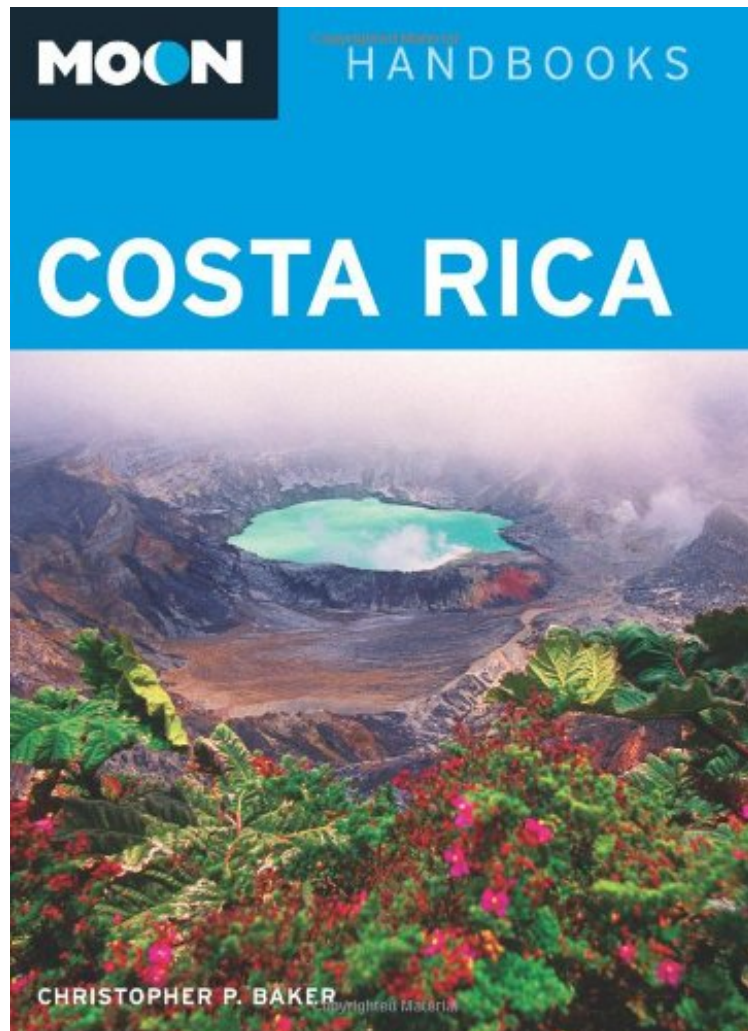


(Read now) Moon Costa Rica (Moon Handbooks)

## Moon Costa Rica (Moon Handbooks)

*Christopher P. Baker*

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**Christopher P. Baker : Moon Costa Rica (Moon Handbooks)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moon Costa Rica (Moon Handbooks):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing By JesseRothI used this guide for a 2-week trip to CR in December 2012, encompassing driving from Nicoya to the Sta Elena cloud forest, down to the Osa Peninsula for a week at an eco-lodge (the marvelous Las Caletas), and then 5 days of spontaneous road-tripping, working our way back up from Osa to Liberia via the southern pacific coast. So we had LOTS of opportunity to refer to this book for food, lodging and sights. The good part is that he recommended Las Caletas lodge in Osa, which we booked for 4 nights loved so much we extended our stay for another 2 nights. This was the highlight of our trip and we plan to go back. By large, though, the author's (Christopher P. Baker) main interest in lodging seems to be interior decor - the

book spends an inordinate amount of time describing the color schemes decorative styles of lodging (with a bent toward pastels), which we just found annoying after a while. We care more about location, views, comfort, friendliness of the managers. We were happy to spend \$100+ night for lodging if the location was spectacular, but we weren't interested in paying for (or reading about) places based on their decor. Also, the author's guidance on food was frequently wrong: he highly recommended an overpriced restaurant in Monteverde called Sofia, where the food tasted like something I would have made for company in college - quesadillas and a bland veggie-cheese dish passed off as a chile relleno. And a soda in Puerto Jimenez he said was one of the best in CR was also nothing special. Bottom-line: don't go to Costa Rica for the food, and don't waste your time looking for good food when you're there - the best you can hope for is good fish and good meat, the rest is bound to be bland. I realize this is now an outdated edition (2009) but next time I'll look for a guide by a different author, one whose tastes in lodging I'll hope are more in synch with my own.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Moon Me. By MussSyke I love these Moon guidebooks. They set the right tone for travel. For example, they don't try to scare you out of driving someplace as the other guidebooks always seem to do, but instead tell you information about driving in the place matter-of-factly. They don't try to force you to agree with their slanted liberal beliefs as Lonely Planet always seems to do, and I'd even believe that the authors have been to the location in question unlike a lot of other guidebooks. I attribute these qualities to the fact that Moon is still a rather small group of books, concentrating mostly on Latin America. As they grow, I expect the quality will decrease, but I hope that doesn't happen. For now they are great. I also like the fact that there are a lot of black and white pictures in these books, along with some color photos. I can take my own photos when I get there, but I like to have some idea of what they are talking about in the meantime, making the higher quantity of photos without sacrificing text quality desirable. They also have some great boxed texts with personal travel stories that give a good example of some cultural aspect and offer an interesting read.

51 of 53 people found the following review helpful. Not for LP loyalists or budget travelers By Jenna As a loyal Lonely Planet reader, I thought Moon would be as good or better, considering the reviews for the two. This book is written for the author's ideals only - anyone who is really into sportfishing and seeing expats exclusively while traveling. It does a poor job of listing the more budget-minded lodging and restaurants, and has little to no mention of info that would suit someone with cultural interest. All restaurants and lodging are "to avoid the Ticos, book here" or "try expat Chuck and Susan's place, here". It would help someone book an entire trip to see other travelers traveling, and to go fishing. Disappointed, I went to the bookstore and paged through LP's older, more concise guide book, and was thrilled to see better descriptions, more color pictures, and more cultural insight. Moon's book also packs an extra 100 pages of Costa Rican history - something that is nice, but not necessary to take with me in a backpack trekking around the country. Lastly, the author has an absurd overuse with superlatives! "This beach is the best in the country" and "the wildlife in this park is unmatched" - these are good descriptions, but when applied to every park and every beach, given that there are dozens, it makes it difficult for the traveler to make an informed decision to organize their best trip to Costa Rica. Overall I was disappointed and will be buying a different guide book to take with me.

Award-winning travel writer Christopher P. Baker knows the best way to experience Costa Rica, from surfing the beaches of Golfo Dulce to hiking in Corcovado National Park and dining in upscale Escaz in San Jose. Baker includes unique trip ideas like The 21-Day Best of Costa Rica, The Offbeat Experience, and Seven Days for Active Vacationers. Packed with information on dining, transportation, and accommodations, Moon Costa Rica has lots of options for a range of travel budgets. Every Moon guidebook includes recommendations for must-see sights and many regional, area, and city-centered maps. Complete with details on the best beaches for surfing and a variety of opportunities to get outdoors, Moon Costa Rica gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience. With expert writers, first-rate strategic advice, and an essential dose of humor, Moon guidebooks are the cure for the common trip.

Earlier this fall Moon released two updated guides to Costa Rica. The 6th edition of the handbook to Costa Rica was written by veteran travel writer Christopher P. Baker, an expert on both Costa Rica and Cuba. Baker won the 2006 Lowell Thomas Award for best guidebook for a previous edition of this book. At 650 pages, the latest version is bursting with valuable tips about traveling through this tropical jewel. -- Gadling, October 29, 2007

About the Author Christopher P. Baker was born and raised in Yorkshire, England. He received a B.A. (Honors) in Geography at University College, London. His love affair with Costa Rica began in 1986, when he participated in a spa program that left him 10 years younger. He has been enraptured with the Central American nation ever since. Christopher's stories and photography have appeared in publications as diverse as National Wildlife, National Geographic Traveller, and Newsweek. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Costa Rica's Best Beaches with Christopher P. Baker 1. For sheer beauty, which Costa Rica beach takes your breath away? Costa Rican beaches are less about scintillating white sands and more about physical context. For a sheer scenic Wow! reaction, I'd give top marks to Playa Guiones in Nosara. Wider than a football field at low tide, this favorite of surfers has tide pools and is great for horseback riding. I'm still bowled over every time I visit Manuel Antonios Playa Espadilla Sur, not the main Playa

Espadilla which fronts the resort area, but the long scimitar separated from the former by a rocky outcrop and river, which sweeps around the crook of a tombolo and ends at a large knoll called Punta Catedral. The views of Manuel Antonio from there are fantastic. I love arriving by Zodiak off the National Geographic Sea Lion when I escort tours. Monkeys are almost always there to greet us, along with coatis, iguanas, and sloths and boas in the trees.<sup>2</sup> If a traveler is craving privacy and a secluded spot to relax, whats your recommendation? Costa Rica is largely about nature. If youre seeking a total escape where you can relax in a hammock with a good book and a pair of binoculars to spot birds and wildlife, there are a few options. If youre in the mood for deluxe rusticity, try Casa de Tranquilidadit has its own rainforest wildlife reserve. On a lesser budget, the experience of literally being eye-to-eye with the monkeys in your own treehouse is unbeatable: Lapas Nest Costa Rica Tree House gets my vote. Two favorite chill out and relax hotels that immerse you in nature but also offer something intangible and unique are Iguana Lodge, which is on the Osa Peninsula, and Monteverde Lodge, which edges up against the cloud forest in Monteverde.<sup>3</sup> What should a visitor know about beach etiquette? For example, are there clothing-optional beaches? Or is nude sunbathing not appropriate? Im always amazed at how often I see European women walking through beach towns, such as Quepos, in bikinis. Costa Rica isnt Brazil! Its much more conservative, and such dress is considered inappropriate by locals. There are no nude beaches, nor even topless beaches in Costa Rica. Gay locals and visitors used to have their own nude beach (Playa Dulce Vida) at Manuel Antonio, but it is now the domain of the magnificent Arenas del Mar, which I recently blogged about.<sup>4</sup> Is beach camping permitted in Costa Rica? Camping is not permitted on any beach. For many years, locals paid no attention to the regulation; now its being enforced more, but you will still find many Costa Rican families pitching their tents beneath the coconut palms (which is actually one good way to ruin your daymore people are killed by falling coconuts than by venomous snakes in Costa Rica).<sup>5</sup> What beaches are best for snorkeling? Costa Rica has relatively few great snorkeling spots, especially compared to its neighboring countries. There are, however, small coral reefs and fabulous fish life to be seen off Cahuita, on the Caribbean side; off Playa Manuel Antonio, in the Central Pacific Coast; and further south (and most notably) at Uvita. Riptides are a danger at many beaches, and you should always inquire about local conditions before swimming.<sup>6</sup> Where can visitors combine a beach day with seeing wildlife? The ability to combine beach with wildlife is one of Costa Ricas major fortes. On most beaches on both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, the forests spill over the sands. The large-scale resort development that has characterized the beaches of northern Nicoya Peninsula has driven away much of the wildlife that was previously easily viewed in the dry forests backing the beach. Elsewhere, however, the worlds your oyster. My favoritesall of which are served by eco-sensitive hotelsinclude Tortuguero (good for viewing marine turtles nesting), Manuel Antonio (although it can get crowded, it offers guaranteed viewing of creatures), and the beaches of Cahuita National Park.<sup>7</sup> Whats a good beach for people who love to surf, but aren't seasoned surfers? Surfs up! Are you a beginner? Me too. If I were to choose my preferred learn-to-surf spot, Id opt for Tamarindo: its the most developed beach resort for surf schools and offers a wide choice of beaches for every level. There are also women-only and kids classes. Plus, since its surf central you get all the fun of chilling with fellow surfer dudes and checking out a crazy bar scene, if thats your thing.<sup>8</sup> A day at the beach is always good, but what if someone wants to do good as well? Are there any volunteer programs you'd suggest? Tremendous! Again, lots to choose from. For example, beach-goers can help save the planets endangered marine turtles at Playa Matapalos Portalon Ecological Wildlife Refuge, and with the Sea Turtle Conservancy at Tortuguero. Also at Tortuguero, Costa Rica Expeditions offers an innovative way for guests to donate a few hours of their time in local schools.