

## **Costa Rica, Conde Nast**

For many visitors, Costa Rica is all about the wildlife. More than a quarter of the country is made up of tropical reserves, wildlife refuges, and national parks. In a land that covers a mere 0.03 percent of the world's surface, some five percent of the planet's animal and plant species are thriving, including 10 percent of all bird species, from the chestnut-mandibled toucan to the scarlet macaw.

Other people come for the beach and abundant coastline (nearly 800 miles of it), both Caribbean and Pacific, the latter offering some excellent surfing. There are several active volcanoes, including Volcán Arenal, which erupts daily and dribbles lava every month or so. At another, Volcán Poás, you can gaze into the crater to see pools of water in iridescent blues and greens.

Visiting is made even smoother by the stable political climate of Costa Rica, though not by its road system, which is atrocious. Consequently, though the country's surface area is not large, getting around is such a pain—especially in the rainy season—that most people concentrate on one area at a time and don't even try to tour all the terrain. Since there are seven provinces comprising very diverse regions, you can return to Costa Rica repeatedly and have a different vacation every time.

While some just visit the Osa Peninsula or the Nicoya Peninsula in one visit, it's possible to stop off at Lake Arenal, Monteverde, and Manuel Antonio in one trip, for those interested in combining different places.

Read this note on Conde Nast website  
(<http://www.concierge.com/destination/costarica/seeanddo>)