

# Moving to Costa Rica: Your Relocation Guide



By Appointment To  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Removals and Storage Contractor Abels

## ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

Freephone: 0800 626769 E-Mail: [export@abels.co.uk](mailto:export@abels.co.uk)

[www.abels.co.uk](http://www.abels.co.uk)



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MOVER



Memb No: A001



FS 23942



198656



TELEPHONE:	Country code 506
STANDARD TIME:	GMT -6 (Central Standard Time) They do not use day light saving time
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	110v 60Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Polio, Typhoid, Cholera, Malaria, Hepatitis A & B
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, Apr 11, 13, 14, May 1, Jul 25, Aug 2, 15, Sept 15, Oct 16, Dec 25
OFFICE HOURS:	0800-1600 Monday – Friday
SHOP HOURS	0900-1900 Monday – Friday
BANK HOURS:	0900-1500 Monday – Friday Some also 1600-1800
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	Police: 911 Ambulance: 911 or 128 Fire: 911 or 118
COSTA RICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON:	Flat 1, 14 Lancaster Gate London W2 3LH Fax: 0207 7068655 Email: <a href="mailto:info@costaricanembassy.co.uk">info@costaricanembassy.co.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.costaricanembassy.co.uk">www.costaricanembassy.co.uk</a>
BRITISH EMBASSY: IN COSTA RICA	Apartado 815-1007 Edificio Centro Colon, (Piso/floor 11) San Jose Costa Rica Tel: 506 258 2025 Fax: 506 233 9938 Email: <a href="mailto:consular.costarica@fco.gov.uk">consular.costarica@fco.gov.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://ukincostarica.fco.gov.uk/en/">http://ukincostarica.fco.gov.uk/en/</a>
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	<a href="http://www.tourism-costarica.com">www.tourism-costarica.com</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@tourism-costarica.com">info@tourism-costarica.com</a>

## Customs

**To the best of our knowledge, the following applies for the importation of household and personal effects into Costa Rica. However, since regulations are subject to change without notice, it is always advisable to check with the authorities that documentation is in order, prior to despatch.**

### Household Goods

Documents required:

- Rated original Bill of Lading or Airway Bill
- Packing list in English or Spanish
- Detailed list indicating brand, serial number and model of all electric appliances and electronics.
- Original or copy of your passport (front page)

Non Costa Rican Citizens will have to pay import duties.

Partial tax exemption for Costa Rican citizens who have lived abroad a minimum of 24 months.

Returning Costa Ricans wanting to apply for partial tax exemption, need to bring a certification from the Costa Rican consulate at the origin country, indicating number of years lived abroad.

Other formalities for this status must be made in Costa Rica.

Customs clearance will take approximately eight working days once the shipment has arrived to the bonded warehouse in San Jose.

It is a requirement that the number of pieces and weight reported on the Bill of Lading matches with the real number of pieces and weight; otherwise, Customs will apply a fine of USD 500 and there will be a delay in customs process from 4 to 6 weeks.

A physical inspection of your cargo will be scheduled, to verify that there are no differences between the quantities and weights declared in the shipping documents and the real ones is mandatory by Costa Rican customs authorities.

These tasks are done by Costa Rican personnel, highly qualified and with wide experience in the handling of your goods.

### Diplomats Removals

Documents required:

- Packing list in English or Spanish
  - Rated original Bill of lading or Air Waybill or “Carta de Porte”
  - Tax exemption
  - Copy of shipper’s passport (front page) and Diplomatic ID
- Duty free entry.

Shipper must be registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Tax exemption process must be done directly by the shippers entity.

Import of Wine and Alcohol is permitted, quantity will depend on the annual allowance agreed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and each embassy.

### Wedding Trousseaux

Same as Household goods removal.

Subject to payment of duties.

### Inheritance

Same as Household goods removal.

Subject to payment of duties.

### New furniture and household goods

Documents required:

- Original invoices or an under oath statement of value.
- Packing List or inventory
- Rated original Bill of Lading or Air Waybill or “Carta de Porte”
- Copy of shippers passport (front page)

Subject to payment of taxes, except those with tax exemption (when applies).

### Works of Art, Antiques

Documents required:

- Invoices if any (not needed if part of household goods shipment)
- Packing list or inventory
- Rated original Bill of Lading or Air Waybill or “Carta de Porte”
- Copy of shippers passport (front page)

Subject to payment of taxes.

### Wooden Goods (furniture, ornaments)

Documents required:

- Permit from Ministry of Agriculture

Subject to payment of taxes.

### Precious Metal Objects (Jewellery, coins)

Documents required:

- Invoice if any
- Rated original Bill of Lading or Air Waybill

Subject to payment of taxes.

### Household Appliances

Documents required are same as household goods.

- Detailed list indicating brand, serial number and model of all electronic articles

### Electrical Appliances

Documents required are same as household goods.

- Detailed list indicating brand, serial numbers and model of all electronic appliances

Subject to payment of taxes.

### **Presents, Souvenirs**

Documents required are same as household goods.

Subject to payment of taxes.

### **Motor Vehicles (includes motorbikes and boats)**

Documents required:

- Rated original Bill of Lading, Airway Bill or “Carta de Porte”
- Original purchase invoice
- Original Vehicle Property Deed or Original Circulation Permit
- Copy of shippers’ passport (front page)

Subject to payment of high taxes except those with tax exemption.

Other documents for motor vehicles import process must be presented in Costa Rica.

### **Machines, Appliances, Spare-parts**

Documents required:

- Invoices
- Rated original Bill of lading or Air Waybill or “Carta de Porte”

Subject to payment of taxes except those with tax exemption.

### **Wine, Alcohol**

Documents required:

- Permits of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy
- Invoices
- Rated original Bill of lading or Air Waybill or “Carta de Porte”

Subject to payment of high taxes.

Prohibited for Air and LCL shipments. For FCL shipments a maximum of five bottles is permitted.

Permits from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Treasury may be requested.

### **Tins and Food**

Importation Prohibited.

### **Arms, Ammunition, Dangerous Goods**

Documents required:

- Permit from Ministry of National Security (only for Costa Rican citizens or residents)

Subject to payment of taxes.

### **Carpets**

Documents required:

- Invoices if any
- Rated original Bill of lading or Air Waybill

Subject to payment of taxes.

### **Medicines, Narcotics, Drugs**

Importation Prohibited.

### **Plants**

Importation Prohibited.

### **Domestic Pets (Cats, dogs)**

Documents required:

- Airway Bill
- Health Certificate
- Up to date vaccination cards
- Invoice or affidavit indicating animal’s value and characteristics

Documentation required before animals arrival.

Subject to payment of taxes.

### **Prohibited Items**

- Pornographic material, subversive material
- Drugs
- Any items not being part of the normal household and personal goods

### **Fumigation of imported and exported wooden crates**

Costa Rica Government adopted ISPM-15 (International standards for Phytosanitary Measures Publication 15). Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (aka NIFM-15) to standardize the treatment of wood packing materials used for the transport of goods.

Any shipments into Costa Rica in wooden packaging (wooden boxes, liftvans, cases, crates, pallets, trunks, barrels, drawers, wooden cuts),. Which were not treated as stipulated by IPPC with Methyl Bromide MB (the minimum temperature should not be less the 10 degrees centigrade and the minimum exposure time should not fall below 16 hours) or Heated Treatment (HT at a temperature of 56 degrees centigrade for a minimum of 30 minutes) will not be allowed in Costa Rica and will be returned to the origin country under the shipper / origin Agent’s expenses.

Incase insects or pests are found within the wood, Authorities will proceed to the destruction or incineration of the shipment. The inspection to conform with these Norms will be completed at the port of entry.

The wood packing material must be marked in a visible location on each article, on at least two opposite sides of the article with a legible and permanent mark in black ink.

Labels and adhesives are not allowed.

This does not apply to wood packing materials manufactured of:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or a combination thereof
- Plywood 5triwall sheets
- Agglomerated sawdust sheet
- Oriented wooden fibre sheets
- Sawdust
- Wooden fibre

## Food

We strongly recommend that shippers be advised not to ship any commercially prepared and purchased food product with your unaccompanied personal goods.

This includes: wines, spirits, beer, cider, spices, herbs, canned packed or wrapped foods, pet food, pastas, rice, food supplements, vitamins, fruit juices, carbonated / non carbonated drinks, milk, perishable foods, dry foods and any other item intended for human or animal consumption.

If the shipper insists on shipping food items, the specified information below must be gathered and provided for each food item imported. If the information is not provided, the food items may face refusal of entry, requiring segregation / manipulation of the shipment under customs supervision at a bonded facility, at substantial additional cost. Costs could be in the thousands of dollars and can not be anticipated. These costs will be the responsibility of the client.

- Product brand name
- Product classification
- Country of production
- Country of packaging
- Type of product (canned, bottled, packaged)
- Quantity

Ask for **Abels form QF565** for completing.

## General Information on Republic of Costa Rica

### Background

Although explored by the Spanish early in the 16th century, initial attempts at colonizing Costa Rica proved unsuccessful due to a combination of factors, including: disease from mosquito – infested swamps, brutal heat, resistance by natives, and pirate raids. It was not until 1563 that a permanent settlement of Cartago was established in the cooler, fertile central highlands. The area remained a

colony for some two and a half centuries. In 1821, Costa Rica became one of several Central American provinces that jointly declared their independence from Spain. Two years later it joined the United Provinces of Central America, but this federation disintegrated in 1838, at which time Costa Rica proclaimed its sovereignty and independence. Since the late 19th century, only two brief periods of violence have marred its democratic development. Although still largely a agricultural country, it has expanded its economy to include strong technology and tourism sectors. The standard of living is relatively high. Land ownership is widespread.

### Geography

Costa Rica has coastlines on the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. The coastal plains are separated by rugged mountains including over 100 volcano cones, of which several are major volcanoes. There are four volcanoes of which two are active that rise near the capital San Jose in the centre of the country. In 1963-65 one of the volcanoes, Irazu, erupted destructively.

### Climate

The climate is tropical and subtropical, the dry season being from December to April and the rainy season May to November. It is cooler in the highlands. There are occasional earthquakes and active volcanoes, with hurricanes along the Atlantic coast. Other natural hazards are frequent flooding of the lowlands at the onset of the rainy season and landslides.

### Population

The population is estimated at 4,075,00 with most people living in the central plateau area.

### Environmental Issues

Deforestation and land use change have occurred for largely cattle ranching and agriculture, this has resulted in soil erosion. Other issues are: coastal marine pollution; fisheries protection; solid waste management and air pollution.

### Currency

The Costa Rican Colon (CRC) is divided into 100 centimos; centimes are rare because of their evaporating value.

Coins: 10, 25, 50 centimos

1, 2, 5, 10, 20 colons

Notes: 50, 100, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000, 10000

### Economy

Prior to the global economic crisis, Costa Rica enjoyed stable economic growth. The economy contracted in 2009 but resumed growth at about 4% per year in 2010-15. While traditional agricultural exports of bananas, coffee, sugar, and beef are still the backbone of commodity export trade, a variety of industrial and specialised agricultural products have broadened export trade in recent years. High value-added goods and services, including medical devices, have further bolstered exports. Tourism continues to bring in



foreign exchange, as Costa Rica's impressive biodiversity makes it a key destination for ecotourism.

Foreign investors remain attracted by the country's political stability and relatively high education levels, as well as the incentives offered in the free-trade zones; Costa Rica has attracted one of the highest levels of foreign direct investment per capita in Latin America. The US-Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force on 1 January 2009 after significant delays within the Costa Rican legislature. CAFTA-DR has increased foreign direct investment in key sectors of the economy, including the insurance and telecommunications sectors. However, poor infrastructure, high energy costs, bureaucracy, weak investor protection, and legal uncertainty due to the difficulty of enforcing contracts and overlapping and at times conflicting responsibilities between agencies, remain impediments to greater competitiveness.

Costa Rica's economy also faces challenges due to a rising fiscal deficit, rising public debt, and relatively low levels of domestic revenue. Poverty has remained around 20-25% for nearly 20 years, and the strong social safety net that had been put into place by the government has eroded due to increased financial constraints on government expenditures. Unlike the rest of Central America, Costa Rica is not highly dependent on remittances, which in 2014 represented 1% of GDP. Immigration from Nicaragua has increasingly become a concern for the government. The estimated 300,000-500,000 Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, legally and illegally, are an important source of mostly unskilled labour, but also place heavy demands on the social welfare system.

### **Religion**

The Catholic faith is the official language of which 76% of the population prescribes. The right to practice other religions is guaranteed and there are 14% Evangelical plus others.

### **Language**

The official language is Spanish but English is also widely spoken.

### **Driving**

The standard of driving is lower than in the UK. You should adhere to speed limits as traffic police are strict.

### **Television**

Television channels are in both Spanish and English.

### **Health**

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance. Only emergency medical treatment is available without charge to visitors.

There have been many confirmed cases of Dengue Fever and deaths from secondary infections. Malaria is also endemic. You should take strict preventative measures against

mosquito bites i.e. wearing of long sleeved shirts and long trousers and use repellants.

### **Safety**

There are some incidents of violent crime, some targeted at foreigners and they are on the increase. Gang muggings can occur even in daylight on busy streets. Thefts from cars are common, including slashing of tyres giving the thieves an opportunity to 'assist' in changing tyres, while an accomplice steals from the car.

Take photocopies of your passport, airline tickets, travelers cheques and keep the copies separately. It is permissible to show a copy of your passport for identification to local authorities should it be requested.

### **Taxis**

Taxis are common and inexpensive in San Jose but harder to find and more expensive in rural areas. In San Jose taxes should be metered for trips less than 12 kms, for longer trips the fare is negotiated beforehand. Taxis are red and airport cabs are orange.

### **Departing Costa Rica**

Every person leaving Costa Rica must pay a tax.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Abels Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date Abels cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*