



RECEIVED
JAN 23 2026
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.91
P 11

RISK ASSESSMENT

School: Nechako Valley Secondary School
 Grade/Group: Gr 11-12 Travel Clubs Teacher: Jana-Rae Kadenaga
 Destination & Activity: Costa Rica
 Date(s) of Trip: March 14-23 2027 (Estimate, not booked)

LOW RISK

<input type="checkbox"/> Day trip, in district	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Risk Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> On beach or near stream (<u>no stepping in water</u>)	<input type="checkbox"/> List on parent information form and permission slip

MODERATE RISK

<input type="checkbox"/> Overnight	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate Risk Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-District but within province	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness/bear area	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming in any pool or hot tub	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Component Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Boating or swimming in lake <u>near shore</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity near fast moving or open water	
<input type="checkbox"/> Creek or stream programs	

HIGH RISK

<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-Province	<input type="checkbox"/> High Risk Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Ski/Snowboard	
<input type="checkbox"/> Active logging roads	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lake crossing	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Component Form
<input type="checkbox"/> On fast moving water	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lake ice activity (<u>not on river ice</u>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Component Form

OUT-OF-COUNTRY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Out-of-Country STEP 1 (<u>must be approved before proceeding to STEP 2</u>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Approval Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-Country STEP 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-Country Application Form

Identify the person in charge at the activity:
 Name: Jana-Rae Kadenaga Qualifications: Teacher, past travel club
 How were students selected to participate and what preparation/experience do they have? Student sign up, will be in good standing and will pay travel fees
 Are students participating in supervision? Yes No
 If yes, how were students selected to participate in supervision? _____

Comments: _____
 Principal/Vice Principal: _____ Date: Jan. 14/26

OUT-OF-COUNTRY STEP 1: PRE-APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM



STEP 1 must receive Board Approval prior to: booking, fundraising, and STEP 2 approval.

School: Nechako Valley Secondary Application Date: January 13/25
 Group/Grade: Gr 11/12 - Travel Club Teacher: Jana-Rae Kadonaga
 Destination: Costa Rica
 Dates: Leave March 13-15 2027 Return March 22-24 2027

Give the goals and objectives of the Out-of-Country trip: Experience different culture and activities in a safe and structured way to increase world knowledge and skill.

Give the experience of the teacher: 2 previous travel club trips - Costa Rica & Europe

Expected number of student participants: 24 - 28

Submit with this application to the Principal/Vice Principal:

- Risk Assessment
- Itinerary
- Current Travel Advisory <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
 - Exercise normal security precautions
 - Exercise a high degree of caution
 - Avoid non-essential travel
 - Avoid all travel

SCHOOL USE	Principal/Vice Principal
Dates within school calendar break? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments: _____	
Principal/Vice Principal: _____	Date: <u>Jan. 14/26</u>
School Supervisor: _____	Date: <u>Jan 23/26</u>
Superintendent: _____	Date: <u>Jan 27/26</u>
DISTRICT USE:	Board Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> PRE-APPROVAL Application Form and supporting documents	
Board Meeting Date: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied
Comments: _____	
Board Chairperson: _____	
Date PVP Informed: _____ Via: <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Phone By: _____	

General Itinerary - Detailed One to Follow

Day 1: Fly to Costa Rica

Meet your Tour Director at your destination

Day 2: San José • Tortuguero

Travel to Siquirres

Travel by boat to Tortuguero

Supervised exploration time in Tortuguero Village

Day 3: Tortuguero

Visit Tortuguero National Park

Enjoy a boat ride through the Tortuguero Canals

Day 4: Tortuguero • Sarapiquí

Travel by Boat to Siquirres

Travel to Sarapiquí

Enjoy the rainforest from a unique perspective as you take a zipline through the canopy (*For safety reasons, weight and size restrictions may apply*)

Day 5: Sarapiquí • Arenal region

Enjoy the thrill of whitewater rafting on the Sarapiquí river

Travel to Arenal

Day 6: Arenal region

Enjoy a kayaking trip on Lake Arenal

Visit La Fortuna Waterfall

Visit the Arenal Hot Springs

Day 7: Arenal region • Guanacaste

Travel to Guanacaste Visit Rincón de la Vieja National Park

Day 8: Guanacaste

Take a boat tour in Palo Verde National Park

Enjoy a snorkeling activity

Day 9: Guanacaste

Enjoy local beaches and activities

Day 10: Depart for home



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du Canada

[Canada.ca](#) > [Travel](#) > [Destinations](#)

Costa Rica travel advice

 **Exercise a high degree of caution**

Latest updates: Editorial change

Last updated: January 7, 2026 09:40 ET

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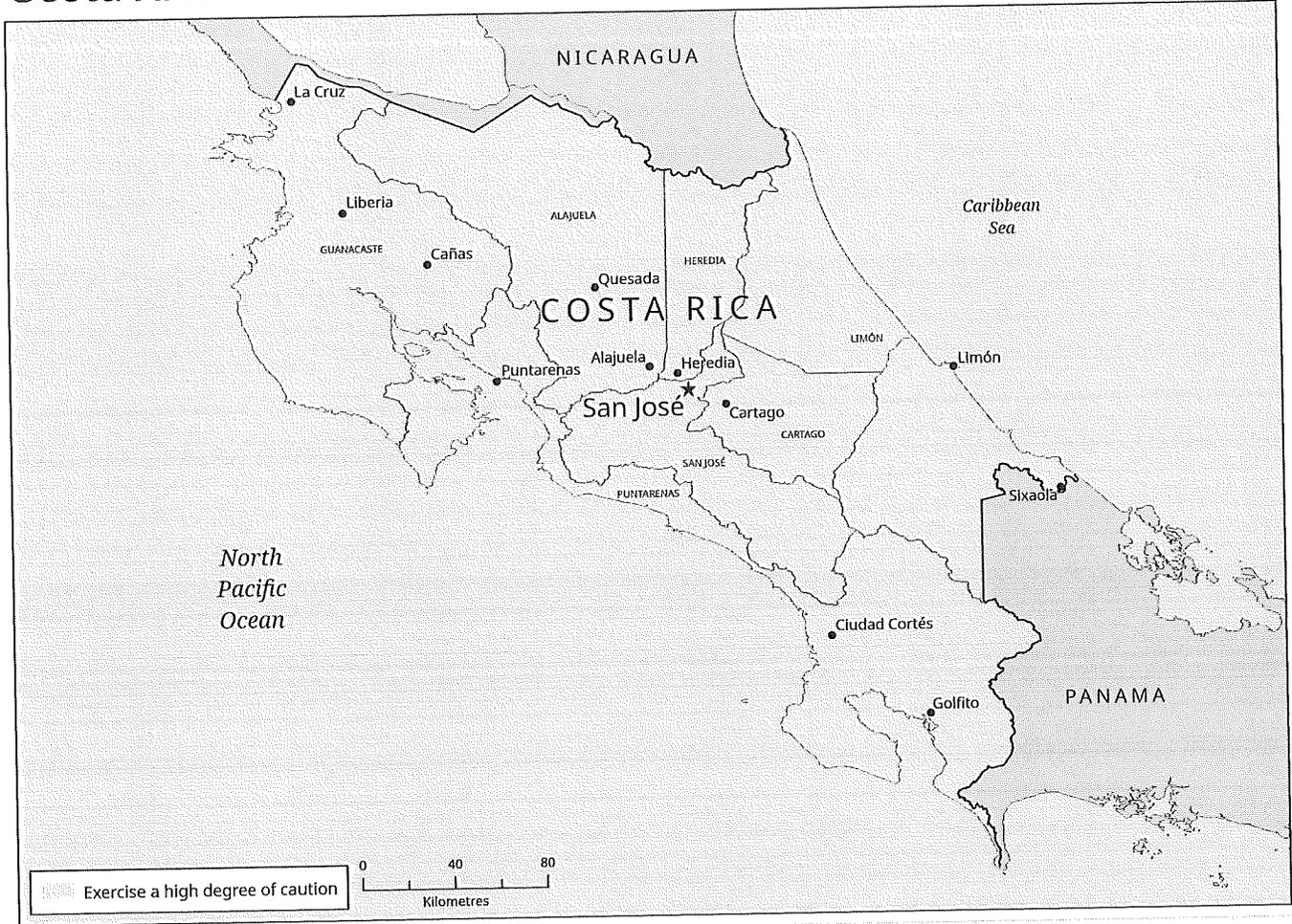
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Risk level

Costa Rica travel advice

Canadá



► Disclaimer

Enlarge map

Costa Rica - Exercise a high degree of caution

Exercise a high degree of caution in Costa Rica due to crime.

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Safety and security

Crime

Petty crime

Petty crime, such as pickpocketing and purse snatching, occurs frequently. Tourists are common targets for theft because they are perceived as being wealthy.

Crime against property, such as house burglary, theft from cars, and vehicle theft, is frequent. Passport theft is also extremely common and increases in frequency during the peak tourist seasons, from November to May and from July to August.

Thieves often work in teams, in which one thief diverts the victims' attention while the other snatches their possessions. Thefts commonly occur:

- in popular tourist areas, including viewpoints
- on buses, on trains, in bus and train stations as well as in airports terminals
- in hotel lobbies
- at restaurants, including on patios located near streets

While you're in Costa Rica:

- always keep your personal belongings, including your passport and other travel documents, in a secure place
- securely carry your passport, including the Costa Rican entry stamp received at the immigration entry point
- avoid showing signs of affluence or wearing expensive jewellery
- avoid carrying large sums of cash or unnecessary valuables

- avoid isolated or deserted areas
- avoid walking alone at night
- be aware of your surroundings, particularly in crowded and tourist areas
- be extra cautious when withdrawing cash from ATMs

San José

In San José, high-risk areas for theft include:

- the Coca-Cola bus terminal area, located between El Paso de la Vaca, Calle 12 and the Coca-Cola market
- the inner downtown area, located between the San Juan de Dios Hospital, the National Museum, Avenida 1 and Avenida 14
- the Mercado central areas
- public parks

Pacific Coast

In Puntarenas province, the following areas are of particular concern for theft:

- Dominical
- Jacó, including the crocodile viewing area along the Tárcoles River
- Manuel Antonio national park
- Quepos
- Cóbano area, including the small seaside towns of Mal País, Montezuma and Santa Teresa, as well as the port of Puntarenas

Caribbean Coast

On the Caribbean coast, the following areas are of particular concern for theft:

- Cahuita

- Puerto Limón
- Puerto Viejo

Car break-ins and theft

Car break-ins and theft are very common throughout the country. Rental and luxury vehicles are a target of choice. Theft commonly occurs in the parking lots of:

- hotels
- supermarkets
- restaurants
- stores
- national parks
- beaches

When leaving your vehicle, always manually check that the doors are locked since “key jammers” could be used to interrupt signals from key fobs, preventing car doors from locking.

If driving in Costa Rica:

- familiarize yourself with your route before you leave
- always keep doors and windows closed and locked
- do not leave valuables within reach or in plain sight
- park your vehicle in a secure area, especially at night
- never leave personal belongings unattended in a vehicle, even in the trunk
- don't stop to change a flat tire in an isolated area, and be wary of strangers offering to help you
- ensure emergency assistance and car insurance are offered by the rental agency when renting a car

Violent crime

Violent crime occurs. Incidents include:

- murders
- armed robberies
- burglaries
- assaults

Drug trafficking is common, and most violent incidents are drug-related.

The most affected provinces are:

- Alajuela
- Limón
- Puntarenas
- San José

Burglaries

Residential break-ins occur. Burglars may be armed with knives or guns and sometimes target rental accommodations or houses and apartments owned by foreigners.

- Choose well-secured accommodation
- Make sure you lock doors and windows at night and when you're away
- Do not confront burglars
- Report any suspicious activity to the authorities

Assaults

Although not frequent, violent assaults against travellers have occurred on the Caribbean coast in:

- Puerto Limón
- Puerto Viejo

If you are threatened, hand over your cash and valuables immediately without resistance.

Fraud

Credit card and ATM fraud occurs. Be cautious when using debit or credit cards:

- pay careful attention when others are handling your cards
- use ATMs located in well-lit public areas or inside a bank or business
- avoid using card readers with irregular or unusual features
- cover the keypad with one hand when entering your PIN
- check for any unauthorized transactions on your account statements

Overseas fraud

Spiked food and drinks

Snacks, beverages, gum and cigarettes may contain drugs that could put you at risk of sexual assault and robbery.

- Be wary of accepting these items from new acquaintances
- Never leave food or drinks unattended or in the care of strangers

Unregulated alcohol

There are reports of casualties due to the consumption of unregulated and adulterated alcohol containing high levels of methanol.

- Buy alcohol from reputable establishments
- Seek medical assistance if you begin to feel sick

Alcohol, drugs and travel

Women's safety

Women travelling alone may be subject to some forms of harassment or verbal abuse.

Incidents of sexual assault against foreigners at beach resorts and by taxi drivers in San José have occurred.

Useful links

- [Advice for women travellers](#)
- [Sexual assault abroad](#)

Demonstrations

Demonstrations take place from time to time, particularly in San José. Even peaceful demonstrations can turn violent at any time. They can also lead to disruptions to traffic and public transportation.

Costa Rican law prohibits political activity by foreigners. Participating in demonstrations or activities may result in you being detained and/or deported.

- Avoid areas where demonstrations and large gatherings are taking place
- Follow the instructions of local authorities
- Monitor local media for information on ongoing demonstrations

Mass gatherings (large-scale events)

Water activities

Coastal waters can be dangerous. Riptides are common. Several drownings occur each year.

Very few beaches are supervised by lifeguards. There are no warning signs of dangerous conditions.

- Exercise caution when swimming
- Don't swim alone, after hours or outside marked areas
- Consult residents and tour operators for information on possible hazards and safe swimming areas
- Monitor weather warnings
- Follow the instructions of local authorities

Useful links

- [Tips for travellers](#) - Costa Rica Tourist Board
- [Water safety abroad](#)

Adventure tourism

Outdoor activities, such as white-water rafting, scuba diving, bungee jumping, canopy touring and other adventure sports can be dangerous if unprepared. Trails are rarely marked, and weather conditions can change rapidly, even in summer.

Safety features on small boats used in river and lake excursions are not always reliable.

Life-threatening fauna such as jaguars, pumas, wild pigs and poisonous snakes are common in the densely wooded areas.

If you intend to practice adventure tourism:

- never do so alone, and don't part with your expedition companions
- obtain detailed information on your activity and on the environment in which you will be before setting out

- buy travel insurance that includes helicopter rescue and medical evacuation
- ensure that your physical condition is good enough to meet the challenges of your activity
- avoid venturing off marked trails
- don't camp or sleep overnight on beaches
- ensure that you're adequately equipped and bring sufficient water
- stay informed of weather and other conditions that may pose a hazard
- know the symptoms of high-altitude illnesses, which can be fatal
- inform a family member or friend of your itinerary
- refrain from using facilities or equipment if you have doubts on their safety

National parks

You must obtain a permit to access national parks.

[Nation Parks](#) – Costa Rica Tourist Board

Road safety

Road conditions and road safety are generally poor throughout the country. Costa Rica has one of the highest traffic accident rates in the world.

Road conditions

Most roads are not paved and those paved are generally in poor condition. Driving conditions may be hazardous, especially during the rainy season, due to:

- potholes
- sharp curves

- lack of traffic signs
- landslides
- narrow or unpaved roads

Driving habits

Drivers don't respect traffic laws. Motorists often drive without lights at night.

While driving:

- remain vigilant when stopped at lights or stop signs
- keep doors locked and windows closed at all times
- keep your valuables out of plain sight
- avoid travel at night

Public transportation

Buses

Public bus transportation is unreliable. Schedules and routes may not be accurate. Vehicles are often late due to traffic and road conditions. Itineraries may also vary from the ones originally announced.

Pickpockets often target tourists in public buses.

If travelling by public bus:

- keep your ID and valuables with you
- avoid placing your bags in the overhead compartment or under your seat
- avoid sleeping

Police checks of passengers on public transportation also occur. Officers often use those checks to determine if foreigners have overstayed the 90-day visa exemption period.

Always carry your proof of legal stay on your person.

Taxis

Official taxis are safe. They are orange at the airport and red with a yellow triangle on the side elsewhere in the country.

- Use official taxis only booked ahead of time
- Never board taxis at taxi stands or flag taxis in the street
- Note the driver's name and plate number
- Make sure the driver uses the meter
- Never use shared taxis

Air travel

We don't make assessments on the compliance of foreign domestic airlines with international safety standards.

[Information about foreign domestic airlines](#)

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Entry and exit requirements

The authorities of a country or territory decide who can enter or exit through its borders. The Government of Canada cannot intervene on your behalf if you do not meet your destination's entry or exit requirements.

We have obtained the information on this page from the Costa Rican authorities. It can, however, change at any time.

Verify this information with the [Foreign Representatives in Canada](#).

Passport

Entry requirements vary depending on the type of passport you're travelling with.

Before you travel, check with your transportation company about passport requirements. Its rules on passport validity may be more stringent than the country's entry rules.

Regular Canadian passport

Your passport must be valid for the duration of your stay.

Passport for official travel

Different entry rules may apply.

Official travel

Passport with "X" gender identifier

While the Government of Canada issues passports with an "X" gender identifier, it cannot guarantee your entry or transit through other countries. You might face entry restrictions in countries that do not recognize the "X" gender identifier. Before you leave, verify this information with the closest foreign representative for your destination.

You should also be aware that current systems used by some countries and travel companies may not recognize the "X" gender identifier. You may still be asked to provide your sex/gender information as either male or female when travelling.

Other travel documents

Different entry rules may apply when travelling with a temporary passport or an emergency travel document. Before you leave, verify this information with the closest foreign representative for your destination.

Useful links

- [Travel and your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics](#)
- [Foreign Representatives in Canada](#)
- [Canadian passports and other travel documents](#)

Visas

Tourist visa: not required for stays up to 180 days

Business visa: required

Student visa: required

Length of stay

The immigration officer will determine the permitted length of your stay when you enter Costa Rica. As a tourist, you may be granted a stay up to 180 days.

If you intend to stay for more than 180 days, you must obtain a residency status from the Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería.

You may face deportation if you overstay the authorized 180-day period. Persons deported from Costa Rica will not be allowed to re-enter the country for 5 to 10 years.

[Immigration department](#) – Costa Rica government (in Spanish)

Entry stamp

You must obtain an entry stamp from immigration officials upon entry into Costa Rica.

Other entry requirements

Customs officials will ask you to show them a return or onward ticket and proof of sufficient funds to cover your stay.

Minors with dual citizenship

Costa Rica strictly enforces requirements for the departure of minors with dual citizenship.

The Canadian passport of a dual citizen child must have a Costa Rican departure approval delivered by the immigration authorities. The granted permission may be temporary or permanent and will be recorded in the Costa Rican immigration electronic system.

The approval must be requested jointly by both parents, prior to departure, to either of the following authorities:

- Costa Rica's immigration department
- the Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada

Several cases of departure denials have occurred due to the lack of proper documentation.

Minors with dual citizenship who are travelling unaccompanied must also have legally certified written consent from both parents.

Useful Links

- [Immigration department](#) – Costa Rica government (in Spanish)
- [Foreign Representatives in Canada](#)

Children and travel

Learn about [travelling with children](#).

Yellow fever

Learn about [potential entry requirements related to yellow fever](#) (vaccines section).

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Relevant Travel Health Notices

- [Measles: Advice for travellers](#) - 13 November, 2025
- [COVID-19 and International Travel](#) - 12 May, 2025

This section has information and advice about health risks you might face when travelling. Following this advice can help reduce your risk of getting sick. Not all risks are listed here.

It's best to talk to a healthcare provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably 6 weeks before your trip to get personalized health advice. Even if your travel date is coming up soon, it's still worthwhile to make an appointment.

Routine vaccines

Make sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date before you travel, no matter where you're going.

These may include vaccines for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, varicella (chickenpox), meningococcal disease, seasonal flu, and others.

Provincial and Territorial Immunization Information

Pre-travel vaccines and medications

When travelling in this destination, you might be at risk for diseases that can be prevented with vaccines or medications. Talk to a travel health care provider about which ones are right for you based on your travel plans.

The highlights below will also tell you if your destination may require that vaccine for entering or exiting.

▶ Hepatitis A

▶ Yellow Fever - Country Entry Requirements

▶ Malaria

▶ Rabies

▶ Measles

▶ Hepatitis B

▶ COVID-19

▶ Influenza

Safe food and water precautions

Eating or drinking unsafe food or water, or swimming in contaminated water can make you sick while travelling. Take precautions by following these tips:

- Boil it, cook it, peel it, or leave it (only eat food that is prepared safely)

- Avoid, if possible, getting water in your eyes, mouth, or nose when swimming in freshwater (like streams, lakes, or canals), especially after heavy rain or flooding - the water might look clean but can still be contaminated
- Don't swallow water when bathing, showering, swimming in pools, or using hot tubs

Eat and drink safely abroad

▶ Travellers' diarrhea

▶ Typhoid

Tick and insect bite prevention

Many diseases are spread by bites from infected ticks and insects like mosquitoes, fleas, or flies. Before you travel, find out what types of ticks or insects are in the area, when they're most active, and what diseases they can spread.

To protect yourself from bites:

- use an approved bug spray (insect repellent) on exposed skin
- wear light-coloured, loose clothing made of tightly woven materials like nylon or polyester
- wear socks and closed-toe shoes
- sleep under mosquito netting if you're outdoors or staying in places that aren't fully enclosed
- do a full body tick check on yourself, your children, your gear, and any pets you're travelling with when you return from outdoor activities

Insect bite and pest prevention

Personal insect repellents

- ▶ Chikungunya
- ▶ American trypanosomiasis
- ▶ Dengue
- ▶ Zika virus

Animal precautions

Some infections can spread directly from animals to people, like rabies or bird flu (avian influenza). Others don't spread directly from animals but can infect people who visit areas animals have contaminated with their droppings or body fluids.

Certain activities can increase your chances of coming into contact with animals, their droppings, or their body fluids, like:

- travelling in rural or forested areas
- camping, hiking, or visiting caves
- visiting places where live animals are sold or killed for food, like wet markets

To reduce your risk of getting sick:

- avoid contact with animals like stray dogs, livestock (such as pigs and cows), monkeys, snakes, rodents, birds, and bats.
- stay away from places where animal waste can build up, such as caves
- avoid eating undercooked meat

Make sure to closely watch children; they are more likely to try to touch animals.

► Mpox

Person-to-person infections

When travelling, you can reduce your risk of getting or spreading respiratory infections, like the flu or COVID-19, by:

- staying at your accommodation and limiting contact with others if you're sick
- wearing a well-fitting mask, especially:
 - if you're sick and need to be around others
 - when you're at large indoor events or in crowded settings, like sporting events, concerts, and airports
- cleaning your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow, not your hands

Mass gatherings (large-scale events)

Clean your hands to help reduce the spread of infectious diseases

Respiratory infectious diseases: How to reduce the spread with personal protective measures

To lower your risk of getting sexually transmissible infections (STIs), HIV, and mpox, you can:

- get vaccinated against mpox if you're eligible
- practise safer sex methods
 - use barrier protection during sexual activity, like condoms and dental dams.

Mpox vaccines

Sexual health and travel

HIV and AIDS: Travel health advice

Medical services and facilities

Health care is very good.

Public hospitals offer very good services throughout the country but waiting times may be long. Doctors rarely speak English or French.

Private clinics and hospitals provide excellent health care. They are mainly located in San José. Services may be expensive. Doctors and hospitals typically require upfront payment.

Emergency services may be limited in rural areas.

Medical evacuation can be very expensive and may be necessary in case of serious illness or injury.

Make sure you get travel insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation and hospital stays.

Health and safety outside Canada

Medications

Some prescription medication may not be available in Costa Rica.

If you take prescription medication, you're responsible for determining its legality in the country.

- Bring sufficient quantities of your medication with you
- Always keep your medication in the original container
- Pack your medication in your carry-on luggage
- Carry a paper and an electronic copy of your prescriptions

Medical tourism

Canadian citizens have had serious health complications following cosmetic or other elective surgeries abroad.

Before leaving for medical travel:

- make sure you've done your research
- use reputable health-care providers only

Receiving medical care outside Canada

Keep in Mind...

The decision to travel is the sole responsibility of the traveller. The traveller is also responsible for his or her own personal safety.

Be prepared. Do not expect medical services to be the same as in Canada. Pack a travel health kit, especially if you will be travelling away from major city centres.

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Laws and culture

You must abide by local laws.

Learn about what you should do and how we can help if you are arrested or detained abroad.

Transfer to a Canadian prison

Canada and Costa Rica are signatories to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. This enables a Canadian imprisoned in Costa Rica to request a transfer to a Canadian prison to complete a

sentence. The transfer requires the agreement of both Canadian and Costa Rican authorities.

This process can take a long time, and there is no guarantee that the transfer will be approved by either or both sides.

If you violate Costa Rica's laws, even unknowingly, you may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned.

Drugs

Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences or heavy fines.

Drugs, alcohol and travel

Child sex tourism

It's a serious criminal offence to have sex with minors in Costa Rica.

Conviction may result in a lengthy prison sentence.

Child Sex Tourism: It's a Crime

Identification

Authorities may request to see your ID at any time.

- Carry valid identification at all times
- Keep a photocopy of your passport and entry stamp in case it's lost or seized
- Keep a digital copy of your ID and travel documents

Photography

It is illegal to photograph official buildings.

Check with local authorities before taking photos.

Investments

Disputes related to property acquisition or other investments are costly and take time to resolve.

If you plan on buying property, or making other investments in Costa Rica:

- seek legal advice in Canada and in Costa Rica before making commitments
- choose your own lawyer
- avoid hiring a lawyer recommended by a seller

Dual citizenship

Dual citizenship is legally recognized in Costa Rica.

If you are a Canadian citizen, but also a citizen of Costa Rica, our ability to offer you consular services may be limited while you're there. You may also be subject to different entry/exit requirements.

Dual citizens

International Child Abduction

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction is an international treaty. It can help parents with the return of children who have been removed to or retained in certain countries in violation of custody rights. The convention applies between Canada and Costa Rica.

If your child was wrongfully taken to, or is being held in Costa Rica, and if the applicable conditions are met, you may apply for the return of your child to the Costa Rican court.

If you are in this situation:

- act as quickly as you can
- contact the Central Authority for your province or territory of residence for information on starting an application under The Hague Convention
- consult a lawyer in Canada and in Costa Rica to explore all the legal options for the return of your child
- report the situation to the nearest Canadian government office abroad or to the Vulnerable Children's Consular Unit at Global Affairs Canada by calling the Emergency Watch and Response Centre

If your child was removed from a country other than Canada, consult a lawyer to determine if The Hague Convention applies.

Be aware that Canadian consular officials cannot interfere in private legal matters or in another country's judicial affairs.

Useful links

- [List of Canadian Central Authorities for the Hague Convention](#)
- [International Child Abductions: A guide for affected parents](#)
- [Children and travel](#)
- [The Hague Convention](#) – Hague Conference on Private International Law
- [Canadian embassies and consulates by destination](#)
- [Request emergency assistance](#)

Driving

You can drive with your valid Canadian driver's licence in Costa Rica for up to 180 days, or the length of the stay granted on your entry stamp.

You must also carry your passport when driving in the country.

Photocopies are not acceptable. You may face a fine if you fail to provide proper documentation when stopped by a traffic officer.

If you are involved in a road accident, the Costa Rican government may prevent you from leaving the country until all injury claims have been settled, regardless of which party is at fault or has insurance coverage. The local legal process may take several months.

In the event of a car accident:

- don't move your vehicle until the authorities arrive
- remain at the scene
- call 911 to report the accident

Automatic speed cameras are common. If you exceed the speed limit, you may receive a speeding ticket by mail.

Traffic fines don't have to be paid on the spot. You can pay a fine:

- at COSEVI (Costa Rican Road Safety Council)
- at a bank

If a police officer asks you for money, you may make a complaint to the Costa Rican Tourism Bureau.

Useful Links

- [Costa Rican Tourism Bureau](#)
- [Road Safety](#). – Costa Rican Road Safety Council (in Spanish)
- [International Driving Permit](#)

Money

The currency in Costa Rica is the Costa Rican colón (CRC).

Credit cards are generally accepted.

It's extremely difficult to exchange Canadian dollars in Costa Rica. U.S. dollars are more easily exchanged.

Cash withdrawals are possible with a 4-digit PIN only.

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Natural disasters and climate

Hurricane season

The hurricane season is from mid-May to the end of November in the Pacific, and from early June to the end of November in the Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. During this period, even small tropical storms can quickly develop into major hurricanes.

These severe storms can put you at risk and hamper the provision of essential services. You could face serious safety risks during a hurricane. You should carefully consider these risks when planning a trip during the hurricane season.

If you decide to travel to a coastal area during the hurricane season despite the risks:

- be prepared to change your travel plans on short notice, including cutting short or cancelling your trip
- stay informed of the latest regional weather forecasts

- carry emergency contact information for your airline or tour operator
- follow the advice and instructions of local authorities

Useful links

- [Severe storms outside Canada](#)
- [Large-scale emergencies outside Canada](#)
- [Active storm tracking and hurricane watches and warnings](#) – U.S. National Hurricane Center

Flooding

The rainy season extends from May to November, which sometimes extends into January.

Torrential rains and landslides occur frequently in the lowlands and mountainous areas along the Caribbean and in the Central Valley.

Seasonal flooding often causes power outages. It can also hamper overland travel and reduce the delivery of other essential services. Roads may become impassable and bridges damaged.

Earthquakes and tsunamis

Costa Rica is located in an active seismic zone. Earthquakes and tremors occur regularly. Tsunamis are possible.

A tsunami can occur within minutes of a nearby earthquake. However, the risk of tsunami can remain for several hours following the first tremor. If you're staying on the coast, familiarize yourself with the region's evacuation plans in the event of a tsunami warning.

Volcanoes

There are several active and potentially active volcanoes in the country, including:

- Arenal
- Poás
- Rincón de la Vieja
- Turrialba

Eruptions may occur at any time. They sometimes lead to evacuations of surrounding areas on short notice.

In the event of an earthquake or volcanic eruption:

- pay careful attention to all warnings issued for national parks
- monitor local media to stay informed of the evolving situation
- follow the instructions of local authorities, including evacuation orders

Useful links

- [Latest earthquakes](#) – U.S. Geological Survey
- [Tsunami alerts](#) – U.S. Tsunami Warning System
- [National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response](#) (in Spanish)
- [Volcanological and Seismological Observatory of Costa Rica](#) (in Spanish)

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Need help?

Local services

- ▶ [Emergency services](#)

Consular assistance

- ▶ [San José - Embassy of Canada](#)

For emergency consular assistance, call the Embassy of Canada to Costa Rica, in San José, and follow the instructions. At any time, you may also contact the [Emergency Watch and Response Centre](#) in Ottawa.



Useful links

-  [Register as a Canadian abroad](#)
-  [View travel insurance information](#)
-  [Read our Traveller's Checklist](#)
-  [Advice for different types of travellers](#)
-  [What to do if things go wrong](#)

Disclaimer

The decision to travel is your choice and you are responsible for your personal safety abroad. We take the safety and security of Canadians abroad very seriously and provide credible and timely information in our Travel Advice to enable you to make well-informed decisions regarding your travel abroad.

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If you need consular assistance while abroad, we will make every effort to help you. However, there may be constraints that will limit the ability of the Government of Canada to provide services.

Learn more about [consular services](#).

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