

Check list for buying property in Costa Rica

1. Be as close to positive as you can be that the AREA you are choosing is the one for you. Does it "feel right"?
2. Medical... if you need to be near medical facilities or other professional services, make certain of their location. Do not assume that the specialist you need will be available at a medical clinic.
3. Shopping. If you enjoy browsing, window shopping or just killing time "looking"...are there stores and merchandise near your location?
4. Restaurants. For some people this doesn't matter... for others it does. If it does, check around.
5. Types of people in the area. Do not assume that there are gringos or like minded people in your area. Know who your neighbors will be BEFORE you move in.
6. Access to airport. If this is important, how long a drive is it from your "home" to the nearest airport?
7. Banks. Is a bank closeby? Is it a national bank that has the services you need?
8. Internet. Do not assume that internet is available everywhere. Oftentimes it is not. And high speed internet is NOT available in about 99% of the country.
9. Utilities. Do not assume they are available. Get positive confirmation from the nearest municipality. In many affluent areas along the beaches, homeowners are often shocked to find that telephone service may not be available for literally years. Ask about electric and the type of water available in your area. ASSUME NOTHING concerning utilities.
10. Building permits. Even if you see other houses in your chosen area, do not assume that you can get building permits. The bureaucracy with regard to building in Costa Rica can be maddening. This is not a certainty either.
11. Infrastructure. Talk to the locals. Find out if there are problems with electric or water. Oftentimes a community grows too fast,

resulting in a poor support system or even , as in some cases, a complete cessation of building permits. Santa Ana and Escazu, two of Costa Rica's more affluent suburbs are experiencing severe infrastructure problems with water and electric outtages almost daily. Poor planning? Perhaps, but avoid the problem if you can.

12. If you are buying property and intend to build, make sure that you check construction prices in your local area. What is standard in San Jose will be completely different than Guanacaste.

13. Schools. If you have children that attend secondary or primary school , ensure that the schools meet with your satisfaction. Do not assume that schools will be adequate in your area. Most of the time they are not.

14. Hobbies. If your hobby or special interest requires special materials or equipment, try to ensure that availability exists in your area.

15. Remoteness. This is almost not worth mentioning except for the large number of gringos that choose to live in remote and isolated areas...and a short time later, discover that too much isolation is unbearable. BE CERTAIN! Isolation is great when daydreaming but different in reality.

16. Weather. Make certain that you thoroughly understand what the weather will be like in your area ALL YEAR ROUND. Being in the beach area in the overwhelming heat of summer months is different than the winter months. And rainy season is completely different than summer.

17. Roads. A large number of both Ticos and Gringos whine about road conditions. The sad fact is that changes to the country's infrastructure are slow in coming. Do not trust the local or the realtor that says " a new road will be installed next year". The reality is more like five years or never. If the roads drive you crazy when you visit, think what they will be like when you have been here a year.

18. If you are planning on building on your property in the near future, ensure that there is a reliable builder in the area or at least one that is available...in your price range. Many people who assumed that they

could find a low priced builder in Guanacaste in recent months have been shocked to find that they are being quoted \$80-100 per sq. foot.

19. Many people arrive here and buy and assume that they will be able to find a job to supplement their income. **DO NOT ASSUME THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND WORK.** It is difficult and most likely you will have to create your own job . Being employed in Costa Rica is extremely difficult.

20. Make sure that you understand what types of insects and animals will be inhabiting your land with you. Sound stupid? If you are petrified of spiders , scorpions, snakes and more... ask .

21. Security. Self explanatory? Not really. Many people either assume that there is too much crime everywhere and assume they have to live in a gated community OR they believe that there is no crime here and that Costa Rica is the second coming of Shangrila. Both are wrong. Check with locals . Talk to the local police. Talk to the people who live in the area.

22. What are the zoning laws and building codes in your area? Most likely there will be no problems, but best to make certain.

23. Do you speak Spanish? If not , you may not want to completely immerse yourself in a community where you are the only gringo...just because it sounds romantic. You might want to consider renting first.

24. If you have any doubt whatsoever about the buildability of your property , engage an architect or better yet, an engineer. Soil tests and possibly a contour map will confirm buildability... or not.

25. If you are buying an existing home...do not expect the owner to fix problems that may arise in the future. Have someone examine the structure with a fine tooth comb.

26. If possible, spend a night or two (or longer) in your future neighborhood. You might be unpleasantly surprised at the smells, sounds and activities. Know what you are getting into.

This list cannot tell you values and whether or not you are getting a "good deal" or not. It can prevent a great deal of headache and

heartache. It is important not to assume that any aspect of real estate is the same as in your home country. IT is most definitely not.

Good luck. We hope that , wherever you end up in Costa Rica...you love it here as much as we do.

Randy y Rhonda