

# Paradise Post

News From Ojochal, Costa Ballena,  
Costa Rica and Beyond



OCTOBER 2016

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## UPCOMING TOUR DATES

Discovery Property Tours are **\$299 per person, 4 days all inclusive**. We don't bill until a week before the tour.

November	12 - 15
November (Thanksgiving tour)	23 - 26
December	7 - 10
December	28 - 31
January	4 - 7
January	18 - 21
January (sold out)	25 - 28
January	1/31 -2/3
February	8 - 11
March	5 - 8

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## Updates from the OSA

Wow, here we are at the end of October already, seems like summer had just begun. Luckily for me I have a summer home in Massachusetts as well as property in Costa Rica. So when summer ends in the Northeast, I head south, stopping along the way at our home in Key West. Even Florida gets cold in the winter but not the southern Pacific zone of Costa Rica. Our temperatures average 82 degrees year round making for nearly perfect weather any time of the year. Winter is an excellent time to visit on one of our 4 day property tours for just \$299 all inclusive.

Sure we have a rainy season from May till the end of October, locals call it the green season since everything is so lush and green. That's the time of year that many of the nearly 600 species of orchids bloom as well as when we get the most magnificent sunsets. Cloudy skies give sunsets there best palette to demonstrate colors on. It's no wonder most locals prefer the rainy season to the dry season.

With the upcoming elections in the US, we've already seen a measurable increase in attendance on our 4 day Costa Rica tours. We expect to have a very busy winter season and have already sold out one of our tours in January. Be sure to book early if you want to come visit, since in the past three presidential election years we see a substantial increase in visitors considering leaving the US after the elections. Everyone can't be happy since only one candidate will win and without going into politics, this has been one of the ugliest election campaigns I've seen in

my entire life. Costa Rica not only offers a refreshing alternative to the US political scene but to those living outside the US, there's no requirement to carry health insurance through Obamacare. Legal residents in Costa Rica receive excellent healthcare coverage through the CAJA at a fraction of the cost in the US.

So what are you waiting for. Come see for yourself why so many North Americans have chosen Costa Rica for their retirement destination or to own a vacation home or rental property. With super low taxes and insurance, owning a home in Costa Rica is very cost effective. Rental demand has been strong and carrying costs are often less than \$1000 per year for property tax and insurance. With no capital gains on appreciation of homes in Costa Rica, your exit strategy is also inexpensive.

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## Drones open a whole new world for photography and videography in Costa Rica



**O**KAY SO THE DRONES ARE COMING. Amazon talks of offering same day delivery service in many major cities in the US and the FAA and many local governments are struggling to design rules for aviation safety and privacy as well. So what do drones have to do with our newsletter? Here's my story. I saw my first drone in Manuel Antonio, Quepos Costa Rica about 5 years ago. It was hovering over the beach area near the national park and recording footage of monkeys. It was a Phantom brand drone and I had to go and personally talk to the

operator, since at that point I was hooked. So I bought my first drone about a year later, more of a toy than a drone, it lacked the sophistication, GPS, gyros and gimbal mounted cameras found on many of the more expensive drones. This was a drone you had to learn to fly and control or you would lose it. Truth is, I lost it on the very first day I owned it but after walking my entire neighborhood and with the help of

consulting YouTube videos, I was able to finally find it. I've finally lost that drone one windy day when a friend wanted to give it a try. I'd had it long enough that it owed me nothing but I was still sad to see it cruise up, up and away, never to be seen again. So fast forward into 2016. Our team has now secured a few Phantom drones with great cameras and easy to fly features like "return to home" which brings your drone back to where it left when all else fails. We are just starting to accumulate footage of our developments, homes and beach areas and look forward to showing off some great drone footage in the near future.

**The video has some nice footage of one of our newer developments (Chontales) undergoing a bunch of new construction. There's also a nice clip from Playa Ventana, one of our more popular local beaches.** When checking out the video, be sure to select full screen from the lower right corner and turn your sound up to enjoy the music.

You can see the video here:

<http://www.viddler.com/v/8e22f0e6>

## Retiring comfortably outside of U.S. borders



**F**or many people in the U.S. thoughts of retirement conjure up images of Florida, Arizona, or maybe North Carolina. But a growing numbers of the baby boomers have been looking outside of the U.S. to Central American countries, especially Costa Rica. Here's why:

**Quality of Life.** Costa Rica has a great climate. The weather is warm. The beaches are beautiful. Residents find stunning natural beauty wherever they look.

Corcovado National Park, for example, has been called the most biologically intense place on earth by National Geographic.

City comforts are available, too. San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, not only sits near the stunning La Paz Waterfall Gardens and other natural wonders, but it has great restaurants, nightlife, and culture.

**Lower Cost of Living.** Living on a fixed income is easier in Central America countries than in the U.S. It is possible for individuals to live comfortable on less than \$1,000 per month. This is appealing

to baby boomers looking to retire and live abroad without sacrificing luxuries like dining out, maid service, and travel.

**Proximity to the U.S..** Central America is a quick flight from the United States, making investment or a permanent move less daunting. Individuals can still visit families or live part time in each place.

**Return on Investment.** While some investors plan to live and settle in Central America, others buy property simply to earn income from their investment. Property costs are low and vacation rentals can yield a good salary, making these foreign investments a popular choice for those looking to save for retirement.

## 2016 promises a good climate for businesses



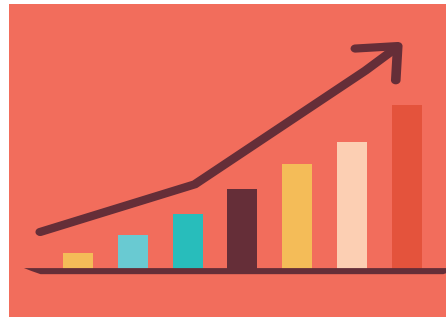
Last December, the Costa Rican government instituted three major business reforms that, according to the presidential office, “directly benefit the business environment.” and will improve the business climate in 2016. Additional developments were brought forth by various subdivisions of the Costa Rican government.

Over the last five years, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Mexico have recorded the most business reforms in all Latin America and the Caribbean. The World Bank’s

*Doing Business 2016: Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency* report names Costa Rica the world’s top improver, moving up 21 positions from last year.

Among Costa Rica’s achievements are improved protocols for paying taxes, getting credit and connecting to the electrical grid.

Other reports reveal the same positive outlook for business in Costa Rica. While experts currently estimate about 4% increase to the economy during 2016, it’s Costa Rica’s stability and steady improvements that make the country so competitive.



### Is Universal Deposit Insurance coming to Costa Rican banks?

Costa Rica’s National Council of Financial System Supervision (Conassif) and financial regulator, SUGEF are working on a new bill that would provide universal deposit insurance for all banks in the country.

Currently, depositors in Costa Rica’s state-owned banks, such as Banco de Costa Rica (BCR) and Banco Nacional have their deposits guaranteed by the State. However, private banks, such as Scotiabank and Citibank, and financial cooperatives and credit unions do not.

Costa Rica is one of the few countries without a military. It is probably the most significant nation without an army after Japan.

## Costa Rica is becoming a leader in medical tourism

The World Health Organization ranks Costa Rica among the top three healthcare systems in Latin America, and consistently ranks it higher in healthcare than Canada and the United States. Life expectancy is 78.7 years, one year higher than the U.S.

Some five percent of Costa Rica’s international tourists visit this small, lush country to take advantage of its medical services, mostly cosmetic surgery and dental care.

For those planning minimally invasive procedures, Costa Rica’s proximity to the U.S. and reputation as a tourist destination offer the best of both worlds. In fact, Costa Rica is one of the top five countries most visited by Americans seeking medical treatment.

Costa Rica boasts hundreds of board-certified physicians, surgeons, and dentists, mostly practicing in or near San Jose. Capitalizing on Costa Rica’s success in cosmetic surgery and dentistry, the country’s international medical offerings



have expanded in recent years to include eye surgery and other elective procedures, such as bariatric surgery (for weight loss) and orthopedics. In addition, Costa Rica has launched research and clinical initiatives for Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, pain management, and diabetes.

Three hospitals—CIMA San Jose, Clinica Catolica, and Clinica Bíblica—recently underwent extensive expansion and modernization to attract a broader mix

of international patients. Clinica Bíblica was the first in the country to achieve JCI accreditation. American-owned Hospital CIMA in San Jose achieved JCI status in 2008. Both are full-service hospitals offering patients a wide array of specialties and procedures previously unavailable to the medical traveler.

## Tourism Board looking to attract bird-watching tourists

Costa Rica's 915 bird species represent almost 10 percent of the species in the world. Tourism officials are planning to cash in on the rising market of tourists interested in observing them.



The Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT) recently launched a National Birds Route, composed of 12 sites across the country where tourists can enjoy the high diversity of bird species here. The sites are also close to important tourism areas such as nature reserves or national parks that represent added value to the tourism potential of birding sites.

The 12 sites are distributed across Costa Rica's seven provinces: Caño Negro in Alajuela, Tapantí in Cartago, Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí in Heredia, San Gerardo de Dota in San José, Santa Rosa and Palo Verde in Guanacaste, Monteverde, Carara, Corcovado and Coto Brus in Puntarenas, and Tortuguero and Cahuita in Limón.



### Vehicle inspection rates to go up starting in July

After eleven years without change, the price of Costa Rica's yearly technical vehicle inspection will increase July 1st. The new rates will be based upon the country's inflation rate.

According to the Public Works and Transport Ministry (MOPT), there are over 1.3 million vehicles in Costa Rica.

# Life In COSTA RICA



## The ins and outs of residency permits

There are four types of residency permits available to foreigners wishing to reside in Costa Rica. Most are income-based. While some include permission to earn a limited income, in general, residency permits do not qualify foreigners for employment.

All residency permits are temporary. But after three years of temporary residency, expats can apply for permanent residency.

### Categories of residency permits

#### Permanent residency:

This residency type is available for first-degree relatives of Costa Rican citizens. This includes parents, children under 25, and minor siblings. Additionally, expats may apply for permanent residency after holding any type of temporary residency permit for three years.

#### Pensionado temporary residency:

This type is for individuals with a fixed lifetime income and thus mostly reserved for retirees looking to reside in beautiful Costa Rica. The minimum required pension is 1,000 USD monthly, to be paid from a social security or retirement fund. Dependents under 18 years of

age and spouses are also included in this permit. Pensionados are not allowed to take up employment, but they can own a company in Costa Rica and collect income. You could, for example, set up a little restaurant, but not be the chef.

#### Rentista temporary residency:

This is basically the same as the Pensionado residency above, but with a higher income threshold. You must produce proof of income in excess of 2,500 USD monthly for five years, the source of which is irrelevant.

#### Inversionista temporary residency:

The most expensive way of acquiring a residency permit, the Inversionista permit allows the holder to legally take up employment. This category requires an investment exceeding 200,000 USD in Costa Rican businesses or real estate. The work permit is limited to employment related to the investment.

#### Representante:

An exclusive category for company heads only. The company must have offices and subsidiaries in Costa Rica and fulfill a number of other requirements.

## Top scuba spot is on the Osa Peninsula

There are many locations around the Osa Peninsula with excellent conditions for diving. However, few spots can match the Caño Island Biological Reserve. You'll see more fish than you can handle – visitors often encounter schools numbering in the hundreds.





## ABOUT COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is about the size of New Hampshire yet has coastline on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific. Nestled between Panama and Nicaragua, Costa Rica has one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America. In 1949 Costa Rica abolished its military by

constitutional amendment and took the money being spent for military and used it instead for education, conservation and healthcare. The well educated populace has attracted an amazing amount of direct foreign investment from around the globe.

Many large multinational corporations have located facilities in Costa Rica to take advantage of the low cost of living, highly educated work force and stable government. With excellent and affordable healthcare, the cost savings just for healthcare has created a large health tourism industry in Costa Rica. With both a public and private healthcare network, elective procedures and dental work are common reasons to visit for North Americans. With a high standard of modern services and both social and political stability, Costa Rica continues to attract both visitors and foreign investment at a brisk pace.

While tourism remains the as the number one source of income, high tech manufacturing and production of industrial and consumer goods has kept

unemployment low while growing a large middle class. Costa Rica is also staunchly democratic and nondiscriminatory. With a longer life expectancy than the US, Costa Rica is often ranked as one of the happiest countries on the planet. Accessibility from North America is very convenient and every major US carrier offers multiple daily flights from a variety of gateway cities, keeping flights surprisingly affordable.

Over 25% of the country is national park or protected reserve and over 5% of the entire world's animals, plants and birds reside in Costa Rica. It is also a migratory destination for both North America and South America. Much of this biodiversity is due to the amazing variety of eco-climates in this small country. With three mountain ranges all sporting peaks over 11,000 feet, rain forests, lush cloud forests, the largest mangrove estuary on the entire Pacific coast and one of the largest lowland forests in the world, Costa Rica is an amazing place to visit. In fact this tiny country is also one of the top wedding destinations to North Americans.

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

### Vicki Skeen

Vicki Skeen resides in the northern suburbs of Atlanta Georgia. Vicki is an Executive Director for an International Software Development company based in Dublin Ireland and her client is AT&T. Vicki originally hails from Michigan but has called Atlanta home for the last 25 years.

In her quest for retirement planning, Vicki and a friend decided to attend the 2014 International Living Conferences in Costa Rica and was immediately drawn to the tropical climate, balmy ocean breezes and indigenous vegetation and wildlife. It was on that trip she met a fellow Pacific Lots owner Laura Carswell and began to inquire more about Costa Rica. In the fall of 2016 after much more research, another trip to Costa Rica a visit to Pacific Lots was made. All it took was a few steps up on the lot in Area #11 and a 90 degree turn toward the ocean for me to say "I want this!" The goal is to start construction in the next 3 years and spend my days in the warm tropical breezes of Ojochal, Costa Rica!



### Chuck Barr

I grew up in Auburn, Washington near Seattle and then joined the service. I was in the Air Force for 8 years, and stationed in Georgia and Montana. I have been living in Phoenix, Arizona and working as an Operator for a nuclear power plant for the past 25 years since 1991. I will retire in 2024.

I bought the land in Costa Rica in 2016, and plan to build the home before I retire in the next 6-8 years.

I learned about the benefits of living in Central America by visiting my son in Guatemala. I saw the great weather for 12 months of the year, and the cost of living being about half of what it is in the US.



**IMAGINE LIVING HERE!**

