

The Story of How Costa Rica Saved its Forests

Long ago, Costa Rica was covered in beautiful forests. But just like many places in the world, people started cutting down trees for wood and to make room for farms.

By the 1980s, more than half of Costa Rica's forests were gone! The animals that lived there were losing their homes.

So the people decided to take action. They created National Parks and reserves so that a quarter for the country is now just for nature!



They made a new rule called "Payment for Environmental Services." This meant they would actually pay people to protect forests and plant new trees instead of cutting them down.

Almost all of Costa Rica's electricity comes from non-polluting sources like water, wind and volcanoes.

Because of all this hard work, the forests began to grow back. Costa Rica is now home to 5% of all the plants and animals on Earth, even though it's a tiny country



Types of forests

Costa Rica has different types of forests:

Tropical Rainforests get a lot of rain all through the year. They have tall trees that make a "canopy" like a green umbrella over the forest floor. It can be very warm or hot here and they are found close to the equator.

Cloud forests are higher up in the mountains where instead of rain, the moisture forms clouds. These misty forests are characterized by twisted, moss-covered trees draped with orchids and bromeliads that grow directly on branches rather than in soil. Cloud forests are incredibly rare.

Dry forests don't get as much rain, so the trees there lose their leaves during part of the year to conserve water. It's much easier to see wildlife when they can't hide in the dense foliage. When it rains again, the forests turn lush green with lots of flowers.

Something to talk about...

1. What is your favorite type of forest and why?
2. What are some ways that forests help people?
3. What will happen to our planet and its animals if too many trees are cut down?
4. What are things you can do right now to help save forests?
5. If you were the leader of your country, what rules would you make to help save forests?
6. What kind of tree would you like to plant?