

# Costa Rica

## Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax<sup>®</sup>, a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and US CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

## General Information

Costa Rica is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in Central America between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (south of Nicaragua and north of Panama), the climate classifications range from humid equatorial (long dry season) in the west to humid equatorial (no dry season) in the northeast.

## Vaccinations

**Routine vaccinations** are essential due to a persistent rise of vaccine-preventable diseases (especially markedly high rates of diphtheria, pertussis, and measles) globally. Prior to travel, travelers should be up-to-date with the age-appropriate routine vaccinations recommended by their home country, which may include: COVID-19; *H. influenzae* type B (Hib); hepatitis A; hepatitis B; influenza; measles, mumps, rubella; meningococcal; pneumococcal; polio; rotavirus; tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap preferred; consider an early pertussis booster for high-risk travelers); varicella.

## Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Costa Rica, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- **Requirement:**

A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers aged  $\geq 9$  months coming from countries with risk of YF transmission (except Argentina and Panama), from Tanzania and Zambia, and with specifications for the following risk countries: Colombia (the entire country except the capital city of Bogotá and Barranquilla, Cali, Cartagena, Medellín, and San Andrés Providencia); Ecuador (applies only to Morona-Santiago, Napo, Orellana, Pastaza, Sucumbíos, and Zamora-Chinchipe and excludes the rest of the country); Paraguay (the entire country except the capital city of Asunción); Perú (the entire country except the capital city of Lima, Cajamarca, Cuzco, Lambayeque, Piura, Tumbes, Inca Trail, and Machu Picchu); Trinidad and Tobago (the entire country except the urban areas of the capital city of Port of Spain, the island of Tobago, and travelers in transit). Note: This does not apply to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) in risk countries.

*Supplementary requirement for exit:* Costa Rican authorities enforce proof of YF vaccination for residents departing Costa Rica for a country with risk of YF transmission and who intend to return to Costa Rica. This exit requirement is to supplement Costa Rica's existing entry requirement under the International Health Regulations.

## Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against chikungunya, mpox, rabies, or typhoid fever.

## Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

## WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2020) Very low Malaria risk was historically due almost exclusively to *P. vivax*. Negligible or no risk of malaria transmission exists in the country.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **A** - Very limited risk of malaria transmission. Mosquito bite prevention only.

*WHO Country List footnote:* When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

## CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Rare local cases in Matina Canton in Limón Province, Sarapiquí Canton in Heredia Province, and Pital District in San Carlos Canton in Alajuela Province.

- Drug resistance<sup>3</sup> : None.
- Malaria species: *P. vivax*
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

<sup>3</sup> Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

## Other Concerns

### Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, with moderate risk in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures are generally inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

### Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent brucellosis, seafood poisoning may be needed.

### Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chagas' disease (American trypanosomiasis), dengue, leishmaniasis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

### Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites.

## Safety and Security

### Key Safety Risks

- Road conditions and traffic collisions
- Public transportation
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for women
- Food and beverage spiking
- Theft of vehicles

- Scams
- Natural disasters

## Key Security Threats

- Risk of violent protests
- Violent crime

## Emergency Phone Number

The national emergency number is 911.

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