Spotlight on Costa Rica

HISTORY

Costa Rica was sighted by Christopher Columbus in 1502, when he landed near Puerto Limón on the Atlantic shore. Believing he had discovered a land of vast wealth, he named it “Costa Rica,” which means “Rich Coast.” Unlike other parts of Central America, the colonization was relatively bloodless. The local inhabitants were mainly peaceful Indian farmers whose numbers were eventually depleted when introduced to European diseases.

The first capital city was Cartago, founded in 1563. Eventually, the capital was moved West to San Jose in 1737. Independence from Spain was declared in 1821, beginning a period of civil war between the Liberal and Conservative factions.

After independence, the government anxiously sought goods that could be exported and taxed for revenue. Coffee, which had been introduced from Cuba, was the answer. The government offered free land to coffee growers, thus building a landowning class. The prosperity brought by coffee exportation since the 1850’s resulted in and settlement expansion. Costa Rica’s long tradition of democracy began in 1889 and has continued to the present day. The only lapse in this record was in 1948, when the constitution was abolished and a military dictatorship took over. One year later, a new constitution was adopted and the army was permanently abolished. In 1983, the country made an official proclamation of neutrality.

Costa Rica today is a model of democracy and political stability. It boasts a fine health care system, telecommunications network and school systems with one of the highest literacy rates in the world - 92 percent.

LOCAL FLAVORS

Costa Rica is well known for the beautiful craftsmanship of her people. Wood working, pottery and glass blowing are popular. Costa Rica’s expert craftsmen are also energized by some of the world’s best coffee and seafood.

DOCKING/TENDERING

The ship docks in Puerto Limón on the Caribbean Sea.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

Please check your ticket for the correct meeting time and location of your tour. Your cruise line representative will direct you to your transportation.

TRANSPORTATION

Taxis are readily available at the pier. Drivers speak English. They can be expensive, so be sure to set price before embarking. The approximate hourly rate is $25 for a cab and Mini-Vans are $20 to $30 per person.

HOW TO GET TO TOWN

All shops and activities are located within walking distance from the pier.

GUARANTEE

Due to the nature of the changes at the ports of call, all information is subject to change.
A. PARQUE VARGAS
Parque Vargas, a five-minute walk from the ship, is located on the waterfront. This main attraction has beautiful tropical trees and flowers.

B. SEA WALL
Enjoy the pleasant walk along the sea wall of Puerto Limón. You can view the rocky headland upon which the city was built.

C. PLAYA BONITA
Located northwest of town, this sandy beach has places to eat and picnic areas. Enjoy the backdrop of tropical vegetation.

D. CENTRAL MARKET
This municipal market is where produce, crafts and sundries are sold.

E. ISLA UVITA
Columbus landed on this island on his fourth and last Transatlantic voyage. This island has strong waves that are good for surfing. It is a 20 minute boat ride from Limón.