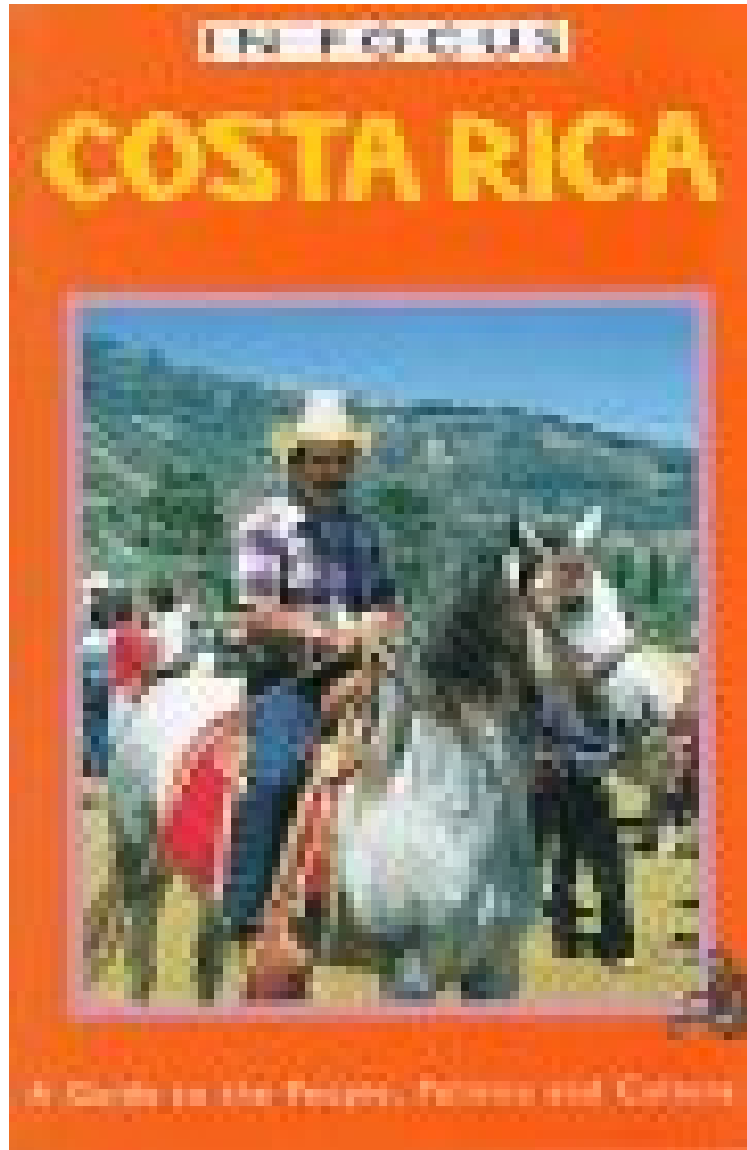


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## Costa Rica in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture

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Distinctive among the turbulent nations of Central America, Costa Rica enjoys a much-envied reputation for political stability and prosperity. Since abolishing its army in 1948, the "Switzerland of Central America" has experienced unbroken democratic rule and respect for human rights. Yet this small country has also been drastically affected by the debt crisis of the 1980s and ensuing structural adjustment, with resulting increases in poverty and social inequality. Though its economy was traditionally based on coffee and bananas, Costa Rica is now among the world's top eco-tourism destinations. The influx of tourists brings vital income and employment but also threatens to spoil the country's spectacular natural beauty. Costa Rica in Focus is an authoritative and up-to-date guide to this fascinating country. It explores: The history, the economy, the society, the environment, the culture and where to go and what to see.