

**JOURNEY THROUGH THE INFINITE MIND** The Science And Spirituality Of Dementia Katya De Luisa (2021) This book presents the neuroscience of dementia combined with practical tips on care, along with exercises designed to help a caregiver “step in their shoes.” It explores the human experience of dementia as well as the spiritual journey the soul travels as dementia progresses. Included is information on holistic approaches to the disease. Available in Spanish and English at Amazon.

**THE INTREPID IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Ana Luisa Monge Naranjo, Bruce James Callow (2021) If you have ever wondered what life is like for women dedicated to science and technology, this book will give some answers. It follows the lives of 18 young Ticas through different times and countries as they excelled in science and technology, making significant contributions to the well-being of people and communities. Published by Editorial Tecnológico de Costa Rica. Available in SPANISH ONLY at: [mgarita@itcr.ac.cr](mailto:mgarita@itcr.ac.cr)

**LAS ESFERAS, MYSTERY SPHERES OF COSTA RICA** Robert A. Normand (2020) Offers an indigenous and spiritual explanation as to the origin of the more than 300 perfectly round stone spheres that have been uncovered in Costa Rica in the last few decades. Some of these spheres



are so perfectly round as to defy any technology known by humans until recently. Available at Amazon.

**THE GOLDEN GRINGO CHRONICLES, A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RETIREMENT IN COSTA RICA** Robert A. Normand (2014) Actual experiences of an expat who moved to Costa Rica, told in three parts: 1) leaving the homeland, 2) surviving in Costa Rica, the early years, and 3) becoming Tico – maybe. Based on over sixty articles published in the Golden Gringo Chronicles monthly newsletter, it covers culture, agriculture, residency considerations, medical concerns, history, and legends of Costa Rica. Available at Amazon.

**CRAZYJUNGLE LOVE** Carol Blair Vaughn (English 2017, Spanish 2020) Based on a true story. A multi-millionaire hedge fund manager comes to Costa Rica with his ingénue wife and the dream of creating their own nature reserve. Things go to hell in a hurry and John Bender ends up dead of a gunshot wound to his head. His wife is left penniless and serves jail time for John's murder. Did she do it? Read the book and decide for yourself. Available at Amazon. (Editor's Note: The book is being made into an 8-episode podcast titled "Hell in Heaven", to be released in February, and will be made into a documentary thriller by Cineflix in 2023.)

**DIARY OF A CRYPTOCURRENCY ABDUCTION** Ryan Piercy and Allen Dickinson (2022) The complete, true story of Ryan Piercy's 2015 kidnapping and month-long ordeal of being chained to a tree in the Costa Rican jungle. The book also covers the years following his release and the trials he and his family members endured. Contains transcripts of his abductors ransom emails, official police records, and photos of the site of his confinement. Available on Amazon.

**CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN** W.D. Woods (2019) True stories by a Northwest Indiana detective of how, over his 28-year career, he investigated some of the most horrific crimes against women imaginable – and brutally describes the details of each one. This may be the most bloody, bone chilling, and disgusting book you have ever read and is not for the faint of heart. These true stories will take you on a ride so repulsive and sickening you can't stop reading – even if you want to. Available at Amazon.

**PROHIBITION MADE THE MAFIA** T. Warren Wyndham (2019) A recollection of 40 years in the liquor and wine industry forms the background for true stories ranging from the Roaring Twenties and Prohibition, to the growth and success of one of the

offspring of the illegal importing sale of liquor, wine and beer by the Mafia and other gangsters. Along the way, the author shares his many personal experiences from his start in the business to his retirement, brushing shoulders with known gangsters and legal and illegal business experiences. Available at Amazon.

## TRAVEL, RELOCATION, COSTA RICA CULTURE:

**TO THE STARS: COSTA RICA IN NASA** Bruce Callow and Ana Luisa Monge Naranjo (2019) An introduction to 12 Costa Ricans who were hired by, or have worked at NASA. The book, in interview format, tells how these exceptional Ticos achieved their NASA dreams as engineers, technicians, oceanographers, and a world famous astronaut. Published by the Costa Rican Institute of Technology's Press, a digital version can be purchased at: <https://ebooks.tec.ac.cr/product/hacia-las-estrellas-costa-rica-en-la-nasa-to-stars-in>

**EXPAT TALES** Helen Dunn Frame (2020) Published before the pandemic, the book shares individual and family experiences about living in Costa Rica. Some chapters are written by the subjects, others from interviews and questionnaires. A book that gives the reader a lot of candid information about the culture and mindset of Costa Ricans. Available at Amazon and <https://www.helendunnframe.com/>

**RETIRING IN COSTA RICA OR, DOCTORS, DOGS AND PURA VIDA** – 4th edition Helen Dunn Frame (2020) The adventures of the author in Costa Rica. Information about how to make decisions about retiring, investing, or living here part-time. Contains questions to ask, resources for answers, and suggested books to read. Covers some of the things that can make the difference between a mediocre experience and a wonderful adventure. The updated 4th edition will be released in December 2020, in time for Christmas buying. Available at Amazon.

**RETIREMENT 101** Helen Dunn Frame (2017) A booklet which addresses planning what to do with your new found free time – time that could be as much as

a quarter to one-third of your life. It helps the reader determine if they want to retire full-time, part-time, or at all. Available at Amazon.

### **THE 20th EDITION OF THE NEW GOLDEN DOOR TO RETIREMENT AND LIVING IN COSTA RICA - The Official Guide to Relocation**

Christopher Howard (2022) An 800-page updated edition to the perennially best-selling guidebook. Covers everything you need to know to make the move. Available at Amazon or at: [www.costaricabooks.com](http://www.costaricabooks.com)

### **THE COSTA RICA CHRONICLES FROM 1980 ON: The Good, Bad, and Ugly People and Places of the Day**

Christopher Howard (2021) A glimpse of the colorful and unforgettable characters and places of the old Costa Rica, Filled with interesting anecdotes. A must read for anyone interested in life in the "old days" of the '80s, '90s, and early 2000s. Available at: [costaricabooks.com](http://costaricabooks.com) and at Amazon.

### **OFFICIAL GUIDE TO COSTA RICAN SPANISH – 3rd edition**

Christopher Howard This 248-page pocket-size book is the only source for Costa Rican idioms and slang translated into English. It contains survival Spanish for daily situations, pronunciation exercises, Spanish-English and English-Spanish dictionaries, and has time-tested tips and shortcuts for learning Spanish. Available at Amazon.

**COSTA RICA FROM SPACE** Bert Kohlmann, Justin Wilkinson, Kamlesh Lullaand Originally published in 2002 and re-released in 2022, this book is an unprecedented photo essay of Costa Rica from outer space. It aids readers visualize the changes taking place to the natural and human environments of the country. Prologue by former astronaut Dr. Franklin Chang. A limited quantity of the book has been made available to the public. To acquire a free copy, email Bruce Callow at: [bcallowconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:bcallowconsulting@gmail.com)

**THE REAL SAN JOSÉ** Michael Miller (Updated for 2018) Often maligned, Costa Rica's fascinating capital city has much to offer. Written to introduce new arrivals (and old hands) to San José, this book will help people become familiar with the layout of downtown and find its hidden gems. Descriptions of museums, the Mercado Central, the cathedral, and a tremendous variety of other diversions and attractions are included. Available at Amazon.

## WORTH SEARCHING FOR:

There are literally hundreds of books, fiction and nonfiction, about Costa Rica, available at Amazon and other online sites in new and used condition. Space prevents including all of them in this list, but here are a few worth searching for.

### **THE TICOS: CULTURE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN COSTA RICA**

Biesanz, Biesanz, and Biesanz Written with over fifty years of first-hand observation, this social and cultural history describes how Costa Rica's economy, government, education, and health-care systems, family structures, religion, and other institutions have evolved, and how this evolution has affected modern Tico's lives, beliefs, and values. A comprehensive introduction to the country. Available at Biesanz Woodworks in Escazú. Telephone: 2289-4337 and also at Amazon.

### **MARRIED TO A LEGEND, "DON PEPE"**

Henrietta Boggs A rare firsthand account of Costa Rica's history. Henrietta Boggs' memoir of meeting, living with, and leaving, the President of Costa Rica, Don Pepe, takes place in the formative years of his brief but profound revolution when the country's constitution was rewritten and the army was abolished. It also recounts the frustrations of a gringa living in Costa Rica in the 1940s. Available at Amazon.

### **CHRISTOPHER HOWARD'S GUIDE TO REAL ESTATE IN COSTA RICA**

Christopher Howard The guide contains 550 carefully researched pages including information for renters. Order from: [www.costaricabooks.com](http://www.costaricabooks.com)

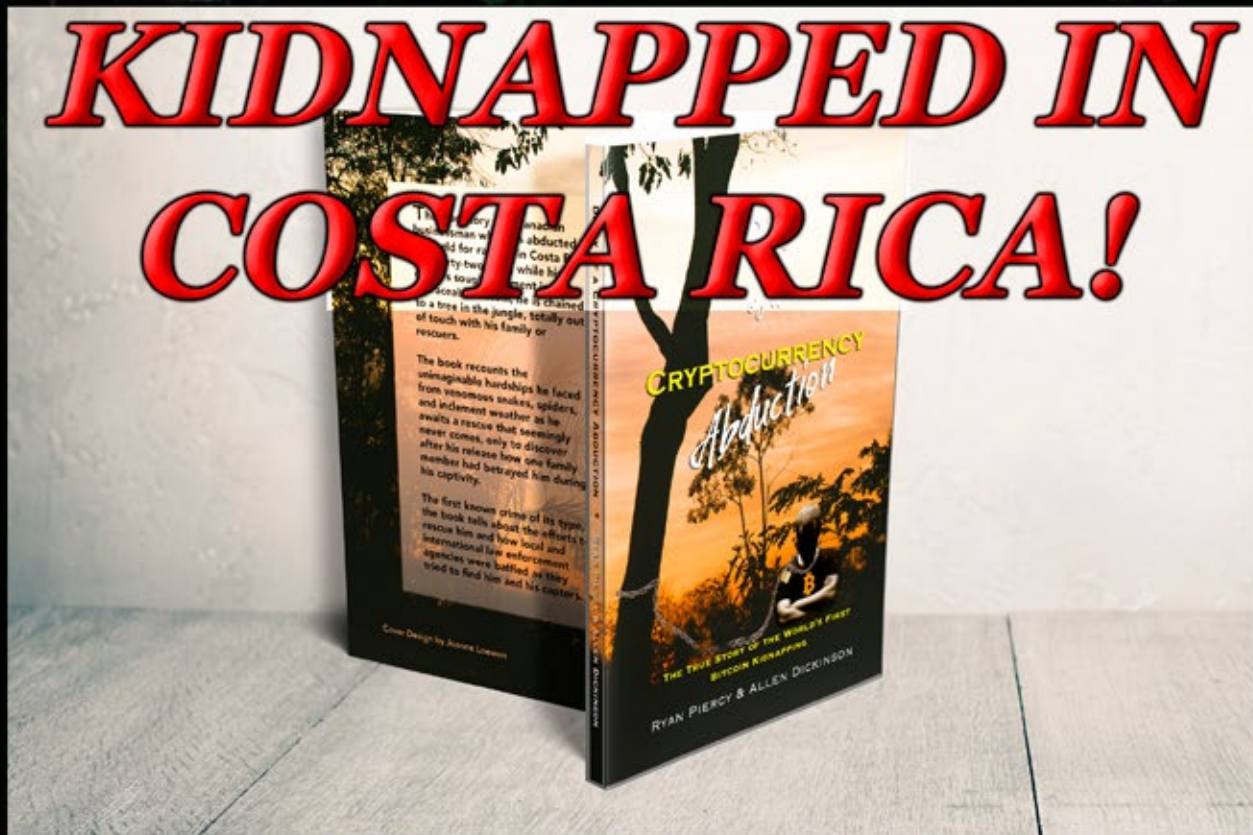
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*Ryan Piercy and Allen Dickinson (2022)*

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# Useful Numbers

## United States of America Embassy

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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](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica)

Email: [costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve) and [embavenezuelacostarica@gmail.com](mailto: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.)

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# FROM THE EMBASSIES



## ASK ACS

### A Few Words About Passports

Your passport is the key to international travel. When you present it abroad you are asking a foreign government to let you travel or temporarily reside in its territories. A passport also provides access to all lawful, local aid and protection, and gives you access to U.S. consular services and assistance overseas. Most importantly, it allows you to re-enter the United States when you return home.

The Department of State's Passport Services Directorate issues U.S. passports to traveling Americans. It operates 26 regional passport agencies across the United States. There are also about 9,000 passport acceptance facilities in the United States where routine passport applications may be filed, including United States courts, state courts, post offices, public libraries, county offices, and city offices. In fiscal year 2021, the Department of State issued 15,496,590 passports (including 2,497,708 passport cards), and there were 145,028,408 valid U.S. passports in circulation. The passport possession rate of the U.S. was approximately 43% of the population.

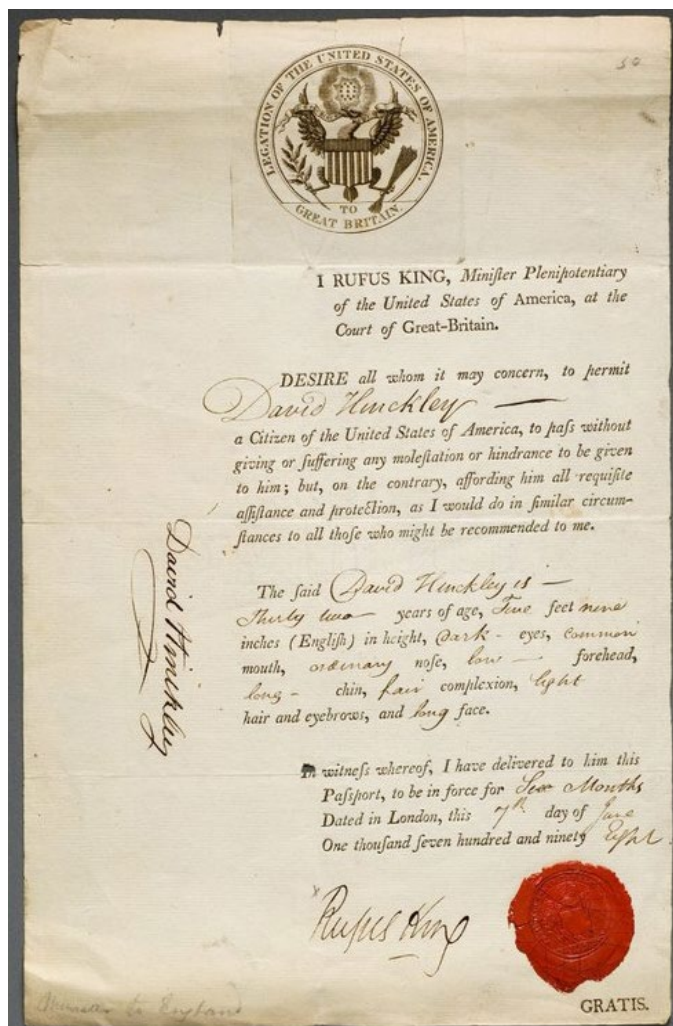
### 200+ Years Of U.S. Passports

The Department of State has issued passports to American citizens traveling abroad since 1789. However, state and judicial authorities also issued passports until 1856 when Congress gave sole passport authority to the Department of State. Throughout the nineteenth century, foreign travel was much more frequent than one might expect. Overseas travelers included merchants, the middle class, and naturalized U.S. citizens who returned to their homelands to visit relatives. For example, statistics show that the State Department issued 130,360 passports between 1810 and 1873, more than 369,844 between 1877 and 1909, and more than 1,184,085 between 1912 and 1925. However, because these numbers do not include passports issued by state or judicial authorities prior to 1856, or people who traveled without any passport prior to 1918, many more U.S. citizens probably traveled abroad than we will ever know.

### Group, Not Individual, Passports

Although 95 percent of mid-19th century passport applicants were men, many women also traveled overseas. If the applicant was to be accompanied by his wife, children, servants, or other women in the party, their names, ages, and relationship to the applicant were stated on the passport application. One passport was then issued to cover the whole group. Likewise, when children traveled abroad solely with their mother, their names and ages were indicated on the mother's passport application. Passport applications by women in their own names became more frequent in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and by 1923 women constituted over 40 percent of passport applicants.

Here is a picture of the oldest American passport displayed at the National Museum of Diplomacy. It was issued in 1798 to wealthy Bostonian David Hinckley. Many Americans "passed" through a "port" like David Hinckley did as part





of a merchants' group traveling from Dover to London on business. American Minister to Great Britain, Rufus King, as an agent of the government of the United States, used the first person "I" to ensure Hinckley would be permitted to "pass without giving or suffering any molestation or hindrance." Note the use of the cursive "f" instead of "s" in the spelling.

## Two Recent Passport Changes You Should Know About:

**Passport Renewals by Mail** In an effort to make passport services easier and more efficient, the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, now offers passport renewal by mail. This new option can save you time and money. To be eligible, you must meet the following four requirements:

- Your previous passport book/card is in your possession;
- You were at least 16 years old when your most recent U.S. passport book/card was issued;
- Your most recent U.S. passport book/card was issued less than 15 years ago; and
- Your previous passport was issued under your current legal name.

For complete instructions, please refer to the U.S. Embassy website at: <https://cr.U.S.embassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>

Payments are accepted online through [Pay.gov](https://pay.gov/public/form/start/607957567) (<https://pay.gov/public/form/start/607957567>) You may pay using a U.S. or international credit or debit card, electronic funds transfer from a U.S. based bank account, Amazon Pay, or PayPal. Applicants submit required documents listed below to any Correos de Costa Rica post office around the country. The documents are sent to the U.S. Embassy in a sealed envelope provided by Correos de Costa Rica. The U.S. Embassy processes the applications upon receipt of the documents. The process takes approximately four to six weeks from receiving your passport application at the Embassy and ,delivery of your new passport is sent back to Correos de Costa Rica.

Lost/stolen/mutilated passports DO NOT meet criteria for the renewal by mail service and require scheduling an in-person appointment.

**Passport Pride: New Gender Identity Markers** From April 11, 2022, in addition to the standard sex/gender markers, (male (M) and female (F), used on valid U.S. Passports, a new marker has been added; an unspecified or another gender identity marker (X) is now available. Applicants can select the gender marker they would like

printed on their passport. The gender selected does not need to match the gender on supporting documentation such as a birth certificate, previous and U.S. passport, or state ID. Medical documentation to change the gender marker on a U.S. passport is no longer required. Applicants can apply in-person at a passport acceptance facility or renew by mail. Beginning in late 2023, applicants will be able to select X as a marker if they are requesting expedited or urgent travel service. In addition, next year applicants will also be able to request (X) for passport cards, emergency passports printed at embassies and consulates, and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBAs).



## UK GOVERNMENT CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

**When we need to use a UK document in Costa Rica, or vice versa, it can seem like a minefield.**

Costa Rica will require an apostille and a translation on any UK document needed to present here, whether to banks, educational institutions or government offices.

An apostille is a certificate from the government that the signature on a document is consistent with their record of officials' signatures. The department that does this needs access to hundreds of thousands of specimen signatures, going back many years. For this reason, there is only one place that this can be done – the UK Legalisation Office.

One needs to go online to start the process. This is to check that the document you are sending can be legalised, pay the relevant fee, and submit your information. This web page will guide you through the process: [www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised](http://www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised)

For documents signed by non-government officials, like financial statements or educational certificates, they will need to be certified by a UK notary. Notaries' signatures are listed in the system and can be legalised/apostilled. You can find a list of notaries here: [www.thenotariessociety.org.uk](http://www.thenotariessociety.org.uk)

What about translation? For use in Costa Rica, you will need to utilise an official translator, a list of whom can be found on the Foreign Ministry's website [www.rree.go.cr](http://www.rree.go.cr) by

searching for “Traductores Oficiales.” They should translate the apostille as well.

If this all seems a bit daunting, there are many UK notaries who will certify your document, get it apostilled and courier it to you here in Costa Rica for a single fee.

### So how about Costa Rican documents for use in the UK?

The good news is that no Costa Rican document needs an apostille for use in the UK. Some lawyers and others here find this hard to believe and ask for proof, such as a webpage. No such webpage exists but if a local official insists, feel free

to put them in touch with us at the Consulate [consular.costarica@fcdof.gov.uk](mailto:consular.costarica@fcdof.gov.uk) and we will reassure them.

Finally, even though you don't need an apostille for the UK, you will need a translation. There is no official list; any professional translator will suffice. The requirement is that they certify their translation in accordance with the simple rules in the last paragraph of this page: [www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document](http://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document)

If you decide to get a fresh copy of an official document, most official documents can be obtained by searching [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Good Luck!

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# ON THE HIGH SEAS

Christine Monteith

## Canada Summer Edition

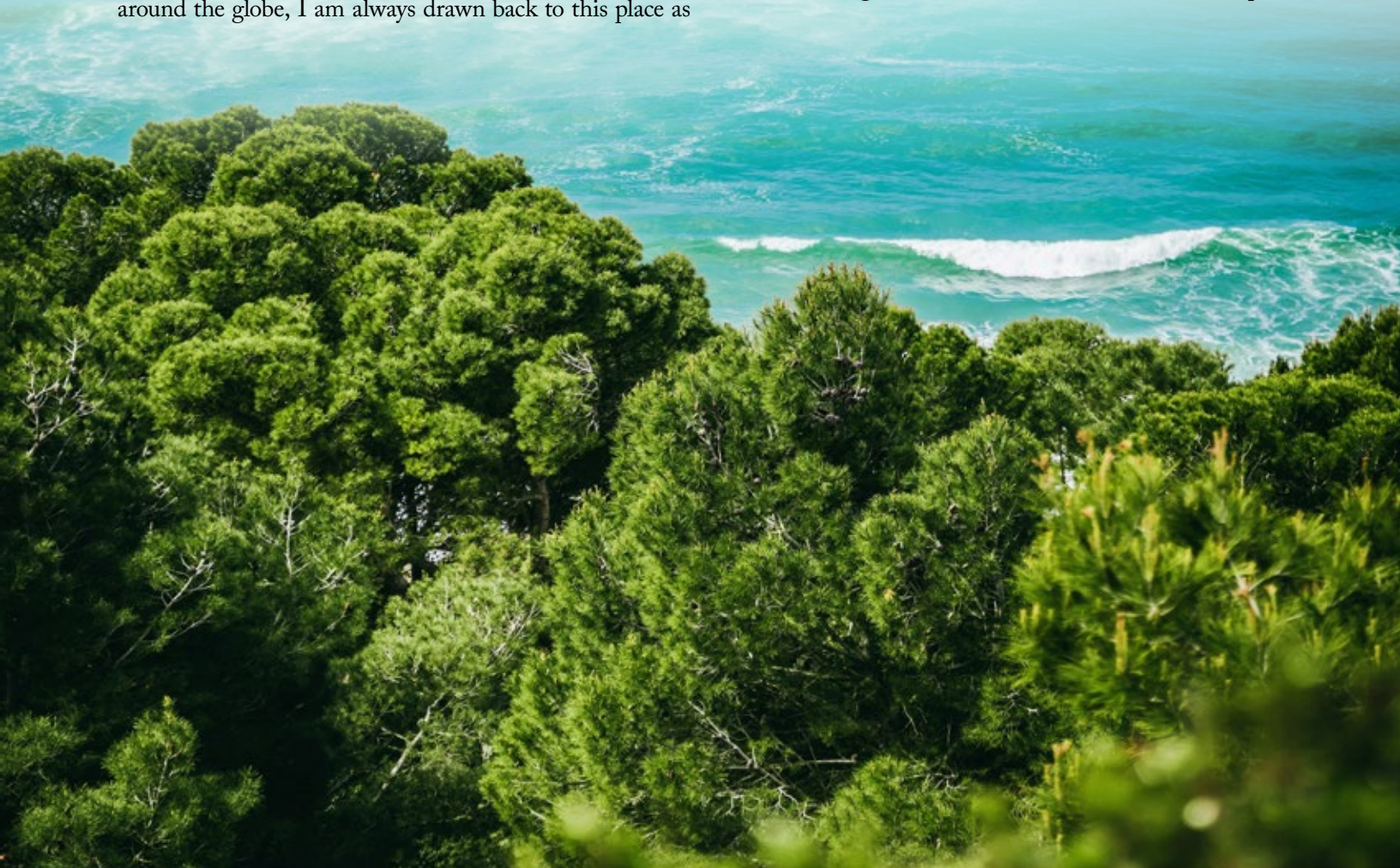
**A**fter three years of nestling in our fruit and flower filled property overlooking the Golfo Dulce, I returned to my special summer place on the Severn River in Central Canada. The log cabin cottage with red and white trim sits on an outcrop of moss covered granite. It is surrounded by towering lodge pole pines, their sparsely needled branches reaching south as if to turn their backs away from the biting north wind.

Through five generations my family has made the journey to this place. When my Dad was a kid they traveled by train and boat launch to get here. This time I traveled on four buses, two jets, two cars, and a ski boat. On the last leg of the trip, as we cruised across the river, my sister asked if it was worth it. I realized that I'd been away too long and with tears leaking from the corners of my eyes I exclaimed, "Every minute!" During my life of traveling and working around the globe, I am always drawn back to this place as

a well-spring of balance and rejuvenation. For many years I couldn't imagine that another place that could give me so much joy might exist.

Many years ago my mother moved to western Canada with her new partner. There they found a high mountain cabin that became their retreat. She had spent many years at the cottage with my sister and I and she knew how important the cottage was to me, and still she said, "Someday you may find another place that you will love as much." I scoffed at the idea.... until I discovered a partially cleared, out-of-the-way couple of acres edging the Costa Rican jungle. It became my forever home.

It is quiet in the mornings at the cottage. As the mist rises from the river I might hear the long, low call of a loon, the occasional squeal of a gull, or honks from a cruising flotilla of Canadian geese. All those sounds are sedate compared





to the cacophony of the jungle noises that wake me in my home in Costa Rica; a pair of toucans squawking about their morning meal, accompanied by singing cicadas, the chirp of petite iridescent tanagers nesting in the eaves, all backed by the growl of howler monkeys waking up in the trees behind the garage. It is like the tuning of the orchestra, offering the excitement and anticipation of how the day will unfold.

Canadian summer high heat is usually 10 degrees or so cooler than home. The days at the cottage run a gamut of weather with sun, rain, heat, and chill, and today the wood stove roars orange to ward off a morning dampness. But that doesn't deter me, I am so excited to be able to swim in the fresh river water that I burst out of the cottage door and hurry down the stone-laid path in bare feet. (My sister continues to be amazed that I walk everywhere in bare feet. The soles of my feet have been toughened by walking down the stone-strewn Costa Rican beach on my way to surf the waves.) No matter the temperature, I joyfully dive into the brisk water... because the river won't swim itself.

My sister and her family do an excellent job maintaining our retreat, but I am three years behind on my quota of cottage chores. In between kayaking, cruising, swimming, and chatting, I catch up with my assigned tasks, things like staining the Muskoka chairs, cleaning the pump house, and raking up mounds of oak leaves and pine needles. In its way it is just like being home. There typical tasks are collecting star fruit and bananas to dehydrate, fermenting cacao beans for chocolate, and chopping back the undergrowth that creeps over the path to the waterfall; little activities that connect me to the land's rich energy.

As a teenager, I was lucky that my family traveled to tropical destinations for Christmas vacations. The concept that there were places in the world where it is summer all year long had a big impact on me and I clearly remember a dark December day when I was 17 and shoveling deep snow from the driveway. As I hoisted each heavy shovelful I vowed that someday I would live in warm climate where "I'd NEVER have to shovel snow EVER again!"

My Canadian cottage is timeless and it will always be an important place in my life. Little things may change, but the fond memories of the scent of pine with aged wood, the slap of water as it ripples against the shore, and the crisp breeze, remain constant. I look forward to more summers there, yet my heart now lives full-time in the moist warmth and vibrant natural surroundings of my home on the edge of a wild and beautiful Costa Rican jungle. It's good to be home.

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# ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling



## Tips to prevent rain damage to your property

**I**n Costa Rica we have a lot of rain; almost everyone who writes articles about Costa Rica has written about the rainfall. For sure, there are a lot of published pictures of mud slides and other disasters, but many private properties also suffer a lot of damage from large amounts of runoff. Therefore, it is really important to know about rain damage, or its potential, before you purchase a home or property.

The weather is changing everywhere, and rainfall in Costa Rica has doubled over the past two years. Admittedly, the country does have a Committee for National Emergencies (Comisión Nacional de Emergencias, CNE), which was created to prevent risk and attend to national emergencies. And yes, they do indeed attend to the national emergencies, BUT there is never enough money or foresight and

planning to do any risk prevention. Like in other third-world countries, CNE doesn't think ahead; they just fix the damage after it happens.

That said, every year, during the Costa Rican rainy season:

- The same rivers overflow,
- The same mountains have mud slides, and
- The same roads and highways become impassable or dangerous to travel.

I needed this long introduction to communicate that rain damage is a national situation that will not be fixed soon. For that reason, as a responsible real estate broker, I created a list of tips on preventing rain damage to your property. I'll approach the issue from a different angle and what telltales to look for.



## HOW TO PREVENT RAIN DAMAGE TO YOUR PROPERTY

The rainy season can do incredible damage, and lots of property owners don't even think this can happen to them. To prevent that occurrence, there are things you should look for when you are considering buying property here. When you are not sure, get the opinion of a pro, and I mean a geologist or someone who knows what they are doing, and not a realtor who says, "It's been that way for 100 years, so why wouldn't it be here for another 100?". Don't listen to salesmanship; listen to knowledge and expertise. Here are some of the things you should look for:

- Check to see if there are any rivers in the area, where they are located, and find out if these rivers have overflowed their banks in the past. If there is a river bordering the real estate you're looking to buy, make sure it is deep enough so that when something or someone blocks it the water won't come your way.
- If the property is located on a mountain or hill side, or there is one behind or to the sides of the location, look for signs of previous erosion. Make sure any rainwater runoff can flow away from the property easily. If the property has a steep or inclined topography or is high up on a slope, go all the way up to the top and check out the situation; landslides go down, not up. Make sure that your neighbor's property won't fall on yours, or yours won't fall on your neighbors.
- Determine if any water coming onto the property from above, or from the road, can drain away from the house, especially if the structure is below the road level. If you need to create ditches or gutters, you should use that information to negotiate the price.
- Roads can be a source of heavy rainwater runoff. Check the condition of the road that serves the property. Is there any damage to the road, and what kind of damages are there? Is there adequate drainage and ditches?
- Inspect the roof gutters and downspouts, plus the storm drains, and determine if they are well installed (use a home inspector). Also, make sure the roof is in good health.
- Make sure the septic system won't be underwater during the rainy season.
- Look for green spots and mold; that's how you can find the problematic areas inside and outside the house.

- If there are retainer walls, look at them to see if there are any cracks.
- Inspect the house structure for cracks or sagging. Either erosion of the soil around or underneath the house from water or earthquakes can cause those cracks. You can fill cracks in walls easily, most of the time, but if a property is on or near a fault line and the house is not built according to code, you'll be filling cracks for the rest of your life. A little paint will cover everything, but a good home inspector can easily tell if the property has any structural problems.
- Find out if rainwater has created erosion and hollowed out the land under the house or has touched the foundation of the house. That's another good job for a home inspector.
- Make sure the power meter and electrical installation haven't suffered water damage (use a home inspector for this too).
- If you plan to buy in a gated community, make sure the condo administration does all the maintenance promptly.

I think I have covered most of it. Feel free to email me any other suggestions.

## PRE-RAINY SEASON MAINTENANCE

The rainy season in Costa Rica starts in May and ends in November. The heaviest rainfall is during September, October, and part of November. After you have purchased the property, don't forget to check these things before the rainy season starts:

- Clean out the storm drains or water drains all over the property,
- Clean out the roof down spouts and gutters,
- Check and clean any ditches used to channel rainwater away from your home.

A last tip. Remember, under Costa Rican law, anyone can call themselves a realtor without any professional experience or training. Ask for referrals and always deal with a qualified realtor.

*Ivo Henfling is a Dutch expat who has lived in Costa Rica for forty years. He founded the American-European Real Estate Group, the first functioning MLS with affiliate agents from coast to coast, in 1999. He is the broker/owner of GoDutch Realty and can be reached at (506) 2289-5125 or (506) 8834-4515 or [email to: ivo@american-european.net](mailto:ivo@american-european.net)*

# SENIOR LIVING IN COSTA RICA

by Katya De Luisa

## The Old Woman in the Mirror

**I**t was another sleepless night. Marie tossed and turned, battling the never-ending barrage of thoughts in her head. She tried counting her breaths but couldn't get past ten before her mind began to roll the mental tapes once again.

Feeling thirsty she threw off the covers, sat up, and noticed the clock showed midnight. The light of the full moon was shining through her window, creating eerie moving shadows on the wall. Something about this night felt strange and she had a sense of foreboding she couldn't shake.

Marie put on her slippers and headed to the bathroom to get a drink. The door was open and a nightlight dimly illuminated the room enough for her to find the glass and turn on the water. When she glanced in the mirror she heard the sound of the drinking glass shattering. Her open hand was frozen in fear above where it had fallen in the sink.

The sound of her rapidly beating heart pounded in her ears as she looked into the dark-circled eyes of an old woman. There was a gray mist enveloping the image and it was spilling out of the mirror, filling the room. The old woman in the mirror cocked her head to one side, like a bird scrutinizing a worm, and slowly began to smile. Marie didn't know what was more terrifying, the glassy stare or the toothless grin.

Time froze as the two continued the staring standoff while the bathroom filled with mist, making the air heavy with chilly cold. Marie was transfixed as the woman rested her gnarly fingers on the mirror frame and saw her skin was covered in brown age spots. The fingers were bony and twisted, and the nails discolored and broken, and there was a loose wedding ring dangling on her fourth finger.

The old woman spoke in a raspy voice that seemed ancient. "Hello, Marie." Marie wondered how the woman knew



her name. She wanted to flee, but she couldn't, she was paralyzed with fear, unable to move.

The mist enveloped the old hag and she disappeared as the mirror became a window. Through it Marie could see a child playing with a puppy at the edge of some thick woods in the distance. The rains had ended and the forest was covered in thick fog that began at the tree line. The puppy playfully ran off, disappearing into the heavily misted trees, his barking fading into the distance. Everything was obscured in a ghostly whiteness as the child ran into the forest after the puppy. The pale shadows of the trees seemed ominous, watching, waiting. Somehow it all felt familiar, like something she'd seen before.

The scene in the bathroom mirror began to fade and Marie found herself in the forest, calling for her puppy. The cold mist enveloped her as she moved deeper into the woods and the whiteness covered everything, even the ground. She stumbled on roots and rocks as she slowly made her way toward the barking, which seemed to be getting closer.

Suddenly a large animal leaped out of the mist and knocked her over. Marie was terrified until she noticed it was a dog who had the same markings as her puppy. The dog licked her face and jumped in circles, playfully barking.

It was getting dark as she and the dog hurriedly made their way out of the forest. At her home she saw a light coming from her father's study. She opened the door and saw a strange gray-haired man sitting in her father's chair by the fireplace. His eyes widened with disbelief as he said, "But how is this possible?" Confused and frightened, she closed her eyes, rubbing them. She slowly opened one eye, then the other, to find the man was gone; her father was sitting in the chair with her puppy in his lap. He scolded her for going into the forest and sent her to bed without supper.

The scene she had been watching in the mirror shifted as the old hag reappeared and began to laugh wickedly. Marie was terrified and shut her eyes, and the sound of that awful cackling began to fade into silence. The stillness was broken by a clock's soft rhythmic ticking, gradually getting louder.

Marie opened her eyes to find herself safely in her bed under the warm covers. Was it just a nightmare? But it felt so real! The moon was still shining through the window and the shadows moved on the wall. The clock now showed 12:05 am.

She noticed her wedding ring was on the nightstand. It was always falling off her thin fingers. She heard a sound and looked towards the bathroom and her heart again began to pound. The door was shut, but Marie swore she could hear muffled giggling from inside.

She suddenly heard a scream, then realized it was her own.

Moments later the bedroom door opened and her daughter rushed in. "Mom, you were just having a nightmare; everything is alright." A man appeared at the door, asking, "Will she be okay?" Marie didn't recognize him, but her daughter seemed to. "Yes, John, it's just another one of her night terrors. The doctor said this is common with dementia. The prescribed sleep medication should start working in a couple of days." John shook his head and turned to leave while mumbling, "I certainly hope so. No one has been getting any sleep around here lately."

After her daughter left Marie watched the shadows on the wall until, finally, she drifted off to sleep.

*Katya De Luisa is the founder/director of the Infinite Mind Dementia Project here in Costa Rica. Contact her at: [kdeluisa@yahoo.com](mailto:kdeluisa@yahoo.com) with any questions and check out the website: [www.theinfinitemind.org](http://www.theinfinitemind.org)*

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# A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Allen Dickinson



## Some Things are Different in Costa Rica

Lately, I seem to have been making lists of things. Don't know why that is, maybe it's the coming holidays - you know, making a list and checking it twice. In the process, I have created a list of some of the things the guidebooks and websites don't mention. Unfortunately, some may not paint a pretty picture, but all are taken from personal experience. Your mileage may vary.

### ELECTRICAL

Light switches are often mounted "sideways" - operating left to right - which can be confusing. (Which direction is On or Off)? It is especially so since the mounting isn't standard (Off/On can be either to the left OR the right, etc.).

Most older Tico homes don't have central hot water systems - the only hot water available is in the shower, where there may be a "suicide shower" head. That name comes from the shower head being electric; the water is heated by flowing it across a live electric heating coil. This may seem dangerous, thus the name, but isn't, usually - the water flow breaks up as soon as it leaves the shower head and falls towards the bather and cannot conduct electricity. (But don't touch the water as it exits the head; you could get a shock.)

Something that frequently confuses expats is that adjusting the shower temperature isn't intuitive. That is, turning the water on and adjusting it UP makes the shower cooler. That's because the increased amount of water flowing across that electric coil exceeds its capacity



to heat it. To turn the water temperature up, turn the water flow down.

Don't be fooled if you see a green ground wire emanating from the shower head - many Tico homes do not have a grounding circuit incorporated in their wiring system. This also applies to power outlets. Some may be of the modern three-prong receptacle design - two for the normal flow of electrical current and a third, a central one, for "grounding". However, the grounding function of the receptacle often ends just inside the wall, immediately behind the cover. The three-prong outlet was installed to accommodate the three-prong plugs that come with many newer appliances.

## FOOD PREFERENCES

Ticos use cabbage like North Americans use lettuce. Don't be surprised if your hotdog comes with mayonnaise, ketchup, and shredded cabbage on it. Or the "salad" served with your meal is cabbage-based.

And speaking of ketchup, Ticos unfailingly put ketchup AND mayonnaise on their french fries. Straight ketchup is sometimes used as "salad dressing." Many restaurants won't know what you want if you ask for Thousand Island, Ranch, or, God forbid, Roquefort dressing. Vinegar and oil is, however, sometimes available.

Lemons in Costa Rica do not have yellow rinds (unless they are very mature) but are bright green. But the flesh inside is yellow.

When you find a food item you like in the grocery store, it may be wise to buy in quantity - it may be that it isn't a popular item with Ticos and it takes a while until the import process brings in new stock (sweet pickles, for instance - I have waited years to find a new bottle).

## PURCHASING FOOD AND OTHER CONSUMABLES

When purchasing food items in a grocery store, be aware that sometimes the price for a small quantity of an item is less than buying the same item "in quantity". For example, four separate, quarter-pound sticks of margarine or butter can be cheaper than buying a one-pound package. Or, two, half-gallons of milk may cost less than a one-gallon container. (Although those two items are dairy, the concept applies to many other common items.) And, the idea of large, "King-Size" (and more economical) packaging just doesn't make

it here; there is often no discount for buying things in larger sizes. For instance, a 2500-gram package of laundry detergent costs nearly the same, per gram, as buying a 500-gram bag does.

Another food-related "trick" grocery retailers use is the "Buy 3, Get One Free!" offer. Don't take that literally, do the math. Sometimes the price for a multi-pack is nearly the same as for four separate items, only minus a small amount. What you end up paying can be the same as buying 3.85 of the item.

Local vendors cruise neighborhoods in small trucks almost daily, selling fresh vegetables and fruit. The quality of their goods may be slightly lower than in grocery stores, but the prices reflect that. If purchased carefully, the taste is always good. However, sometimes intensional parasites think so too, so when buying from a street vendor, always wash vegetables and fruits in a mild bleach and water solution before eating.

Purchasing a light bulb is a little different here. Stores that sell them usually have a "socket" at the check-out counter, and the light bulb will be removed from its package and inserted in the socket to ensure it is working and good when you buy it.

Or, electrical items, like a new rice cooker or a TV, might have the factory-sealed box opened during check-out and all parts will be verified as being present and undamaged at the time of purchase.

## TIME ZONE

Looking at a map, one would assume that Costa Rica is in the same time zone as the east coast of the U.S. - San Jose is almost due south of Miami. But no, Costa Rica is in the Central Time zone, which requires a mental adjustment whenever you need to contact somebody on the East Coast. And Daylight Savings Time is not in use here - another adjustment if it is used where you are calling. (BTW, Panama IS in the Eastern time zone.)

## MONEY

The national currency is called Colones, but it is sometimes, informally, referred to as "Pesos" or "Plata" In general, when referring to an indeterminate amount in any type of currency, the word "dinero" might be used (Do you have enough dinero?).

Credit cards have become very popular with Ticos, and almost everywhere honors them. When using a card issued by a foreign (USA or another country) bank, a transaction fee (converting local colones to another currency) may be added.

Costarican currency (bills) are frequently counterfeited, so they are not blindly trusted. Therefore, it is standard practice for a cashier to hold each bill, even the smallest denomination, up to the light to see the watermark, or they feel for the braille dots each bill has to assure the bills are legitimate before accepting them.

When numerals are written out in Costa Rica, Ticos use the European style - for example, sevens have a cross stroke, and zeros have a diagonal slash. With digits, decimal points are often replaced with commas and visa-versa (10.000 vs. 10,000). And, a dollar sign (\$) is frequently used in place of the colone symbol (₡).

## GENERAL

There are no public school buses in Costa Rica. Privately owned transportation, often 9, 12, or 15-passenger mini-vans are used to transport children to/from school... for a price. Families pay a monthly "subscription" fee for the service.

Costa Rica is a democratic country. The laws, however, are not based on Common Law (as they are in Canada, England, and the USA) but on Civil Law, sometimes referred to as the Napoleonic Code, whose origins date back to Roman times. Therefore, many seemingly simple legal issues are handled much differently and can be subject to much more complicated and time-consuming processes.

At night, and sometimes during the day, local police vehicles circulate with their emergency (red and blue) beacons on and flashing. The lights do not indicate an emergency, just the presence of a police vehicle.

Gasoline is sold by the liter here. One liter equals 0.264 gallons. To convert liters to gallons, multiply the liters by .264 (10 liters = 2.64 gallons).

Most Ticos prefer to park their vehicles by backing them into parking spaces, even though it can be more difficult and time-consuming. The commonly held belief is that exiting is quicker and easier in case of an emergency, like an earthquake. At the same time, most do not know how to parallel park.

Costarican homes may have one or more resident geckos. These small and harmless lizards serve residents

well by eating bugs. They may chirp occasionally, but none will try to sell you insurance.

A month's supply of medication sold in pharmacies does not come loose in a bottle, but each pill or tablet is individually packaged in a plastic blister on a small sheet; each one has to be separately pushed through the foil backing for use. It is common to see a particular medication being sold individually, one or two at a time.

When indicating a date, like my birthday, as 5/18/43, the Costarican style is to reverse the month and day: 18/5/43. (Confusing if your birthday or other important date is a single digit date - is 3/6/56 March sixth or June third?)

This list is by no means comprehensive and keeps getting longer and longer as I write! Space, however, limits me so I must end here... for now. Keep your eye on this column in future issues for more "differences".



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# WILD SIDE

by Ryan Piercy



## Manatees, Sirens of the Sea

So what do mermaids and cows have in common? For the answer, I'd suggest you ask early voyagers, who reputedly mistook Sea Cows (of the order Sirenia) for those mythical ladies. Costa Rica, and specifically Isla Tortuguero, is home to one type of these purely aquatic mammals known as the Manatee. (*Trichechus manatus* of the family Trichechidae)

Like their cousin, the Dugong, Manatees are commonly called Sea Cows, probably because of their relation to the now-extinct Steller's Sea Cow.

The Manatee family contains three species, the Amazonian Manatee, the West African Manatee, and the West Indian Manatee, which is found from Brazil to central Florida.

Tortuguero, where the mammal is legally protected, hosts one of the few significant populations. Once abundant, these herbivores have long been hunted for their supposedly tender and delicious flesh. Also, their hides were commonly used for machine belts and high-pressure hoses.

Manatees are heavily wrinkled beasts that look similar to a tusk-less walrus (mermaids?) with small round eyes and a spatulate tail. They are air-breathers, have only forelimbs, flippers set close to their small head, and live in small family groups. Occasionally a herd can be made up of 15 to 20 individuals.

Manatees are quite large at up to 15 feet in length, weighing up to 600 kilos, and consume about 50 kilos of





aquatic vegetation daily. They are generally nocturnal, and the female can give birth any time of year, every two or three years. The young feed off the mother, who positions herself in an erect state, using their flippers to assist the children in sustaining themselves.

An interesting fact about Manatees are their teeth, which wear down at a rate of about 1mm per month due to their diet. To counter the loss, the molars slowly move towards the front and fall out when completely worn, replaced by new teeth from the back of the jaw. Manatees frequent estuaries, rivers, and canals and, therefore, may be seen in the canals at Tortuguero. However, they are difficult to spot as they frequently only show their nostrils above water, with the rest of their huge bulk remaining submerged.

Aside from their natural camouflage under the water, the reduced numbers add to the difficulty of spotting these creatures. Though protected by some governments, such as Costa Rica and the USA, they are still in an endangered state, along with the Dugongs, who may number only 40,000 worldwide. Hopefully, the attempt to protect them by the same species that caused their predicament will allow them to regain their population numbers before they become extinct, like their unfortunate relatives, the Steller Sea Cow.

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# DESIGN WISE

by Shelagh Duncan

## Choosing Your Style, Part 1: Modern or Contemporary?



**W**hen we moved to Costa Rica back in 2007, I was probably more drawn to a Tommy Bahama living room more than any Modern one. How can our casual and laid-back lifestyle in Costa Rica relate to the cold, clinical steel and concrete interiors that are called Modern?

However, things change. Oscar Wilde penned, "With age comes wisdom", and perhaps my new-found appreciation for the modern aesthetic is proof of that. The clean lines and minimalist approach does have a certain appeal, and, I must admit, I have always admired the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

What can be confusing is that the concept of Modern for many people also encompasses what we call Contemporary design. These are actually two quite different styles, but the terms are often used interchangeably. Simply put, Modern design has a historical reference: Contemporary style reflects the current trends.

So what exactly is the difference? Modern design has its own specific place in history. It was born out of the Modernism era in the first half of the 20th century and is in stark contrast to the previously ornate, hand-made furniture of the Victorian and Art Nouveau eras. Factories could produce more items faster and cheaper, and this movement perfectly reflects the 2nd industrial age – and change. Poet Ezra Pound's battle cry was "Make it new!" – and they did.

Modern design was functionally motivated and followed the same principles as modern architecture – machine-like simplicity, smoothness of surface, and an absence of ornament. Modern furniture embraced the new materials – steel in its many forms, glass, molded plywood, and of course, plastics. The goal of modern design was to capture timeless beauty in spare precision. It gave us iconic and enduring designs and names like Eames, Saarinen, Le Corbusier, Breuer, and Mies van de Rohe.



White was the perfect backdrop for these new pieces; it showed their form in the purest way. These modern rooms made liberal use of windows and light – again in complete contrast to Victorian homes where the "Window Tax" produced those gloomy interiors! However, it was the Englishwoman Syrie Maugham who gave us the first all-white room way back in the 1920s. Her white room was not in the Modern style, but this revolutionary concept helped change the way Modern designers thought about space. Airy interior spaces with sparsely furnished rooms, clean lines, and asymmetrical balance characterized the modern look – and the rooms were white.

'Modern' is a design style attributed to a specific period of time, 'Contemporary' is not. The word contemporary, by definition, means "existing, occurring, or living at the same time; belonging to the same time." And that is exactly the same for the use of the term in interior design.

Contemporary design is ever-changing – it is of this moment. It is a living, morphing entity and will display

itself in a very different form ten or 50 years from now, depending on the trending styles at that time.

Contemporary style refers to what is popular right now and can be very eclectic for that reason; it borrows pieces and styles from different eras. For example, furniture and art from the Modern era are often used in Contemporary design, and we know that the mid-century modern look is very popular right now. However, traditional details and trim can also be incorporated into these designed spaces, as well as industrial and rustic pieces.

The only caveat with this style is that, because it is ever-changing, it can look great today – but can start to look dated after a while. So I guess we just have to keep buying new pieces to keep it updated!

So, you decide whether your style may be Modern or Contemporary, and really, unless you are a purist the terminology is not as important as the finished look. Well-designed homes and interiors can have the essence of the modern style with the openness and materials that reflect that time, but by including pieces that show





your personality and taste, you can enjoy a contemporary and modern home.

Tropical Modernism is something different again. As an architect in Sri Lanka, Geoffrey Bawa was one of the original proponents of Tropical Modernism – a design movement that, amongst other things, began the integration of buildings and the landscape. This is when the blurring of lines between indoor and outdoor living, which we still enjoy today, began.

He built for the tropical climate. He recognized its special needs and combined those needs with the basic principles of Modern design. Bawa's legacy was some beautifully designed hotels, a university campus, and many public and government buildings, as well as many private residences.

What does Tropical Modernism look like today? This is an area that perhaps would be most relevant to us living where we do, so let's look at this in detail next time. We will talk about the architecture, the furniture, the materials, and the overall style.

Embrace the differences and enjoy the results!

Until next time, Shelagh.

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# PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

by Tony Johnson

## "No THING Can Make Us Happy", Part 2

*Rupert Spira, Spiritual Teacher*

Come on! Surely newborn babies, a kind word, a friend's smile, a puppy all bring moments of happiness. Don't they? Yes, they do. But it's a temporary, fleeting happiness, not the lasting kind we seek. And with all the problems that we have, a puppy can't lastingly overcome our unhappiness. So, what will? Those brief moments, although insufficient, can deepen our understanding of happiness and its barrier, suffering, and, thereby, improve our ability to experience more lasting happiness and avoid or reduce suffering.

Consider what those examples, and every other incident of happiness, have in common, what defines them. Can you see that they all involve a degree of satisfaction? Of contentment? That at those times, we are not seeking something different but are content with things as they are. We don't think, "That puppy would be better with more spots", it's good enough as it is. That is contentment. The definition may surprise you, but any time we're happy, at any level of happiness, we're essentially content with the situation. It's "good enough."

The happiness we seek is not some constant high, though that is a degree of happiness. What we really need is a steadier state of contentment, a sense that our situation or life overall is satisfactory, good enough. That may seem like a rather disappointing explanation. Some imagine happiness to be more, much more than that, and many would be dissatisfied with that definition, feeling it falls short of what we think we need, a lasting high. But try this:

What would you call being content on a regular basis and relatively free of suffering? Might you call it "Happy"?

### MEANING AND ENGAGEMENT

What does make us happy, in the contented sense of the term? The internet is filled with tips and even formulas. Let's look at some examples. For our purposes, we'll

explore a simple one; Happiness = Engagement + Meaning. But what does that involve?

Consider, when we are "engaged" with something, we're deeply absorbed, challenged by some situation, activity, or concern. That concern is "good enough" to consume our time and energy, and our involvement makes us happy. We don't need more, and we don't want to be doing something else. Fortunate is the person who is engaged in their work. Unhappy is the person who's bored at work. Engagement happens when the activity is important, interesting, and enjoyable, leaving us "content" and happy.

Add "meaning," and we increase our happiness. For example, the meaning of a word points to something that defines the word. "Meaning in life" points to our living for something larger than ourselves, which gives our lives purpose and significance. Sounds simple, right? Just do the two factors of the formula and we're happy, right? Not so fast.

### WHAT NEXT?

While "engagement" and "meaning" give us directions to aim for, we're still left with the task of identifying what exactly would give us engagement and meaning. So reaching happiness isn't as easy as these formulas suggest; it involves knowing who we are. Some generalities aside, there is no "one size fits all" easy answer, but now we at least have a direction. We're less lost and more clear about how to find happiness.

Then there's the problem of suffering. "Life is filled with suffering, but happiness is possible," said The Buddha.

### SUFFERING

Finding happiness also requires dealing with a large obstacle in our way; "suffering." Again, we need a clear definition to make our efforts effective. Suffering and



happiness are closely interrelated. Basically, when we're happy, we're content and free of suffering, when we're suffering, we're discontented and unhappy. But we must understand that "suffering," the word as it is used here, refers to something different than typically thought. It can involve, but is different than, great physical pain. It actually refers to a level of emotional discomfort that WE ADD on top of that physical pain. Both happiness and suffering are states of mind; they are our REACTIONS to our conditions.

Happiness and suffering are related to conditions, but, strictly speaking, those conditions, those "things," are not happiness or suffering. They are both states of mind created by how we see and feel about our conditions. That distinction may seem unimportant, but remember, we often have little or no control over most conditions. The good news is that we can potentially control our reactions. Doing that makes us less at the mercy of circumstances for finding our happiness and thus alleviating suffering.

The Dalai Lama said, "Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional." So, to be happy, we must know how to find both happiness and escape suffering. A rule of thumb; we're unhappy, suffering, when we PERCEIVE our life as being deficient, falling short somehow. And that causes us to suffer.

We typically see "suffering" as acute, unbearable pain, not mere dissatisfaction. Certainly, raw pain would be seen by most as "suffering," but the Buddhists make an important distinction between pain and suffering; they don't consider the DEGREE of pain to be definitive of suffering. Again, they define suffering as the emotional overlay that we superimpose on the pain. As distressing as pain is in its own right, we can, and do, make it worse by RESENTING its presence and refusing to accept it. The perception that "this is unfair, unwarranted" adds to our pain, giving us suffering and unhappiness.

If we're accepting, content, rather than rejecting our conditions, we can reduce the suffering. If we can avoid or reduce suffering, we can increase our happiness. The key in either direction to happiness, or away from suffering, is contentment. But how can we possibly

feel content when our life is deficient, falling short of expectations, and involving great pain?

## CONTENT IN THE MODERN WORLD?

In this age of discontent, of constant complaints about society, it seems blasphemous to even suggest being content. What's wrong with someone who's not fighting power? Content does not mean we make no effort to make things better for ourselves or others; it means that we don't have to wait until utopia arrives to be happy. We can be

If you focus on hurt,  
you will continue to  
hurt. If you focus  
on lesson, you will  
continue to grow.



content with our efforts, if they are genuinely intended to make things better, and they persist.

If you recall, while writing the last article, I had Covid, and the fourth member of my family had died in the last two years. I was struggling to recover my happiness and



*Life isn't waiting for the storm to pass...  
It's learning to dance in the rain.*

end the suffering, but I didn't know how. Covid left me in a lot of bodily pain, punctuated by "lightning bolts" of ever-sharper agony. Additionally, my biochemistry was "off," "out of order", even after the pain had ceased; I just didn't feel right. So I was very unhappy and enduring a great deal of suffering.

When we're healthy, we're largely unaware of our bodily functioning. Breathing, heartbeats, digestion, muscle tension all operate below our awareness, unconsciously controlled by hormones and the nervous system. But for weeks, I was acutely aware of being ill. You can understand my unhappiness; my life was not satisfactory because it fell short of the health I was used to enjoying. While things were slowly improving, I created my suffering, which made things worse. After two vaccinations and two booster shots, I still came down with Covid – only one day after the second booster! So I developed a "poor me," "why me" resentment of my reality. Add Tim's death, and I wondered what value life, my life, had, if any.

It took a while to appreciate the lessons I've written about for years and apply them to one of the worst states I had ever been in. I asked myself if happiness means contentment, how could I possibly be content with that current state? If suffering means an optional layer of discomfort added by my resentful attitude, how could I reduce suffering when Covid seemed so unfair?

First, contentment does not mean I had to be content with the TOTALITY of my reality. When I thought about it, there were a few positives among many negatives. After hours in the ER for testing, I was discharged and not hospitalized; my Covid didn't warrant that level of treatment. Even better, as the days passed, the pain, though still present, slowly subsided. And, while my biochemistry remained "off" for weeks, I could see slow recovery; I was able to resume my walks and enjoy nature. Things WERE getting better. They would be even better still if I could appreciate that progress rather than resent the slow arrival of full recovery.



With regard to my suffering, I realized no person, nor had nature, singled me out for the illness. I had to accept that it just happened like it did to millions of others. I was no more entitled to an exemption than them. I had to see that my refusal to accept my bad luck just made things worse.

Tim's death, and its meaning for the rest of my life, was harder to resolve and restore contentment with. Before Covid and his passing, my life was pretty good. I'm 75 but in quite good health with no chronic illness, so I was physically and intellectually active. Yes, I could go at any time, but with the complete cure of Covid likely, I could resume what had been a good life. Hence, again I could be content with the progress of my recovery, if not the continued feeling of being "off" and the eventual, if not immediate, restoration of that good life. And if I ceased resenting what I was going through, that progress would be a bit better.

In short, while I couldn't control my conditions (Covid and my age), I COULD control my REACTIONS to them. And by doing that, I could reduce my suffering and restore some level of happiness. Like others, I'd prefer that these problems never occurred, but since they had, it was now

up to me to make the best of them. Those "THINGS" (Covid and my age) didn't make me happy or unhappy; my attitudes, my reactions to them did. And those were in my power to control and return to happiness. When I did that, not looking for elation but for improvement in my mood, I could be content with "baby steps" to feeling better and accepting that bad things happen to me, just like they do to everyone else. I don't have to let them make me feel defeated, hopeless.

To repeat, find contentment to restore happiness. An oversimplified slogan might help to understand and use these ideas. "To be happy, seek peace, contentment, avoid resentment". I'm feeling a lot better now. Yes, happy. I'm enjoying a complete recovery from my illness, enabling me to resume engaging and meaningful activities.

It would have happened a lot sooner if only I had better practiced what I preached.

*Tony Johnson is content and free of suffering in the Costa Ballena. It took him a while to appreciate again how fabulous that is. Contact him at: [johnson.tony4536@gmail.com](mailto:johnson.tony4536@gmail.com)*

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## ► 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.costaricaaaa.com](http://www.costaricaaaa.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](mailto:commander@alcr10.org) or visit our website at: [www.alcr10.org](http://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](http://www.amigosofcostarica.org) or email to: [emily@amigosofcostarica.org](mailto: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](http://www.atenasbridgeclub.com) or email to: [atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.birdingclubcr.org) or email to: [info@birdingclubcr.org](mailto:info@birdingclubcr.org).

## ► 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](mailto: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](mailto:cbwn00@gmail.com).

## ► Costa Rica Writers Group

Writers, authors, and anyone who would like to write can benefit from this group. Members read and evaluate or critique each other's work, or present what they write. Any aspect of writing can be discussed. We have access to resources for editing, publishing, and the whole writing process. We meet by ZOOM on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 11:30 a.m. For more information contact Edie Bakker at: [edierainforest@yahoo.com](mailto:edierainforest@yahoo.com)

## ► 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](mailto:democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com) or visit our website at: [www.democratsabroad.org/cr](http://www.democratsabroad.org/cr) Register to vote absentee at: [votefromabroad.org](http://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](http://www.dawgcostarica.org) or email to: [dawgcostarica@gmail.com](mailto: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: [littletheatregroup.org](http://littletheatregroup.org) Email: [info@littletheatregroup.org](mailto:info@littletheatregroup.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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:pzwomansclub@gmail.com) or visit our web site at: [www.pziwc.org](http://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@pwnocr.com](mailto:info@pwnocr.com) The PWN website is: <http://www.pwnocr.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](mailto:bob@bobnormand.com)

### ► Radio Control Sailing Club

Meets at Sabana Park Lake. For information email Walter Bibb at: [wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://www.sanvitobirdclub.org) or email: [eltangaral@gmail.com](mailto:eltangaral@gmail.com) for more information.

### ► Wine Club of Costa Rica

Social group. Monthly Meeting, Mainly Escazú Email: [costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com](mailto:costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com)

### ► 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](mailto: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](mailto:service@arcr.cr) subject line; Club Corner, and post them on the the ARCR Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](http://www.facebook.com/ARCR123).

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

## Important dates in Costa Rica:

### 02 Nov, Wednesday

All Souls' Day. Observance

### 22 Nov, Tuesday

Teacher's Day Observance

### 24/25 Nov, Thursday/ Friday

ARCR seminar for expats

Location: Park Inn Hotel, health conditions permitting.

Contact the office for updates and reservations.

Seating is limited.

### 01 Dec, Thursday

Abolition of the Army Day

Non-Compulsory Payment

### 08 Dec Thursday

Feast of the Immaculate

Conception Observance

### 25 Dec Sunday

Christmas Day National Holiday

### NATIONAL HOLIDAY:

Non-essential businesses will be closed. Paid holiday for Costa Rican workers. A worker who is required to work on a national holiday must, by law, be paid double wages.

### NON-COMPULSORY

**PAYMENT:** Official holiday, however the employer is NOT required to pay their employees double if they are required to work that day.

**OBSERVANCE:** Paid day off for Costa Rican workers.

**NOTE:** ARCR office will be closed from Thursday December 22nd until Tuesday January 3rd 2023



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For more information, or to enroll online, go to our website at: **[www.arcr.cr](http://www.arcr.cr)**, email us at: **[service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr)**, call ARCR Administration at: **(506) 4052-4052**, or drop by our offices on Calle 42, Avenida 14, San José, Costa Rica (The ARCR office is on the right).

