

Additional Safety & Helping Others

More Beach Safety Rules

Always swim sober—alcohol and drugs impair judgment.

Watch children closely—never turn your back on the water.

Use flotation devices if you are not a strong swimmer.

Obey warning flags/signs (red = high hazard, no swimming).

If You See Someone Caught in a Rip Current

DO NOT swim out to rescue them—you may become a victim too.

Yell instructions: “Swim parallel to shore!”

Throw a flotation device (cooler, boogie board, life ring) if possible.

Get help: Alert a lifeguard immediately or call 911/emergency services.

If no lifeguard, signal others on shore to call for help.



**PLAYA GRANDE
UNIDA**



**DANGER:
RIP
CURRENTS
CAN KILL!**

Break the Grip of the Rip!

Powerful channels of water that pull you away from shore

#1 cause of drownings in Costa Rica

- Learn to spot them
- Know what to do
- Stay Safe!

What is a Rip Current?

Rip currents are fast-moving, narrow channels of water flowing away from the shore, often through breaks in sandbars. They form when waves push water onto the beach, and it rushes back out to sea.

They do NOT pull you under—they pull you out to sea.

Due to the irregular or messy/choppy wave patterns on Cahuita's beaches, it is difficult to spot Rip Currents.

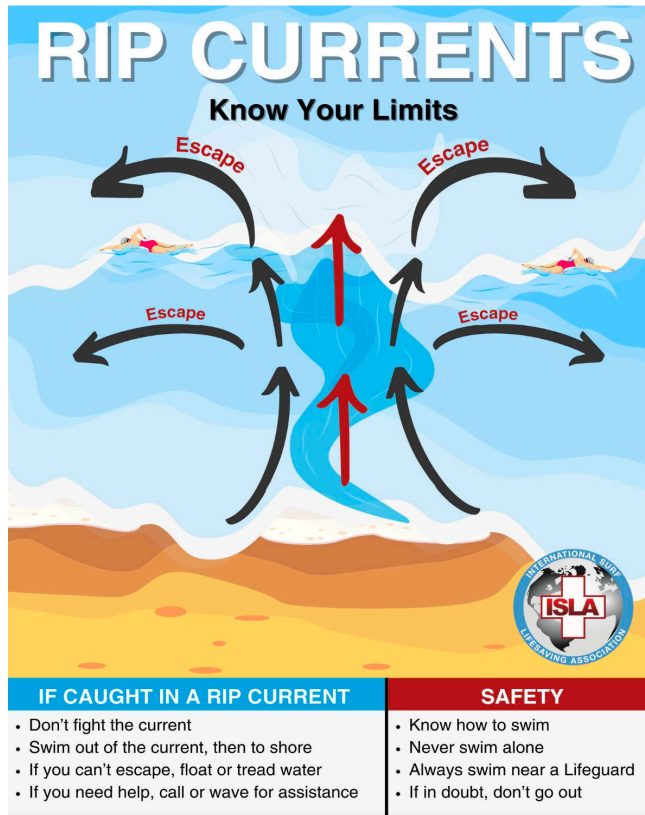
Even strong, experienced swimmers can be caught.

Key Facts

Playa Grande, Playa Negra, and Playa Cahuita have some of the highest incidences of aquatic accidents in the country.

40 people drowned in Cahuita between 2019 and 2025. 80% of the drowning deaths in the country are attributed to Rip Currents. There were over 150 aquatic rescues in Talamanca in 2025

Most drowning victims were between 21 to 30 in age, and most were men.



Prevention Tips

Swim near a lifeguard whenever possible; ask about conditions.

Never swim alone, especially on Playa Grande.

If in doubt, don't go out.

Check local beach forecasts (e.g. rip current outlook: low/moderate/high/risk).

CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT?

If you are caught in a Rip Current **STAY CALM—DON'T PANIC!** Rip currents will not drag you underwater—they carry you away from shore. Fighting them exhausts you and increases drowning risk.

WHAT TO DO—Remember:
Float, don't fight.

Relax and float—tread water or float on your back to conserve energy.

Don't swim against the current—you will tire quickly and may not win.

Signal for help—face the shore, wave your arms, and yell "Help!" loudly.

Escape options:

Swim parallel to the shore (left or right) to get out of the narrow rip channel. Most are only 10-20 meters wide.

Once free of the pull, swim diagonally back toward shore (following breaking waves). If you can't swim out, continue floating/treading until the current weakens (they often fade offshore), then head to shore.