Costa Rica and Panama
Costa Rican Flag
Map of Costa Rica
Costa Rica

• Population 4.8 million
• Area 19,700 square miles (somewhat smaller than West Virginia)
• Unitary constitutional presidential republic (power in national government)
• Long-standing and stable democracy
• Highly educated workforce
• Official language: Spanish
• Regional languages: Mekatelyu – Bribi – Patois
• ¼ of its area is protected jungle
• Little indigenous population
• Rated as one of the happiest countries in “Blue Zones of Happiness”
• Currency: Colon about 600 to $1 per capita income $18,000
History

• 1502 Columbus sailed to eastern shore and reported gold jewelry worn by natives
• 1522 Gil González Dávila landed on the west coast and seized some of the native’s jewelry
• 1522-1821 Colonial period: Costa Rica was the southernmost province of the Captaincy General of Guatemala
  • Lacked resources such as gold and silver
  • Forbidden from trading with Panama
  • Described in 1719 as “the poorest and most miserable colony in S.A.”
  • No indigenous population available for forced labor
History (2)

• 1821 independence – Imperialists wanted to join Mexican empire and republicans wanted independence
• 1823 Battle of Ochomogo won by the republicans
  • San Jose became capital
• 1823 part of Federal Republic of Central America
• 1838 full independence
• 1856 William Walker’s unauthorized incursion into Costa Rica is repulsed by President Juan Rafael Mora Porras
  • Juan Santamaria was killed in the fight against Walker and is remembered as a national hero
History (3)

• 1869 era of peaceful democracy begins
• 1917-1919 Federico Tinoco Granados ruled as a dictator
  • Coup d’état led to oppressive dictatorship that tried to crush all opposition
  • Granados was assassinated in 1919
• 1919-1948 peaceful democracy resumes
• 1948 44-day Costa Rican civil war: José Figueres Ferrer led an uprising
  • Results
    • Constitution guaranteeing free elections
    • Abolition of standing army
    • 16 peaceful presidential elections through 2018
History (4)

• Economic crisis of 1978
  • Coffee prices dropped while oil prices skyrocketed
  • President Rodrigo Carazo transformed Costa Rica’s economy from agriculture to technology and services
    • Companies like Microsoft, Motorola, P & G and Intel established operations
    • Tourism becomes a major mainstay of the economy

• 1982 harsh austerity program introduced; U.S. pressures Costa Rica to oppose Sandinistas in Nicaragua

• 1986 Oscar Arias Sanchez elected President

• 1987 Arias wins Nobel Peace Prize for peace plan between Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras
• 2004 Corruption scandal involving 3 former presidents
• 2005 heavy flooding on Caribbean coast creates national emergency
• 2007 Costa Rica said to be on course to be first carbon neutral country
• 2010 First woman president, Laura Chinchilla, elected
• https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Chinchilla
• 2012 Earthquake kills 2 in Nicoya peninsula west of San Jose
• 2018 Carlos Alvarado becomes president
American Involvement

- 1850’s William Walker intervened w/o U.S. government support
- Government contracted with U.S. businessman Minor C. Keith to build a railroad from San Jose to Limon. Completed 1890
- 1938 dispute between United Fruit Company (bananas) and peasants. UFC was required to sign a collective agreement with trade unions in 1938.
- 1980’s Reagan administration used Costa Rican territory to attack Sandinista government of Nicaragua
- 2007 the U.S. reduced Costa Rica’s debt in return for conservation of Costa Rica’s forests
Education in Costa Rica

• Free and compulsory since 1869
• 30% of national budget –
• Pre-education before age 7
• Primary education is compulsory
  • Uniform required to reduce social and economic distinctions
• Secondary education (12-17) is voluntary
  • First 3 years general education
  • Second part is specialized (academic or technical)
• Public and private universities
• School year runs Feb-Jun, July-November
Health Care in Costa Rica

- Universal health care
- \( \frac{3}{4} \) of health care system is public
- Focus on preventive care
- Emergency care free of charge
- Private hospitals used by 30%
- Many drugs available without prescription
- Pharmacies can treat minor diseases and Costa Ricans start there
- Abortions mostly illegal
Government

• President and two Vice-Presidents elected for a four year term
  • If no one wins more than 40% of the vote in the first round, a second round is held between the top two candidates.
  • Feb 4, 2018 Fabricio Alvarado Muñez from the conservative National Restoration Party won 24% of the vote and Carlos Alvarado Quesada from the Citizen’s Action Party won 21%
  • April 1, 2018 Quesada won 60.6% of the vote

• Legislative assembly has 57 members elected from closed proportional representation in each of C.R’s seven provinces
  • 2018 National Liberation Party won 17 seats, NRP 14, CAP 10, Social Christian Unity Party 2 seats, Broad front 1 seat

• Constitution defines Costa Rica as a Roman Catholic nation
Political Parties

• Traditionally two dominant parties
  • Social Christian Unity Party (center-right party)
  • National Liberation Party (center party)

• After 2002
  • Citizen’s Action Party (center-left to left-wing)
    • Won Presidential elections in 2014 and 2018
  • Right-wing parties
    • Libertarian Movement, Costa Rican Renewal Party, National Restoration Party, Christian Democratic Alliance
  • Left-wing party
    • Broad Front

Costa Rica’s Environmental Agenda

- Carlos Alvarado Quesada wants Costa Rica to:
  - Build an electric rail-based public transport system for San Jose
  - Run the electric grid on 100% renewable energy by 2030
  - 70% of buses zero emissions by 2030, 100% by 2050
  - 60% of Costa Rica’s land mass to be covered by rain forests by 2050
Costa Rica Tourism

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNKwiYUFB34
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vxm7doOH5tg
Costa Rican National Parks

• https://www.visitcostarica.com/en/costa-rica/things-to-do/ecoturism/national-parks?gclid=Cj0KCQjwuZDtBRDvARIsAPXFx3CB74Dul9DumDaGKyUyHwtEjPl-Ks6gSmJ0ylr
Costa Rican Immigration to the U.S.

• 126,418 smallest Central American population
• Mostly in NYC area, New Jersey, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Florida, and North Carolina
• Only 3% of total immigration from Central America
• Tend to assimilate into American or other Hispanic cultures
Retire in Costa Rica?

• Lower living costs: about $1,300 to $1,600 a month for a single person
• Lower airline prices than other retirement destinations
• 1 bedroom apartment costs about $480
• Relatively cheap fresh fruits, vegetables and staple foods
• Other common expenses lower than in the U.S.
• Incredible natural environments
• As many as 50,000 Americans live in Costa Rica
Costa Rican Crafts

• Oxcarts

• Pottery in Guaitil
  • https://www.stayintamarindo.com/guaitil-pottery-capital-of-costa-rica/
  • https://costaricamonkeytours.com/costarica-travelguide/the-guatil-pottery-village-of-guanacaste/
Happiness in Costa Rica
From “Blue Zones of Happiness”

• Alejandro Zuniga and Costa Rica
  • Avocado vendor
  • No car, no expensive jewelry, no fine clothes or big electronics
  • Work provides six or seven hours of social interaction
  • Costa Rica’s social system takes care of most people’s needs (strong social support from family)
  • Small property owners instead of large haciendas
  • High literacy and mandatory primary school
  • Universal health care, which works to keep people healthy and social security
  • No army since 1949
  • Refugees from other Latin American countries
Costa Rican Music

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvgYN-Bhme4
Is it safe?

• State department level 1 warning which is exercise normal precautions
• Warnings for a central neighborhood in Limon, Liberia, pavas and hospital neighborhood in San Jose
Panama
Panama

- Population 4 Million
- Area 29,119 Square Miles (a little smaller than South Carolina)
- Official Language: Spanish
- Government: Unitary presidential constitutional republic
- Ethnic groups: 65% Mestizo, 12.3% native Panamanians, 9.2% Afro-Panamanian, 6.8% Mulatto, 6.7% white Panamanian
- Currency: Balboa, US dollar
- Per capita income $28,000
Topographic Map of Panama
Map of Panama Canal
History of Panama (1)

- Pre-Columbian Panama widely settled by Chibchan, Chocan, and Cueva peoples, who lived by hunting and gathering and growing corn, cacao, and root crops
- 1501 Rodrigo de Bastidas discovered the east coast of Panama
- 1502 Columbus arrived
- 1510 Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and Martin Fernández agreed on the first settlement near the Tarena River
- 1513 Balboa discovered the Pacific coast of Panama and named the Pacific the “south sea”
History of Panama (2)

• 1519 Present day Panama City was founded
• 1531 portages were established between Panama City and the Atlantic so gold could be exported to Spain
• 1671 Pirate Henry Morgan sacked Panama City and destroyed it in a fire
• 1673 Panama City rebuilt and re-established 5 miles from the original site
• 1713 Spain founded the Viceroyalty of New Granada including Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela
History of Panama (3)

• 1821 Panama declared independence, joining Venezuela, New Granada (Colombia), and Ecuador to form Republic of Colombia
• 1830 Panama separated but, in 1831, rejoined a Republic of Colombia, reduced in size
• 19th century chaotic relationship between Panama and Colombia continues
• 1855 first transcontinental railroad completed, Panama Railway
• 1882-1914 Panama canal (more history elsewhere)
• 1903 Panamanian separation from Colombia
• 1903 -1968 Panama a republic dominated by a commercially oriented oligarchy
• 1964 January 9 Martyr Day 20 rioters killed protesting U.S. occupation of Canal Zone, 500 Panamanians wounded
• 1968 Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid elected president for the third time. Ousted by the Panamanian military first 2 times, by the National Guard the 3rd time in favor of a military junta. General Omar Torrijos emerges as principle power, implementing populist policies, demanding wage increases from multinational companies.
• 1977 Torrijos, Jimmy Carter sign Torrijos-Carter treaties, ceding the Panama Canal to Panama in 2000.
Panama History (5)

• 1981 Torrijos mysteriously dies in a plane crash. Foul play suspected
• 1983 Manuel Noriega takes over
• 1987 U.S. embassy attacked. U.S. freezes aid to Panama.
• 1988 Noriega indicted in U.S. courts for drug trafficking
• 1989 Noriega annuls election of Guillermo Endara. In December, U.S. troops invade Panama for seven days
• 2000 Panama takes control of the canal.
• 2019 Businessman Laurentino Cortizo wins 2019 election
Government of Panama

• President is elected for a non-renewable five year term
• President appoints a cabinet
• Unicameral National Assembly consists of 71 members elected for five year terms and eligible for reelection
• Supreme Court appointed for 10 year terms with approval of National Assembly
  • Separate divisions for civil, penal, and administrative cases
Political parties in Panama

• Democratic Revolutionary Party (social democracy) 35 deputies
• Democratic Change Party (Liberal conservatism) 18 deputies
• Panameña Party (national conservatism) 8 deputies
• National Republican Liberal Movement (Liberalism) 5 deputies
• No one party can govern alone: coalition governments
• 2019 election: Laurentino Cortizo of the DRP won with 33.35% of the vote.
Education

• Elementary education free and compulsory for children between 6 and 15
  • 1/3 of Panamanians over 15 have not completed primary school
  • Literacy rate is 90%

• Public and private universities
History of the Canal (1)

• 1880’s French construction team unsuccessfully tries to build the canal. Incessant rains caused heavy landslides and yellow fever and malaria spread

• 1902 U.S. throws weight behind Panamanian Independence

• 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty between the U.S. and France gives U.S. exclusive and permanent possession of the Panama Canal. Many Panamanians considered it an infringement on Panamanian sovereignty

• 1904 U.S. starts building the canal

• 1905 Chief Engineer John Stevens recruits West Indian laborers and persuades President Roosevelt that a lock canal was best

• 1909 Three locks were begun raising ships 85 feet above sea level
History of the Canal (2)

• 1914 Canal opened. Cost:
  • Over $350 million (most expensive project to date)
  • 5,600 workers killed of 56,000 workers

• 1935 Madden Dam added (reservoir to ensure operation of canal)

• WWII 65,000 Americans stationed to protect canal

• 1977 Torrijos and Carter sign treaty to cede canal 12/31/1999

• 1999 Panama takes over canal

• 2016 expansion doubled the capacity of the canal increasing the width and depth of the lanes allowing larger ships to pass
Signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties

- The treaties were the source of vehement controversy in the United States, particularly among conservatives led by Ronald Reagan, Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms, who regarded them as the surrender of a strategic American asset to what they characterized as a hostile government.
- In the year preceding the final transfer of canal assets there was an effort in the United States Congress, notably House Joint Resolution 77 (HJR 77) introduced by Helen Chenoweth-Hage, to declare the Carter–Torrijos treaties null and void.
- 1999 the treaty was implemented as planned.
Time Lapse through the canal

• It takes 8 to 10 hours to go through the canal.
• Cost may be $450,000 depending on the size of the vessel
• https://www.cheapestdestinationsblog.com/2013/07/19/how-much-does-it-cost-to-go-through-the-panama-canal/
• Lets go through in six minutes thanks to time lapse photography
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8TkcWhmByg
Panamanian Immigration to the U.S.

• As of 2010, 165,000 Panamanians had immigrated to the U.S.
• Sixth-smallest Hispanic group and the second smallest Central American group
• The largest number went to Florida, New York, California, and Texas
• Many blacks among the Panamanian immigrants with others being mixed race
Retirement in Panama?

• Lower cost of living
• Better climate
• Pensionado program provides Americans with deep discounts
• Good medical care

Cons

• Slower pace of life means slower service
• Limited infrastructure in some rural areas
• Power outages common in rural areas
Panamanian Crafts: the Mola

Music in Panama

• Salsa, Cumbia, Tamborito (folk dance), Conga, tipico, Jazz, Calypso
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4LWpXMjLZE
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyXVnNa5MbU
Is it safe?

• Overall: level 1 exercise normal caution
Next week

• Colombia and Venezuela