



By Kevin Sookram

Huge marlin ... large schools of grouper and snapper ... leaping sailfish and tarpon ... more record-breaking fresh and saltwater catches than you can shake a rod and reel at! Welcome to Costa Rica's South Pacific Coast, where fishing just doesn't get any better than what you will find in the inviting waters off this friendly, exotic and serene nation.

Widely known among fisherman as the "world's best fishing spot," Costa Rica holds more than 70 current International Game Fish Association (IGFA) world record catches from its tropical cobalt waters, including 17 all tackle marks!

During a recent International Sailfish Tournament just off Quepos, 1,691 billfish were released by 120 anglers in only four days. Forget about calling it fishing. Those anglers were catching!

So are you looking to land the "Big One"? How about a "supersized" dorado, prize marlin, or sashimi quality tuna? How about reeling in a Pacific Cubera Snapper that weighs more than your neighbor's golden retriever?

Do some research and you'll soon find that this part of Costa Rica is one of a very few and exclusive locations on the planet where fishing is wild and exciting all year round.

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But just don't take my word for it. After all, most of my deepwater fishing experience comes from the Atlantic, where the Florida Keys and the Caribbean have been kind to me. Instead, take it from an expert on the subject.

Captain Bobby McGuiness was chosen as the world's top captain by the authoritative IGFA in 2006 and was among the top ten IGFA record setters in 2008. Captain Bobby also holds more records than any other captain currently fishing in Costa Rica.



Captain Bobby McGuiness

"The lure of the south pacific for visiting anglers is its incredible combination of offshore and inshore fishing and also the mind boggling beauty of the surrounding areas," McGuiness wrote to me in an e-mail exchange. "Costa Rica is one of the few countries anywhere that can boast of a year round fishing season on its gorgeous pacific coast. Many anglers fish out of Quepos, less than half hour north of the perfectly positioned Hacienda Matapalo, and some folks also like to fish out of Golfito or Puerto Jimenez three hours or so south."

"Quepos is one of the country's best known fishing destinations and also one of the longest," the Captain explained. "The first sport fishing captains, most of them Americans, brought their boats down from the States and began offering charters out of Quepos at the end of the 1970s, attracted initially by the amazing sailfish bite that traditionally occurs from the beginning of January through April – also the time of Costa Rica's best weather."

The world record holder continued: "Although January to April is considered the best, the sails (sailfish) stay in the Quepos area all year long. Anglers who fish offshore might encounter a sail any day of the year. Marlin is a big attraction as well, though not as abundant as sails. These beautiful and powerful fish

can be found 365/7. Delicious dorado (mahi-mahi) are also caught offshore year round out of Quepos. Tuna is also a big attraction; yellowfin tuna usually first appear in May and stick around through October – the really "big boys" (in the 200-pound range) are caught closer to the end of the season."



David Matluck, CEO of Pegasus Star Ltda., landed two sailfish in one morning

The marvelous thing about fishing in this part of Costa Rica is that great catches aren't limited to those made offshore. There is excellent inshore saltwater fishing all year round. In Quepos a 45-pound roosterfish will give you more fight than a 110-pound sailfish. Several varieties of snapper, mackarel, snook, jack and tripletail among others make a home in Costa Rica's tropical waters and though these type of fish might not have the glamour of their offshore neighbors, they're every bit as fun and challenging to catch.

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Rooster fish

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Perhaps while you're fighting that Pacific blue marlin or filleting that juicy snapper in Quepos, you might notice that the waters surrounding you, whether you're inshore or off, seem strangely calm or flat. But there's actually nothing strange about it, as the flat waters are merely a byproduct of science.

So, if you're looking for the best possible fishing experience imaginable in arguably the most desired location there is, make your plans now. The fish are waiting.



Delicious Cubera snapper



THAT'S a tuna!

In sharp contrast to the prevailing winds that hit the U.S. west coast, Costa Rica is similar to Hawaii in that the winds come in from the east. However, a magnificent 11,000-foot mountain range nearby shelters the region from the wind. Because there is very little wind, there are no stomach-churning seas and so sport fishing in the area unlike other places on Earth, takes place on flat water. Talk about Pura Vida!



Kevin Sookram loves fishing



A great day of fishing for Snook



You should have seen the ones that got away!