



Dan Youra, Travel Guide

4th of 5-part series comparing tourism on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula to tourism in Costa Rica

If I ask you what Costa Rica and Washington State's Olympic Peninsula have in common, what do you answer? They both are in the western hemisphere. Yes, that's true. Try again. They both are washed by the Pacific Ocean. Yes, very good. What else?

How about some comparisons that are not so obvious? You may be surprised to learn that the two—one a tropical country pinched between the Caribbean and the Pacific and the other a land with glaciers in the Pacific Northwest—share a long list of points in common.

Below are comparisons of outdoor adventures.

• **Rain forests:** It is no secret that Costa Rica is draped in rain forests. What is less well known is that Washington's Olympic Peninsula is home to three rain forests on its western flank. Both are sheltered by humungous trees and are homes to a menagerie of wildlife living beneath the towering canapes. The difference between the two areas is that Costa Rica's rain forests are tropical, while the Olympic Peninsula's are temperate. To learn more take a ride on an arial tram over the tropical jungles at www.rainforesttram.com. To stay in the Olympic rain forest check in Lake Quinault Resort www.lakequinault.com or Quinault River Inn www.quinaultriverinn.com.

• **River rafting:** Turrialba is Costa Rica's city whose motto is *100% Adventure*. It rests along the upper and lower Pacuare River in the heart of tropical rafting country. A good base camp is Hotel Geliwa www.hotelgeliwa.com. Rivers wash down the Olympic Mountains on their way to saltwater creating excellent rafting and kayaking trips. For a base camp in Olympic National Park check in Lake Crescent Lodge www.lakecrescentlodge.com

• **Mountains:** Mountains and hiking go together. Also mountains and mountain bikes. Both activities are very popular in Costa Rica and on the Olympic Peninsula. Whether you are a day tripper, an avid hiker or an extreme mountain biker, you can find satisfaction for your favorite adventure in the tropics and in the Olympic northwest. The big difference in the mountains is this: Costa Rica's tallest peaks are topped by a volcano. Olympic Mountains are capped by snow covered glaciers. The trips up and down the mountains are the same. Exhilarating treks through verdant forests with spectacular views of surrounding nature. Learn more about the Irazú Mountain Bike Tour up a volcano at www.costaricarios.com. The jewel of the Olympics is the wilderness. For hiking



information stop at www.nps.gov/olymp/wic/.

• **Fishing:** Both locations are bounded by more saltwater than adjoining land mass. Fresh water rivers cascade down their mountains to the sea. And deep blue lakes dot both landscapes. The common creatures in all that water are fish—both saltwater and freshwater. World class fishing is pursued in Costa Rica and on the Olympic Peninsula by enthusiasts casting their lines for the next big luncker. For a fishing report on Olympic waters take a look at Olson's Resort www.olsonresort.com.

• **Bugs:** If you are one of those people who hesitates to take one of these adventurous trips into the wilderness because of a fear of being bitten by a bug, here is some advice. Especially if you don't like to drench yourself in smelly repellent, check out the latest. The repellent is in the fabric of your clothes. The clothes are Buzz Off Shirts made by Ex Officio www.exofficio.com. I wore their bug repellent shirt in a Costa Rican rain forest and in an Olympic rain forest and I can vouch that it works.

To test this list of points in common take a trip to both destinations and experience them for yourself.

If you find the costs of travel to be more than you can afford or wish to pay, try something new. Pay less, plus, get paid to travel. Join a discount travel club. I suggest Coastal Vacations. Go on cruises and pay only taxes. Stay in exotic condos and pay only \$19 per night. How about \$6.95 for 3 days and 2 nights in Mexico or Hawaii. It works for me. Check out the web sites below.

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Visitor Center
(360) 437-0120

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Dan Youra at Cruise Terminal in Caribbean town of Limon, Costa Rica

