

Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for requesting more information about our language school. This brochure describes in detail the various Spanish programs and cultural activities available at Intercultura.

We offer our students:

- Established, accredited school; founded in 1993.
- City campus in Heredia, home to the National University and close to San José
- Brand-new, air-conditioned beachfront campus in beautiful Playa Sámara
- University qualified professors
- Highly qualified staff
- Diverse student body of students from different age groups and cultural backgrounds
- University academic credit available
- Small groups (max. 6, average 3-5)
- Latin dance, music, film and cooking classes (no extra charge)
- Volunteer programs
- Cultural activities program
- Excursions throughout the country
- Fully equipped, comfortable learning atmosphere and resource facilities
- Multilingual Student Affairs coordinators (English-Spanish-French-German)
- Free internet access
- Airport or local transport center pick-ups
- Homestay or hotel accommodations

Please do not hesitate to email or call us should you have any further questions. We look forward to hearing from you soon and welcoming you to Costa Rica.

Sincerely,

Laura Ellington MA and Adelita Jiménez
Founding Directors

INTERCULTURA COSTA RICA

www.interculturacostarica.com / www.samaralanguageschool.com
Heredia Tel: +(506) 2-260-8480 / Sámara Tel: +(506) 2-656-0127/2-656-0954

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The primary goal of Intercultura is to teach you the Spanish language in a warm yet intellectually challenging environment. Classes at our city and beach campuses are conducted entirely in Spanish, providing students from all over the world with a complete and intensive learning experience. Our professors have advanced university degrees and teaching certification, and we are accredited through the US university system, offering undergraduate credit to those interested. In addition, you have the opportunity to come to know Costa Rica, its traditions and its rich cultural heritage by participating in our daily cultural and extracurricular activities. Intercultura also emphasizes the importance of interacting with the community at large, whether through the Spanish program's outreach activities or shared events with local students in our ESL program.

On a larger scale, we hope to promote global awareness and tolerance through this sharing of cultures. We believe that participation in programs such as this one teach not only a new language, but also effective tools for communication and understanding in the constantly evolving world culture in which we live.

LOCATION

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is located in the Central American isthmus, bordered by Panama to the south and Nicaragua to the north. One of the most developed countries in Latin America, Costa Rica has long been famous for its tradition of peaceful democracy in a region more often characterized by totalitarian regimes and civil strife. The army was abolished in 1949, and government spending concentrated instead on improving social programs. In 1987 then-president Oscar Arias was awarded the Nobel Peace prize for his Central American Peace Plan, and in 1989 the country celebrated 100 years of democratic government.

Costa Ricans also enjoy the highest standard of living in Central America, a 95% literacy rate, and the greatest overall advancement in the social and economic spheres. Travelers appreciate the security and the sophisticated infrastructure of the country's transportation, communications and tourist facilities. Costa Rica's economy is based largely on primary exports of coffee, banana and cocoa, and more recently, tourism. Though small in size, the country has had the foresight to

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protect approximately 25% of its land in National Parks and private nature reserves: It is a country of lush vegetation, high mountains (112 of volcanic origin!), jungles, rain forests and beautiful beaches. You will also find that Costa Ricans (otherwise known as “Ticos”, are an incredibly friendly people and a willing resource for any adventure you undertake.

HEREDIA

Intercultura’s city campus is located in Heredia, approximately 20 minutes by bus from the capital city of San José, in Costa Rica’s primary coffee-growing province. Originally known as the “City of Flowers,” Heredia has since developed considerably, providing all the conveniences of a medium- sized city in an environment which escapes, to a large extent, the common urban problems affecting San José. Heredia is home to the National University, and an important cultural center for Costa Rica. The central park and surrounding area retains a typical Latin American “pueblo” feel, despite increasing modernization. Colonial homes, buildings and a picturesque colonial church surround the park.

Intercultura’s central location within the city gives students easy access to transportation, shops and entertainment. At the same time, the tranquility and natural beauty of the mountains is only a few minutes away by taxi or bus. In the downtown area students are usually no more than a 5 minute walk from a variety of services, including: sports center and Olympic-size swimming pool; Internet cafés; gyms; bars, restaurants, discotheques; the National University’s theatre and grounds; the International telephone office; clinics and travel agencies.

Heredia’s proximity to transportation hubs such as the airport and the central bus stations in San José make it an ideal base for your stay here. Easily accessible from the city are volcanoes, beaches and national parks, and the country’s many other natural wonders and biodiversity.

Our Heredia campus is located in a complex of three beautifully restored colonial buildings with interior patios and lush tropical gardens. The classrooms have full audio-visual equipment and provide a spacious, breezy work atmosphere. In their free time, students enjoy relaxing on the lawns, garden tables and benches, doing homework in one of our comfortable study areas, practicing Spanish in the language lab, and using the Internet.

SAMARA BEACH

Sámara is a small beach town on the Northern Pacific Coast, and part of the vibrant province of Guanacaste, from where much of Costa Rica’s folkloric and cultural heritage is derived. Nearby Nicoya, the region’s capital, is the site of one of

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Costa Rica's oldest colonial churches, dating back to 1644. It is also home to the indigenous Chorotega population, famous for their ceramic artwork, whose once-powerful chieftains and their families gave their names to most of the towns in the area. Sámara, for example, is named for a legendary Chorotega princess. Also in the Sámara area are a wealth of National Parks and protected areas, such as Ostional Turtle Refuge, the Barra Honda Caves and Palo Verde National Park, a bird-watchers paradise. Folkloric dance, music and local "fiestas" abound, as do opportunities for outdoor activities and ecological exploration.

The beach itself is situated on a stunning horseshoe-shaped bay protected by a coral reef, which makes for calm waters, safe swimming and easy surfing and boogie-boarding at high tide. The white sand beach is over 5kms long and lined with palm trees, offering a perfect spot for jogging, walking, biking and horse-riding.

Our beautiful Sámara campus is located in brand new, beachfront facilities. Classes are held in modern, air-conditioned rooms, all with a view of the ocean: each is equipped with standard audio equipment, whiteboard, and a large communal study space, encouraging didactic activities and easy class participation. Occasionally, teachers take students outside the facilities to hold a conversation hour in our rancho, the tropical gardens, or on the beach under the shade of a palm tree. Ecological trips, community interviews and other activities help students practice Spanish "en vivo" with local Costa Ricans. Facilities also include a large open-air rancho used for dance classes and special cultural activities; a kitchen for cooking classes, several lounge, garden and study areas, hammocks, and the reception and tour services desk. Nearby restaurants and open air café-bars provide ample places to relax and chat with friends, drink coffee or try the delicious local fresh fruit shakes.

LANGUAGE PROGRAM

SPANISH INSTRUCTION

Intercultura's Spanish program centers around the Communicative Approach. Our aim is to enable students to really *communicate* in the language. Instead of a traditional grammar program, classes are designed to provide a fully balanced intensive immersion experience for our students. This means that they incorporate all aspects of language acquisition: conversation, grammar, reading, writing, general comprehension and idiomatic expressions. In addition to formal textbooks, we use a wide variety of current materials: newspapers, literature, audiocassettes, DVDs, advertisements, music, short stories and more. Classes also incorporate field-trips and out-of-class learning experiences by taking students to practice their Spanish in marketplaces, museums, buses, restaurants,

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and others areas where communication practice is a necessity. Thus classes remain interesting as well as educational!

Our core Spanish program consists of eighteen different week-long units, from complete beginner through advanced-superior. These develop from basic communication and grammatical concepts to literature and socio-cultural studies, intensifying work towards full proficiency in the various areas of language acquisition and cultural comprehension. Upper-level courses cover Latin American culture, politics, society and history, and incorporate complex field projects, current events, linguistics, and regional language usage. We also have specialized courses for those who wish to study topics such as business, medical or media Spanish.

" In my role as a trainer of teachers, I am keenly aware of what constitutes effective instruction...[and] as an educator, I recognized and experienced first-hand the excellence of Marcelo's instruction.....[He] has the ability to explain grammatical concepts with great clarity...he constructed excellent visuals which helped me comprehend and use the new learning. Equally effective was his insistence that all newly learned grammar be applied in conversation....It is my belief that [he] is an outstanding instructor, one of the finest I have encountered in my work as an educator."

-- Marc Becker, PhD, Director of high-school district Research and Assessment.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

All Intercultura professors have university degrees in Spanish with teaching certification. They have also completed our "Spanish as a Second Language" intensive training course in addition to various professional development workshops both nationally and internationally. These include the ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages)-sponsored seminar in the U.S.A.; the ACTFL-AmeriSpan conference in Guatemala; and the National University Center for Postgraduate Studies/ Master's in Teaching Spanish as a Second Language seminar "Making Good Teachers Better" in Costa Rica. Please see our staff page at <http://www.interculturacostarica.com/staff.htm> for full details.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Upon arrival you will be given an oral placement exam to determine which level is most suitable for you. These exams are given every Monday at 7:45 am before classes begin; students need to be punctual in order to be assigned a level for that

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week. The exams ensure an effective learning environment in a class appropriate to your knowledge of Spanish. The Spanish Director is always available for consultations and to reevaluate your placement should you feel that you have been placed in an unsuitable level.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Classes consist of groups ranging from 1 to 6 students, the average group size being 3 to 4 for most of the year, except during high season (January-February and June-August), when 5 to 6 is the norm. The minimum age in order to be considered for study is 18 (exceptions can be made under special circumstances pursuant to interview and recommendations). In Heredia, classes run from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm in the morning session or 1:30 to 5:30 pm in the afternoon sessions. In Sámara classes alternate, from 8am to 12pm and 1.15 to 5.15pm. Students will be informed of their placement (morning or afternoon) after their entrance exams. Private lessons are available in the afternoons on a space-available basis only.

When planning your studies you may select private classes in order to supplement your regular group studies or design a full schedule of one-on-one instruction (usually available only in the afternoons). You need to make your decisions about which program is right for you in advance. Once the program has begun you may *add* private hours to your group program (as available), but you cannot *switch* group classes for private.

START DATES

Classes start every Monday (see National Holidays for exceptions), and should be booked at least one week in advance, though to ensure space, it is best to register three or four weeks ahead of time. Programs are confirmed on a space-available basis. Students must specify in advance whether they prefer accommodations in the hotel or with a homestay family. The average length of stay is from one to two months, but students may elect to take anywhere from 1 week to 1 year depending on their needs.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Intercultura has a small lending library available to all registered students, which includes Latin-American children's books, Spanish grammar texts, classic literature, audio programs, travel guides and more. Books may be signed out for use on the premises (school is open until 9pm Monday through Thursday, 5pm on Fridays).

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- To encourage students to use their Spanish outside of class we have a "Spanish Only" rule during break time. On Fridays we give out small prizes to those students who have shown the most initiative in this regard!
- Due to the intensive nature of the program, students are expected to be on time to classes, keep up with homework assignments and speak only Spanish during class. The Spanish Director meets regularly with professors to ensure that students are progressing at the same pace. If necessary, students may need to repeat a level, or take private classes to supplement the group studies. In extreme circumstances the school reserves the right to exclude disruptive students from the course.
- Graduations in Heredia are held on Fridays at 10:30 am for both morning and afternoon classes and are followed by a selection of fresh, in-season tropical fruits. In Sámara, graduations are held in the "Rancho" at 12:30. All students are invited to attend. For graduating students who will not be able to attend, we ask you to please inform the Spanish Director at the beginning of the week in order to expedite delivery of your graduation materials.
- All students receiving university credit must meet with the Spanish Director during their first week at Intercultura in order to process their application and schedule exams.

ACCOMMODATIONS

A key part of our program is the homestays we offer with selected Costa Rican families in Heredia and in Sámara Beach. All students are encouraged to participate in this opportunity, as it provides an invaluable source of Spanish instruction as well as a wonderful interpersonal experience. In general, homestays are regarded as the most effective way to put into practice the Spanish you learn in the classroom. Living with a family who speaks no English, in combination with intensive study, provides a wholly integrated exposure to both the language and the culture. In this way the learning process is greatly facilitated, as is the speed with which fluency is acquired.

Homestays also provide an economical alternative to hotels, as breakfast, dinner, private room and laundry service are all included in the price. Probably the most valuable aspect of the homestay experience, however, is the opportunity to really get to know a Costa Rican family, making many new friends and experiencing first-hand the famous Costa Rican warmth and hospitality!

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Those students who choose to participate in homestays will receive specific guidelines and suggestions aimed at facilitating the experience with your new family (for example, it is a nice gesture to give your host family a small gift from home upon arrival). However, before deciding on a homestay, you should keep in mind that Costa Rica is still a developing country and as such does not provide many of the luxuries that one usually takes for granted. In general one cannot expect the same standard of living nor the cultural values to which one may be accustomed. We recommend reading the article "Culture Shock" (in this brochure) in order to get a better idea of the experiences and changes you may encounter during your stay here.

If you prefer not to participate in the homestays we will be happy to help you make alternative living arrangements, either in hotels, pensions or furnished apartments. In Sámara, we offer 5-night stays at several hotels offering pool, AC and other amenities (no food included), for the same cost as the 7-night homestay option.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

After classes and on weekends we offer a wide selection of activities conducted in Spanish, which greatly enhance your understanding of, and connection to, the culture (most involve no extra charge).

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR: Each month we have a new special events calendar, national holiday activities, and a variety of fun excursions which are accompanied by a school teacher or staff member and in which we encourage English students to participate so as to promote social interaction with the locals. These activities include football (soccer) games; theater shows; discussion groups; live music; discos, poetry and dance contests, talent nights, Latin music classes, arts and crafts workshops and more. For some of the more important national holidays Intercultura's staff presents folkloric dance performances; students are encouraged to join in!

LATIN DANCE CLASSES: You will learn salsa, merengue, cumbia and marcado, the most popular dances in Costa Rica, enabling you to go dancing with confidence and interact with Ticos on a fun social level.

CULTURAL LECTURES: We hold periodic talks covering a diverse range of subjects such as the ecology and environment of Costa Rica; Latin-American literature; politics; women's studies, indigenous peoples and other socially and culturally related themes.

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FILM NIGHT: Our weekly Spanish language films are an entertaining way to practice the language.

INTERCAMBIOS: During these cultural exchanges Spanish students sign-up to meet with Tico English students at the school to practice conversation skills (in both languages) in a relaxed atmosphere, and to make new friends from the local community.

COSTA RICAN COOKING CLASS: Once a week we teach students how to make typical Costa Rican dishes, a nice skill to take home and share with friends and family!

LOCAL ACTIVITIES: Every week, weather permitting, the local band presents free open-air concerts in Heredia's Central Park and the National University shows Spanish language films and theater presentations, open to the general public for a nominal fee. In Sámara, students can choose between the football game at low-tide, chatting with local at a beach-side café, or learning to make jewelry out of coconuts, shells and other materials with local artists.

"FIESTAS PATRONALES": These local celebrations are held in all Costa Rican cities and villages every year, usually over a weekend. They are advertised throughout the country and are an excellent source of cultural entertainment. You can watch bullfights "Tico" style, where the bull is not harmed in any way, participate in traditional games and try out a variety of local fare.

EXCURSIONS: On weekends we host excursions throughout the country. Possibilities range from relaxing on a white sand beach, to studying the complex ecosystems of the Monteverde Cloud Forest, to watching the eruptions of a live volcano! During the week we take students to theaters, museums, nearby parks, the capital city of San José, discotheques, soccer games, concerts and more! In Sámara, turtle watching, ecological hikes, dolphin watching, snorkeling and surfing replace the city activities of the Heredia campus.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

The best way to plan for your trip is to buy a comprehensive travel guide, which will inform you on the history of the country, the people, socio-political trends, and other important information. This will also give you concrete ideas about what you want to see while in Costa Rica, and about trips for weekends, afternoon tours, and anything else you would like to plan. The next step is to find a reliable travel agent who can help you with tickets, and if you choose, tours. We recommend using local travel agencies for tours as it generally significantly

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cheaper than arranging them from abroad, and you will also have the advantage of not being stuck to a pre-set schedule. The Internet also has a wealth of information on every aspect of travel in Costa Rica.

There are several student travel agencies that have very reasonably priced fares for both students and non-students. One agency that comes highly recommended is Exito, which offers special consolidator and promotional fares, air passes and stopover deals. They also give friendly advice on travel to/in Latin America and provide very reliable service:

Tels: (800) 655-4053/4 Web page: www.exitotravel.com E-mail: info@exitotravel.com

Other well-known agencies include Council Travel and STA, which have offices in most major cities in North America and Europe. Another option is to go directly through the airline, although international regulations may prevent them from direct-selling at the wholesale prices that travel agents can offer you.

TRAVEL OPTIONS

For students wishing to travel on their own, Costa Rica is very safe, and one may easily arrange both day and weekend trips from Heredia and Sámará. You may use our travel guides and other resources to plan any of these trips and more, during and after your stay with us. If you are planning to continue travel to other parts of Latin America we can recommend several reliable local travel agencies who will help you with international tickets and tours. For flights to Costa Rica and beyond, you should always check with the corresponding embassy for visa requirements before you depart.

HEALTH:

Costa Rica is generally considered one of the safest countries in Latin America to travel in as far as health risks are concerned. In contrast with many other Latin American countries, you are unlikely to get any illness that could interfere with your study or travel plans. There is potable drinking water in all major cities and at most beaches. Bottled drinking water is widely available. The more remote you get the more chance there is of experiencing 'traveller's tummy', which is usually mild and will go away by itself within a few days. You should check with your doctor for any shots that may be necessary or recommended (at publication time none are required for Costa Rica). Dengue has been reported in some coastal areas, and you may choose to use prophylactic medicines if you plan to be in these areas or in other parts of Central America. Malaria is rare, but has been reported in remote areas on the Caribbean Coast.

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MEDICAL INSURANCE:

If you do not have health insurance it is a good idea to purchase temporary coverage before traveling. Ask your doctor for recommendations. There are many nationwide travel agencies, such as Council or STA, in addition to the ones we suggest below, which offer similar services: Health Care Abroad (Tel: (703) 255-9800 / (800) 237-6615; SOS: Tel: (215) 245-4707 / (800) 523-6586; Mutual of Omaha : Tel: (402) 342-7600 / (800) 775-6000; Travel Guard: Tel: (715) 345-0505 / (800) 826-7488

CLIMATE:

Summer in Costa Rica runs from December to April, during which it is sunny all day with average temperatures in Heredia around 75-80 °F (24-27 °C) due to its elevation. On the coast temperatures are higher, averaging between 90-95 °F (32-35 °C). The rainy season runs from May through November, during which time it is usually sunny in the mornings with showers in the afternoons or evenings. However, from September to mid-November it can be cloudy most of the day with sporadic heavy rains. Keep in mind that Costa Rica's geographic diversity is reflected in the climates of its different regions, so you will need to first investigate each region you plan to visit in order to bring the appropriate apparel.

WHAT TO BRING

Shorts	Sunscreen lotion (15 SPF or more)
Casual trousers/skirt	Notebook & pens
T-shirts / tank-tops	Spanish-English dictionary
1 set of dress clothes	Any prescription medicine
Sneakers	Sunglasses
Sandals or flip-flops	Travel guide
Dress shoes	Insect repellent
Swimwear	Tote bag/backpack
Towel	Umbrella
Rain jacket	Camera & film
Ear-plugs	Reading material
Contact-lens solution	<u>501 Spanish Verbs!</u>
Hat	Small flashlight
Sweater/sweatshirt/light jacket	First-aid kit (w/ allergic reactions medications)

COMMUNICATIONS:

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Students may receive email, mail, faxes and emergency telephone calls (English, Spanish, French and some German spoken) as follows. Regular calls should be made to the student's homestay/hotel phone.

MAIL: P.O. Box 1952-3000, Heredia, Costa Rica, Central America.
PHONE/FAX: Heredia: +(506) 260-8480 / Sámará: +(506) 656-0954
EMAIL: Students may use schools computers or go to an internet café.
 Wireless is available in Heredia for weekly and monthly rates.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For those interested, we have several volunteer projects to choose from. Many positions ask for a minimum time commitment (often at least one month), and may require students to cover their own room and board. Relevant work experience and/or degree may be necessary. Most positions are set up after your arrival in Costa Rica so that you may first be interviewed by your chosen organization. More information and specific details are available upon request. Current positions include the following:

- Social work, counseling and administrative support in women's development centers and anti-abuse shelters.
- Teaching English, providing educational support and organizing creative activities/sports in orphanages and drug rehabilitation centers.
- Teaching general subjects and/or English in a bilingual primary school in Heredia.
- Trail maintenance, biological studies, construction, beach patrol and administrative support in national parks, reserves and turtle protection entities.
- Radio production and administrative support in a city radio station.
- First aid, paramedic and office work at the Red Cross.
- Cleaning, caring for and exercising animals at the local shelter.

UNIVERSITY CREDIT

Intercultura offers students the chance to receive academic credit for Spanish courses completed with us in Costa Rica through Brookhaven College, a fully accredited institution of higher learning.

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Students choosing to receive credits through Brookhaven should make all arrangements directly through them **prior** to beginning their studies. In order to begin the process, please contact:

Russell Garrett

World Language Central

P.O. Box 6162

College Station TX 77844-6162

Tel: 1-877-496-6152

Email: info@worldlanguagecentral.com

Students planning to enroll in classes with us may also request permission from their department to receive credit directly from Intercultura for their studies here. This requires a little pre-planning on your part as universities usually want to see our course information and outlines etc. (which we are be glad to send upon request) before granting approval. After course work with us is completed we then send your official transcripts along with an official letter from the Spanish department director here, to your university.

REFUNDS AND LIABILITY

Intercultura does not give refunds once students have started the program, except in case of justifiable and documentable emergencies, in which case 50% of the unused portion of the balance may be returned at the discretion of the administration. Before the program has been initiated there is a 20% penalty for withdrawal. Intercultura accepts no legal responsibility for students' safety or belongings during their stay in Costa Rica.

REGISTRATION AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

To register simply fill in the enclosed form and return it by email or fax, or call us with your registration information. We are happy to provide you with transportation from the airport to your homestay. Please advise us of your flight date, airline, flight number and arrival time so that we may be at the airport to meet you. Airport pick up is offered free of charge to students who are studying and staying with a family their first week at Intercultura. Please contact us for other transportation options and prices.

Because class placement begins at 7:45 am on Monday mornings we request that students plan their flights so as to arrive by then. Most arrive either Saturday or

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Sunday. Our general student orientation and tour of Heredia take place on Mondays at 8.30am in Heredia, or at 12:00 pm in Sámara.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

The following dates are national holidays in Costa Rica, during which classes will not be held at Intercultura. **There are no discounts for these days, so you should take this into account when planning your study dates.** Those which fall on weekends do not affect your stay. For each holiday there are different cultural activities in which we encourage students to participate. (NOTE: In addition to the national holidays, each town holds its own "fiestas" every year, providing a variety of cultural activities. See "Cultural Activities" for details).

January 1:	New Year's Day
March or April:	Easter Week (contact us for exact dates)
April 11 th :	Juan Santamaría Day
May 1:	Costa Rican Labour Day
July 25:	Annexation of Guanacaste
August 15:	Mother's Day
September 15:	Costa Rican Independence Day
October 12:	"Día de las Culturas"
December-Jan:	Christmas Holidays (inquire for exact dates)

REFERENCES FROM EX-STUDENTS

Please see our web pages: www.interculturacostarica.com and www.samaralanguageschool.com for a complete list of regularly updated references

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CULTURE SHOCK

One of the factors most influential in a student's stay in a foreign country is their awareness of and ability to adapt to the inevitable process of culture shock that occurs. Culture Shock is the syndrome affecting anyone who comes to a new country for a significant time, and it involves symptoms as simple as feeling homesick and worn-out. In its more serious aspects, culture shock will affect the way you perceive your host family, the local population, and every aspect of your stay. The more you can prepare yourself the more you will understand why you react as you do in many situations, and the more you understand the easier it will be to cope in a positive way, and the sooner you will adjust to life in this new culture.

This excerpt from a U.S. Government training guide explains why and how culture shock occurs, and what it entails.

In an effort to get over culture shock we think there is some value in knowing about the nature of culture and its relationship to the individual. In addition to living in a physical environment, every individual lives in a cultural environment consisting of man-made

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physical objects, social institutions, and has the capacity to learn and use it.

Culture shock is brought on by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situation of daily life, when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders in a restaurant, when to take statements seriously and when not. These cues may be words, gestures, facial expressions – all customs or norms which we acquire in the course of growing up, and are as much a part of our culture as the languages we speak or the beliefs we accept. Psychologists now believe that more than fifty percent of all communication is non-verbal. All of us depend for peace of mind and our efficiency on these cues, most of which we are not consciously aware.

When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues are removed. No matter how intelligent, broad-minded, or full of goodwill he or she may be, a series of props have been knocked out from under him or her. This is followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. All people react to this frustration in much the same way but in varying degrees.

First, they reject the environment which causes the discomfort! The ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel badly! Another phase is regression. The home environment suddenly assumes a tremendous importance. To a U.S. citizen, everything from the U.S.A. becomes irrationally glorified. All the difficulties and problems are forgotten, and only the good things back home are remembered.

Some symptoms of culture shock are: excessive concern over cleanliness and the feeling that what is new and strange is 'dirty'; a feeling of helplessness and a desire for one's own nationality; irritation over delays and other minor frustrations, out of proportion to their causes; delays and outright refusal to learn the language; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed or injured; great concern over minor pains; and finally that terrible longing to be back home in familiar surroundings, to talk to people who really make sense, and to be able to use 'real' money!

Individuals differ greatly in the degree to which culture affects them. Although not common, there are some individuals who cannot live in foreign countries. Those who have observed people go through a serious case of culture shock and on to satisfactory adjustment, have discerned the following steps in the process.

Honeymoon phase: During the first days and weeks most individuals are fascinated by the new. But the 'tourist' mentality does not normally last and the foreign visitor has to seriously cope with the conditions of real life.

Hostile Phase: It is then that the second stage begins, characterized by a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country. This hostility evidently grows out of the genuine difficulty which the visitor experiences in the process of adjustment. There is mail trouble, school trouble, language trouble, housing trouble, transportation trouble, shopping trouble, and the fact that people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these troubles. They help, but they just don't understand your great concern over these difficulties. Therefore they must be insensible and unsympathetic to you and your worries. The result? 'I just don't like them.' You may become aggressive, band together and criticize the host country, its ways and its people. This criticism is not objective, but derogatory. Instead of trying to account for conditions and the historical circumstances which have created them, you talk as if the difficulties you experience are more or less created by the people of the host country for your special discomfort. This second state of culture shock is a crisis in the disease.

Grin and Bear It Phase: As the visitor succeeds in getting some knowledge of the language and begins to get around by him/herself, the beginning of his or her adjustment to the new cultural environment is taking place. He or she may still have difficulties but takes a 'this is my cross, I will bear it' attitude. Usually in this stage the visitor begins to become interested in the people of the host country. The sense of humour returns and instead of criticizing, jokes about difficulties. The visitor is now on the road to recovery!

Effective Adjustment Phase (Last Phase): In the final stage of the adjustment, the visitor accepts the customs of the country as just another way of living. He can operate within the new milieu without feeling anxiety, although there are moments of strain. Only with a complete grasp of all the cues of social intercourse will this strain disappear. For a long time the visitor will understand what the host nation is saying, but is not always sure what is meant! With a

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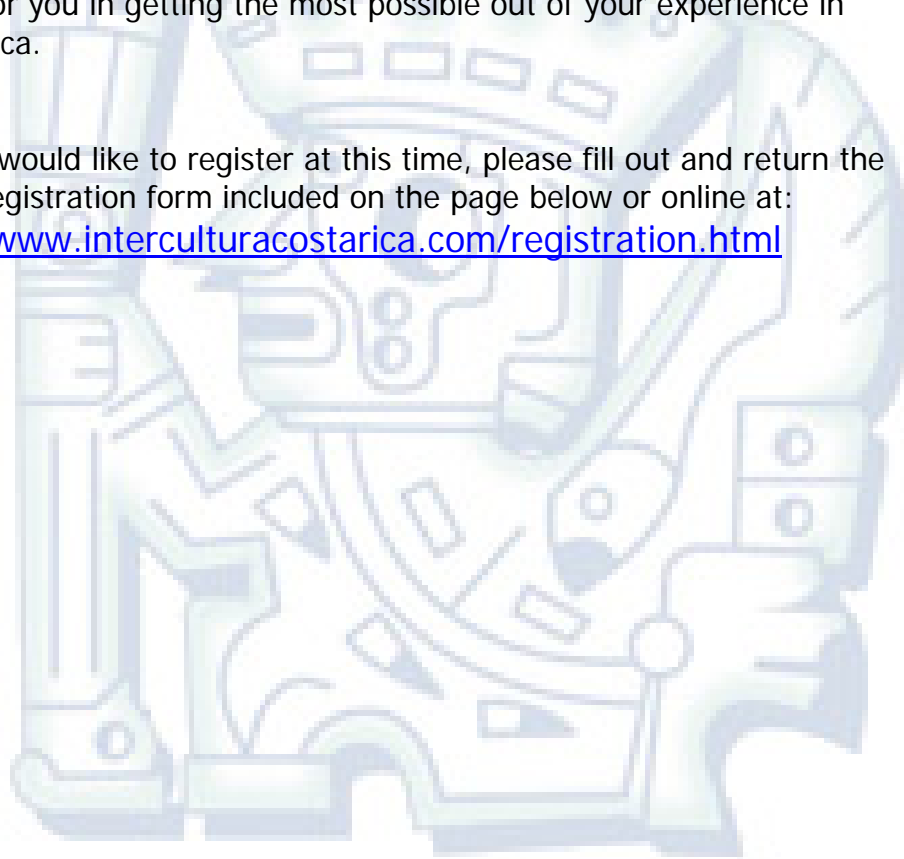
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complete adjustment, he or she accepts the food, drink, habits, and customs, and actually begins to enjoy them! When the visitor leaves the country he or she genuinely misses it and the people.

Most of our students may never experience the majority of these symptoms, but we hope the information will be both amusing and useful for you in getting the most possible out of your experience in Costa Rica.

*If you would like to register at this time, please fill out and return the registration form included on the page below or online at:

www.interculturacostarica.com/registration.html



REGISTRATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TEL.# _____ FAX # _____

AGE: _____ MALE: _____ FEMALE: _____

NATIONALITY: _____

PROFESSION: _____

PASSPORT NUMBER: _____

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Do you wish to be picked up at the airport (Heredia)/Bus stop or airport (Sámara)?

Date / time / # of arrival flight/bus

Total length of program (# of weeks) _____ Group Program (Y/N) _____ or Private
 (# hrs) _____

Start/End dates of **Heredia homestay**

Start/End dates of **Heredia classes**

Start/End dates of **Sámara homestay/hotel** (please specify)

Start/End dates of **Sámara classes**

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CHECK APPROXIMATE SPANISH LEVEL:

COMPLETE BEGINNER: (no previous Spanish study) _____

ADVANCED BEGINNER: (present tense, simple sentences) _____

INTERMEDIATE: (future, past, present tense, some conversation) _____

ADVANCED: (subjunctive, reading, writing, conversation) _____

SUPERIOR: (fluent, literature, Latin American studies, etc) _____

Where and for how long have you studied Spanish?

HOMESTAY INFORMATION:

If you are signing up for our Homestay Program, please state any preferences or concerns you might have regarding (smokers, children, pets, allergies, vegetarian food) and any physical problems we should be aware of:

Please tell us a little bit about yourself, your likes and dislikes, and your general expectations for this experience:

(feel free to add extra page if necessary)

