



Things You Should Know About San José, Costa Rica

› History of San José, Costa Rica

San José is located near the middle of Costa Rica in the picturesque and verdant Central Valley, approximately 3,800 feet above sea level. The city was originally founded in 1736 by the Cabildo de León colonial council. The city takes its name from parish patron St. Joseph. A tobacco factory was built in 1782 and tobacco became an important cash crop, spurring economic and population growth. San José did not obtain its municipal charter until 1823, making it one of Latin America’s youngest capitals. In 1837, the neighboring city of Cartago, wishing to overthrow the government of the newly independent Republic of Costa Rica and join Mexico, attacked San José in the “La Guerra de la Liga” (the League War). San José was victorious and remained the country’s capital.

In the late 19th century, French coffee entrepreneur Monsieur Amon helped San José become a center for coffee production, ushering in the so-called “Golden Age” of Costa Rican coffee. The coffee industry brought wealth and prosperity to San José and the industry continued to grow rapidly throughout the 20th century. Today, San José’s central location makes it a strategic transportation and tourism hub and an important stop along the Pan-American Highway.

› Modern San José

Modern San José is a vibrant, dynamic, and bustling city of more than 365,000 people. The sprawling metro area spans 17.2 square miles. As the country’s economic and cultural epicenter, San José boasts a lively nightlife and entertainment scene with trendy bars and restaurants frequented by “Ticos” (locals). It’s also home to the University of Santo Tomas and the University of Costa Rica. San José is also rich with historic architectural landmarks like the National Theater of Costa Rica and many excellent museums, as well as expansive parks, fountains, and plazas.

› Climate and Clothing

San José’s climate is generally mild. Temperatures range from 59 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit (15 to 30 degrees Celsius). However, San José can be windy and cooler due to its elevation. The rainy season runs from May to November. Business attire is recommended for the Roundtable. Comfortable shoes and a jacket are suggested for travel around the city.

› Tips

All restaurants add a mandatory 10% service charge/gratuity to the final bill, but feel free to add something extra for exceptional service. In hotels, it’s customary to tip bell service \$1 per bag, housekeepers around \$2 per day, and bartenders \$1 per drink. For cab rides, a tip from \$1 to \$5, depending on distance, is sufficient.



› Hotel/Conference Location

DoubleTree by Hilton Cariari Hotel

San Antonio de Belen Ciudad Cariari,
San José, Costa Rica

TEL: +506-2-209-1000

FAX: +506-2-239-0285

› Cocktail Reception & BBQ Buffet

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Cariari San José

Poolside • Monday, Nov. 4 • 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

› In Case of Emergency

Emergency Number:

Costa Rica has a 911 emergency service like that of the United States. If you need an ambulance, dial 128 and to report a fire, dial 118.

› Places to Visit

San José is one of Latin America's hidden gems. It's filled with excellent museums, historic architecture, spacious plazas, soaring skyscrapers, numerous sculptures, flowing fountains, and many verdant parks.

In 2006, San José was appointed "Ibero-American Capital of Culture." The Plaza de La Cultura complex houses several outstanding museums, including the Pre-Columbian Gold Museum and the National Coin Museum. Another important museum is the Museum of Jade, which contains the world's largest collection of American jade, as well as approximately 7,000 pieces of pre-Columbian artifacts. The National Museum of Costa Rica is housed in the former Bellavista Fortress. It contains an extensive collection of pre-Columbian archeological works dating back to 12,000 B.C. And the Museum of Costa Rican Art houses more than 6,400 works of art dating from the mid-19th century.

The National Theater of Costa Rica is San José's most impressive and important historic landmark. Built in 1897, its beautiful interior features elegant European architecture and opulent Italian furnishings.

Another important landmark worth visiting is the Metropolitan Cathedral of San José. The beautiful interior features a breathtaking domed ceiling, intricate wood carvings, and exquisite stained-glass windows.

San José is also known for its parks; especially La Sabana Metropolitan Park. Known as "the lungs of San José," this massive park was once the country's first international airport. It features vast open green spaces, lakes, fountains, and is home to the country's national stadium and the Museum of Costa Rican Art.

No visit to San José would be complete without a stop at the colorful and lively Central Market. This maze of more than 200 shops spans an entire city block. It offers a wide variety of local wares, handicrafts, trinkets, fresh food, and inexpensive meals served in small restaurants called "sodas."

› Food & Nightlife

A younger generation has reinvigorated San José's restaurant and nightlife scene which continues to evolve and thrive. Many outstanding and trendy restaurants downtown can be found along the city's main thoroughfare, Central Avenue. Another emerging gastronomic hub is Barrio Escalante which is pioneering a mini culinary renaissance with hip foodie tours of trendy nightspots. Costa Rica is also known for its coffee and the coffee culture is just about everywhere. From sushi to salsa, a savory culinary adventure awaits.

› Transportation

There are a variety of transportation options to get you around the city conveniently and inexpensively. Uber has become increasingly popular and is usually less expensive than taking a taxi. Buses are inexpensive, but crowded, and there are no posted bus schedules. Red-colored "official" taxicabs are everywhere but taxi drivers tend to be a bit pushy. Avoid taking private taxis.

› Regulators' Dinner at Ram Luna Restaurant

Tuesday, Nov. 5

- Depart hotel for restaurant at 7 p.m.
- Depart restaurant for hotel at 10:30 p.m.

› For More Information

For more information about San José, things to do there, local culture, and about places to see beyond San José, check out the visitcostarica.com website. We look forward to welcoming you to the 12th Latin American and Caribbean Regulators Roundtable. See you in San José!