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MAN



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# ORIGIN: COSTA RICA

CBS&A Coffee Business Services & Academy, a Volcafe Initiative



*'Costa Rica is nature's own paradise with lush rainforests, towering volcanoes, mystifying cloud forests and open savannahs. Coffee regions have been blessed with fertile soils, hard-working people and a two-century-old coffee culture. This gives us a perfect environment to produce one of the world's best coffees.'*

*Carlos Homberger,  
General Manager,  
Volcafe Costa Rica*

## COSTA RICA AT A GLANCE:

Population:  
**4.7** mio people

GDP per capita:  
**\$9,400**

Export share  
of GDP:  
**37%**

Coffee share  
of exports:  
**2%**

Coffee Production:  
**1.7** mio 60 kg bags

Coffee Hectarage:  
**99,000** ha

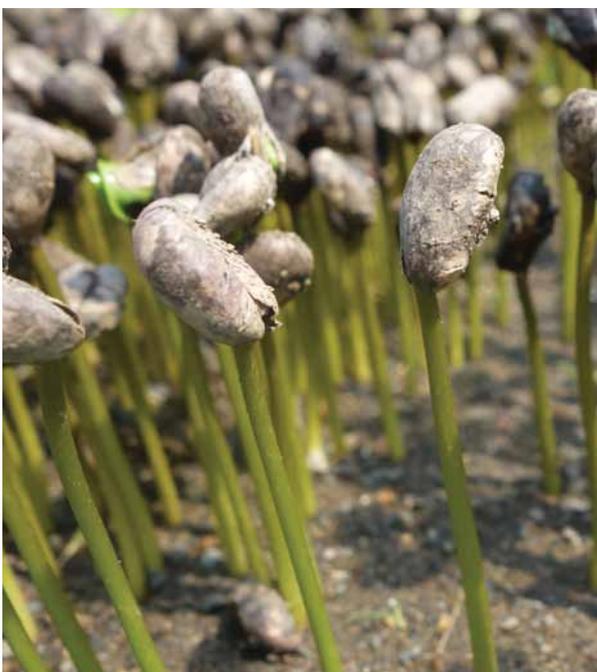
(2012 data: ICAFE,  
World Bank, Volcafe)

## PRODUCTION

Costa Rica was the first country in Central America to grow arabica coffee, starting in the early 1800s in the Central Valley. The nature of our volcanic soils welcomed the crop. After the independence the government started to encourage the activity by offering land and plants to people interested in being a part of the incipient industry. A few decades later coffee would be recognized as the entrepreneur of Costa Rica's economy.

Costa Rican coffee producers have had a very high yield in the past but it has been diminishing in the last decade mainly because of aging plantations. The proper renovations needed were not done on time and coffee output has been falling. To correct this problem, ICAFE, Instituto del Café de Costa Rica, has started to promote a renovation program, where soft loans are granted to the producers in order for them to finance the needed renovation. Hopefully this will start paying off in two to three years time.

Other than the high productivity per hectare, another thing that Costa Rica is avowed for is the coffee legislation that regulates the coffee industry and everything that it deals with. As part of our coffee legislation, fully ripened cherries are manually collected, and taken to the wet milling facilities where processing is done the same day with strict quality rules. The milling process has to comply with local strict regulations of water usage, water treatment, and CO2 release limits. This responsible and technified processing makes the Costa Rican coffee industry the most advanced in the world.



Recently leaf rust disease has affected Costa Rica's coffee production. The coffee institute of Costa Rica, ICAFE, along with the government and some private institutions, have started campaigns to help producers from the areas that were mostly affected, hoping for results in about two more years.

## VOLCAFE IN COSTA RICA

Volcafe Costa Rica is proud of its efforts to procure and to process not only the best coffee but also in a sustainable way. For us the coffee experience starts with the people behind it. Consequently we have started what we call farmer support organization. Our team of expert agronomists provides technical assistance and equipment for improving farm yields through sustainable means. Our program offers a series of talks to producer groups about sustainable agricultural farming methods, sound economic administration and proper social practices. On the milling side, Volcafe Costa Rica has also invested in reducing water usage. The production of biogas from the water treatment has contributed to the decrease of firewood usage. Volcafe Costa Rica is working towards a continual reduction in its electricity use. A reduction of 15% in our energy consumption has been the result of the introduction of sound environmental practices, being among the most efficient mills in Costa Rica.

## COFFEE REGIONS

In Costa Rica only arabica coffee is grown, mostly the Caturra and Catuai varieties. There are eight very well defined coffee producing regions in Costa Rica that go from 600 to 1,700 metres above sea level. The total planted coffee area is 99,000 hectares. The different microclimates with variations in soil, humidity, shade, altitudes and temperatures, allow Costa Rica to have a rich variety of cups that go from high acidity to sweet chocolatey and malty flavors.

**West Valley:** San Ramon, Palmares, Naranjo and Grecia districts located between 800 and 1400 metres altitude, and produce GHB, HB and SHB. Its cupping characteristics are very well balanced acidity, body and aroma.

**Tres Rios:** located to the east side of the capital, this region takes much of

its characteristics from its proximity to the Irazu Volcano. At 1200 to 1650 m, Tres Rios produces a hard and closed fissure bean. Its cupping characteristics are a very thick and creamy body, bright acidity and good aroma.

**Turrialba:** very near the Turrialba volcano, this area is located towards the Atlantic coast. Unlike other regions, in Turrialba there is abundant rain during most of the year. Coffee grows from the 600 to 1300 metres, and beans are open and large. Its cupping characteristics are normal acidity, good aroma and a mild body.

**Tarrazu:** located towards the southwest, and also known as Los Santos, coffee is grown from 1200 to 1900 metres altitude, in rather cold temperatures. This region offers one of the most complex profiles of the country: a highly acidic cup, with a rounded finish, excellent aroma and a chocolatey flavor.

**Orosi:** this valley is located not far from the central valley towards the east. Surrounded by slopes, coffee grows from the 1000 to 1400 metres. Given its volcanic soils the Orosi lands

have welcomed not only coffee but also some other plantations. Its cupping characteristics are: medium acidity and body, with some floral scents to it that result in a well-balanced cup.

**Guanacaste:** this area is the hottest of the country, and coffee is grown from 600 to the 1000 metres, in small regions near the mountains where temperatures are colder resulting in small, hard open fissure beans. Its profile is a smooth cup, with good aromas and medium body and acidity.

**Central Valley:** the region is the most populated of the country. Coffee is mostly grown from 1000 to 1400 m. The valley is recognized for its highly acidic and aromatic coffees, however within the regions there are sub-regions with various qualities. In general this regions grows SHB, with fine acidity and sweetish flavor notes.

**Brunca:** this region corresponds to the southern part of the country. HB and MHB are grown from 1000 to 1400 metres with temperatures that range widely. Its features are: regular body and acidity with a medium body, what many call –stomach friendly– coffee.



## COFFEE GROWING REGION OF COSTA RICA

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