



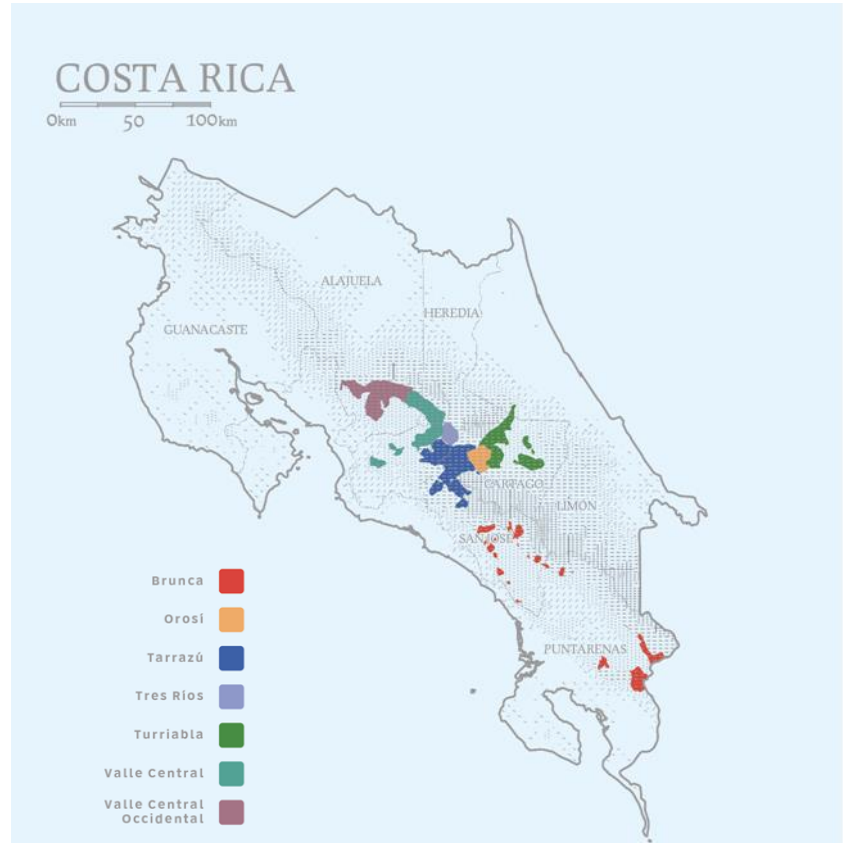
Costa Rica – Pura Vida



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Coffee production has played a key role in Costa Rica's history and continues to be important to the country's economy. As recently as 2006, coffee was Costa Rica's number three export, after being the number one cash crop export for several decades. The largest growing areas are in the provinces of San José, Alajuela, Heredia, Puntarenas, and Cartago.

The Tarazu region is particularly well known for producing some of the finest Costa Rican coffee on a consistent basis. The region's altitude ranges from 1200 – 1800 masl, resulting in a slow development of the bean which when roasted displays notes of apricot and tropical fruit with a bright acidity and well-rounded body. The region produces approximately 537,000 60kg bags across 22,000 hectares, most of which is composed by small farms that average a size of 2.5 hectares. The coffee produced here is 95% Strictly Hard Bean (SHB).



The green coffee grading system of Costa Rica is altitude based, classifying each type by bean hardness. As a rule, coffee cherries grown at higher altitudes take longer to fully develop for a number of reasons including lower availability of oxygen and a slower rate of respiration due to lower temperatures, particularly at night. This results in a buildup of sugars and denser, harder coffee beans which when roasted release complex acids and sugars which all contribute to the quality of the cup.

The Costa Rican grading system includes the following classifications:

Strictly High Grown (SHG) / Strictly Hard Bean (SHB) - grown at an altitude of higher than 1,200 meters above sea level;

Good Hard Bean (GHB) - elevations between 1,000 meters and 1,200 meters.

Medium Hard Bean (MHB) - elevations from 500 meters to 900 meters.