During my time spent in the country of Costa Rica, I found a lot of different sounds that catch your ear while you are in Costa Rica. After sorting through the honking horns and barking dogs, you’ll find two types of music. These two types of music are the traditional Latin American music and the more modern, or Mainstream, music that we are familiar with in the States. The Latin American music includes some well-known instruments like the guitar, maracas, some type of wind instrument (sometimes an ocarina) and the occasional xylophone. The music style tends to be very up beat and gives off a happy vibe, although there are some sad songs. Sometimes, in the larger, more populated, parts of the city, you can find one or more street performers playing this type of music. I don’t know what it is about hearing someone sing in a foreign language, but I like it.

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Pura vida or “pure life” is the best way to describe the people of Costa Rica. Generally speaking, the people in this country live a “normal life” or rather a life just like that of an American only richer. Here you will find the quality of life is maximized. These individuals simply seek out what is best for them using the heart rather than the head. They choose happiness over stress and believe most strongly in the importance of faith, family and fitness. These tools give the ticos the advantage of a satisfying existence without rush or regret because they live a pura vida.

The culture of the ticos, as Costa Ricans are called, is heavily influenced by Christianity and the vast majority of the country’s residents are Catholic. The image of Christ can be found on everything from automobiles to elaborate statues in the center of a public market. Agriculture is another dominate feature in society. Fresh fruits, beans, and rice are just some of the commodities this rich country has to offer. Meals are a family affair like most other activities in Costa Rica. Extended family usually lives close together and children typically do not leave the home until they are prepared to start their own families. Ticos enjoy the taste of good coffee, a major export of the area, the rhythm of dance, the beauty of artistic expression and even the thrill of competition. Exercise is like a pastime with the ticos. Bicycling, aerobics, and, of course, soccer are part of the social norm in Costa Rica. The three loves of a tico can be identified with a quick look at the layout of a typical neighborhood. Elaborate churches are next to massive schools that educate future generations and next to either the church or school sits an expansive green soccer field. Their respect for faith, family, and fitness is something that America would do well to emulate. These aspects are the hub of a fulfilling life mixed with a dash of laughter and a pinch of hard work.

To live like a tico or tica, you must first make time instead of spending it. Release the pressures of life and go with the flow. Then after you have mellowed, you must indulge yourself in meaningful relationships that will outlast the tangible world. Surround yourself with friends and family that you can help and appreciate. Then, finally, you can appreciate yourself by taking care of your body and your mind. Connect to nature and make your own life pure and meaningful. If a person is defined by the life they live, then the ticos have discovered the substance of what makes life both meaningful and enjoyable. Come witness the phenomenon of pura vida. Let it sweep you up and transform everything you thought you understood about living. The ticos are waiting to embrace you.
RELIGION IN COSTA RICA...

Beacons of hope...

Spotted throughout the countryside, like beacons of hope, one can find church after church in Costa Rica. In fact, the Catholic Church is a major cultural theme. When visiting Costa Rica you will begin to notice a pattern in every town and village; a church directly across from a park. In a recent survey taken by the University of Costa Rica, 70.5% of the population declared themselves Roman Catholic. Following Catholicism, Evangelical Protestants claim 13.8%. 11% of Costa Ricans claim no religion while 4% belong to other faiths.

All in all, Costa Ricans are a very moral, religious people who are devoutly devoted to their faith. So, visit Costa Rica and be moved by the love of a deeply religious people.

What do they practice?

The national religion in Costa Rica is Roman Catholicism with 70.5% of the population identifying themselves as such. However, Costa Rica is a country open to all faiths.
La Moda de La Ropa de Costa Rica

By: Tamsen Brooks

Moda is the Spanish word for fashion, but what exactly is fashion. Who is considered fashionable? Does fashion vary from country to country and continent to continent? I observed the “fashion” of Costa Rica and asked a few individuals their opinion of what was considered “hip.”

My papá tico, Fran, told me that the typical dress of the younger generation was very similar to American teenagers and young adults. Fran worked as a chauffeur for the airport and saw many younger Costa Ricans and Americans. I observed that the typical dress of many women was very little and very tight. I asked our chaperone from CPI what her opinion was on the fashion of Costa Rica and she told me it was one of two things: Prep or Punk. This proved very true. I witnessed many “emo” - looking children or “jockey” looking children. For adults, the dress was more conservative. However, no matter if they were walking down Calle Principal or waiting at a bus - stop, most of the women had on either high-heeled shoes or gladiator sandals.

On our excursion to one of the local malls, I found that many of the stores were American stores. There were American Eagle, Aeropostale, and Converse stores just to name a few. A difference I noticed that Ticos do not leave their houses unless they have bathed, styled their hair, and put on muchas muchas sumas of make – up. In America, people, especially college-aged individuals, will dawn their jogging pants or pajamas when out in public. I asked my tico cousins, Joselyn, who is fourteen, and Juan Diego, who is seventeen, their opinions of the clothing fashion of Costa Rica. They both agreed that the younger “ticos” were skinny jeans, t-shirts, gladiator sandals, and some sort of jacket or hoodie. The jackets and hoodies are worn no matter the temperature.

Our group visited Costa Rica during what is considered their “winter” or “rainy” season. The temperature was an average of 26 ° C (78 ° F). I would be interested to witness what is worn during their “summer” or “dry” season. In conclusion, appearances are highly admired among this culture and the locals are NOT afraid to let a passerby know that they enjoy seeing their clothes or lack of clothes.
Costa Rica has a variety of wildlife to see wherever you go. The first animals you encounter in Costa Rica are the dogs. Most families keep small dogs as pets and many large mixed breed dogs roam the streets. Usually, it’s the small dogs behind the gates that are the most ferocious. The rest of them just look at you with a sad face as you pass by.

On the way to La Fortuna and Arenal Volcano, you pass by a little rest stop where there are many iguanas. While the iguanas are young and small, they are green; however, as they get older, they turn orange. They are usually not aggressive, but it is a good idea to stay back because they like their space. Also at Arenal, if you keep your eyes open, you might be able to find a howler monkey.

While traveling to Manuel Antonio, you pass by the Rio Tarcoles where there is an abundance of crocodiles to see. Some of them are swimming in the river and some are just hanging out on the bank near the river. There are also macaws that live near the Rio Tarcoles. Macaws always fly in pairs, never solo.

Once you arrive to Manuel Antonio, you can see monkeys everywhere. This is where you have to keep an eye on your stuff because the monkeys will come and steal your bags. In Manuel Antonio National Park you can find sloths, black iguanas, raccoons, and several different kinds of monkeys. There are howler monkeys, white-faced monkeys, and squirrel monkeys. Also, in Manuel Antonio, you can see a Jesus Christ lizard. These are the lizards that can run on water.
There are really two main options for television service in Costa Rica. One is Sky TV (http://www.sky.com/). This is the Direct TV equivalent in Costa Rica. The other is Cable Tica (http://www.cabletica.com/) or the main cable equivalent. As far as channels go, there are only two that are from Costa Rica, channel 7 and 13, TeleTica (http://www.teletica.com/) and SinArt (http://www.sinart.go.cr/) respectively. While I was in Costa Rica, I spent many nights with my familia tica in the sala watching tv. There are many movie channels that play popular movies voiced over in Spanish. There are also TV shows based out of other Latin American countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. These include news shows, music channels, and movies. Some of these channels include Telemundo, TeleHit, and Ultima.

One of my personal favorites on TeleTica was “Quien Quiere Ser Un Millionero?” It was the Costa Rican version on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” One of my familia tica’s favorites was “El Chavo del Ocho” which was a Mexican skit show. I also watched quite a few movies, including Shrek, Toy Story, and Superman Returns. Other than the few Latin American channels, they had many of the same channels we have here in the States, such as MTV, HBO, Disney, Nickelodeon, ESPN, AMC, and others. Actually, the television service in Costa Rica has the majority of the channels that our basic cable has. There were some shows in English with Spanish subtitles, but most were just dubbed over in Spanish.
Costa Rica Ticas

By Joey Sharif

Costa Rican girls also known as Ticas are very attractive. Their attractiveness rivals that of other countries well known for their beautiful women such as Brazil and Spain. These chicas often have dark hair, amazing tan bodies, and smiles that are sure to give you a heart murmur. During my time in Costa Rica I had many encounters with Ticas and I can say these beautiful women make Costa Rica the primary vacation destination for single men. These sexy ladies have a style similar to that of the U.S. involving skinny jeans to accentuate their coke bottle frames, which drive men wild. However, their swimwear is different from your typical American Bathing suits. Their swimwear is much more revealing, which is often frowned upon in the U.S., as it should be due to the absence of Ticas on U.S. beaches.

These God sent beauties are found throughout Costa Rica in malls, restaurants, city streets, discotecas, and of course the amazing beaches of Costa Rica. Be sure to brush up on your Spanish prior to your visit because these lovely ladies usually don’t speak much English. Therefore, you will have to communicate through the romance language known as Español.

The discotecas are a hot bed for hunnies! In discotecas these Ticas flock like the salmon of Capistrano to salsa, cumbia, and merengue music. It is always astonishing to watch these ladies shake their hips to the up-tempo beat of this music, which will leave you mesmerized. It is even more fun to get one the dance floor live la vida loca with these striking señoritas.

As you can see, Costa Rica is a single man’s dream, due to the abundance of voluptuous Ticas. These ladies are found throughout the country and make the trip worthwhile, so if beautiful women are one of the attractions you seek in a vacation then look no further than the Rich Coast!
Before going to Costa Rica, I knew there would be changes in the foods I would be eating on the trip. It did not take me long though, to discover the staples of the Costa Rican cuisine. Only a few days into the trip I noticed that two foods were present at every meal. This was rice and beans. My Costa Rican mom could prepare rice and beans in so many different ways that I never really got tired of them, okay maybe just a little tired of them. However, rice and beans represent the history and culture of most Latin American countries. This is because they can be bought in bulk for cheap, then prepared in advance to feed lots of mouths. This is still the case today, with rice and beans appearing in multiple varieties on the dinner table. Also, in Costa Rica there are all these little diners called Soda’s. They are all over the place from markets to street corners. These are a popular stop for locals and tourists to grab a quick bit to eat that taste like something their mom would have made. The famous dish here is the casado, which literally means a marriage between the rice, beans, and other items on the plate. The dish usually included chicken, beef, or fish served beside rice, beans, plantains, a cabbage salad, and anything else that might be in the kitchen. This is the traditional and typical Costa Rican dish.

In Costa Rica there are lots of produce markets and farms, so the produce there is extremely fresh. I loved going to the big markets and seeing fruits and vegetables that I had never seen before. Their bananas, mango, mango, tangerines, strawberries, avocados, and so many more were so good. I felt like I actually ate a lot healthier in Costa Rica because in my house there was hardly any processed food. We ate fresh fruit and freshly baked breads for breakfast. Then for supper we had vegetables, soup, or some sort of meat. However, when craving some Oreos or chips, there was a Mega Super near our house that I could stop at for a quick snack.

The types of drinks in Costa Rica were also different from what we mostly drink in the States. At most meals they serve a fresco, which is a fruit drink with either water or milk. Basically this is fruit put into a blender with sugar and either water or milk. I loved pineapple and water because it was not too strong, but oh so good. Of course, coffee is a signature staple of Costa Rica. I found out really fast that coffee time can be anytime. Since the main industry in Costa Rica is coffee, coffee is more than a drink but a way of life. I enjoyed this aspect very much being the coffee lover that I am, and I was very intrigued on how they brewed their coffee. I did not see one coffee maker while on the trip, instead they use these stands with what looks like a sock. They put the ground beans in the sock and then pour hot water into the sock and the coffee passes through to the pitcher. I do not know if it was the technique or the beans, but every cup of coffee I had was amazing; and that was quite a bit of coffee if I must admit.

I experienced many new styles of food and drink in Costa Rica. I was open to trying new things and allowing myself to become completely absorbed in their culture by eating their cuisine. I am not saying I liked everything I tried, but I gained so much more than simple a full stomach. I gained new insights into a different culture by sitting down at a table each night with my family. The simple act of eating enabled me to feel not so much like a tourist but a part of the “tico” life.
While I was studying abroad in Costa Rica, I got the opportunity to go bungee jumping. At first I was thinking about all the safety hazards and horror stories that I had heard, but I decided that those stories are probably one in a million and I couldn’t pass up this chance. So, our chaperone at CPI, Meggie, made the calls, took up our made, and the date was set. When the morning came Trent, Dan, Joey, Emily, and I got up early and met at the school to take the bus out to the bungee site.

The drive seemed to take forever, but when we finally arrived all you could see was vibrant green all around you. In the background, you could see the gush of the rolling river below, as you walk out onto the rusty orange bridge. I remember my boyfriend telling me that if anything looked old or rusty that I should back out. And now the bridge I am about to jump off of looks like it is about to fall apart. After filling out some waivers and signing away our lives, we make our way out to the middle of the bridge where the platform is. Nerves begin to rise as the workers are getting close to ready. The group begins to figure out what order we will take our plunges. Next came the harness. There is one that goes around your waist, somewhat like a rock climbing harness, and straps around you feet, too. There were several people in front of me in line so I got to watch a couple of jumps before I had to go. When it was my turn I climbed up on the platform, and they got all the bungee cords attached to me. The last step is to demonstrate how to use the clip that lifts you up.

When you are finally ready, the worker tells you to step up to the edge and drop the rope. This is when my heart was beating so fast I thought it could explode. I was so scared I could hardly breathe. I was trying to keep my eyes closed and not look down, but the man kept telling me “Look here, put your feet here”. So I would have to look down, right over the edge all the way to the rolling river at the very bottom. At this point, I just had to keep telling myself there is no “maybe I can jump”, but only that “I have to jump when he gets to 1!”. And then you take the leap. Terrified and praying that everything goes as planned you just have to let yourself fall. At first, it just takes your breath away and as hard as you try, you can’t even scream. There is just a moment of floating. It is the most amazing, indescribable feeling I have ever experienced.

So now when my mom asked me, “If your friends jumped off a bridge, would you?”

I can honestly answer her and say, “Por su puesto!”

By Jackie Motter
Café Britt is a coffee lover’s dream place to visit. It is a coffee plantation and factory, which has been operating in Heredia, Costa Rica since 1985. It is located near the Barva Volcano, and coffee grows well in Costa Rica because of the climate. Café Britt is committed to sustaining the environment and to make the world’s best coffee at the same time. When you enter Café Britt you are greeted with a sample of coffee and other samples are available in the garden area before the tour starts.

Four types of coffee tours are available such as the Classic Coffee Tour, the Coffee Lovers Tour, a nature and coffee tour, a combination tour.

The Classic Coffee Tour is led by two tour guides in traditional coffee harvesting dress who speak Spanish and English. The tour guides explain the process of how coffee is grown and harvested. Visitors are able to see the coffee grow on the trees in the plantation before it is harvested and processed into drinkable coffee. After learning of the growing and harvesting process, visitors are led to the roastery where the coffee is roasted and the packaged. The smell of the roastery is divine as you smell the different blends of coffee roast together. The types of coffees available at Café Britt are Espresso, being the strongest, Dark Roast, Tarrazú, Orgánico, Decaf, Light Roast, and Tres Rios. From the roastery, visitors watch as two volunteers and one of the tour guides demonstrate how to “cup” coffee and how to cool it with a spoon. Then a light-hearted play takes place, which describes the evolution of coffee from when the Arabs first discovered it until its present state in Costa Rica. Two different volunteers are then needed to witness a wedding ceremony between two people.

The tour is very interactive and humorous with the tour guides switch places throughout the tour and make jokes with the members of the tour. Despite the tour being entertaining, it is also very educational and impossible not to learn something about coffee. For instance, did you know that coffee actually starts out as a ripe cherry that as it matures and is processed turns into the coffee beans we use for coffee?

Once the tour is over visitors are invited to look at the different types of coffee and chocolate products Café Britt has for sale. The gift shop is very large and includes a coffee bar where a barista will make your favorite type of coffee drink. They sell numerous types of coffee from the ones listed above to Fair Trade coffees and more along with chocolate covered fruits and nuts. Café Britt also sells typical tourist souvenir items like coffee mugs, magnets, key chains, and T-shirts. It is a great place to buy some souvenirs for people back home, and don’t worry about not having enough room in your suitcase because they can ship their coffee directly to your house or you can order it online.

For more information on the types of coffee tours go to www.coffeetour.com and for more information on Café Britt or to check out their online gift shop go to www.cafebritt.com
There are a great number of diverse activities that appeal to a wide range of people. Living with a familia tica is a mind-blowing opportunity. And this opportunity that is as interactive has you want it to be. For example, I lived with a family of four whom were very welcoming of me into their daily lives. I spent my time with my family tica likes and dislikes.

My Papa Tico played on a soccer team in the small town of Heredia. He played twice while I was staying in their home. He was open to talk about his team and share stories about the sport he loved. My Mama Tica was a mother of two who deeply loved to talk about the joys in her life. I spent most of dinners talking of the evening news and about the key points in this family’s life.

My sister Tica and bother Tico were ages 17 and 20, respectfully. They were on a two-week vacation from school the first 2 weeks I was there. My first evening I spent with my sister Tica, we went to mass that Sunday evening with some of her guys friends.

However, one of my favorite nights I spent with my family tica was singing Nellie’s greatest hits of the 90s with my sibling Ticos. It was a simple reminder of my younger brother back in the states. It also gave a perfect example that like music some these are international.

There are also the disco techas, dance club in Costa Rica. However, do not be alarmed about not knowing the dances because, C.P.I. offer dance classes. The salsa, cumbia, along with a few others are taught at the school. I travel to four disco techas during my stay in Costa Rica. I found these locations premium to practice the dances of the culture. These experiences were wonderful in showing another aspect of the culture. I was able to dance with both locals and members from my group during my trip. I greatly enjoyed the time by making a fool of myself and giving it my all.

The weekend excursions also gave opportunities to observe the Ticos in a different setting. During my stay in Manuel Antonio, I was able to see a local fair. At this fair, there was a tiny amusement park, games of chance, food, and dancing. A few in my group even enjoyed the games and danced as we walked through the neighborhood party. It has a time to really see the people relaxing and enjoying their weekend outside of workweek.

The movie theater is also a great way to spend the evening. On Wednesday the local movies have half price tickets. A part of the group went to see Shrek four. While a few, took the time to walk about the very laborite mall. The food choices along with shoe selection were very extensive. I will encourage future study aboard students to try new foods or simply purchase cute shoes. These times spent within the group gives others’ opinions to culture being experience daily.

The few options discussed above are to give assistance in exploring the nightlife of Costa Rica. There are many choices and variations when deciding what to do with free time. I encourage you to try it all and to add to the list. As stated by Tamsen Brooks, “You only experience Costa Rica like this once”. So, I will leave you with a thought, what will your “Puda Vida” mean to you:
Tico? What is that? When Daniel Arias (local Tico) was asked this question he responded with this answer: “Well first of all remember that “tico” is a nice way to make something smaller; for example, not poco but poquitico. Also, for me being a Tico is being part of a community that lives together with nature, agriculture and a community that is trying to make its true development- in which most people are always late for appointments.” He ended the quote by writing “jeje” (in English “hehe”... lo siento... un chiste malo.) His quote paints a good picture of a typical Tico. They are laid-back men who like to have a good time, but they are so much more.

Different Ticos have different styles- like all men in the world. I once heard the younger guys described as fitting into one of two categories: the “punk” look and the “polo shirt/preppy” look. I started noticing these trends immediately. My two brother Ticos were in the “punk” category and they both had their eyebrows pierced and one had his lip pierced with gauged ears, but both were extremely charming and were super sweet to their mama. These are not the only trends though. Some Ticos are businessmen and wear nice suits all day while others sport T-shirts. One cannot pinpoint one exact style because they are individuals. However, no matter what they are wearing they almost always have a confident attitude.

Speaking of attitude... Ticos like to flirt and I actually read somewhere online and also in a travel book that it is a part of their culture. True statement! It is well-mannered flirting (for the most part) and is usually appreciated by the women (Ticas and non-Ticas... solo digo.) Also, like Daniel said, Ticos are often late for appointments. This does not mean they are lazy or inconsiderate of other people’s time. It is more about them taking their time and enjoying it. They can definitely be described as easy-going. They do not like to rush or be rushed. This also does not mean that they are not hard workers because they are! Ticos, young and old, work hard at school, at home and at their jobs. They want a good life and they work for it. Seems like good philosophy to me.
One of the weekend trips that we took while in Costa Rica was to Arenal Volcano. Arenal is one of the most active volcanos in Costa Rica. It erupts every 3 to 200 minutes, which makes it very active.

The weekend began with a trip down a curvy mountain road and through a few small towns. We stopped in a few of these towns to see certain things. The Catholic Churches was one of the main things that we saw in these towns. These churches were very large and very extravagant, with colorful windows depicting Christ and other stories from the bible. We also saw the world’s largest ox wagon. This wagon is in the Guinness Book of World Records. The wagon towered over all of us and was painted in a very elaborate designs and colors. Then finally one of the last places that we stopped before making it to La Fortuna, which is where Volcano Arenal is located, was an iguana habitat on the banks of a river. These iguanas are not the typical house pets that we know. These iguanas stretched 4 feet at least, and most of them were a bright orange color.

When we arrived in La Fortuna, we went to eat at a nice restaurant in a semi-outdoor setting that one of their main dishes was shaped like a volcano. The restaurant would tower the arroz con pollo (rice with chicken) into the shape of a volcano. After eating it was time to go to the resort that we stayed at, Arenal Springs. Arenal Springs was a really upscale resort that was fairly secluded and many of the rooms where separated into apartment style. Inside our rooms was another incredible sight. The rooms were very large and they really looked like they were from a brochure or a catalog.

After settling into our rooms we got ready to go to the Baldi Hot Springs in La Fortuna. The hot springs had numerous different pools that were set at different temperatures and had small waterfalls and water slides there. The pools there are really relaxing after a long ride from Heredia. Then it was finally time for supper, which was a buffet style that was spread with numerous different meats, fruit, vegetables, and desserts. Then it was time to go see the volcano erupt. Now we all had images of the volcano erupting that it would be this massive amount of lava rolling down the side, but it really wasn’t. It was quite magnificent watching the volcano erupt but it wasn’t the amounts of lava that keep flowing over the sides.

The next day was one of the most anticipated on the trip, going to swim around a waterfall. I don’t know about any of the others that were in our group but I was very excited. Before we had arrived we were told that there would be a hike of 600 steps down to the waterfall and 600 back up, that was quite interesting trying to work our way down the side of the mountain, but it was very rewarding because at the bottom was the waterfall. The waterfall was 200 meters high and fell from the jungle way above our heads. The water in the pool at the bottom of the waterfall was ice cold though, so getting in was like an adventure. We had to crawl across slippery rocks and instead of being able to jump right in, we had to ease ourselves in, because of all the rocks in the water. When the water hits your skin though it’s like taking a bath in ice, but the more you stay in the pool the more accustomed to it you become.

Finally the last part of our weekend before we left La Fortuna was having lunch, but this was no ordinary lunch. This day was the finale of one of the world’s biggest games, The World Cup. We had planned to have lunch at a different location, that did not have a TV, but with The World Cup playing and us being in Costa Rica, this was one of the once in a lifetime chances that we could not pass up. So our guide Daniel, found us a restaurant that was showing the game and reserved us a table and we watched The World Cup from Costa Rica.

This weekend was one of the most memorable experiences I have ever had. There was so much excitement and new opportunities to experience things that I may never get another chance to do again.

Christopher Woods
When you are in Costa Rica, you will be staying with a host family. This is the best way to learn Spanish. Most of the families do not speak English, but do not be alarmed. They will help improve your communication skills just by the simple day-to-day interactions you have with them. They are caring, considerate and willing to help with anything you need during your stay.

My Familia Tica were a mother, a father, a brother and a sister, but not all families are like this. You may have only parents or maybe even just a mother. I lived in a family compound with two other students from our UNA group. We all lived with different individual families, but our families were related. One student was with my abuelita tica (grandmother). If you end up in a compound with other students, it is best to agree to speak Spanish as often as possible so as not to...
I have just returned from Costa Rica, and I must admit it was a wonderful place to immerse in the Spanish language and culture! While visiting Costa Rica, I had the opportunity to encounter many differences in lifestyle first-hand.

First, Costa Rica is the greenest country in the world. The people of Costa Rica are very proud of this fact and work hard to keep their streets clean. Their motto is Pura Vida...Pure Life. The term originates with nature. Costa Ricans feel more in tune with nature with a healthier, happier life. Costa Rica initiated a goal to be carbon neutral by 2021. Therefore, they have instilled a program of mass planting and half of its territory is now covered in trees. Ninety percent of Costa Rica’s energy comes from renewable sources.

Second, Costa Rica is full of natural beauty. Not only does it have beautiful mountains and beaches, but it also has seven active volcanoes, and 9,000 different species of tropical plants and trees. The Costa Rican rainforest covers 25% of the national territory and has an abundant diversity of wildlife. We saw sloths, monkeys, iguanas, raccoons, crocodiles, and even a pink bird.

Third, Costa Rica with its temperate climate and volcanic soil grows plenty of fresh fruits. A few of these fresh fruits are papayas, mangos, cantaloupe, guavas, mamones, watermelon, coffee, cas and pineapple. I have had cas in a fruit drink and have been told it is very good for a person’s health....especially the kidneys. The pineapple is the freshest I have ever had!! Some of you may be asking why I have put coffee on this list. Actually, coffee is considered a fruit. It grows in a cherry bean. Coffee is one of Costa Rica’s biggest exports and grows all over Costa Rica. They take special care to grow and produce the very best!