

Cost of Living Comparison Between the US – Costa Rica

The cost of living in Costa Rica has assuredly become one of the principle considerations when contemplating living in Costa Rica. Costa Rica's cost of living is substantially lower than that of the United States. Some of the primary costs associated with living in Costa Rica include:

- ❖ **PROPERTY TAXES**—Low property tax rates are one of the most attractive benefits when living in Costa Rica. Property tax rates can be as low as 1/25th of the rates of some areas in the U.S. The Costa Rican government has divided the country into many areas called municipalidades. Each municipalidad has various regions with different tax rates for each. A home in the coastal regions with a market value of \$350,000 would have annual tax rates around \$300.00. The same home located in a more remote mountainous region would have annual tax rates in the \$150.00 range.
- ❖ **UTILITY COSTS**—The costs of services such as electricity, water, phone, and cable are also considerably lower than those in the United States. The moderate climate prevalent throughout the country greatly reduces the amount of energy needed for heating and cooling thus keeping electricity costs down. A typical three bedroom home with American amenities (AC, Dryer, etc) would incur costs around \$80–\$200 monthly. Costs associated with water and sewer are typically under \$20 per month. Cellular phone service is quite good throughout the country with monthly costs around \$10–\$25 depending on usage. Direct TV is available throughout the country with English programming and the rates are comparable to those in the U.S.
- ❖ **TRANSPORTATION AND FUEL COSTS**—Vehicles are typically more expensive in Costa Rica. On average one can figure approximately a 25% increase in the cost of both new and used vehicles when purchasing a car in Costa Rica. It is also expensive to drive or ship your own car as the import taxes are very high. However, maintenance on vehicles is typically less than half of the costs you would pay in the U.S. Gasoline in Costa Rica is also about 20% more expensive, but diesel is typically less expensive. Costa Rica has a very inexpensive bus system, and taxi cabs are very reasonable when compared to other countries.
- ❖ **FOOD COSTS**—The cost of food varies greatly in Costa Rica depending on whether or not it is a domestic product. Things produced in Costa Rica (chicken, fish, pork, rice, beans, fruits and vegetables) are very inexpensive. Packaged and processed foods imported from the U.S and other countries can be very expensive. Costa Rica also offers a wide variety of restaurants with local cafes or “sodas” throughout the country. A typical meal consisting of fish or chicken served with rice, beans and salad will run around \$3 in a typical café. Many coastal areas and resort towns offer gourmet quality dining for under \$20 per person.

Prices of Produce as of February 2007 Source: Al Dia

Apio	Celery	¢0.35 lb
Ayote Sazón	Squash	0.15 lb
Ayote Tierno	Squash	0.53 lb
Banano	Banana	0.03 ea
Bróculi	Broccoli	0.51 lb
Camote	Sweet Potato(red)	0.31 lb
Cebolla seco	Onion	0.40 lb
Cebolla trenza	Onion	0.40 lb
Coliflor	Cauliflower	0.68 ea
Coco		0.34 ea
Culantro		0.08 roll
Chayote tier.	Squash	0.15 ea
Chayote quel.	Squash	0.14 ea
Chile Dulce	Red/Green Pepper	0.28 ea
Elote	Ear of corn	0.12 ea
Fresa	Strawberry	0.77 ea
Frijol tierno	Black bean	0.88 lb
Huevos	Eggs	0.53 lb
Lechuga Am.	Lettuce	0.29 ea
Lechuga Crio	Lettuce	0.22 ea
Limón mand.	Lime	0.04 ea
Limón mesino	Lime	0.08 ea
Maracuyá		0.48 lb
Manga (not mango)		0.65 lb
Mora	Blackberry/Rasp	0.68 lb
Naranja	Orange	0.06 ea
Ñampí		0.31 lb
Palmito	Heart of Palm	0.79 lb
Papa	Potato	0.28 lb
Papaya		0.20 lb
Pepino	Cucumber	0.35 lb
Piña	Pineapple	0.46 lb
Plátano	Plantain	0.17 ea
Remolacha	Beet	0.28 ea
Repollo	Cabbage	0.17 lb
Sandía	Watermelon	0.20 lb
Tiquisque		0.31 lb
Tomate	Tomato	0.81 lb
Vainica	Green Bean	0.66 lb
Yuca Corr.	Casava Root	0.11 lb
Yuca paraf.	Casava Root	0.14 lb
Zanahoria	Carrot	0.14 lb
Zapallo		0.14 lb

Cost of Living Comparison: United States v/s Costa Rica	United States (\$)	Costa Rica (\$)
Housing costs monthly (comparable 3 bedroom, 2 bath houses)	\$ 800 - 4000	\$300 - 1200
Gasoline (per gallon of regular)	\$ 3 - 4	\$2 -3
ADSL Internet (256/128 kb/sec) (per month) (UNLIMITED)	\$47.49	\$28.25
Home Phone Service	\$14.00	\$5.25
Cell Phone (500 anytime minutes, plus taxes)	\$40 - 60	\$10 - 15 plus free incoming calls
Cable TV (basic /monthly)	\$40.00	\$30.00
Water (per unit m3)	\$.61	Water on property
Electricity (average cost per kWh)	\$.0973	\$.061
Private Health Care (average annual cost of individual health plan for male 55-59 yrs)	\$3695.00	\$36
Groceries (monthly expense per person)	\$500 - 1500	\$150 - 300
Eating out for meals	\$10 - 50	\$3 - 20
Entertainment & Misc. Expenses (monthly)	\$100 – 500	\$20 - 50
Housekeeper or Gardener (typical pay an hour)	\$6.00 – 20.00	\$1.00 – 2.00
Construction workers (typical pay an hour)	\$15.00 – 50.00	\$1.00 – 3.00
Haircut (in a beauty salon)	\$18.00 & up	\$ 2.00 & up
Movies	\$8.00	\$3.50