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COSTA RICA'S TOURISM GROWS AT THREE TIMES THE RATE OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

In 2015, Costa Rica welcomed over one million American tourists

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA – January 15, 2016 – Costa Rica's tourism experienced a growth of three times the rate of the country's economy, making 2015 an exceptional year for the country's tourism industry. The country recorded figures that exceed all statistical records established by the Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT).

"In addition to the country's rapid arrivals growth, 2015 has been an exceptional year for development in the tourism industry," said Mauricio Ventura, Minister of Tourism. "We have experienced an increase in the number of airlines currently flying to Costa Rica, as well as major progress in the development of the National Congress and Convention Center. This year will also be forever marked in Costa Rican tourism history, as the industry important milestone – the arrival of over one million Americans."

Costa Rica received over 2.6 million international arrivals by all ports, representing an increase of 5.5 percent. In addition, flight arrivals recorded over 1.8 million, an increase of 8.0 percent, maintaining its position as the main port of entry to record with almost 70 percent of tourists entering the country.

According to Ventura, four airlines began offering flights from North America to Costa Rica in 2015, including flights from Baltimore, Houston, Calgary and Denver.

The country attributes the increase in North American tourism to several marketing and public relations initiatives including several international fairs, new partnerships, activities in cities with the highest concentration of best prospects, and the popular "Save the Americans" campaign. As the country's first inter-species campaign, Costa Rican animals warn Americans that their hectic work habits are endangering both their minds and bodies. One of the campaign's main concerns is the loss of family vacation time, as studies by Expedia.com show Americans leave over 500 million vacation days unused every year.

Learn more about the campaign on www.savetheamericans.org. More information on Costa Rica can be found at www.visitcostarica.com.

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About Costa Rica

Costa Rica is located in Central America between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south; it is bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. With

an abundance of unique wildlife, landscapes and climates this small country proudly shelters approximately five percent of the known biodiversity in the world. In order to protect and preserve its wealth of natural resources, Costa Rica has become a global leader in sustainable practices with protected areas comprising 26 percent of its land mass. With a peaceful spirit, emphasis on education and an economy based on tourism, technology and exportation, Costa Rica offers one of the highest standards of living in Latin America. Visitors to Costa Rica enjoy a highly organized tourism infrastructure among a tropical paradise of lush rainforests, mystical volcanoes and cloud forests and beaches that meet mountains filled with monkeys and macaws. Offering a broad terrain of activities and accommodations, visitors to Costa Rica will find a range of hotel options ranging from small beachside bed & breakfasts to authentic intimate boutique mountain lodges to major international business hotel brands and everything in between. Costa Rica's accommodations offer something appealing for everyone's desires. The phrase "Pura Vida" can be heard echoing throughout Costa Rica from coast to coast. Used as a greeting or expression of happiness, the phrase literally translates to "pure life," however its true meaning is "full of life," which accurately describes the adventure and wonder that await visitors.

About Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT)

Established in 1955, the Costa Rica Tourism Board spearheads the vital task of regulating and promoting Costa Rica's extensive of tourism offerings. The ICT and its partners in the private sector work tirelessly to garner recognition, standardize practices, provide insightful research data and foster cultural development for the country's coast to coast one-of a kind tourism products and resources.

About Save the Americans Campaign

Save the Americans is the Costa Rican Tourism Board's new North American marketing campaign for 2015. The building of the new campaign is a collaboration between the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT) and the advertising agency 22squared. Creation of the Save the Americans campaign involved an intensive research process, analysis, design and testing in national and international publics. The Labrador agency led the independent research process, administered the focus groups and provided findings and recommendations for optimizing the work based on participant feedback. Studies were held in Toronto, LA and NYC. The campaign will consist of animals from Costa Rica reaching out to Americans through various media channels and will encourage North Americans to visit Costa Rica.