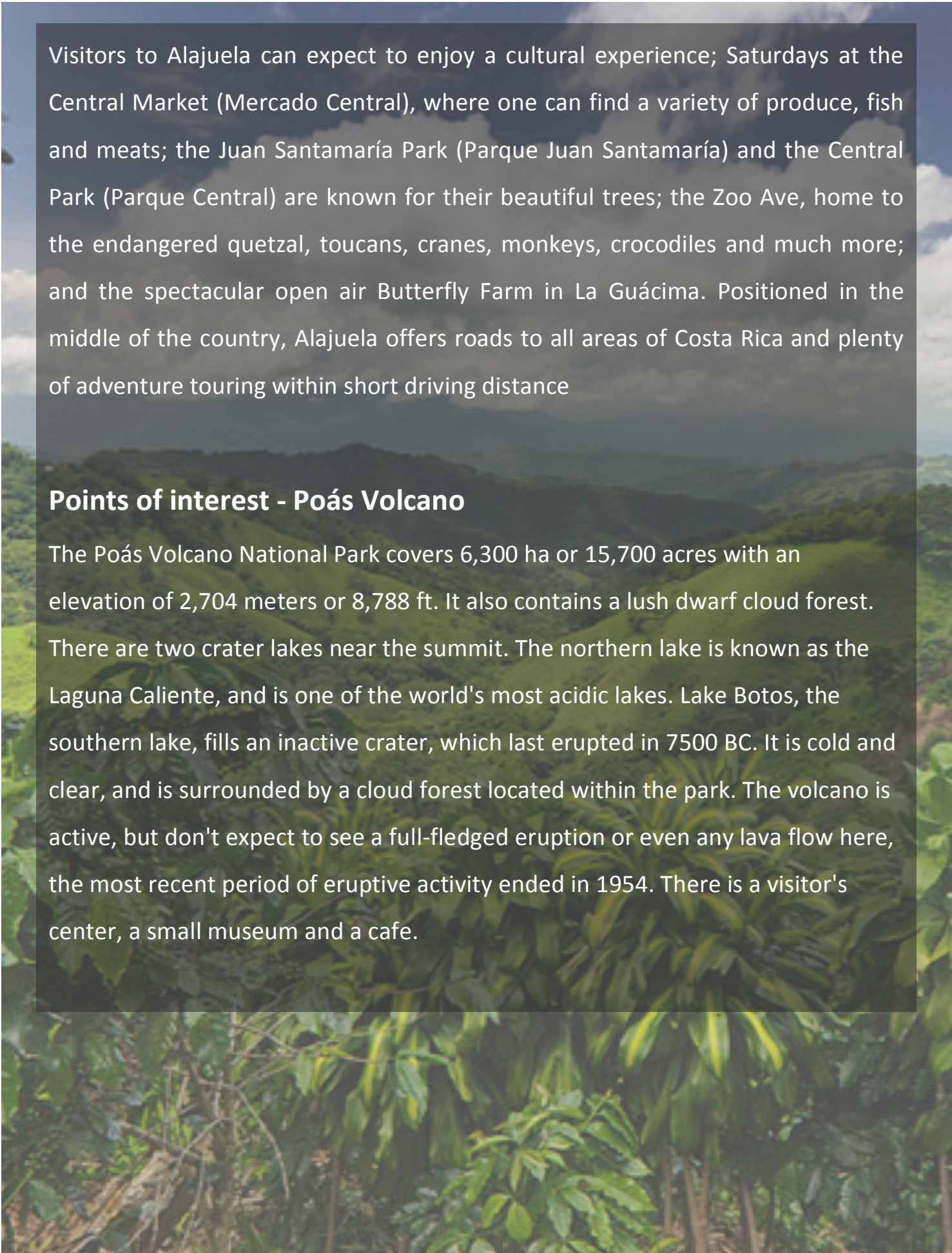




ALAJUELA

In the Beautiful Central Valley

The Capital City Alajuela shares its name with the province located northwest of San Jose. With a tropical climate, slightly warmer than San Jose, yet still boasting the fresh mountain air of the Central Valley, Alajuela is said to have "the best weather in the world". Alajuela is the second largest city in Costa Rica, but does not have the hustle and bustle that can be experienced in San Jose.



Visitors to Alajuela can expect to enjoy a cultural experience; Saturdays at the Central Market (Mercado Central), where one can find a variety of produce, fish and meats; the Juan Santamaría Park (Parque Juan Santamaría) and the Central Park (Parque Central) are known for their beautiful trees; the Zoo Ave, home to the endangered quetzal, toucans, cranes, monkeys, crocodiles and much more; and the spectacular open air Butterfly Farm in La Guácima. Positioned in the middle of the country, Alajuela offers roads to all areas of Costa Rica and plenty of adventure touring within short driving distance

Points of interest - Poás Volcano

The Poás Volcano National Park covers 6,300 ha or 15,700 acres with an elevation of 2,704 meters or 8,788 ft. It also contains a lush dwarf cloud forest. There are two crater lakes near the summit. The northern lake is known as the Laguna Caliente, and is one of the world's most acidic lakes. Lake Botos, the southern lake, fills an inactive crater, which last erupted in 7500 BC. It is cold and clear, and is surrounded by a cloud forest located within the park. The volcano is active, but don't expect to see a full-fledged eruption or even any lava flow here, the most recent period of eruptive activity ended in 1954. There is a visitor's center, a small museum and a cafe.