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EL RESIDENTE

September

October

2023

TASTE THE TROPICS:

Mango / Manga

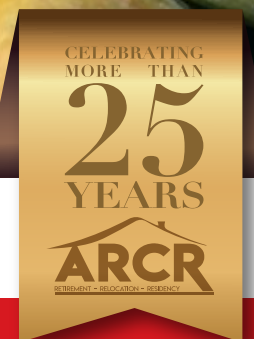
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Editor's Note

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! You may think that greeting is coming a little early, but I include it now for a good reason. The celebration of Thanksgiving has been a North American tradition (Canadians celebrate on a different date than American citizens, but they still mark the day) for many years. However, as the world becomes more "global," North American exclusivity for the holiday is becoming a thing of the past – Ticos are now being urged to adopt the custom and take the day to give thanks for their own good fortune. It is not widespread in Costa Rica, yet, but the tradition is growing (along with the availability of expensive frozen turkeys at some of the larger supermarkets.) The point of this is to encourage expats to share the special day with their Tico friends and neighbors. Cook a turkey and trimmings, invite them to come share in the feast, and express your gratitude for being able to live in their beautiful country. What can be more Thanksgiving-like?



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ACROSS THE BOARD

Notes and News from the Board of Directors

FUNERAL SERVICES AND BURIAL

CRYPTS U.S. military veterans might be interested to know that the American Legion, Post 10, owns three burial crypts for use by veterans. Located in San Antonio de Escazu at the Campo de Esperanza, each crypt has space for four full coffins and one space reserved for cremated remains. There are four spaces presently vacant.

In addition, the American Legion Post 10 has made an agreement with Polini Funeral Homes to facilitate cremation of veterans at fifty percent of advertised prices.

For more information, contact contact Chuck Turner (506-2228-6014); Matt Lopes (506-8968-6935); or Craig Carlson (506-6042-9921). Additional information, including a meeting schedule, is available at: www.alcr10.org or www.facebook.com/amlegioncr/

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TASTE THE TROPICS

by El Residente Staff



Mango / Manga

The word mango (plural "mangoes" or "mangos") originated from the Portuguese "manga," which in turn comes from the Malayalam word ma. In Costa Rica the word manga is used to describe a type of mango that is two or three times larger than a regular mango (it can weigh up to 1kg), which has more fiber and is less sweet.

It is believed that mangoes originally came from Northwest India and Myanmar. The exact origins of the fruit are not known for sure, but mango fossils from about 20 million years ago have been found in Southeast Asia. The fruit is also often mentioned in religious and mythological manuscripts; there are documents from 4,000 years ago that represent mangoes as a symbol of attainment, the fruit of self-realization regarding the devotee's potential perfection. An excellent example

of one of those mentions is seen in an image of Lord Ganesha, where the god of intellect and wisdom in Hinduism is depicted holding a mango.

According to legend, the basis for this depiction comes from when Ganesha was a child living with his parents, Shiva and Parvati, and his brother Kartikeya, a mischievous sage came to their house to test which one of the brothers was more intelligent. The sage presented the boys with a ripe mango and asserted that whoever ate it would attain wisdom and knowledge. He then proposed a challenge to the brothers: whoever went around the world three times and returned first would be awarded the mango.

Each of the brothers had an animal as their means of transportation; Ganesha traveled on a mouse and

Kartikeya on a peacock. Kartikeya was confident he would win as he believed there was no way Ganesha's mouse could outrun his peacock. Nonetheless, when Kartikeya returned from circling the world three times, he found that Ganesha had been awarded the mango. He did not understand how that could be.

The sage explained, "Ganesha said that his parents, Shiva and Parvati, were his whole world. He asked them to stand together and circled them three times and claimed the fruit." This fascinating story shows how mango is considered a food of the gods.

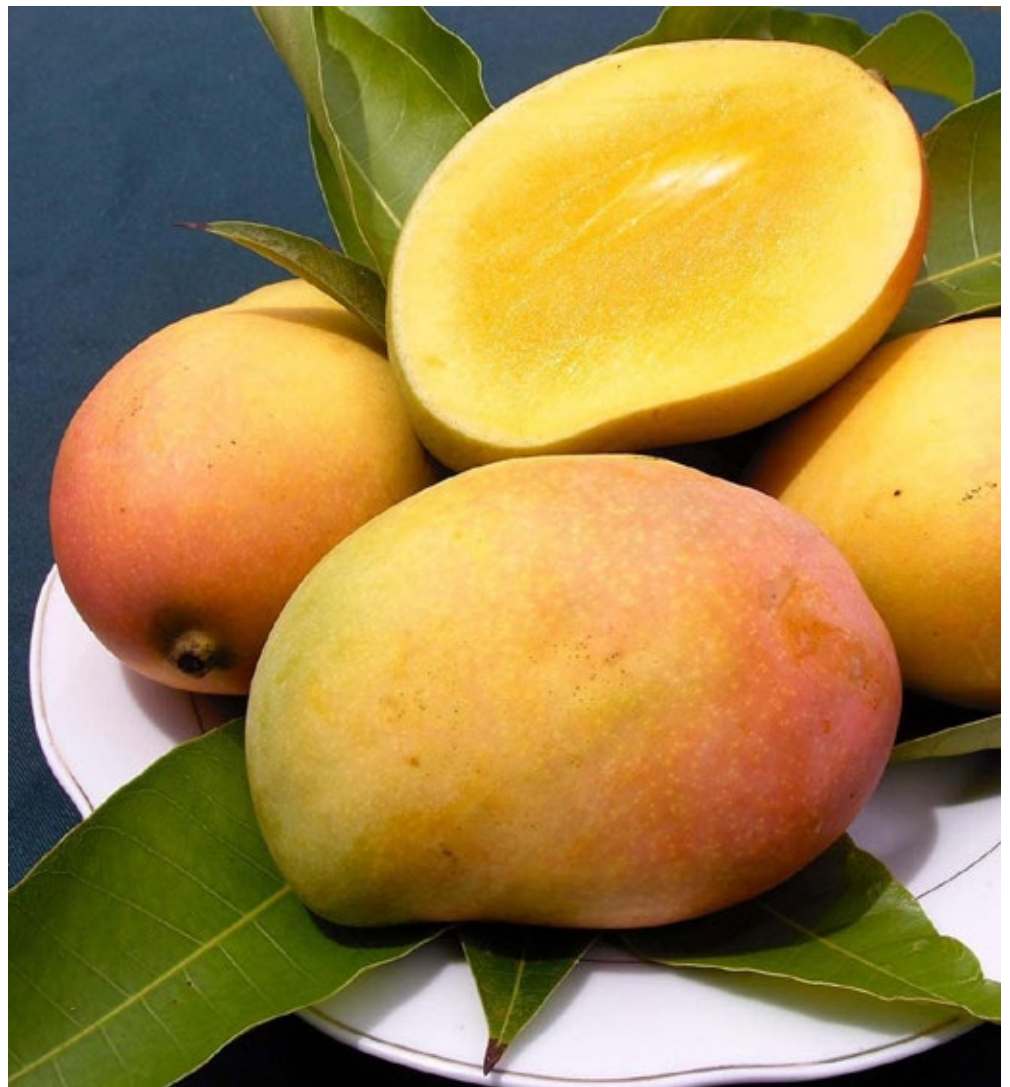
The tree has spread and is now widely cultivated in all tropical regions of the world.

The mango/manga is a giant drupe, or stone fruit, and belongs to the genus *Mangifera*, which consists of numerous fruiting trees cultivated for their edible

fruit. They all belong to the family of flowering plants, Anacardiaceae. Mango trees are big and round with a dense top. They can grow to be 30 meters in height and 80 cm in trunk diameter. A fast-growing tree, it can produce fruit after 4-6 years and can live for a very long time; there are 300-year-old specimens that still produce fruit! The mango is the national fruit of India, Pakistan, and the Philippines and is the national tree of Bangladesh.

Mango trees bloom and give fruit from January to July. The flowers are small, yellow and pink, and grow in clusters, and the fruit is oval, 8 to 30 cm (3-11 inches) in size. The immature fruit is green and turns yellow, orange, red, or purple as it ripens. When ripe, the flesh is yellow, fragrant, sweet, and tender, with a flavor similar to peaches or plums.

In Costa Rica green mangoes (mango cele in Spanish) are eaten with salt and lemon, Tabasco, or even Salsa Lizano. This is a staple Costarican snack and you will



see street and roadside vendors with plastic bags filled with pieces of the fruit marinated in salt and lemon. This is a treat for tartness lovers.

As for the nutritional value, mangoes are considered a super-food: 1 cup of mango equals 100% of daily vitamin C requirements, 35% of vitamin A, and 12% of dietary fiber. A mango also contains small amounts of minerals such as iron, potassium, and magnesium. It is important to point out that mangoes are cholesterol, sodium, and fat-free, and a cup of mango has about 100 calories.

CAUTION: The skin of unripe, pickled, or cooked mango can be consumed, but contact with oils in mango leaves, stems, sap, and skin has the potential to cause contact dermatitis of the lips, gingiva, or tongue, and can even cause anaphylaxis in susceptible individuals.

Mangoes can be eaten in a wide variety of ways. They are used in different recipes and preparations which use



mangoes as a main ingredient, or as a garnish. Some examples are salads, marmalades, chutneys, and tarts. Mango flesh can also be made into juices, smoothies, ice cream, fruit bars, aguas frescas, pies, and sweet chili sauce, among other dishes.

Here is a recipe for a mango ceviche; the recipe substitutes ripe mango for fish and gives it a similar treatment.

Ingredients:

- 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 large ripe mangoes, peeled, pitted, and dice into 3/4-inch (2 cm) cubes
- Juice of 4 limes
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 habanero chili, seeded and finely chopped (optional)
- Leaves from 2 cilantro sprigs, finely chopped

Directions:

- Place the red onion in ice water for 10 minutes while you prepare the other ingredients. Place the diced mangoes in a bowl and add half the lime juice

and salt. Taste for balance and add more of both if necessary.

- Add the chili, then drain the onion and add it along with the cilantro leaves.
- Stir everything gently to combine, then refrigerate for 5 minutes to chill and marinate.
- Serve in individual large glasses or bowls.

This nutritious and versatile fruit of the gods is readily available in Costa Rica. Mangas, with their sweeter taste and less fiber, and which are really hard to find in non-sub-tropical areas, can be easily found in the fruit stands of this tropical paradise. A manga does not need to be a rare treat, and there is no need to limit yourself, so go ahead and eat one a day to keep your doctor away!

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OUT AND ABOUT

by Mitzi Stark



September, a Patriotic Month

September 15th is Independence Day in Costa Rica, but the whole month of September is called *el mes de la patria* or month of patriotism. During the month-long celebration, Costa Rica's symbols, the torch of liberty, flags, and banners are seen in stores, on lamp posts, and on public buildings as Costa Rica fetes its 102nd birthday.

In colonial times, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala were all together one part of the Virreinato of New Spain with its capitol in Guatemala City. But, by 1820 the King of Spain, Fernando VII, was in trouble; Napoleon was at the door

with a huge army and the treasury was almost empty. Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela had already gotten their freedom and the provinces of Central America were agitating for their own.

As the story goes, representatives of the five provinces were having a tumultuous meeting in Guatemala but were undecided on what to do. An unruly crowd was gathered outside the building, somebody lit a firecracker, and the representatives, thinking that a revolution had started, hastily proclaimed independence from Spain. Fernando VII had his own worries so he readily gave in. The news, however, did not reach Costa Ricás capitol city



of Cartago until late in October, so the September 15th date is celebrated here.

The most popular activity of the Independence Day celebration, however, takes place on the 14th, the day before, with the arrival of the flame. The “flame” is the “torch of liberty” which is lit in Guatemala City a few days earlier, then relayed across the Central American countries by high school kids in their gym uniforms. You can follow the progress of the torch through radio, TV, or the internet as it passes across all five countries. It is a national thrill

when Nicaraguan teenagers extend the torch across the border and pass it to Costa Rican teens.

It is an honor for the torch bearer, accompanied by classmates, to run a few kilometers and pass the torch to the next group of youths. All along the way students from schools and high schools will “meet the torch” to receive the “flame” to take back to their own villages. The final leg of the journey is when the torch reaches Cartago and the runner uses it to light the brazier in the plaza of the old capitol city.

At 6 p.m. on the 14th, the entire country joins in singing the national anthem together, no matter where they may be; a city street, the bus station, a central park, or a school. This is followed by a traditional lantern parade as children march in processions with their lanterns, some made at home, some bought at the librería, others at a stand on the street. The lanterns come in all styles, mostly with patriotic designs, and the parade is a reminder of how villagers and townsfolk came out with their lanterns to meet the news of independence. This is how children here learn their country’s history.

The 15th itself is a more subdued day, with civic events, traditional music, and folk dances in parks and in the



schools, which are open to the public. This is a day to be proud to be in Costa Rica, so Happy Independence Day!

As an added note, the cities of Atenas and Grecia were named for Athens and Greece. A historian told me that these newly formed cities were so named because at the time, the 1840's, Greece was fighting for its own independence from Turkey, and with independence still fresh in Costa Rican hearts and minds, they named their cities for the struggling Greeks.

Every canton, there are 82 of them, has a Casa de Cultura or cultural center, and they are sure to offer some activity or exposition for Independence Day. Some centers are more active than others, but most offer music and art lessons, and a few have courses or other activities, such as poetry workshops or dancing lessons. All residents are welcome to participate. You can find out what's happening in your area by looking up "casa de cultura" plus the name of your town or canton.

In the western central valley city of San Ramon there is a museum dedicated to the life of Jose "Pepe" Ferrer Figueres. Pepe is considered the father of modern Costa Rica who, after settling a brief civil war in 1948, restored democracy to Costa Rica, and



championed reforms that included workers' rights, family protection, and women's right to vote. The building was his childhood home and is now open to the public Tuesdays to Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Look for the brown and white building across from the north side of the church. There is no charge.

The San Ramon historical and cultural center is active with many special events. There are art shows, classes, demonstrations and more, and coming up is a traditional food festival plus activities for International Peace Day.

October is not barren of events and a major one occurs on Friday, October 13th. That is the second Friday in October, which is always international Egg Day in Alajuela province, the major producer of eggs in Costa Rica. It may be your lucky day because Canavi, the egg producers association, offers their traditional free egg breakfast in the Juan Santamaria plaza in Alajuela. Starting at 8 a.m., the breakfast will have displays of different ways of using eggs and egg shells.

Other things are going on in various locales and you can find out about the many activities through these internet sites: www.gamcultural.com (gam stands for general area metropolitan), mcj.go.cr (which is the Ministry of Culture and Youth), and sanjosevolando.com. Or, look up agenda cultural and the name of your area.

Mitzi Stark has lived in Costa Rica for several years. She enjoys going to the multitude of one-day fairs and cultural events that are available to the public, particularly those in the Central Valley, and hopes to see you at one soon.



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UNDERSTANDING TICOS

by Edie Bakker



Part One: Respect and the Power of Words

***Editor's Note:** Costa Rica, like every society, has its own culture. Sometimes customs may be different than we are accustomed to, a situation that can easily foster misunderstandings. This article is the first of a multi-part series explaining some of the differences between expat and Costarican cultures. To help us avoid offending our hosts and to better assimilate into their country, the author has compiled a list of some of the common misconceptions expats may have. By its very nature, this series may contain generalizations, and its contents will not apply to every situation.*

Before beginning, one must first acknowledge that Costa Rica has three main layers of society, the “Upper Class,” the “Middle Class,” and “All the Rest.” It is this last group that makes up the majority of the population. Like any culture, there may be a considerable divergence in values and everyday views between the members of the different classes. It would be impossible to go into all the permutations here, and because it is this last group that we have the most contact with (the grocery store

workers, fruit stand vendors, maids, gardeners, bus and taxi drivers, waitresses, gas station attendants, beauty shop attendants, farmers, factory workers, etc.) this series is focused on that group.

SPEAKING AND UNDERSTANDING SPANISH

1. Expats should try to learn and use Spanish, even if just a few words. This is a Spanish-speaking country,

and trying to learn their language shows respect for its people and its culture. Many Americans expect immigrants to the USA to use English when they arrive, yet stubbornly refuse to attempt Spanish when they are in a Latin country.

2. Fortunately, Ticos are very tolerant of mistakes. They appreciate your efforts to use the language and will overlook a lot of errors. The worst mistake I ever made when I first came here was; when trying to tell Edgar, my property manager, he could get off work. I used the words “quita Edgar” because it looks like the English word “quit.” He was horrified, stammered, and turned red. I had said the words “remove Edgar” or, by the look on his face, “fire Edgar” ... or possibly I had threatened to kill him, I’m not sure. I later took him aside, apologized, and all was soon well.

Another time, I told Edgar that I needed a machete to cut a “cabeza” (head). He was quiet for a moment, then calmly stated, “Que susto!” or “How alarming!” I quickly realized the word I wanted was “calabaza” meaning pumpkin. We laughed about that for a long time.

Tico Spanish may sometimes be different from the Spanish spoken in other Latin countries or that is taught in North American schools. The quickest way to learn a language, as it is used locally, is to plow in and just talk.

3. A common misconception that many Gringos have is that Ticos don’t say “no.” They do. “Es complicado” effectively means “no,” even if it leaves room for negotiation. A direct “no” is seen as crude or impolite. Avoid saying it to them, and try to understand when they find a way around saying it to you.

Ticos work hard to please others and will often say “yes” even when they’d rather say “no.” A request like, “Can you please help me with...?” can get a “si,” even when the Tico knows nothing about what you’ve asked them to help with. But, rather than “disappoint” you and be polite, they may say “yes” to the request.

Look for another way to say no. For example, when a street vendor approaches you, don’t say “no.” Say, “Ahora, no.” (Not now), or “Gracias, no hoy.” or “No hoy, gracias.” (Thank you but not today), while shaking your head no. Both phrases work well.

4. A good way to ask a Tico to do something extra, besides saying “Por favor,” is to say, “De casualidad, ...” which means, essentially, “By any chance, ...(could you...)” This allows them to turn you down rather than saying no or

avoiding the issue. (Also, “sera possible que ...” may work when trying to get your way with a Tico.)

5. One of the most important things to know in Costa Rican Spanish is when saying “you” do not use the “tu” form that they taught you in Spanish class; instead, use “usted.” Although common terms in other Spanish-speaking counties, “tu” and “vos” are used by very few Ticos; like “tu”, those words are considered low class, offensive, or overly familiar. It is best always to use the more formal “usted” and adapt all the verbs accordingly. This is especially a problem with using Google Translate, which uses the “tu” form. If you use a translation program, paste your translated message into a text and try to change the articles and verbs appropriately. This can be difficult for beginning Spanish speakers, and if you can’t get them all, at least the reader will know you are trying to be respectful.

6. When using Costarican Spanish, say “You’re welcome” with the words “Con mucho gusto” (With much pleasure), not with “De nada” as in Mexico and Spain.

7. “Le agradezco mucho” means “I’m grateful for you.” Show your appreciation. You can also use “Muchismas gracias” liberally. Some Ticos are very grateful and say this often.

8. Enjoy the idioms. When my property manager first told me that “todo el mundo” was upset about something, I thought he was exaggerating. I soon learned that “todo el mundo” means everyone concerned, not the whole world.

I also reacted incorrectly when I was told there was a “monton” of ants in the yard. Really? A mountain of ants? But I soon learned that what was actually being said was there was a ton of ants in the yard. Which, when you think about it, makes no more sense.

Learning Spanish can be difficult and time-consuming, but it can be fun too, if you maintain your sense of humor and the ability to laugh at your mistakes.

Edie Bakker has a degree in anthropology. She has lived all over the world and written for National Geographic. Author of a book about American culture, she is sensitive to how misunderstandings often cause cultures to collide.



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GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

by Gamaliel Molina Díaz

The Indigenous Games of Costa Rica

There are eight tribes of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica: Bribri, Cabécar, Ngöbe, Maleku, Brunca, Naso Broran, Huetár, and Chorotega. According to UNICEF data, the total indigenous population, 63,876 people, comprises about 1.7% of the nation's total population. Forty-eight percent (48%) of this population lives within the limits of the 24 indigenous territories, or nations, and 52% lives outside of them. Most of these communities preserve their language, customs, traditions, art, and spirituality, which constitute an intangible heritage of these peoples.

According to investigators who have visited most of these territories the groups have also continued the traditions of competing in many native sporting events. These competitions include bow and arrow accuracy (which has variants of shooting at fixed or moving targets) as well as contests with spears, blowguns, competing in races (with weights), speed races, and long-distance running. There are also competitions with wood picking, and the well-known sport of a rope pull in addition to river swimming events.

To take advantage of those indigenous sports which can be found in commonality among the communities, and to provide an outlet for their youth, the first Indigenous Games were held in December 2018. They were

organized by the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral del Territorio Talamanca Cabécar and the Asociación Deportiva Cultural Cabécar Talamanca with the support of ICODER. The second Indigenous Games were held in December 2019.

The first games were a great success with delegations from fifteen of the Costa Rican territories, and included a large delegation from the Republic of Panama, as well as representatives of the Miskitu Indigenous people who live in Costa Rica, attending. During the second event, there were seventeen delegations, three of them from Panama. In each event, there were more than one hundred fifty participating athletes, comprised of both men and women. More than 400 spectators enjoyed the festivities.

The games were cancelled in 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to the Covid pandemic, but planning for the Third Indigenous Games in 2023, along with efforts to secure funds carry them out, is now underway. The Games will be held between December 1 and 3, 2023, in the Gavilán Canta community in the Cabécar Talamanca territory. This is the same site where the previous two events were held.

Gamaliel Molina Díaz, who is Bribri and Cabécar from Talamanca, is a part of the organizing committee of the Indigenous Games of Talamanca Cabécar. He can be contacted at: gamitaditsofree@hotmail.com

Important:

ARCR strongly supports the Third Indigenous Games of Talamanca Cabécar, and are donating supplies to help feed the participants. If you would like to assist in supporting this worthy effort, please contact the ARCR Office. To learn more about the games, email Martha Rollins at: rollinsmartha@gmail.com, or Sr. Gamaliel Molina Díaz, directly.

DESTINOS

by Edie Bakker



Monteverde on a Budget

“Monteverde is a magical place,” I told my husband. “I wish you could see the mists hanging in the deep valleys and feel the fresh cool air. I’ve got to show it to you!” I had been there with the Costa Rica Bird Club. But we live here on a limited budget so how could we possibly afford to go to Monteverde? On the bird trip, I met a woman who had a converted bus. Perhaps we could stay with her.

“Not here,” she said. “But there’s a lady named Elizabeth...” I texted Elizabeth in my faulty Spanish and with the help of Google translate, and, yes, she had a cabin. It was on Airbnb so I looked her up. The pictures

weren’t that good and there was no stove, and she said something about having to walk to the cabin from her house. I didn’t like that idea, but it was only 20 mil per night, so we took the chance. I made smoothies with whey powder for protein and froze them for supper. We packed light. We could eat a hot meal in Santa Elena, the main tourist town in the Monteverde mountains, on the second day there.

Wow! Were we in for some surprises! The single room was part of an old restored sugar mill and it was clean, modern, comfortable, and with a kitchen and a bathroom with a large shower. It had large windows and the



view was astonishing; we could see all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Elizabeth had planted brightly colored flowers everywhere and hummingbirds and butterflies were abundant. Other than a spring bubbling in the background there was absolute silence.

On the second day, we toured the craft stores of Santa Elena and took in a fascinating orchid garden. The mountain views all around us were astonishing. We were having a blast.

We did have to carry our things about 60 yards from the end of the road, and we found it odd and uncomfortable that the area inside the mill, which included the path to the bathroom from the bedroom, was all gravel, so was glad I had brought some plastic slip-on shoes. Wi-Fi was not listed on Airbnb, but it turned out to be excellent. Elizabeth came over once to bring us hot cinnamon rolls,

but otherwise we were completely alone in paradise. Clouds played on the steep mountains around us while I relaxed in a hammock. I wondered how we had been so lucky. We have gone back again and again.

Over time, we have found other beautiful places that are budget friendly. Not all of us came down here with savings or a big income, and I wanted to share such wonderful places with others and learn of their finds, so I created a Facebook group called Budget Friendly Places in Costa Rica. Please visit the group and share your discoveries with other like-minded people. You may even want to share a place with El Residente.

And by the way, if you're looking for that lovely isolated cabin in the mountains of Monteverde, it's called "Casita Don Simon." I'm tempted to keep it just our secret!



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GUEST COLUMN I

by Pablo E. Arias

First Import Tax Exemption Under Law 9996 Approved

In a historic achievement for the expatriate community in Costa Rica, the first import tax exemption under Law 9996 has been granted. The tax break was awarded for the importation of a vehicle which complied with the conditions outlined in Law 9996. This law, enacted in 2021, offers tax exemptions to qualifying expatriates, including investors, renters, and retirees. This exemption, worth an impressive \$10,754.77 (€5,799,179.84), was facilitated by International Relocation Partner, a key player in providing shipping and customs services in the country.

The approval of this exemption signifies a significant breakthrough for expatriates in Costa Rica, who have been patiently waiting for the law's implementation for two years. The delayed roll-out has been a source of disappointment for many expatriates who had anticipated the government's promised tax benefits. The successful approval of this exemption indicates a promising future for Law 9996. If the government can maintain this effective

implementation, the law could serve as a powerful incentive to attract more expatriates to Costa Rica.

The Founder of International Relocation Partner, Pablo E Arias, shared his thoughts: We are incredibly pleased to have assisted our client in securing this exemption. This marks a significant victory for the Costa Rica expat community, and we believe it sets a precedent for future cases. We are confident that this is the first of many more approvals that will be awarded under Law 9996.

Those who have completed their immigration process under the investor, retiree, or rentista categories may be eligible for this benefit. Contact us for more information.

International Relocation Partner is dedicated to assisting expatriates with their relocation to and from Costa Rica. Our wide array of services includes import and export of goods, customs clearance, and vehicle registration. Please see our ad elsewhere in this issue or contact me at: costarica@internationalrelocationpartner.com



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Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

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

United Kingdom Embassy

Phone: (506) 2258 2025

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

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

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

Email: costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

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

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

Email: sos@international.gc.ca

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

French Embassy

Phone: (506) 2234 4167

Address: A022, San José, Curridabat

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Email: a.m.bafrcr@gmail.com

Spanish Embassy

Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Email: emb.sanjose@maec.es

Emergency assistance: (506) 6050 9853

Venezuelan Embassy

Phone: (506) 2220 3704, 2220 3708

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

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

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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

Although Costa Rica is home to some of the best destinations for surfing, hiking, and adventure tourism, daily direct flights from San Jose to Europe make international travel easier and a popular destination for travelers. U.S. travelers who plan to visit Europe in 2024 should be prepared to follow and understand the European Union's new entry and exit system.

EU'S NEW ENTRY AND EXIT SYSTEM FOR U.S. TRAVELERS:

Americans who will be traveling to any of the listed 24 countries in Europe will need to sign up for the EU's new entry and exit system, which is expected to go into effect summer 2024. The European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) resembles the U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization. When the system goes live Americans will need to register their travel online in advance. Although the implementation plan includes a six-month grace period for travelers, it's important to plan ahead and stay informed for future travel.

ETIAS travel authorization will be an entry requirement for visa-exempt nationals traveling to most European countries. Americans will be able to visit Europe without a visa but will need to register online in advance and pay a nominal processing fee, approximately eight dollars (7 Euros). ETIAS is linked to a traveler's passport and is valid for up to three years or until the passport expires, whichever comes first. Individuals who obtain or renew a passport will need to obtain a new ETIAS travel authorization. ETIAS authorization must be valid for the entire duration of stay. ETIAS authorization is linked to a traveler's passport; therefore, travelers with emergency passports must obtain a new ETIAS authorization to remain in or enter the Schengen Area, even if they previously received authorization. Travelers will receive a notification 120 days before their three-year

ETIAS authorization expires. The most recent up to date information regarding ETIAS can be found at: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en

PASSPORT RENEWALS:

Passport renewal wait times are subject to change due to demand, so if you anticipate traveling in 2023 or 2024, plan your passport renewal ahead. Currently, U.S. citizens who apply for a passport in person at the Embassy generally receive their new passport within two weeks. The wait times for mail-in renewals is slightly longer at eight weeks currently, including the time to send and receive it with Correos de Costa Rica. Passport wait times are significantly shorter for U.S. citizens living in Costa Rica compared to those in the U.S. right now. Passport processing times may change over time and up-to-date information can be found on our Embassy website. We recommend that U.S. citizens try to apply for a renewal with enough time in between their travels.

U.S. Embassy San Jose

Phone: 506-2519-2000 or 011-506-2519-2000 (from U.S.)

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[Costa Rica International Travel Information \(state.gov\)](https://state.gov/costa-rica-international-travel-information)
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EXPANDING UK-COSTA RICA TRADE TIES

The recent COVID-19 pandemic forced many businesses to either close or change their business models completely. Data shows that business restrictions during the pandemic forced a global

business paradigm shift towards the digital economy, which negatively impacted traditional business models, while creating more and more opportunities through sales diversification online.

The pandemic also revealed how fragile certain supply chains are, and the importance for nations to diversify the sources of certain essential raw materials and inputs. That being said, countries around the world are now looking at untapped markets to try to fulfil their needs. The United Kingdom is no exception. British companies are now looking at new, untraditional markets, such as Latin America, to try and diversify their portfolio of both potential imports and exports.

With this reality in mind, the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) at the British Embassy in San Jose aims to support UK businesses in order for them to invest, grow and export to Costa Rica and Central America. By doing so, businesses are able to create more job opportunities in the UK, as well as throughout markets in Latin America.

The Department fulfil its wider objective of growing UK investment in Costa Rica by identifying

opportunities for UK businesses to export in both the public and private sector; creating alliances between UK and Costa Rican businesses and promoting UK products with the broader Costa Rican and British communities in Costa Rica.

There are already a number of established UK businesses in the market, in sectors ranging from legal and financial to medical devices and automobiles. But we know there's a lot of potential for expansion in the food and beverage sector, for example. Wouldn't it be great to have some great English cheddar or funky Stilton cheese in your neighbourhood grocery store?

If you are interested in contacting the Department for Business and Trade at the British Embassy, please email us at ukin.costarica@fcdo.gov.uk



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ON THE GRID

by Ivo Henfling



Ten Things Tica Housekeepers Do

I am going to share with you some of the things housekeepers in Costa Rica do. Understand, some of these things may seem unusual or illogical to you and me, but they are very normal to them. Housekeepers do these things because they come from a different culture and background than we do, and you should accept that before you hire one.

We expats often assume that housekeepers lack knowledge and education, but that's not necessarily true. We expats have different lifestyles, and therefore their experiences and logic are sometimes different from ours; they are not wrong, just different. Many of the ways they do things are because things in the tropics are different; there is more sun, no snow, less money, more rainfall, and more time available with many mañanas, as well as they have some different physical conditions to live with than we do.

An interesting but useless fact I recently learned from an employee of the 3M Company over a glass of wine

is that Costa Rica has the highest usage of 3M Scotch-Brite sponges per capita in the world. I don't know if it's true, but 30+ housekeepers in over 40 years of living here suggest to me that it most likely is. That's only one oddity. Allow me to tell you about some other things housekeepers do differently in Costa Rica, so you can adapt and won't be so surprised when one happens:

1. SCOTCH-BRITE SPONGES

In our home, housekeepers are prohibited from all use of that kind of sponge.

The Reason

Most housekeepers do not have appliances at home, and certainly not stainless-steel ones. Housekeepers will use those sponges on all painted and stainless-steel appliances, and scratched appliances look horrible. When hiring a new housekeeper, a smart employer will instruct

them how to clean the appliances. And they won't buy Scotch-Brite sponges.

2. CLEANING FLOORS

After sweeping, housekeepers love to clean floors with a scented, disinfectant cleaner; as long as the house smells clean, in their opinion, it is clean. They will spread the cleaner directly on the floor, instead of putting it in a bucket, and then move the mop (or a towel) through it, spreading it out until the floor feels clean. If they do use a bucket with water and soap, make sure they change the water from time to time during the cleaning. If not, they will clean the whole house, including the bathrooms, with the same water. And make sure your housekeeper knows you expect the corners of the room and the floors near the baseboards to be cleaned also.

Housekeepers in Costa Rica clean the rugs and wall-to-wall carpets with a broom, not with a vacuum cleaner. If you have a vacuum cleaner, you will have to teach your housekeeper to check and see if the bag needs emptying or changing now and then. If not, they will keep using the same bag for years.

The Reason

Many housekeepers may only have a dirt floor at home, no rugs or carpets. With a dirt floor they don't need to clean in the corners, so cleaning the center of the space is sufficient... and they don't use a mop, disinfectant cleaner, or a vacuum cleaner, to accomplish that.

3. COBWEBS

Housekeepers do not look up, just down. No matter how many cobwebs you might have on the ceiling, the house is clean as long as the floors are clean. They do not realize you need to clean the cobwebs once in a while too, so remind them. Sills of windows that are always closed, and especially when there are curtains, tend to gather cobwebs quickly.

The Reason

At home, the housekeeper may not have a ceiling, curtains, windowsills (or even windows).

4. ASPARAGUS

Never ask your housekeeper to clean your asparagus. She will not only clean the stems, but she will throw out the tips too.

The Reason

Ticos do not eat asparagus, only rice and beans. They may add an egg to that now and then.

5. CLEANING YOUR DESK

When your housekeeper cleans a desk, she will either make one stack of every piece of paper she sees or move everything around without any direction. She thinks it does not matter where things are. I teach my housekeepers to move everything clockwise, so if I cannot find something, I just look a little bit further to the right.

Teaching them to clean your computer requires special attention. Housekeepers will try to clean a monitor with the wrong cleaner and put too much pressure on the screen (especially laptops.) It is also very important to make them understand not to clean a keyboard when the computer is on. And the most important tip, tell the housekeeper not to clean your computer in the dishwasher! (Yes, they will!)

The Reason

Most housekeepers probably do not have a desk, let alone a computer at home, so they are totally uninformed about proper care. Be prepared to give them a bit of help learning.

6. CHECK THE GARBAGE

It may sound weird, but you need to occasionally check the garbage before your housekeeper takes it out onto the street. And you want to make sure the housekeeper sees you when you do so. It is their way of taking things home that they think are extra or that you do not need. Items like toilet paper, soap, detergent, and any electronics that you don't use very often, can disappear that way. Also, it is a good habit to check her handbag before she goes home from time to time. If you do it openly, straightforwardly, and from the first day, you keep her honest, and she won't feel you're accusing her of anything.

The Reason

Often, in their opinion, if you don't use it, then you don't need it. Local employees do not see that as stealing.

7. CHRISTMAS TIME

Many domestic employees in Costa Rica are Nicaraguan. At Christmas time, they will ask for more vacation days than they have accumulated to go home to Nicaragua. Often,

many do not come back in the new year at all, or will be several months late. So, do not give them more "Aguinaldo" and vacation days than they have earned.

The Reason

They may not have seen their family, and mainly their children, for a whole year. They may have saved up enough money to be able to stay longer because they don't need much to live on. Also, they see responsibility differently than we do and do not feel they have an obligation to be back at work when you think they should. If, by the time they get back, you have found another housekeeper, so be it; they will just find another job. If you're happy with the housekeeper you have, keep communicating with them (on WhatsApp) and try to help them financially when they come back broke. I promise you'll keep them for years.

8. CLOSE YOUR BOOK

When you stop reading your book, use a bookmark to mark your place. Do not put the book upside down on the page you are on; you will find the book closed without a bookmark.

The Reason

Housekeepers in Costa Rica don't read books; they watch Novelas on TV and TikTok on their phones.

9. PUTTING THINGS AWAY

Do not expect your housekeeper to put items in any special place; things will be "stored" in the most convenient location available at the moment. For instance, six clean drinking glasses can be "stored" in six different places, and not all together.

The Reason

Many housekeepers' homes do not have much in the way of extra items to be stowed away when not in use.

Additionally, their homes do not have many (if any) storage cabinets, closets, or even shelves where things can be stored. Therefore, since there is no "regular place" to put something away, they do not think in terms of "putting something where it belongs" – they just leave it where it was last used, or put it someplace handy at the time.

10. BEING ON TIME

Don't expect your housekeeper to arrive at work at a fixed time every workday.

The Reason

Many housekeepers must travel a significant distance to get to work. Most do not have a vehicle and must take multiple buses, and the buses in Costa Rica have no fixed schedules. Ticos do not see promptness as a major issue; this is the land of mañana and just getting there meets their sense of obligation.

Perfect housekeepers do not exist. Our current housekeeper has been with us for four years now. She is basically honest, and although we know she takes little things home occasionally, we are very happy to have her. If you have a good housekeeper who works well and listens to your suggestions, try to keep her. Treat her well and pay her what she deserves. (And don't expect to find a housekeeper who speaks English; they're rare and expensive.)

My last tip is simply common sense: Do not leave money (even small amounts) and jewelry lying around. That is a temptation for any employee.

Ivo Henfling is an English-speaking 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

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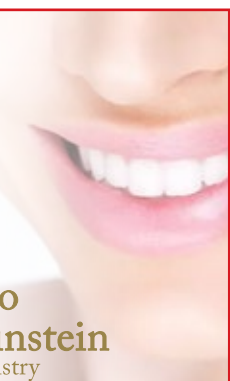
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LEGAL UPDATE

by Rómulo Pacheco

Why Use an Attorney for Residency?

Whether you should handle the residency application procedure in Costa Rica yourself, or seek the assistance of an attorney, depends on your comfort level with legal processes, your familiarity with the local laws and regulations, and the complexity of your individual case. And, of course, your command of the Spanish language. Here are some factors to consider when making this decision:

FAMILIARITY WITH THE PROCESS

Residency applications in Costa Rica involve navigating complex legal requirements, extensive paperwork, and potential language barriers. If you have previous experience or knowledge of the process, feel confident in your ability to understand and comply with the regulations, and are comfortable handling legal matters, you may choose to proceed without an attorney.

SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

If your situation involves unique circumstances, such as having a complex legal history, previous denials, or special requirements, it may be beneficial to seek the expertise of an immigration attorney. They can provide personalized guidance, assess your case, and help navigate any potential challenges or complications.

LANGUAGE BARRIER

If you are not fluent in Spanish, working with an attorney who is proficient in both English and Spanish can be highly advantageous. They can assist with translation, communicate with immigration authorities on your behalf, and ensure your accurate understanding of the requirements.

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Immigration attorneys have specialized knowledge of the complex residency application process, current laws, and

any recent changes or updates. They can provide advice tailored to your situation, help you gather the necessary documentation, and ensure compliance with all the latest legal requirements.

TIME AND CONVENIENCE

Residency procedures can be time-consuming and involve multiple steps, appointments, and follow-ups. Hiring an attorney can save you time and effort by managing the process on your behalf, scheduling appointments, and submitting the necessary paperwork in a timely manner.

MITIGATING RISKS

Engaging an attorney can help minimize the risk of mistakes or omissions that could potentially lead to delays, denials, or complications in the application process. They are professionals who can guide you through the process to ensure all requirements are met and increase the chances of a successful outcome.

Ultimately, the decision of whether to hire an attorney or handle the residency procedure yourself, depends on your personal circumstances, level of comfort, and the complexity of your case. Consulting with an immigration attorney for an initial assessment or seeking professional advice can help you make an informed decision based on your specific needs and goals.

For more information, please call or send an email to:

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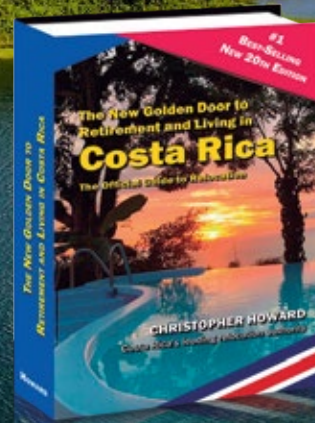
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GUEST COLUMN II

by Helen Dunn Frame

Beware, There is Another Scam Going Around

A few months ago a friend called me, obviously upset. She quickly rattled off something that I couldn't understand. "Please slow down. What has happened?" I asked, aware she was very upset about something.

"I got scammed "

"What? How?"

"I received an email message asking me to call a number and giving a case number. I should have deleted it, but I called. At that number a man calling himself Calvin Reynolds answered and told me I was being sued for nearly \$5000, for a debt from 2005."

"Did you recall such a debt?"

"No. But that was the year I retired and moved overseas. I thought maybe I had let a small debt slide. I can still

remember what I had for breakfast last week, but I doubted my memory regarding this debt. I knew it had to be small after so many years of accruing interest.

"When things like this happen, we don't always think straight" I said.

She continued. "That Calvin was a silver-tongued talker who pretended to be on my side. He told me that the company, which he said he could not name due to a non-disclosure agreement, wouldn't want me to go to court, so they could collect the entire amount. He said that this company would go after my super FICO score, too. When I brought up the statute of limitations, he told me that because the firm had tried to collect for so many years, that it didn't count. I suspected that wasn't true, but I could not verify it at the time."

“How horrible.”

“All I could think about was having to return to the United States with my disability and what it would cost. I mentally added up the price of a ticket and the cost of a hotel, and realized that if I lost the case I would be out a lot more money. So, I negotiated; I offered \$1000. The guy put me on hold and when he returned he said the company would accept half, almost \$2,500. I agreed and gave him my credit card information.”

“Are you sure it was a scam?”

“Yes. I have no doubts now. I should have Googled the firm he said he was from, “Jacob, Alexander, and Associates” out of Scottsdale, Arizona, because later, when I did check, I saw three reports saying, “This is a scam.”

“Then, when I checked my credit card statement online, I found that a law firm, S. K. & Associates, LLC, out of California, had charged the money, not J. A. A. I knew I had never heard of or done business with that law firm, and certainly didn’t give them permission to charge anything to my card ”

Having been aware of other scams (See my article “Beware New Scams Exist, which appeared in El Residente in 2019,) I advised my friend to call her credit card company, report it, and get a case number. I also told her to block any phone numbers she could find for either firm. Then, she should write up what happened, to the best of her knowledge, and send the report to the credit card company. I told her she would be given a secure link for this.

Per my instructions, she called and canceled the card, which meant several weeks without it. As she had several automatic payments, they gave her a temporary card number she could use, and she had to call multiple companies to give them the different card number. Most of them accepted the new number over the phone, but one wouldn’t; it took her filling out a form several times and calling, with the help of a friend who speaks native Spanish, to explain the situation. When her new card arrived, she had to call all the same businesses again because the temporary card had a low limit and she had a new account number.

If you get an email from one of these firms, or any other suspicious company, immediately Google them and go to their website. Report the email as spam to your email company. IF you call them, don’t tell the

representative you are speaking with where you live because the firm already has far too much information about you.

Please note that the creditor has 45 days to attempt to charge the fee again to the defunct card. If it does, you will be notified. And, keep a file of all the paperwork you accumulate.

Editor’s Note: An August 22, 2023, article in Bloomberg Businessweek reports that “globally, cybercrime costs, including scams, are set to hit \$8 trillion this year, outstripping the economic output of Japan, the world’s third-largest economy. In the US alone, consumers lost almost \$8.8 billion last year, up 44% from 2021, despite record investment in detection and prevention.” One expert researcher estimates that by 2025 losses will reach \$10.5 trillion. Seniors, no matter where you are, are prime targets. Be very careful with whom and where you place your confidence and trust.



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3. Attend ARCR Seminar for Expats. ()
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OFF THE HIGH SEAS

by Christine Monteith

Busing it in Costa Rica



I have always liked taking public transportation; buses, trains, or subways. And that has special meaning in Costa Rica.

It's a six-plus hour drive from our home on the Golfo Dulce to San José. The Costanera that hugs the Pacific coastline is our preferred route, but when there's a bridge out or some other obstacle to travel, we can drive Route 2, locally called the El Camino de los Muerte, over the Cerro de la Muerte (the Mountain of Death.) The road, with its fog shrouds, landslides, slow truck traffic, and rock falls, never fails to disappoint. When driving that track, you must always pay close attention; an on-coming vehicle flashing its headlights means you can be certain that you will find a surprise around the next curve. It's the stress of the unpredictability of that road and the traffic on it that has converted my husband and I into big fans of the bus.

Oh, if you are in a hurry, there is an option of sorts; Sansa, the domestic airline that offers a regular schedule in and out of the Golfito airport. Though "airport" is a relative term for that narrow strip of tarmac bordered by a wall of mountains to the east and the waters of the Gulf to the west. Landing there in a 12-seat prop jet is like rolling

down a bowling lane. And "regular" is another conditional term. Service at the airport is definitely VFR (Visual Flight Reference), and when the cloud cover descends below the mountain ridge, you can kiss that flight goodbye. The airport staff will recommend that you catch a water taxi across the six-mile expanse of open water to Puerto Jimenez, where your flight will be waiting on the tarmac.

Of course, traveling by bus takes more time and some patience. Fortunately, I have a lot of the former... and I am trying to cultivate more of the latter. Over the years I've enjoyed dozens of trips on Tracopa, the bus line that services the Southern Zone. Their huge King Long buses painted in vibrant neon colors always leave on schedule. Arrival times, however, are fluid.

It's not just traffic or construction that can delay a bus. It seems that each driver determines his own individual stops. My usual seat is just behind the driver, from where I've observed the bus pull over for anyone flagging it down. Sometimes the potential passenger wants to negotiate the fare, and if the two can't agree, the bus moves on without the new rider. Drivers also make unscheduled stops to pick up veggies, street hawkers, and girlfriends. I've seen

passengers ring for a stop in what seems like the middle of nowhere. One time two buses traveling in opposite directions came to a dead halt in the middle of the highway so that the drivers could have a chat. Also, I have come to the conclusion that all bus, transport, and truck drivers know each other as they give each other a friendly honk and wave as they pass. These drivers are the kings of the road and all other vehicles give way when they see a Pepto-Bismol pink behemoth barreling towards them.

For long-haul trips, I have a designated couple of carry-on items to ease my trip; a travel pillow and, most importantly, extra layers of clothing are at the top of the list. Extra layers of clothing, you ask? If you have ever ridden a bus in Costa Rica you know that even though it may be 88F outside, inside the bus the air-conditioning blows chilled arctic air. So, when I embark wearing a T-shirt and shorts, as soon as I am seated, I pull on long sleeves and pants. And maybe a sweater.

One thing about the buses in Costa Rica is that their seats are always comfortable and have footrests. The passengers are mostly Ticos, though occasionally, a couple of tourists fresh from a tour of Manuel Antonio National Park will board at Uvita. The locals are always friendly, and sometimes a seatmate will want to practice their English. It is a small country; one time I discovered that my seatmate was the cousin of my neighbor. We've learned that as we travel around Costa Rica, when we mention that we are from Pavones, almost everyone has a cousin living there.

The most frequent reason for our trips to San Jose is to catch a flight out to Canada or California. Upon arriving at the Tracopa terminal a few blocks south of San José Central, we will often walk the dozen blocks to the Tuasa terminal to catch the Alajuela bus to the airport.

Yes, we could drive (when our 25-year-old Hyundai Galloper doesn't have to spend quantity time with its mechanic), and driving offers convenience. But it also means that the person behind the wheel can't relax and enjoy the spectacular scenery. Taking a bus gets us out of our bubble and we can drop into the moment, rather than stressing about the journey. And a big plus is that we get a chance to chat with people that we normally wouldn't meet. We make new friends and learn new things about this beautiful country every bus trip we make. Sharing the public space with our neighbors puts us in the real world with equanimity.

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

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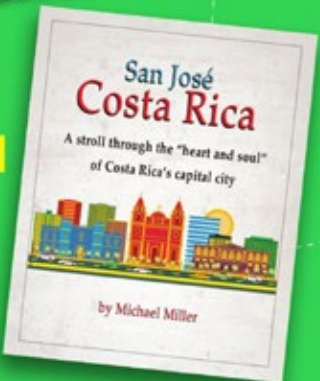
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DESIGN WISE

by Shelagh Duncan



Mold - Friend or Foe?

WHAT IS MOLD?

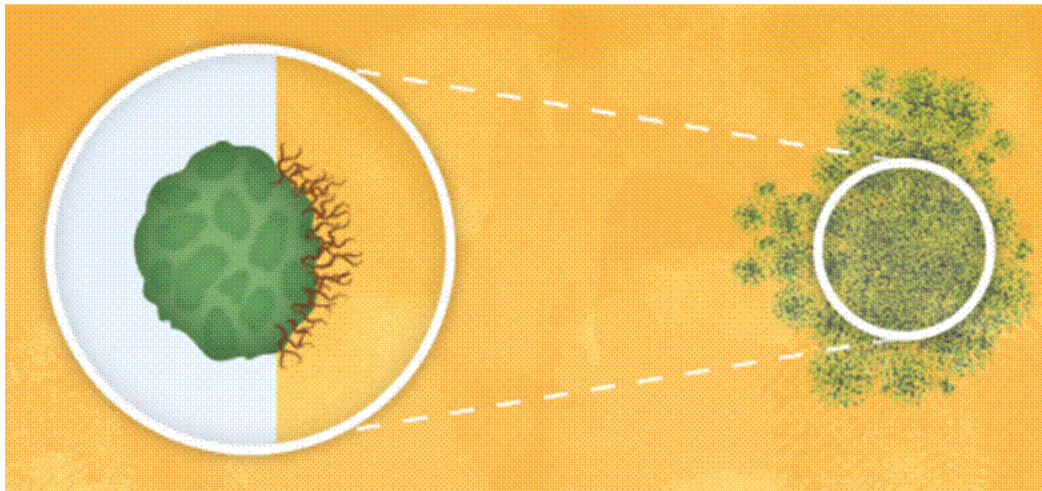
Molds (and mildew) are fungi. Fungi are not plant, animal, or bacteria, they are microbial. They are responsible for such wonderful organisms as delicious edible mushrooms, they are the makers of the "miracle drug" penicillin, and is the yeast that makes our bread rise, our fine wines ferment, and our richly flavored cheeses taste so good. They play important roles in the production of many foods, beverages, antibiotics and enzymes.

Biologically, all fungi have defined cell walls but lack chlorophyll. They reproduce by means of (airborne) spores. Approximately 100,000 species of fungi have been

described and it is estimated that there are at least that many more waiting to be discovered. The vast majority of fungi feed on dead or decaying organic matter – they are one of the principal agents responsible for the natural recycling of dead plant and animal life.

And that is the problem. We live in the jungle, in the tropics, and all around us the cycle of life is constantly renewing itself and producing countless numbers of spores that we breathe in and live with each day. Some of them cause allergies and can have serious health issues, but most are just a constant cleaning problem.

Mold has four critical requirements for growth – available mold spores, available mold food,



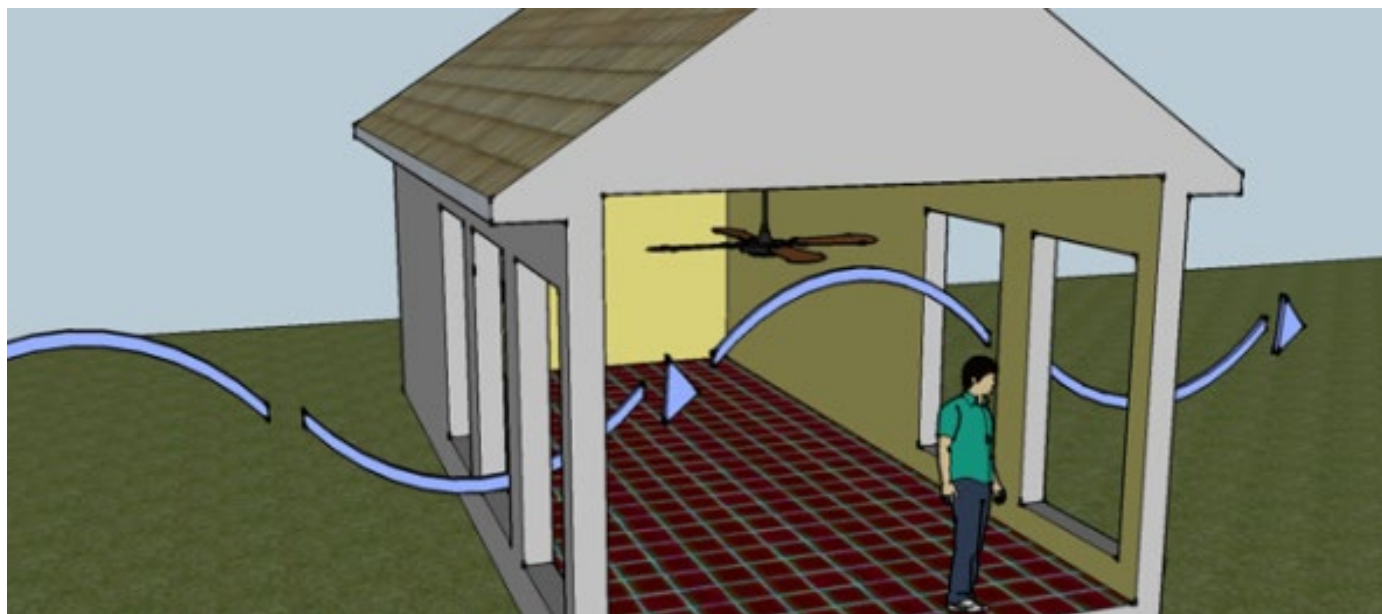
appropriate temperature, and considerable moisture. In other words, if we can control our environment, we can control mold. That is easier said than done!

Air conditioning and dehumidifiers will help with the temperature and humidity requirements, but it is impossible to eliminate the spores, or their food. Almost every substance that contains carbon atoms (organic

substances) will provide food – and carbon is everywhere.; it is the sixth most abundant element in the universe. For example, the oil from your skin that is left when you touch an otherwise mold resistant surface like stainless steel, or the soap residue left from a good cleaning, will both provide sufficient nutrients to support the growth of most molds.

And once a spore finds food it attaches itself, puts out roots, and quickly colonizes the area.

Keep in mind that many of the most common materials found in homes, like wood, fabric, and other organic fibers, are among the most preferred of mold nutrients. So, eliminating mold food from your environment is a virtually impossible task.



The most commonly used chemical treatment for mold is chlorine bleach. If you have used it you know that the mold always returns, usually even worse than it was before, especially on porous surfaces. And although bleach eliminates the visible mold growth, it also encourages the next bloom because bleach is mostly water, and when that dries it leaves a layer of carbon residue behind – which is the perfect mold food.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

It has been suggested that anti-fungal, oil-based paint works to deter mold growth, and we have tried it and agree. However, builders here typically use water-based paints because they are cheaper and easier to work with. But, even when using anti-fungal paint (oil or water based) the mold will still grow on the surface, if you don't keep it clean. Mold grows on almost everything, even specks of dust!

If you have an established mold problem, there is a process called Ozone Shock Treatment which is available. It is a fast and easy solution to get rid of moldy smells in homes by blasting the area with a lethal dose of ozone. As long as you evacuate and wait until it has dissipated, it is safe enough for humans. Critics however, say it may kill, but does not remove, the mold. And, because a high-ozone dose is a powerful oxidizing agent, the ozone could not only damage such things as rubber, but could also change the molecular structure of some chemicals and produce other noxious chemicals. (There are many other studies that do confirm the effective use of ozone to kill mold,

but usually in conjunction with other remediation techniques.)

A tip: When building or remodeling, it is a good idea to stay away from using drywall or any other porous building materials, if you can. And concrete ideally should be sealed because moisture wicks up from foundations and through block walls. Done properly, slabs should be poured onto a thick layer of plastic over a couple of inches of raked sand. And other kinds of moisture-block should be applied to exterior masonry surfaces. If you are looking, Sella Tek SA is a Costa Rican company specializing in sealing buildings against moisture problems.

TRICKS SMART HOMEOWNERS USE

If you are in the design and/or construction process, a smart and practical solution for keeping closets and storage areas dry and mold free is to run hot water pipes through the walls. Also, locating your water heater in a bodega (or a large closet) will give you a 'dry' room. Another "trick" is including a small wattage (incandescent not led) light bulb inside a kitchen pantry and leaving it on permanently; the heat will help keep the space dry. Finishing your wood and bamboo surfaces with poly-urethane, instead of shellac, will work well – however marine varnish will out-perform all others. Use car wax along your tile grout lines to help prevent the moisture seeping up from the concrete below, and especially in showers or anywhere it comes in direct contact with water. (Auto

wax is also great to use on appliances once or twice a year to help prevent rust!)

For things like mattresses and thick cushions – go Tico. Put them outside in the sun and turn them often. Make use of our natural solar power! Elevated or propped up on a concrete surface, they will heat up faster than laying on gravel or earth. When dry, spray with a mold control chemical to keep the musty smells at bay.

We know that bleach is a no-no, and vinegar kills bacteria and germs, but only some types of mold. The vinegar you buy here, like the bleach, is pretty diluted and is almost all water, so stay away from that.

There is another natural, anti-microbial product which is highly effective; Concrobium Mold Control. This product actually kills the mold, right down to its 'roots', by suffocating it. The magic is that once dry it sets up an anti-microbial barrier shield to prevent other mold spores settling and growing in the treated area. Safe to use on almost everything, including fabric, it is odor and chemical-free, easy to use and very effective. I use it once or twice a year and it really works.

Of course, doing the obvious things, like running your fans and maximizing ventilation to increase the air circulation in your house can be a big help (try for cross-ventilation if you can.) Unfortunately the most effective, overall solution is still air conditioners and dehumidifiers, or a combination of all the above.

If you have a boat then Concrobium Mold Control could be your new best friend! Constant exposure to water and humidity make boat surfaces a haven for mold and mildew, and that familiar musty smell that welcomes you when you open up after a long period can be eliminated. The product is safe to use on almost all surfaces, has no smell, and needs no mask for application. You can protect your investment by controlling mold without using environmentally harmful chemicals.

Concrobium is a mainly a mold treatment, not a cleaner. Follow the instructions and you will get great results. If you have staining due to mold growth, Concrobium will also help remove it quite safely.



Some of us have come to the conclusion that no matter how hard we try, we just have to live with ubiquitous mold and the constant battle to keep one-step-ahead. So, pour yourself a glass of fine wine, cut a slice of crusty fresh bread, layer on some Blue Stilton, and sit back and enjoy. Paradise has its price – and its rewards.

THE PITCH

Concrobium Mold Control is available at Royal Palm Interiors in Uvita in refillable spray bottles and gallon jugs. The nozzle on the bottle can spray the product and can also be adjusted to produce a stream to reach into tight or hard to reach spaces like corners of closets and under sinks.

Until next time,

Shelagh Duncan

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► Alcoholics Anonymous

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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.costaricaaa.com

► American Legion Post 10

Meets the first Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. at Casa de España (across from the Palma Real Hotel & Casino) in Sabana Norte, San Jose. For more information call Matt Loper, 8968-6935, or Craig Carlson, 6042-9921

► American Legion Post 12-Golfito

Currently inactive. For information contact Mel Goldberg at 8870-6756

► Amigos of Costa Rica

A US-based non-profit organization established in 1999. Amigos of Costa Rica has the mission of connecting global resources to Costa Rican Organizations. Amigos currently works with over 120 Costa Rican nonprofits and is happy to connect with donors who wish to explore how they can contribute to Costa Rica. U.S. Government tax-payers donations are deductible. For more information go to: www.amigosofcostarica.org or email to: admin@amigosofcostarica.org

► Birding Club Costa Rica

A private group that travels around Costa Rica to observe and identify the 900+ species of birds found here, learn about different parts of the country, and enjoy the company of like-minded and

interested people. For more information, visit the website: www.birdingclubcr.org or email to: info@birdingclubcr.org.

► Canadian Club

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

► 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, or email to: nylarryg@yahoo.com.

► Costa Rica Writers Group

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► 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: or visit our website at: www.democratsabroad.org/cr Register to vote absentee at: votefromabroad.org

► 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, andypucek@live.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. For more information go to our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/newcomers.org/> or email to: newcomersclub.costarica@gmail.com

► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

Formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make a positive contribution to our local community. The Club meets for lunch on the second Tuesday of each month in different restaurants around the canton. We also host a Ramblers group, a Games group and currently have a team working in the Municipal gardens. For more information, please send an email to: pzwomansclub@gmail.com or visit our web site at: www.pziwc.org.

► Professional Women's Network

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

on the speaker for the month and to register, call Sarah Joy at 8868-6990 or email us at info@pwncr.com
The PWN website is: <http://www.pwncr.com>

► San Vito Bird Club

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

► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Open to men too. We work on peace issues and against violence. The Spanish speaking group in San José works through ZOOM but new members can be accommodated in English. The San Ramon group is also active. Contact itzstar@gmail.com or call Mitzi at 2433-7078 for information.

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

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



BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Important dates in Costa Rica:

9 SEPTEMBER.

Children's Day
Our Lady of Los Angeles
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Holiday

15 SEPTEMBER

Independence Day
National Holiday

NON-COMPULSORY

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

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

No ARCR Seminars are scheduled for September or October

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