

Outsider closes gap in Costa Rica election

Polls suggest that outsider Otto Guevara is gaining against front-runner Laura Chinchilla ahead of Sunday's presidential election. Guevara has stunned opponents by tripling his poll rating since August, as Costa Rica's 2.8 million voters look for an alternative to the main parties



45.1%

Laura Chinchilla, National Liberation Party: Moderate (50) – who is backed by sitting President **Oscar Arias** – supports **Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)** and opening of country to international trade and private-sector competition. Backs Free Trade Agreements with China and Singapore



30.1%

Otto Guevara, Libertarian Movement: Right-winger (49) wants to scrap Costa Rica's currency, the colon, for U.S. dollar, as Panama and El Salvador have done. Pledges to slash income tax, be tough on crime, provide every student with a laptop, and burn bureaucratic red tape. Supports CAFTA



9.5%

Otton Solis, Citizen's Action Party: Centre-left former economy minister (55) wants renegotiation of CAFTA, arguing one-sided deal floods country with U.S. products, affecting farmers and increasing poverty. Opposes opening up mobile phone market to foreign competition – a condition of CAFTA

Candidates need 40% or more of vote to avoid a second-round runoff in April

Source: Demoscopia / Al Dia. Interviews with 1,209 Costa Rican adults, conducted Jan 20-26, 2010.

Margin of error: $\pm 2.8\%$

Pictures: Associated Press

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