

A Glimpse Of Costa Rican Culture And Traditions

Since the majority of Costa Ricans are not indigenous to the region, Costa Rica has less cultural flair than other Latin American Countries such as Mexico or Guatemala. Only one percent of the Costa Rican population is considered to be Indian, and there is a small Latin population who identify as Ticos, but a whopping 98 percent of the population is white. While this has an affect on the "Latin" feel of Costa Rica, Costa Rica still resembles most other Latin counties as it is conservative, traditional, and predominately Catholic. Gender roles are extremely traditional with men and women respecting their roles within the family. Most Costa Ricans also live at home until they are married and going away to college or to find independence from one's family is rare.

The backbone of Costa Rican culture is the family. Family ties are of the utmost importance and some of the most important Costa Rican traditions revolve around the family: baptisms, engagement parties, weddings, first communions and funerals.

Religion also plays an important role in Costa Rican culture but takes a back burner to family. Many religious celebrations are more about spending time with family and partying than they are about the religious significance of the holiday. Religious parades and processions occur here just as they do in other Latin American countries but lack the colorful flair that is seen elsewhere. This is because the Indian and Latin populations are so small that they don't offer a mix of cultural religious practices.

Costa Rica experiences two major economic shutdowns that revolve around the Easter and Christmas holidays. During this time, Businesses can be closed for up to five days, transportation services cease, and families use this time to spend time together and worship.

Another integral part of Costa Rican tradition is the pilgrimage to Basilica de los Angeles. This pilgrimage takes place each year and is in honor of the Virgin of the Angels.

Even though religion has taken on less significance than it has in the past and families often vacation rather than observe religious customs, families continue to come together often. Large gatherings that include extended family are common and are perhaps the molding ground of Costa Rican culture.