

Best Waterfalls to Visit in Costa Rica

Whether you are staring spellbound at a titanic plume of water plunging majestically into an abyss or watching a set of rushing cascades scurrying down an idyllic stream, Costa Rica waterfalls will leave you with enduring memories. From its lush green, tropical forest-clad slopes to its mist-shrouded cloud forests, surely no other country plays host to such idyllic waterfalls. Aside from the mesmerizing waterfalls themselves, you'll encounter bejeweled butterflies, rainbow-hued hummingbirds and a jungle bursting with wildlife. Here are 10 of the best waterfalls in Costa Rica.

1. La Paz Waterfall

Set in a delightful cloud forest, the La Paz Waterfall Gardens is one of Costa Rica's most visited ecological parks. Enjoy a delightful walk through the mist before the majestic 37-meter (120 foot) El Tempo waterfall the first of five reveals itself through the cloud thrown up by its spray. Along the way, you may encounter birds, marmosets, capuchin and spider monkeys and languidly moving sloths. This fabulous private reserve is also home to a hummingbird garden with 26 dazzling species, a rare frog sanctuary, and a serpentarium.

Location: The La Paz Waterfall Gardens is in central Costa Rica, 31 km north of Alajuela.

Hike difficulty: Low. The Trail of Falls is a fifteen-minute walk from the reception area.

2. Rio Celeste Waterfall

The 90 meters (295 ft) Rio Celeste Waterfall is Costa Rica's most beautiful waterfall. It is famous for its luminous blue water, the product of a chemical reaction between minerals from the nearby volcano and the enveloping rainforest. A two-hour hike delivers you to the waterfall's doorstep. Along the way, you may occasionally glimpse inquisitive monkeys, iridescent blue morpho butterflies, and the occasional hard to spot poison dart frogs through the vibrant jungle. Upon your arrival you are greeted by a thunderous mist-shrouded waterfall and bubbling boulder-strewn cascades.

Location: The Rio Celeste Waterfall is in Tenorio Volcano National Park in the northwest.

Hike difficulty: Low. A typical round trip is 8 to 9 hours depending on your hotel's location and local traffic conditions.

3. Montezuma Waterfall

When you are tired of Montezuma's gorgeous beach, head for one of the most delightful of all **Costa Rica waterfalls**, the Montezuma Waterfall. Immerse yourself in a lush green world, home to three delightful waterfalls ranging from 15 meters (50 feet) to 24 meters (80 feet). Just a short twenty-minute hike along a lush moss-covered forest trail brings you to the first waterfall. The second waterfall features a fabulous swimming hole at the bottom of its plunge into the river.

Location: The Montezuma Waterfall is on the tip of the South Nicoya Peninsula

Hike difficulty: Low. The Montezuma Waterfall is a short twenty-minute hike from the town.

4. La Fortuna Waterfall

Surely one of the highlights of all **Costa Rica waterfall tours** the La Fortuna Waterfall plunges 70-meters (230 feet) into a delightful pool of swirling blue-green water. Located at the foot of the dormant Chato volcano, La Fortuna features a fifteen-minute hike down to the falls via a magical tropical forest staircase. As you descend, the surrounding jungle is bursting with Costa Rica's famed wildlife, until you emerge at the foot of the waterfall, surely one of the highlights of any trip into Costa Rica's Arenal Mountain range.

Location: The La Fortuna Waterfall is at the base of the dormant Chato volcano, about 5.5 kilometers outside of the town of La Fortuna in Alajuela Province.

Hike difficulty: Low. The La Fortuna is a fifteen minute hike from the carpark.

5. Catarata del Toro

La Catarata del Toro is your classical picture postcard waterfall and surely one of Costa Rica's most epic **rainforest waterfalls**. Plunging unbroken for nearly 92 meters (300 feet), La Catarata is a spectacular sight. Set on the rim of a deep bowl, the waterfall drops from a cutting through the cloud forest before hurtling into a massive pit. The surrounding cloud forest is alive with Costa Rica's amazingly diverse wildlife making an encounter with the forest's inhabitants even more spellbinding.

Location: The Catarata del Toro waterfall is on a private reserve 6 km north of Bajos del Toro in the central mountains north of Costa Rica's Central Valley.

Hike difficulty: Low.

6. Nauyaca Waterfall

The Nauyaca Waterfall comprises two series of waterfalls. The top waterfall lunges 61 meters (200 feet) into the first pool, which then cascades over a second 18-meter (60 foot) waterfall filling the bottom pool. The pool's clear blue water is a wonderful spot for a swim, particularly after a hike or horseback ride. Access is either via a one-hour hike on a well-maintained trail, a horseback ride

accompanied by a guide or a 4WD transfer. The rainforest trek is spectacular with hummingbirds and monkeys making frequent appearances.

Location: The Nauyaca Waterfalls are located in the South Pacific region of Costa Ballena, just 20 minutes from Dominical.

Hike difficulty: Moderate.

7. Llanos de Cortez Waterfall

Reputed to be Costa Rica's most beautiful waterfall, Llanos de Cortez is a shimmering series of wide ledges with water delicately cascading down their faces, creating a shimmering curtain of water. Roughly 15 meters (50 feet) wide and a dainty 3.7 meters (12 feet) high, Llanos de Cortez feeds into a clear pool with its own white sandy beach, the perfect spot for a swim or a leisurely picnic. Just a ten-minute stroll from the car park, the dense forest trail is filled with exotic birds and Costa Rica's ever-present monkeys.

Location: The Llanos de Cortez Waterfalls are located near the town of Bagaces, just a half hour south of Liberia.

Hike difficulty: Low

8. Bijagual Waterfall

This epic 180-meter (590 foot) waterfall is one of the highest in Central America. Accessible by either a 45-minute guided horseback ride or a 2.5 hours' round trip hike through the lush rainforest, the trip's highlights include panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and quaint fishing villages. Toucans and scarlet macaws share the forest with monkeys, sloths, and frogs. Enjoy a cooling plunge in the natural spring fed by water from the Carara National Park's high mountains.

Location: The Bijagual Waterfall is located in the Manantial Agua Viva private forest reserve near Jaco on the Central Pacific Coast.

Hike difficulty: High. A round trip hike takes approximately 2.5 hours and includes steep slopes.

9. Savegre Waterfalls

A leisurely one-hour hike through a mist-shrouded cloud forest leads you to the bridge marking the first of the gorgeous Savegre waterfalls. After crossing it, you reach the "cave", a huge natural rock formation. Continuing on, you arrive at the second imposing 30-meter (98-foot) waterfall. Along the way, you'll encounter the area's diverse bird and plant life, which calls the crystal clear Savegre River ecosystem home.

Location: The Savegre Waterfalls is 8.5 miles north of San Isidro.

Hike difficulty: Moderate.

10.Tocori Waterfalls

Visiting the Tocori Waterfalls is an adventure. Only accessible by horseback, the trail winds through working fields and tropical rainforest for around an hour. A short forest nature walk follows your ride as you arrive at the first of four delightful waterfalls. Another short walk brings you to the remaining three waterfalls. A highlight is a refreshing swim in the pool at the foot of the waterfall.

Location: The Tocori Waterfalls are set on Rancho Don Gilberto a private ecological reserve at Tocori on the Pacific Coast

Hike difficulty: Moderate. A horseback tour lasts for four to five hours including lunch and transfer times.

Few sights in nature rival the thundering roar of a majestic waterfall in full flow. The very air seems to quiver with primal energy as its cool tendrils of mist caress your face. Add in ethereal cloud forests, invigorating hikes through living jungles and you have Costa Rica waterfall tours at their very best.