**INTRODUCTION:** Costa Rica is a country in Central America situated between Nicaragua and Panama. This small country boasts 6% of the world’s biodiversity, over 60 years without an army, a stable democracy, and high levels of education, health, and happiness (worldhappiness.report).

This culture box aims to provide resources for approaching Costa Rica in a multidisciplinary way, featuring items that tell stories of Costa Rica’s past and present.

**WHAT THIS BOX INCLUDES:**

1. Costa Rican Flag
2. Constitution of Costa Rica
3. *Chorreador de Café* (Coffee Maker)
4. Wooden Machete
5. Drum
6. *Oso Perezoso* (Sloth)
7. Colones (Costa Rican Money)
8. *Carrito* (Little Car)
9. Wooden Snake
10. *Ranita* (Ranita)
11. Post Cards
12. Volcanic Stone
Costa Rican Flag

DESCRIPTION

The current design of the flag of Costa Rica originated in 1848, adopting the colors of the French flag as the designer was inspired by the 1848 French revolution. The blue represents the sky, opportunity, idealism and perseverance. White represents peace, wisdom, and happiness. The color red symbolizes the blood of those who died defending the country, and also the warmth and generous nature of Costa Ricans.
The Constitution of Costa Rica was established in 1949 by the Constitutional Assembly led by Jose Figueres Ferrer. It was drafted after the end of the relatively short Costa Rican Civil War (March 12-April 24th, 1948). It brings some unique and groundbreaking laws helping to make Costa Rica the special and livable country that it is today. These include abolishing the army, guaranteeing citizenship and voting rights for all Costa Ricans regardless of race or gender, priority of health and education programs, and protection of ecological harmony between people and nature.

The copy of the Constitution in this Culture Box is an abridged selection containing the articles most important for the unique laws mentioned above.
Chorreador de Café

DESCRIPTION

The chorreador is the traditional method for brewing coffee in Costa Rica. Using this method, coffee grounds are placed in the cloth bag suspended by the wooden frame, hot water is poured over the top and coffee drips out into the mug below. Its name comes from the verb *chorreare*, which refers to liquid flowing through or out of something. In this case, that liquid is water poured in and coffee flowing out!

Historically, coffee cultivation has been one of Costa Rica’s most important economic activities. It is known to produce some of the highest quality coffee in the world!
Wooden Machete

DESCRIPTION

Machetes are among the most important tools in Central America. Farmers in the countryside, known as *campesinos*, use machetes for many tasks including harvesting crops, weeding fields, and chopping wood. True machetes are made of metal and have sharp blades. This one is made of colorful tropical wood.
Drum

DESCRIPTION

This style of drum is known as a djembe. Though now popular across the Americas, including in Costa Rica, it originated in West Africa. Its continued presence and popularity represents the persistence of African culture across centuries of colonization, forced migration, and slavery. The Caribbean coast of Costa Rica is a unique region of the country primarily populated by members of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. In this region many people speak an English dialect known as Patwah and have developed a rich culture of Afro-Costa Rican music.
Oso Perezoso- sloth

DESCRIPTION

Sloths are know in Spanish as osos perezosos, meaning "lazy bear." There are both two and three-toed sloths in Costa Rica, inhabiting the tops of trees in most areas of the country, including the 25% of protected land area. They do move slowly, so slowly in fact that algae grows on their fur!
Colones- Costa Rican Money

DESCRIPTION

Costa Rica’s currency is named the colón, called colones in the plural. It is named after Cristóbal Colón, or Christopher Columbus in English. Columbus arrived to the Costa Rican territory in 1502, leading to about 300 years of Spanish colonization. The paper currency features colorful depictions of some of Costa Rica’s most emblematic political figures on the front and animals on the back - including the sloth!
Carrito

DESCRIPTION

The bumper of this toy car displays the phrase, "Pura Vida." This phrase meaning "pure life" is a common expression in Costa Rica. Though there is not a perfect translation of the meaning in English, it can be a greeting, an affirmation that all is well, or description of something positive. Costa Ricans pride themselves on taking a "pura vida" approach to life, embracing happiness, positivity, and peace.
Wooden Snake

DESCRIPTION

There are about 225 species of reptiles found in Costa Rica. Of this number there are 120 species of snakes, 22 of which are venomous. The most dangerous snake is the fer-de-lance, or terciopelo. While not the most venomous, it is the most aggressive venomous snake. Most snakes are somewhat docile, preferring to avoid contact with humans.
Ranita

DESCRIPTION

This small, wooden frog or ranita can be used to make a croaking-like sound by running the stick across the bumps on its back. Costa Rica boasts an impressive number of amphibians, counting 175 different species, 85% of which are frogs. They have adapted to lay their eggs in pools of water found in leaves in order to avoid the eggs being eaten by fish.
**Post Cards**

![Post Cards of Costa Rica](image)

**DESCRIPTION**

This collection of post cards show off some of Costa Rica's most iconic images: beautiful beaches, impressive volcanoes, and diverse wildlife. Costa Rica has made it a priority to protect its natural resources, and ensure an ecologically healthy environment for its residents. Currently, 98% of its electricity comes from renewable sources and it has a goal to be carbon neutral by 2021. Additionally, clean drinking water is considered a basic human right in Costa Rica. More than 95% of the population has clean water right from the tap!
Volcanic Stone

DESCRIPTION

Volcanoes are a key feature of the Costa Rican landscape, counting 14 total within the country. Many are found in the Cordillera Central, a volcanic mountain range forming the continental divide that separates east from west. Many volcanoes are still active and located within national parks, attracting national and foreign visitors to form an important part of ecotourism.