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**Taste the Pura Vida on a culinary adventure through Costa Rica**  
*Excite your taste buds in the happiest place on earth*



**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica – July 10, 2017** – If the soul of a destination is found in its gastronomy, then exploring *Tico* cuisine will unearth an infinite zest for life. Food-obsessed travelers with an insatiable appetite for dynamic gastronomic experiences will find sustainable practices, fresh organic ingredients and exotic dishes as part of Costa Rica’s culinary offerings. From eating like a local at the Central Market in San Jose to enjoying five-star cuisine, Costa Rica’s options satisfy all palates.

**Traditional Costa Rican fare nourishes the soul.** Typical Costa Rican meals include hearty dishes made up of rich, locally-grown ingredients. *Ticos* are experts at devising delicious meals with the freshest produce and have been firm

believers in farm-to-table since before it became trendy. Costa Rica’s tropical location offers many exotic foods, which are readily available and included in local cuisine. In 2015, the Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT) announced their **National Sustainable and Healthy Gastronomy Plan**. As part of the program’s goal—to promote Costa Rican cuisine as sustainable, national culinary training places high emphasis in using local plants, vegetables and fruits in traditional recipes.

**Gallo Pinto** is Costa Rica’s national dish. Consisting of fried rice, black or red beans, onions, red pepper and cilantro, it is served with eggs (sunny side up or scrambled), bread (with butter or *natilla*, which is similar to sour cream), a cup of coffee or fresh juice. *Gallo Pinto* can be found in any restaurant and although it is a breakfast food, it can be ordered at any time. **Rice and Beans** is the Caribbean version of Gallo Pinto— cooked with coconut milk and spices. It is best

eaten on the Caribbean coast, in the province of Limón. According to National Geographic author Dan Buettner, the secret to living a happy healthy life to the ripe age of 100 is to consume a diet that consists of beans and grains. He says that Americans can extend their lives by four years adding “a cup of beans a day.”

Another celebrated dish is **Olla de Carne**—a typical beef stew made of tender cuts of either short ribs or flank steak and hearty vegetables, including: cassava, taro roots, potatoes and plantains. Also found in most restaurants, especially in sodas, it can be ordered at any time of the day. When visiting the Pacific coast, travelers should try **Sopa de Mariscos** (Seafood Soup)—a tomato-based soup with clams, mussels, shrimp, squid, fish and vegetables. *Sopa de Mariscos* is sold in most restaurants, but the best quality comes from coastal towns. **Patí**, which are spicy beef empanadas, are best eaten on the Caribbean coast. Visitors, near Lake Arenal, should try the charcoal-grilled freshwater bass served with **palmito salad** and a **guanabana batido** (shake). Other dishes worth trying are **pipa** (coconut) fresh off a tree, **tamales** or a cup of **Costa Rican coffee** from a *chorreador* (pourer).

Costa Rica is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest coffee producer in the world and by law only produces the highest quality: Arabica. Since its introduction in the late 1700's, coffee has formed the backbone of Costa Rica's economy. Most of the country's coffee is grown in the San José, Alajuela, Puntarenas, Heredia and Cartago provinces. Visitors interested in learning more can enjoy the energizing brew while touring a plantation.

**Share a meal to uncover new truths.** Food provides more than sustenance. With it we celebrate occasions, forge relationships and expand our horizons. Renowned world chef Anthony Bourdain once said: "You learn a lot about someone when you share a meal together." But a lot of insight into the self can also be gained. Whether travelers seek adventure or relaxation in Costa Rica, exploring *Tico* cuisine provides a regionally-authentic experience and an intimate view of us and others. Exploring Costa Rica's passion for food and cooking traditions will provide travelers a new perspective of the world and *that* is the ultimate gift of travel.

For more information on Costa Rica, visit [www.visitcostarica.com](http://www.visitcostarica.com)

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### **About Costa Rica**

Nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, Costa Rica offers visitors an abundance of unique wildlife, landscapes and climates—a trip to this Central American country is anything but run-of-the-mill. The country proudly shelters approximately five percent of the known biodiversity in the world and has become a global leader in sustainable practices. Visitors to Costa Rica enjoy a highly organized tourism infrastructure offering a broad terrain of activities and accommodations.

### **About Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT)**

Established in 1955, the Costa Rica Tourism Board (the ICT), alongside its partners in the private sector, spearheads the vital task of regulating and promoting Costa Rica's extensive tourism offerings.