

All Things Costa Rica

A pathfinder for young adults who are planning a trip to Costa Rica.

About This Pathfinder

Costa Rica is a small country located in Central America. It is becoming known for eco-friendly tourism as well as its great nature diversity. Costa Rica is a wonderful destination for high school Spanish Clubs and/or Spanish classes. It offers students a chance to use their Spanish skills while learning about a Spanish culture in a unique location much different than the United States.

This pathfinder is designed primarily for high school students or young adults taking a trip to Costa Rica. It would also be useful for people who just want to learn more about the country. The pathfinder will help students learn about the different aspects of Costa Rica including culture, climate, people, land, wildlife, traveling information, and tourist destinations. In other words, you will find out about all things Costa Rica. Use this pathfinder's sources to plan, prepare for, and take with you on your trip to Costa Rica. After using some of the resources on the pathfinder, be sure to check out Extension Ideas for activities.

Electronic materials are useful when learning about another country because you get up-to-date information. Print materials can quickly become outdated. Websites that are kept updated allow you to know when a new road is built, a tour guide operation is no longer open, or know about the current weather forecast or exchange rate. This pathfinder gives you access to current information quickly.

When choosing the sources for this pathfinder, I kept the following questions in mind. Does the source enhance the user's understanding of Costa Rica? Will the information assist the user in planning and/or taking a trip to Costa Rica? Is the source interesting and easy to use?

Websites

General Information

Costa Rica, Wikipedia, last modified May 26, 2009

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Rica

- Wikipedia provides a good overview of many topics about Costa Rica including facts about the history, demographics, economy, and foreign affairs involvement.

Travel & Cultures Costa Rica, National Geographic Society, ©1996-2009

http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/places/countries/country_costarica.html -

National Geographic provides information about Costa Rica's economy and fast facts. Be sure to watch the video of the canopy tour. Click here to watch it - http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/regions-places/central-america/costarica_costaricacanopytours.html

Costa Rica, Lonely Planet Publications, ©2009

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/costa-rica>

- Lonely Planet is a well known publisher of travel information for destinations all around the world. This website includes general information about Costa Rica as well as a large list of locations around the country. Click on any location and read about that specific place <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/costa-rica/places>.

Costa Rica Tourist Information, Tourism-CostaRica.com

<http://www.tourism-costarica.com/index.cfm>

- Read information specifically written for tourists. The information tabs are at the top of the page. Be sure to check out the different tours available under the Adventure tab. You can learn about many different touring options from sea kayaking to hot air balloons to horseback riding.

Costa Rica Travel Site, InfoCostaRica, ©2000-2007

<http://www.infocostarica.com/general/>

- Here you find many articles and links about Costa Rica. Topics include information about the people, education, government, sports, and culture.

The World Fact Book, Central Intelligence Agency, last updated May 14, 2009

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cs.html>

- Many facts about Costa Rica are presented by the CIA. This website is unique in that it gives very specific statistics about Costa Rica. A map is also included on the page.

Costa Rican Tourism Site, Central American.com Inc., © 1995-2009

<http://centralamerica.com/cr/index.htm>

This website provides more information about Costa Rica. Be sure to click on the different links on the menu on the left side of the screen. Specifically read the following pages: <http://centralamerica.com/cr/moon/moland.htm> - Tells about the land and climate

<http://centralamerica.com/cr/moon/moflora.htm> Facts about the ecosystem

<http://centralamerica.com/cr/moon/mohistory.htm> Read a brief history of Costa Rica

<http://centralamerica.com/cr/moon/moart.htm> Learn about the Arts and Culture

The Real Costa Rica, Tim Lytle, © 2003-2008

http://www.therealcostarica.com/costa_rica/costaricans.html

- This website is written and kept up to date by Tim Lytle, a man who originally lived in Chicago but has been living in Costa Rica since 2003. It features information about many topics including travel, health, education, and living in Costa Rica. Since it is written by a man living there, it offers information from the perspective of someone who moved from the United States.

Food

Costa Rica Cuisine, The Global Gourmet, last modified January 2007

<http://www.globalgourmet.com/destinations/costarica/costcuis.html>

- Read about food in Costa Rica, including information about native dishes. Be sure to click all the links to find out about different fruits, drinks, specialties, and desserts.

Costa Rican Cuisine, Toucan Guides, © 1993-2009

[http://costa-rica-](http://costa-rica-guide.com/travel/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=492)

[guide.com/travel/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=492](http://costa-rica-guide.com/travel/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=492)

- Here you will find several traditional Costa Rican recipes. Maybe you want to try making some before you take your trip. Then, try the foods while you are in Costa Rica.

Rainforests

A Journey through the Rainforest, Sandy Wiseman, 1995

<http://philip.greenspun.com/cr/rara>

- A journal entry written by Sandy Wiseman who is a forensic and educational psychologists, conservationist, photographer, and director of Conservation International -Canada. This firsthand account of a hike through the rain forest gives you a taste of what you may experience on your own hike.

Costa Rica Rainforests, Delfina Travel Groups, ©2003-2009

<http://www.govisitcostarica.com/travelinfo/rainforests.asp> - Read and view pictures about the different kinds of rainforests you can encounter in Costa Rica. Be sure to check out the links for the Tortuguero National Park, Manuel Antonio National Park, Corcovado National Park, and the Monteverde Cloud Forest.

Monteverde Cloud Forest, Monteverde Info, © 2002 -2007

<http://www.monteverdeinfo.com>

- Read and look at photos specifically about the Monteverde Cloud rainforest. This website also features information about different tours through the Monteverde Cloud forest.

Miscellaneous

National Parks, National System of Conservation Areas, ©2005

<http://www.costarica-nationalparks.com>

- This website provides a list and links to popular destinations in Costa Rica. Use this list to find national parks that you would like to visit.

News, Inside Costa Rica.com, ©2002-2009

<http://www.insidecostarica.com>

- Read the daily Costa Rican news online. Top news stories, weather, and airport information are included.

Images & Audio

Costa Rica Photos

<http://www.costaricaphotos.com/>

- View spectacular photos from all around Costa Rica. This photo tour includes images of Costa Rican arts and crafts, buildings and landmarks, cities and towns, nature, Costa Rican life, and historical photographs. You will become familiar with the Costa Rican landscape and people.

Costa Rica Photos, Ron Niebrugge of Niebrugge, last updated March 27, 2009

<http://www.wildnatureimages.com/Costa-Rica-Photos.htm>

- Look at professional photographs of Costa Rica's wildlife. These will give you ideas of what to look for while hiking through rainforests.

Costa Rica National Anthem, David Kendall of NationalAnthemsInfo

<http://www.nationalanthems.info/cr.htm>

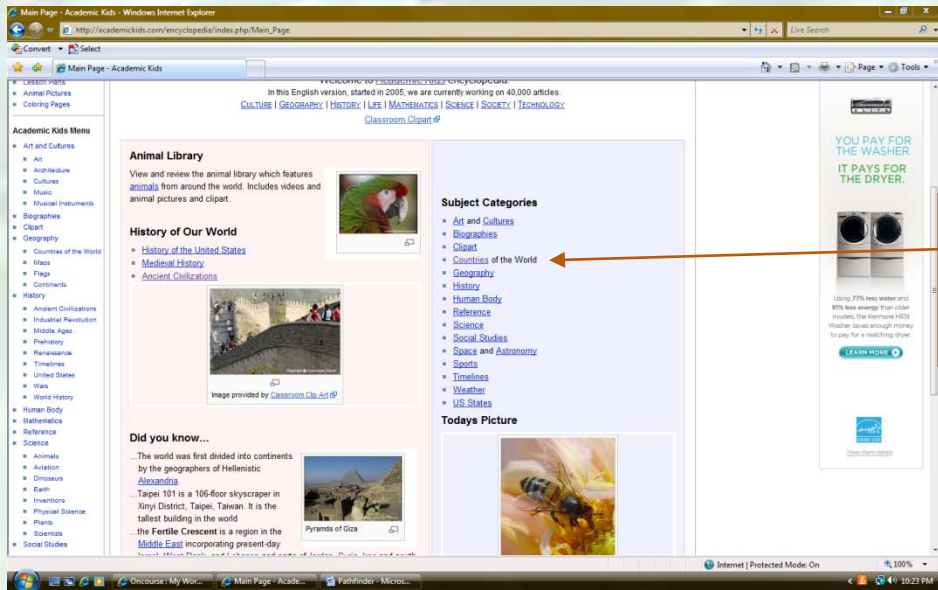
-Listen to the National Anthem and read the lyrics. Click on the "Listen" tab under Music to hear the song. Click on the "View" tab under Lyrics to read the lyrics.

Databases, Reference Resources, & Searching Ideas

Academic Kids Encyclopedia, last modified May 9, 2008

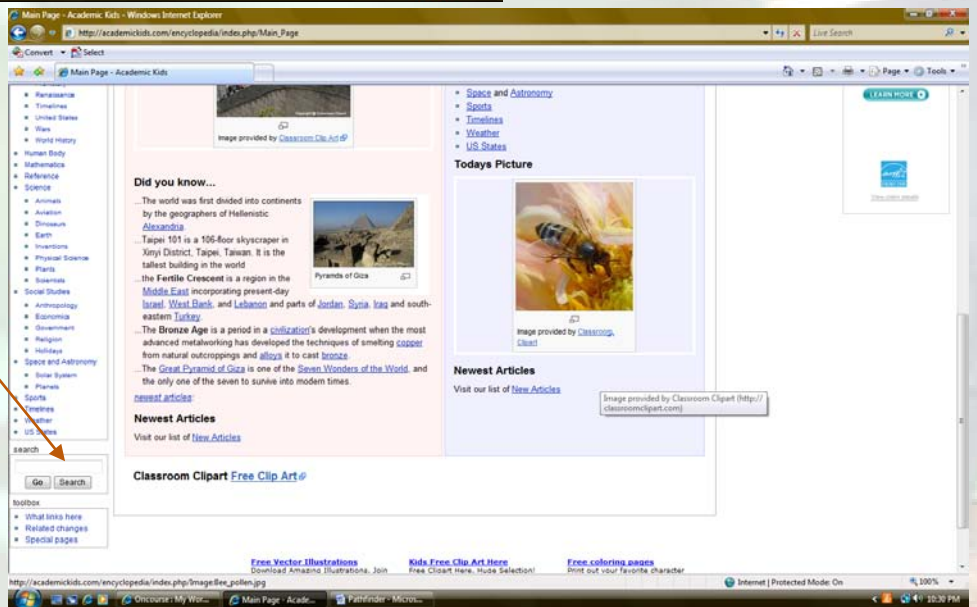
http://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Main_Page

- Academic Kids is a free online encyclopedia for students. It is easy to use. To find information you can either select a category from the Subject Categories list or type in your search on the search bar.



Click on "Countries of the World" for a list of countries. Then choose Costa Rica from the list.

Click in the Search box and type in your search. Try typing in Costa Rica then click on "Go."



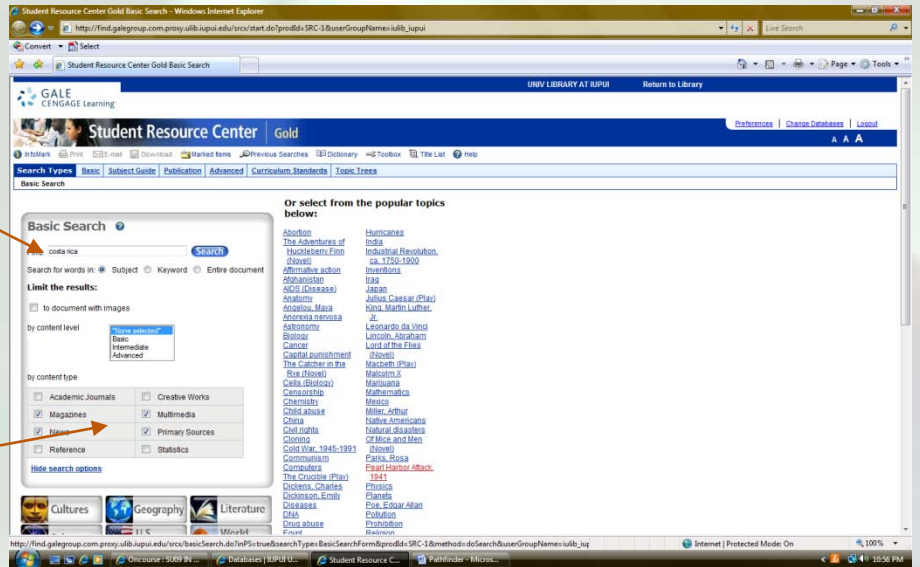
Student Resource Center, Gold (Gale CENGAGE Learning), last updated May 26, 2009
http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.ulib.iupui.edu/srcx/start.do?prodId=SRC-1&userGroupName=iulib_iupui (A password is necessary to access the database from this link. Check your local library for access to this database or ask your librarian about a similar one.)

- This database features information from a variety of sources including academic journals, magazines, news, reference, statistics, primary sources, and multimedia. To use the database type in your search keywords into the search bar and click on the "Search" button. You may choose to limit your search by content level (basic, intermediate, or advanced) and/or choosing only the source types you

want information from such as magazines and multimedia. The screenshots below are of a sample search using the very general search term "Costa Rica."

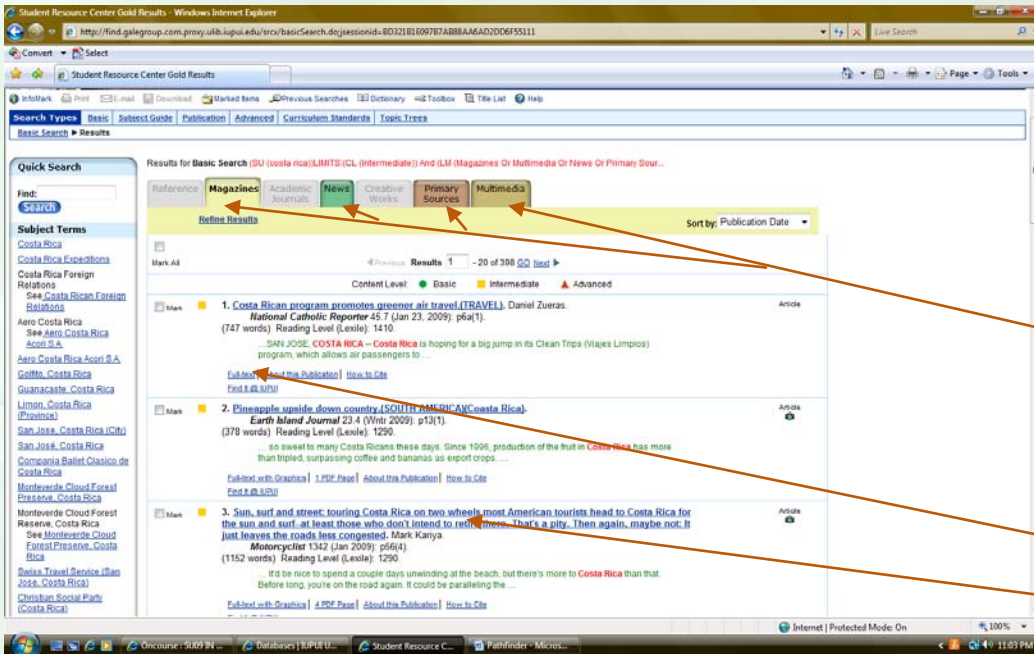
Type in the search term Costa Rica

Choose your search limits. I chose intermediate level and magazines, news, and multimedia.



I found many articles about Costa Rica. Click on the different tabs at the top of the results to see results from different media (ex. magazines, multimedia, etc.).

To read the article online, select the resources that say Full-Text. Simply click on the article you want and read the information.



You can find many articles about Costa Rica. Typing in "Costa Rica" is a very broad and general search term. It yields many results. Another way to limit search results is by typing in more specific searches. For example, maybe you want to read more information about Monteverde Cloud Forest, so type that into the search bar. Try using some of the following keyword searches in this database or other online search

tools such as <http://www.google.com>. Costa Rica and tours, Costa Rica and rainforests, Costa Rica and animals, Costa Rica and travel tips. When you think of other search terms write them down, so you will remember to try them.

Useful Software and Internet Tools



Learn Spanish Software, Rocket Spanish,

<http://www.rocketlanguages.com/spanish/premium/index.php?hop=polygonzo>

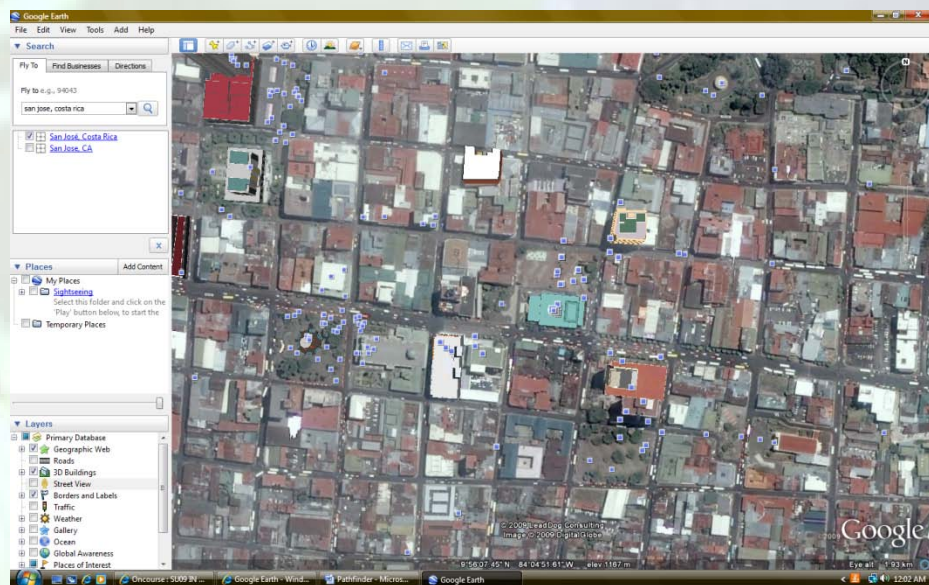
- Spanish is the official language of Costa Rica and knowing some Spanish will help you get around easier throughout your travels. This software will help you better your conversational Spanish skills. The

following is part of a review from <http://www.learningspanishprograms.com/rocket-spanish-review.html> : "Unlike other learn Spanish software titles, Rocket Spanish is more of an audio course. Its main goal is in teaching you useful phrases and words for conversational Spanish. If you're looking for a program that gets into writing, and spelling then this isn't the Spanish program for you."

Google Earth, ©2009 <http://earth.google.com/index.html>

-Use Google Earth to look at different cities around Costa Rica. Since you have to download the software to your computer (there is a free version), be sure to ask permission to download. Your local library may already have the software available on their public use computers. Use Google Earth to look at different cities and destinations around Costa Rica. Type in the city you want to see in the "Fly to" search bar. Use the scrolling feature on your computer mouse to zoom in and out.

The bigger cities are more likely to have clear pictures up close. The screen shot below is of San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. I typed in San Jose, Costa Rica into the "Fly to" bar.



Exchange Rate Converter, Yahoo.com, ©2009

<http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter?u#from=USD;to=CRC;amt=1>

- You will need to know how many U.S. dollars equal a Costa Rican colon so you know how much things cost. Type in United States Dollar and Costa Rica Colon into the converter boxes and the amount of money you want to exchange. I find it most helpful to choose 1 dollar as the United States dollar amount. You will then find out the current exchange rate.

Weather, The Weather Channel Interactive, Inc., ©1995-2009

<http://www.weather.com>

- Use weather.com to find out what the weather is in different Costa Rican cities. Simply type in the city name into the search bar and click the "search" button. You may have to type in Costa Rica after the city name or choose the right city from a list. For example, type in "San Jose, Costa Rica" instead of just San Jose. Click the following links for the cities I looked up for you or type in your own search.

San Jose:

http://www.weather.com/outlook/travel/businesstraveler/local/CSXX0009?lswe=san%20jose,%20costa%20rica&from=searchbox_localwx

Puerto Limon:

http://www.weather.com/outlook/travel/businesstraveler/local/CSXX0006?lswe=Puerto%20Limon,%20COSTA%20RICA&lwsa=Weather36HourBusinessTravelerCommand&from=searchbox_typeahead

Liberia:

http://www.weather.com/outlook/travel/businesstraveler/local/CSXX0005?lswe=liberia,%20costa%20rica&from=searchbox_localwx

Weather, World Meteorological Organization

<http://www.worldweather.org/171/m171.htm>

- Another website to look at for information about weather and climate of Costa Rica. Choose a city from the list to learn about its specific weather conditions.

Books & Other Sources



Culture and Customs of Costa Rica by Chalene Helmuth: Greenwood Press, 2000.

- "This outstanding series will broaden readers' horizons with interesting, well-rounded overviews of these sister nations to the south, and the explicit, easy to read texts and illustrations will make these books appealing and accessible to teens. Young adult librarians are urged to give them a look."-VOYA [http://www.amazon.com/Culture-Customs-](http://www.amazon.com/Culture-Customs-Costa-America-Caribbean/dp/0313304920)

[Costa-America-Caribbean/dp/0313304920](http://www.amazon.com/Culture-Customs-Costa-America-Caribbean/dp/0313304920)



Costa Rica - Culture Smart: A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette by Jane Koutnik: Kuperard, 2006.

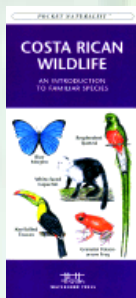
- "Culture Smart! offers illuminating insights into the culture and society of a particular country. It will help you to turn your visit-whether on business or for pleasure-into a memorable and enriching experience. Contents include* customs, values, and traditions

* historical, religious, and political background

* life at home* leisure, social, and cultural life* eating and drinking

* do's, don'ts, and taboos* business practices* communication, spoken and unspoken"

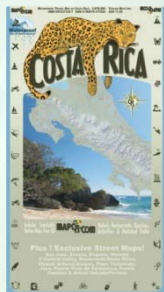
http://www.amazon.com/Costa-Rica-Culture-customs-etiquette/dp/1857333241/ref=pd_sim_b_1



Costa Rican Wildlife: An Introduction to Familiar Species by James Kavanagh: Waterford Press, 2001.

-From the Back Cover

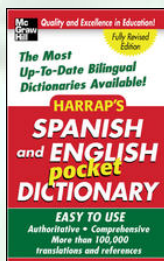
"Costa Rican Wildlife, An Introduction to Familiar Species, is a must-have reference guide for beginners and experts alike. This guide provides a simplified introduction to species that are familiar, widespread and/or unusual in Costa Rica. The Pocket Traveler Eco-Travel Guides provide simplified reference to the prominent wildlife species of the world's most popular eco-tourism destinations. Each pocket-sized, folding guide identifies up to 150 species of common and unique animals in each area and most feature a map highlighting natural vegetation zones. Each is laminated for durability."



Waterproof Travel Map of Costa Rica by Toucan Maps: Toucan Maps, Inc., 2008.

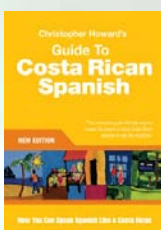
- "The best map Costa Rica has ever seen." --Jack Ewing,

Founder Hacienda Baru Wildlife Refuge http://www.amazon.com/Waterproof-Travel-Map-Costa-Rica/dp/0976373327/ref=pd_sim_b_7



Harrap's Spanish and English Pocket Dictionary by Harrap's: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

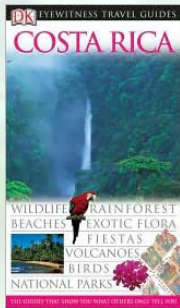
- "Harrap's Spanish and English Pocket Dictionary is the most comprehensive portable dictionary available today. Fully revised and up-to-date, this authoritative reference features more than 57,000 references, 90,000 translations, and thorough coverage of Latin American Spanish." http://www.amazon.com/Harraps-Spanish-English-Dictionary-Dictionaries/dp/0071456694/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1243461464&sr=1-2



Guide to Costa Rican Spanish by Christopher Howard: Costa Rica Books, 2005.

- "Pocket-size guidebook jam-packed with information to help you speak like a native Costa Rican. The ONLY book of its kind." --By Steve

Silver Special for Costa Rica Today http://www.amazon.com/Guide-Costa-Spanish-Christopher-Howard/dp/188123388X/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_c



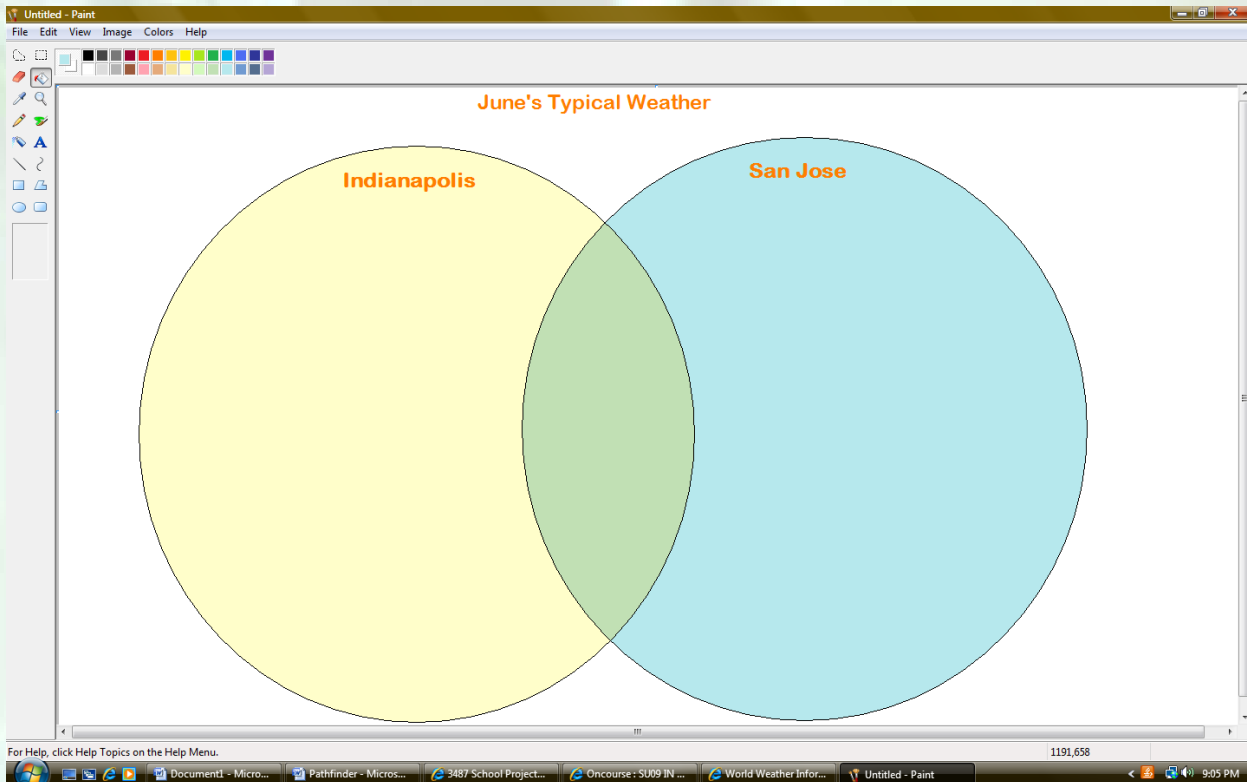
Costa Rica by DK Publishing:DK Travel, 2005.

-“Recognized the world over by frequent flyers and armchair travelers alike Eyewitness Travel Guides are the most colorful and comprehensive guides on the market. With beautifully commissioned photographs and spectacular 3-D aerial views revealing the charm of each destination, these amazing travel guides show what others tell.” - from the Publisher <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Eyewitness-Travel-Guide-Costa-Rica/DK-Publishing/e/9780756613525>

Extension/Activity Ideas

1. **Be a Chef** - Choose some Costa Rican recipes to make from the recipes found in the Food section websites. Split into groups and have each group make a different recipe. Host a Costa Rican cuisine night and sample the different foods. Food could also be brought into a Spanish class classroom. Vote on which recipe is your favorite. Be sure to try and order your favorite food while in Costa Rica.
2. **Plan the Trip** - Using the websites in the General Information area find activities and/or tours that you would like to do. Create a travel itinerary with the places you want to see on it. Be sure to include the day you will be there, specific city names, what you want to do there, and tour group operation (if applicable) you would use, where you will spend the night, and how much it will cost. You should also include phone numbers and address of these locations when possible.
3. **Travel Brochure** - Create a travel brochure that sparks interest in Costa Rica. Use your knowledge built from any or all of the sources in this pathfinder. Your brochure should be attractive and include interesting and useful information about Costa Rica. Remember, you are trying to persuade people to want to go to Costa Rica. Pass the brochure out to fellow classmates or club members who are still unsure about going on the trip. Or, plan to make a brochure about Costa Rica before the first informational call out meeting about a trip is planned. Then with the teacher or adult sponsors' approval, you can pass them out to the people at the meeting.
4. **Weather Forecaster** - Use <http://www.weather.com> or <http://www.worldweather.org> to compare Costa Rica's weather with your local weather. First, type in the name of your city to find out what the weather is your area. Then, select or type in different Costa Rican cities to find out about their weather. Besides knowing the current weather, it would be useful to see what the

weather typically is for the Costa Rican city during the particular month of your trip. Look up typical weather for both your city and the Costa Rican city. Chart the comparisons and contrasts on Venn diagram. You will know what weather to expect and thus what clothing to pack and wear. See below for an example of how to set up a Venn diagram.

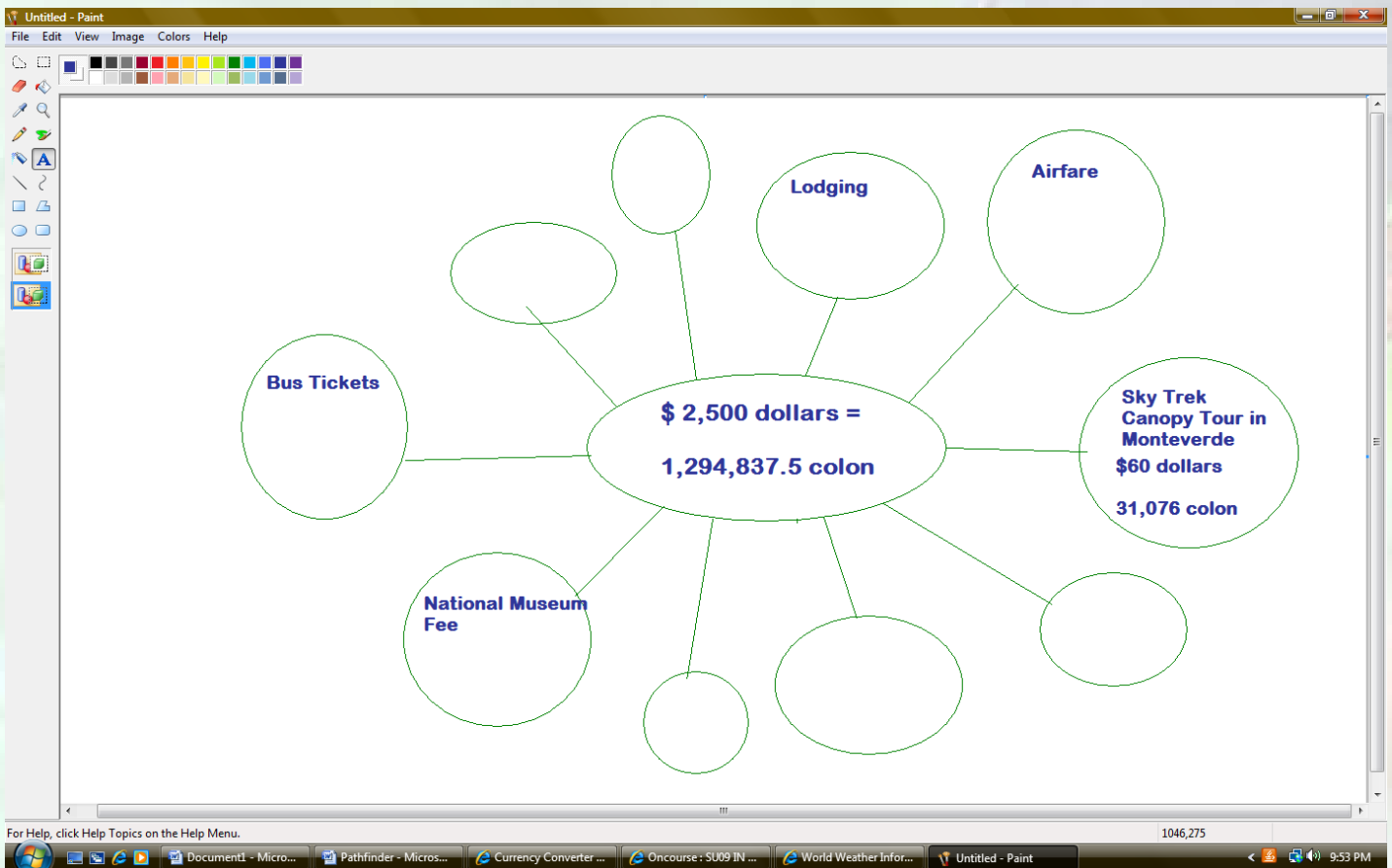


5. **Presentation** - Together with your intended travel group (classmates, club members, etc.), pick a topic about Costa Rica and become an "expert" on it. Each person should pick a different topic. Some topic suggestions are Costa Rican culture, food, popular destinations, rainforests, and economy. Use the sources on this pathfinder to learn all about your topic. Remember the databases could help you find many articles about your topic. Create a presentation about your information. You might want to use a program such as Microsoft PowerPoint to make visuals for your presentation. Share your "expertise" with your travel group.

6. **Create a Game** - Design a game that incorporates Costa Rican themes and Spanish words. It might be a board game with Costa Rican landmarks. For example, you roll a dice and move ahead four spaces and land on the Poas Volcano. It may say something like "stuck in the lava lose one turn." Perhaps you land on a space that is a zipline rainforest canopy tour and skip ahead three spaces. Try to use Spanish words or phrases that might be helpful when traveling to Costa Rica. Maybe you land

on the La Tienda (store) space. Another person playing the game draws a card with an object for sale on it and reads you the card. Make the items for sale something you are likely to buy in Costa Rica. For instance, the person reading the card might read: *Cuanto es el café?* (How much is the coffee?). You would answer by guessing a number one through six and rolling the dice. When guessing the price, answer in Spanish. For example, *el café es cinco colons* (The coffee is five colons). If your guess matches the dice you move that many spaces ahead. If your guess is wrong, you move backwards the number shown on the dice. Try to incorporate as much Costa Rican themes as possible.

7. Make a Budget - Use the pathfinder sources to find out about different places and activities you want to see and do. Find out how much each activity will cost and use the currency converter to find out how many U.S. Dollars and Costa Rican Colons each thing will cost. Be sure to list both the dollar and colon amount for each item. If you made an itinerary, use the places you selected on it. Organize your information by creating a graphic organizer like the one below. Start by placing your budget amount in the center circle. The example below already includes some circles filled out. Fill in your circles with any expense you want to include. When you are finished filling in your circles add up your estimated money spent. Did you go over budget? This activity will help you estimate how much money you will need for your trip.



For Teachers

8. Curriculum Standards - Using this pathfinder and/or can help meet curriculum standards in your school. The following are just some of the standards that could be fulfilled when utilizing this resource. These standards were retrieved from the Indiana Department of Education website in May 2009.

<http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards/StandardSearch.aspx>

Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism - HTT.20.1 Students develop an understanding of basic physical geography and major tourist areas of the world.

World Geography - WG.2 Students will acquire a framework for thinking geographically about places and regions. They will identify the physical and human characteristics of places and regions. They will understand that people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity, and how culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

Geography & History of the World GHW.11 Students will examine the physical and human geographic factors associated with sports, recreation and tourism along with the local and global consequences of these activities.

Pura Vida!

"Literally 'pure life,' a national expression that sums up the desire to live the best and most pure existence."
(*The Travel Book a Journey Through Every Country in the World*, Lonely Planet, 2005, p. 97.)

Pathfinder created by Jennifer N. Cecil-Jessie, May 2009