

FIVE THINGS TO DO IN COSTA RICA

This Central American country offers more than its fair share of natural delights and adventures. As well as looking for sloths, we enjoyed seeing plenty of other wildlife, a little time at the beach and some pretty simple and terrific meals. **By Jennifer Allford**



COSTA RICA TOURISM BOARD

Go for a walk in the woods

The trick to walking in the forests of Costa Rica is to keep your eyes open to see the astonishing biodiversity everywhere around you. Try to keep your mouth closed so you are better able to hear the delicious cacophony of all those critters. Also, take your sweet time. "Walk slowly and wait for things to show up," the guide advises. "If you walk fast you will miss the whole thing."



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Grab a towel and hit the beach

Costa Rica has beach towns on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Just south of the Sloth Sanctuary, on the Caribbean side of the country, you'll find the little town of Puerto Viejo. It has the requisite beautiful beach and surfers on the water or heading to the waves, carrying boards while riding their bikes. It's got tons of funky little beach bars and tourist stands.

Jennifer Allford was a guest of Visit Costa Rica, which did not review or approve this story.



JENNIFER ALLFORD

Check into a cabin

Marco Otilio and Aurora Gamez started Almonds and Corals hotel near the beach in Manzanillo with one room in 1993. There are 25 cabins now. You're serenaded to sleep by the sounds of the rainforest and wake up to howler monkeys.



JENNIFER ALLFORD

Might as well go for a soda

You'll find sodas, little diners, all over Costa Rica. At Soda Mirna in Puerto Viejo, I enjoyed a healthy portion of fish, Caribbean style, along with the ubiquitous rice and beans. Sodas usually make their own hot sauce and guard the recipe.



JENNIFER ALLFORD

Eat like the locals at a cafeteria

In the Central Valley, on the way back to San Jose, Costa Rica, we stopped where the locals do for a bite to eat. Bar Y Restaurante El Yugo, a cafeteria on Highway 32, serves up all kind of traditional Costa Rican fare.

