

HAPPY PLANET INDEX: LATIN AMERICA ON THE TOP



It is clear to the vast majority of people all over the world where the best standards of living are. Nobody denies that the standard of living in, for example, Norway is much higher than in Rwanda. The statistics from the UN give an overview of living standards on a regular basis. However, let's not forget that happiness and strain on the environment do not necessarily equal living standard.

In July the New Economics Foundation released its second Happy Planet Index focusing on ecological efficiency of countries as well as on life expectancy and life satisfaction. Few would believe it but the winner, out of the 143 nations included in the Index, was **Costa Rica, which can now claim the title of the greenest and happiest nation in the world.**

On a general note, Latin American nations came into 9 of the top 10 positions whilst the highest performing European nation, the Netherlands, came in 43rd place, way ahead of the UK, which stumbled in at 74th. Perhaps the biggest surprise was the performance of the USA, which achieved a miserly 114th.

The so-called big nations and the ones with the greatest economic potential tended to perform poorly, even if they were doing well in the past. Whereas the USA, China and India scored highly in terms of happiness and green policies in the 60's and 70's, they are performing poorly now. The data was collected without taking GDP into account. Instead, factors such as general happiness and the strain and levels of consumption in terms of the environment were used. Some may point to the fact that people do not have to be honest about their level of happiness, especially where religious countries are involved. However, facts about greenness and life expectancy are undeniable. Indeed, Costa Rica was found to have the second highest life expectancy in the world after Canada. It appears that good lives do not need to cost the earth.

Happy Planet Index:

Top 10 Countries

1. Costa Rica
2. Dominican Republic
3. Jamaica
4. Guatemala
5. Vietnam
6. Colombia
7. Cuba
8. El Salvador

9. Brazil

10. Honduras

Related: [**THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX CRITICIZED**](#) [**Blue Zones: The Secret of Long Lasting Life**](#)

Date: 2009-07-13

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/costa-rice-the-happiest-country-in-the-world-news1719>