

Immigration Control

Entry Requirements for Foreigners by the Immigration Authorities of the Republic of Costa Rica

- You must have an Entry Visa, in the event that it is required, as established by the Department of Immigration, according to Circulation Letter DG-3312-2010, which sets forth the following:

FIRST GROUP

Nationals of the following countries are permitted to enter without a consulate visa and with a maximum stay of up to 90 natural days.

GERMANY	LITHUANIA
ANDORRA	LUXEMBURG
ARGENTINA	MALTA
AUSTRALIA*	MEXICO
AUSTRIA	MALTA
BAHAMAS	MEXICO
BARBADOS	MONTENEGRO
BELGIUM	NORWAY*
BRAZIL	NEW ZEALAND*
BULGARIA	NETHERLANDS (HOLLAND) *
CANADA	PANAMA
CROATIA	PARAGUAY
CHILE	POLAND
CYPRUS	PORTUGAL
DENMARK*	PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO
SLOVAKIA	SAN MARINO
SLOVENIA	PUERTO RICO
SPAIN	SERBIA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*	SOUTH AFRICA
ESTONIA	UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN**
FINLAND	NORTHERN IRELAND**
FRANCE*	CZECH REPUBLIC
HUNGARY	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA
IRELAND	GREECE
ICELAND	ROMANIA
ISRAEL	VATICAN CITY
ITALY	SINGAPORE
JAPAN	SWEDEN

LATVIA
LIECHTENSTEIN
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBURG

SWITZERLAND
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
URUGUAY

* Their dependants are treated the same

** Includes England, Wales and Scotia

SECOND GROUP

Nationals of the following countries are permitted to enter without a consulate visa and with a maximum stay of 30 natural days

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
BELIZE

BOLIVIA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
EL SALVADOR
THE PHILIPINES
FIJI

GRANADA

GUATEMALA
GUYANA
HONDURAS
NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS
MARSHALL ISLANDS
SALOMON ISLANDS
KIRIBATI
MALDIVES

MAURITIUS
MICRONESIA (FEDERAL STATES)
NAURU
PALAU
TONGA
SAMOA
SAINT CHRISTOPHER AND NEVIS
SAN VICENTE AND THE GRANADAS
SAINT LUCIA
SÃO TOMÉ and PRINCÍPE
SEYCHELLES
SURINAM
TUVALU
TURKEY
VANUATU
VENEZUELA

THIRD GROUP

Authorized to enter the country with a consulate visa and with a maximum stay of 30 natural days.

ALBANIA
ANGOLA
SAUDI ARABIA
ALGERIA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
BAHRAIN
BENIN
BELARUS

MALASIA
MALAWI
MALI
MOROCCOS
MAURITANIA
MOLDAVIA
MONGOLIA
MOZAMBIQUE
NAMIBIA

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BOTSWANA
BRUNEI-DARUSSALAM
BURKINA FASO (ALTO VOLTA)
BURUNDI
BHUTAN
CAPE VERDE
CAMBODIA
CAMEROON
COLOMBIA

IVORY COAST
COMOROS
CHAD
ECUADOR

EGYPT

UNTIED ARAB EMIRATES
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
GABON
GAMBIA
GEORGIA
GHANA
GUINEA
GUINEA BISSAU
ECUATORIAL GUINEA
INDIA
INDONESIA
JORDAN
KAZAKHSTAN
KENYA
KYRGYSTAN
KOSOVO
KUWAIT
LESOTO
LIBERIA
LIBYA
LEBANON
MADACASCAR

NEPAL
NICARAGUA
NIGER
NIGERIA
OMAN
PAKISTAN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
PERU
QATAR
SAHRAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
(WESTERN SAHARA)
REPUBLIC OF CENTRAL AFRICA
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS
ZAIRE)

LAOS PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RWANDA
SENEGAL
SIERRA LEONE
SUDAN
SWAZILAND
TAILAND
TAIWAN (REGION)
TANZANIA
TAJIKISTAN
TIMOR-LESTE
TOGO
TUNISIA
TURKMENISTAN
UKRAINE
UGANDA
UZBEKISTAN
VIETNAM
YEMEN
DJIBUTI
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

Nationals from countries in the third group must request a consulate visa from their country of origin, with the following exceptions:

- a) Nationals from the countries in the third group that have an entry visa (tourist visa, crewmembers visa, or business visa) to the United States, Canada, South Korea, Japan, countries in the European Union and/or Schengen visa, stamped in their passport, with a minimum stay of **three months**, can do without a consulate visa to enter Costa Rica, and will enjoy the same entry conditions of those nationals from the first group. The length of stay and passport validity corresponds to the group in their country of origin.
- b) Nationals from countries in the third group that have legal residency (residency, work permit, study permit, refugee status) with a stay of no less than six months, in the countries from the first group that do not fall under the conditions from the prior section, may request a consulate visa in that country as a legal resident as long as they present before a Costa Rican consulate proper documentation that identifies them as permanent residents. The Costa Rican consulate must verify the authenticity of this condition before immigration authorities of the resident country.
- c) Nationals from the countries in the third group with legal residency (residency, work permit, study permit, or refugee status) of a minimum of six months in the United States of America, Canada, and the European Union, can do without a consulate visa to enter Costa Rica, with the same entry conditions of those countries in the first group. Nationals that do not have legal residency for the required minimum of six months may opt for a consulate visa in the respective country. The length of stay and passport validity corresponds to the group that is their country of origin.
- d) Nationals from countries in the third group that have permanent residency of no less than six months in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, or El Salvador, may request a consulate visa in one of the these countries where they have permanent residency as long as they show before a respective Costa Rican consulate the proper documentation that proves their permanent residency. The Costa Rican consulate must verify the authenticity of the permanent residency before immigration authorities of that country.

For other foreign nationals from the third group that request an entry visa before a Costa Rican consulate that is not in the country of origin or residency and that does not fall under the conditions indicated previously, the Consulate agent must send a petition to the Immigration office by fax, in order to be evaluated. This petition will be considered according to the applicable conditions and rights. The Immigration and Foreign Administration Department may deny any request as deemed necessary. In any event, there must be reasonable indication that the foreigner does not intend to stay in the country, as this would distort the immigration status of Non-resident.

FORTH GROUP

Entry with a restricted visa and with approval from the General Director of the Immigration and Foreign Administration Department, for those who apply to the Restricted Visa Commission, with a stay of 30 natural days.

COUNTRY

AFGANISTAN
BANGLADESH
CUBA
ERITREA
ETHIOPIA

JAMAICA
MYANMAR (BURMA)
PALESTINE
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF
CHINA
(MAINLAND CHINA)

HAITI

DEMOCRATIC NORTH KOREA
SOMALIA
SRI LANKA

Notes:

- a) **Nationals from countries in the fourth group that have an entry visa (tourist visa, crewmember visa, or business visa) to the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Schengen visa, or countries from the European Union, stamped in their Passport with a minimum stay of three months**, can do without their restricted visa to enter Costa Rica, with the same applicable entry conditions of those countries from the second group. The length of stay and passport validity corresponds to the country of origin. Nationals from the countries that comply with this condition may be exempt from the guarantee deposit, having the same conditions as those from the second group.
- b) Nationals from countries in the fourth group that show legal residency (residency, work permit, study permit, refugee status) with a stay of no less than six months, in the countries from the first group, may request a consulate visa in that country as a legal resident as long as they present before a Costa Rican consulate proper documentation that identifies them as permanent residents. The Costa Rican consulate must verify the authenticity of this condition before immigration authorities of the resident country.
- c) **Nationals from the countries in the fourth group with legal residency (residency, work permit, study permit, or refugee status) of a minimum**

of six months in the United States of America, Canada, and the European Union, can do without their restricted visa to enter Costa Rica and the same applicable entry conditions of those countries from the second group will be applied. Nationals that do not have legal residency for the required minimum of six months may opt for a consulate visa in the respective country. The length of stay and passport validity corresponds to the group that is their country of origin.

- d) Nationals from Hong Kong carrying British passports for British National Overseas/BN that are valid, will receive the same treatment as those from the first group, therefore they will not be required to show a visa to enter the country and they will be allowed to stay up to 30 days. Hong Kong nationals that do not have this documentation will need a restricted visa and the same conditions will apply to that related to the People's Republic of China.
- e) In the event that business owners and national investors from the People's Republic of China that carry out their proceedings with the Costa Rican consulate in China duly certified by a letter of support sent by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, CCPIT or the PROCOMER Business Office in China; the entry requirements will be for those foreigners from the third group, meaning, by means of consulate visa. The PROCOMER Business Office in China will only grant this document in those cases where the person is required to travel to Costa Rica to participate in an activity related to promoting exports and investment in Costa Rica, organized by PROCOMER. It is understood that these letters submitted by organizations cited in this section must have the minimum requirements for such a case by the Costa Rica consulate in China.
- f) Nationals from the People's Republic of China that carry **valid diplomatic or government passports from the People's Republic of China** will be exempt from the visa requirements for their entry, stay, exit, and travel within the country for a period of no more than 30 days from the date of their entry. Those that carry a **service passport from the Republic of China for public matters** may enter the country with a consulate visa, according to the conditions of the third group and according to procedures set forward by the DGME (Immigration and Foreign Administration Department) and the Costa Rica consulate in Beijing.

- **Valid passport or travel documentation with a minimum stay of three months for nationals from countries in the aforementioned first and second group and six months for those from the third and fourth group, with the exception of agreements from others countries.**
- Non-residents must prove their solvency in accordance with means of accreditation and minimum amounts determined by the National Immigration Agency.

- Non-residents must show a return or continuing ticket when the means of transport is commercial. When dealing with private transportation, the appropriate flight itinerary must be presented. In the event of a maritime means, the navigation plan, with the destination port must be presented.
- There should be no problematic issue to enter the country
- Residents must prove by means of documentation related to their immigration status in Costa Rica. In the event that their residency documentation is expired, this will not be an issue to authorizing their entry into the country.
- Present the Entry or Exit Card filled out completely and in legible handwriting.
- In the event that a non-resident foreigner has left Costa Rica avoiding immigration controls or from a non-certified place, a fine must be paid according to article 33, subsection 3) of Law No. 8764. If the fine is not paid, their entry into the country will be denied and a restriction for entry will be imposed for a period triple that of their irregular stay. In the event that the person is a resident, and has been caught avoiding entry or exit immigration controls, a detailed form must be submitted of the case to the Foreign Affairs Department so that they can proceed accordingly.

The New Immigration Control law was approved by the Immigration and Foreign Administration Department and published in the Official La Gaceta Daily on September 25th, 2011.