

**COSTA RICA TRAVEL MANUAL
FOR STUDENTS OF THE
IECR
Instituto de Español “Costa Rica”**

**SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA
CENTRAL AMERICA**

**SPANISH COURSE AND
LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE**

COSTA RICA INFORMATION

IECR INSTITUTO DE ESPAÑOL "COSTA RICA"

PRESENTATION

IECR is a highly professional Spanish school located in San José, Costa Rica. It organizes short and long term, intensive, language IMMERSION PROGRAMS for persons interested in studying Spanish, professional Legal and Medical Spanish courses as well as Spanish for Missionaries and Religious Organizations. Furthermore IECR offers PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS in many different areas like business administration, legal field, social field, TEFL, tourism, hospitality as well as VOLUNTARY WORK in National Parks.

Thanks to our dynamic methodology in language teaching and personalized attention in a professional and friendly atmosphere, we provide high quality in the area of Spanish teaching. Our **MISSION** is offering first rate Spanish instruction along with authentic cultural experience. Therefore we offer personalized attention in individual classes or small groups combined with cultural activities such as Latin Dance and Costa Rican Cooking, for an approach to Latin American culture.

Costa Rica



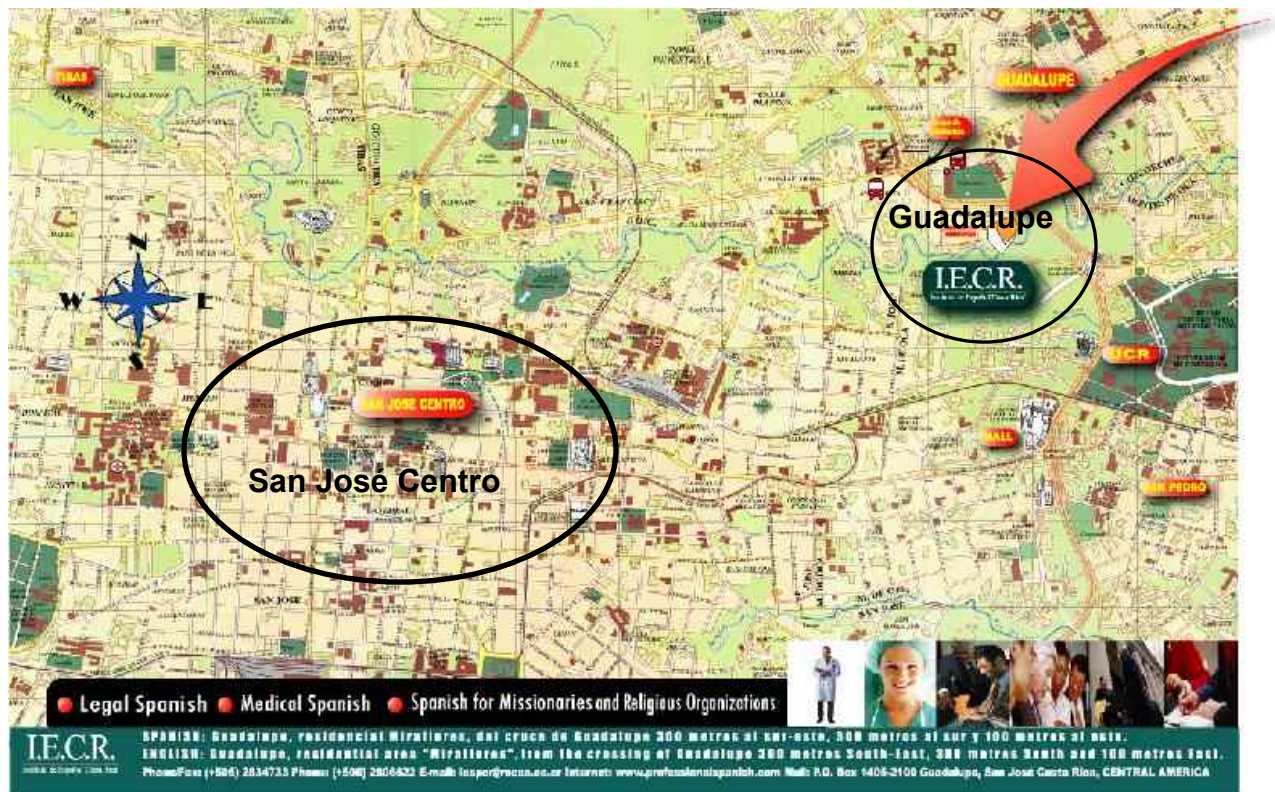
I.E.C.R.
Instituto de Español "Costa Rica"

● Legal Spanish ● Medical Spanish ● Spanish for Missionaries and Religious Organizations

I.E.C.R.
Instituto de Español "Costa Rica"

SPANISH: Guadalupe, residencial Miraflores, del casco de Guadalupe 288 metros al sur-este, 308 metros al sur y 188 metros al este.
ENGLISH: Guadalupe, residential area "Miraflores", from the cloister of Guadalupe 300 meters South-East, 308 metres South and 188 metres East.
Phone/Fax: (+506) 2024733 Phone: (+506) 2905022 E-mail: ieacr@racca.co.cr Internet: www.profesionalespanish.com Mail: P.O. Box 1405-2100 Guadalupe, San José Costa Rica, CENTRAL AMERICA

HOW YOU WILL FIND US



map of San José

LOCATION OF THE INSTITUTE:

San José, Guadalupe, del Hipermás 300 metros sur-este, 300 sur, 100 este

INFORMATION ABOUT COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is a small country on the bridge between North and South America. It is a country where you can still experience pure nature. Costa Rica has placed 25 % of the country under protection to stop the exploitation of its natural areas.

This little country is bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean, between Nicaragua and Panama.

Geography:

The country is divided by a backbone of volcanoes and mountains. Costa Rica is part of the Pacific "Rim of Fire" and has seven of the isthmus's 42 active volcanoes plus dozens of dormant or extinct cones. There are several of coastal plains separated by rugged mountains. Costa Rica is rich of black and white sanded beaches on the Caribbean coast as well as on the Pacific side. Everywhere in the country you will find rain forests and cloud forests with a plenty of exotic flora and fauna.

Climate:

Costa Rica is a tropical country which contains several distinct climatic zones. There is no winter or summer as such and most regions have a rainy season from May to November and a dry season from December to April. Temperature in Costa Rica is around 72 Fahrenheit in the Central Valley, 82 Fahrenheit on the Atlantic coast and 89 Fahrenheit on the Pacific coast.

Sociological facts:

Costa Rica has a population of 4,016,173 inhabitants (July 2005 est.).

Almost two-thirds of the nation's population live in the small, fertile Central valley around San José. Although still a largely agricultural country, it has expanded its economy to include strong technology and tourism sectors. The standard of living is relatively high.

Costa Rica is a democratic Republic and has no regular military forces. Costa Rica has a literacy rate of 96%.

More than 90 percent of Costa Ricans are Roman Catholic.

<i>PACKING LIST FOR YOUR STAY IN COSTA RICA</i>
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Pack light! You will have to carry what you take. It will be easier if you can limit yourself to a couple of bags (e.g. check two medium bags and one small carry-on). Remember that you will probably want to buy some things in Costa Rica to take home, so leave room for that.

Recommended clothes:

- Summer cloths
- for the national parks and volcanoes please bring sweat-shirts
- Long trousers
- T-shirts with long arms (as moskito protection in the national parks)
- Comfortable shoes or tennis shoes (including shoes for the beach as well as for rain forests)
- Swim suit / swim shorts
- For Internships: normal, decent clothing/attire. The Costa Ricans use more conservative clothes than “liberal” ones. NOT ACCEPTED ARE: “hippie”-clothing, shorts, transparent fabric, piercings nor visible tattooes.

Additional things:

- Sun blocker
- Insect repellent
- Camera, binoculars
- Personal things (like books, medicine, disc man etc.)

HEALTH

You are unlikely to encounter any serious diseases in Costa Rica. Sanitary standards are high and the health system is very good. There are several state-owned and private hospitals.

We recommend to contract a MEDICAL INSURANCE in your country which covers illness in foreign countries. In case of illness, you will need to go to a private hospital and present the bill afterwards to your assurance company.

No vaccinations are required to enter Costa Rica as epidemic diseases have been all but eradicated throughout the country. There is no Malaria risk in cities and urban places. There exists only a small risk when working in plantations or in rain forests for a longer period of time. Infectious hepatitis, a serious problem throughout Central America, is reported only rarely in Costa Rica.

MONEY

CURRENCY of Costa Rica is the national currency (Colon). US-Dollars are also accepted in almost all businesses (e.g. hotels, restaurants, car rentals, super markets). Local busses, taxi, bakery etc. must be paid in colones.

You can change your Traveler Checks at the following banks: BANCO NACIONAL COSTA RICA, BCR BANCO COSTA RICA, BANCO PROMERICA, SCOTIA BANK. Most shops, restaurants, hotels etc. accept credit cards (VISA; MASTER CARD). You can also withdraw money from a cash machine (ATM) with your credit card.

The IECR accepts traveller checks (American Express, Thomas Cook), US dollars, colones, checks drawn from a US bank account, certified checks, international money orders, deposits on the Institute' bank account (see Website for detailed information).

NOTE: Please do not change money in the streets at persons pretending to have good change rates. Do not take more money with you than you need!

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS for US-citizens:

US-passport with a minimum validity of 6 months (from the entry day on)

Always take a copy of your passport with you and leave the original at your host family.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ID CARD (ISIC):

If you have an ISIC – student card, please remember to take it with you. There are several institutions who grant a discount for students carrying the ISIC card.

TIME AND ELECTRICITY

TIME:

Costa Rica is on Greenwich Mean Time minus 6 hours. This means there exists a time difference between South Carolina, United States and Costa Rica from minus one hour. (6.00 p.m. South Carolina means 5.00 p.m.in Costa Rica).

ELECTRICITY:

Electrical current in Costa Rica is the same as in the United States: 110 Volts, 60 cycles. There are three different types of electrical sockets: older ones with two equally-sized flat slots, newer ones with two flat slots of different sizes and a few with a round hole for an earth pin. If the plug on your appliance does not fit the socket, you need to change the plug or get an adapter.

TELEPHONE, COMPUTER, INTERNET

TELEPHONE:

For making telephone calls (national and international ones) please buy a telephone card for international calls (llamadas internacionales). They are sold in drugs stores, souvenir shops and supermarkets.

COMPUTER, INTERNET:

At our institute you can use our Internet laboratory for free. We also offer wireless internet that you can use with your own equipped computer/ laptop.

YOUR HOST FAMILY

The IECR places the student with a previously selected family who meets the standards of the Institute.

Remember that you are host in a family who will do its very best in order to assure you a comfortable and pleasant homestay. Please treat your family in the same way so that the Institute's objective will be achieved: to reach a social-cultural approach and exchange that gives you the opportunity to put into practice your newly acquired Spanish skills and at the same time to understand the Costarican culture.

The family provides two meals per day, that means breakfast and lunch or breakfast and dinner (weekends and holidays included) as well as laundry service at least once a week. Any additional consumption of food is not included in the lodging contract.

Please let your host family know when you are going to skip a meal. It is not fair to have the family wait for you for lunch or dinner if you will not show up.

You are responsible for the keys to the house that the host family will give you. If the key gets lost you must replace the bolts.

International phone calls are not permitted. However, you may receive phone calls. If you wish to make an international phone call you can acquire international phone cards, which can be used in public telephone boots or at the phone at your family house (ask for permission first!) you need to make local phone calls please ask the family for permission and agree on payment arrangements. These calls should be short. In Costa Rica every minute of each call is charged for. This means that the more you talk the more you pay, no matter how close the distance is.

GOING OUT IN SAN JOSÉ

In Costa Rica the majority starts with 18 years. Entrance to bars and discotheques is only allowed to persons aged over 18 years. Alcohol is served to persons aged over 18 years.

Close to our institute and to the area where your host family is living, we recommend the following places to visit:

- Mall San Pedro (shopping center, food courts, bars, cinemas, discotheque)
- El Pueblo (different bars, restaurants and discotheques)
- El Cuartel (restaurant, bar and discotheque with live music)
- San Pedro (area around the university of Costa Rica): a lot of bars, restaurants roller skating discotheque

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Airports:

Juan Santamaría International Airport (San José)	441-0744
Limón International Airport	758-1379
Tobías Bolaños International Airport.	232-2820

Emergencies	911
Fire Department and Rescue Units	118
Traffic Police	222-9330/ 222-9245
Police Department	117
Rural Police Department	127
Red Cross	128
Clínica Católica	225-5055
Hospital Clínica Bíblica	223-6422
Clínica Santa Rita	221-6433
Centro de Intoxicaciones	223-1028

USA embassy (working hours)	5192000
USA embassy (after working hours)	2203127

Instituto de Español (working hours)	2806622
Instituto de Español (emergency number)*	8152329

* call after working hours or on weekend

The IECR wishes you and all your student fellows a
successful study abroad stay in Costa Rica full of new
cultural experiences! ¡Hasta pronto!