



EDU-CULTURE  
IMMERSION

Costa Rica  
2017



## Group Program in Costa Rica

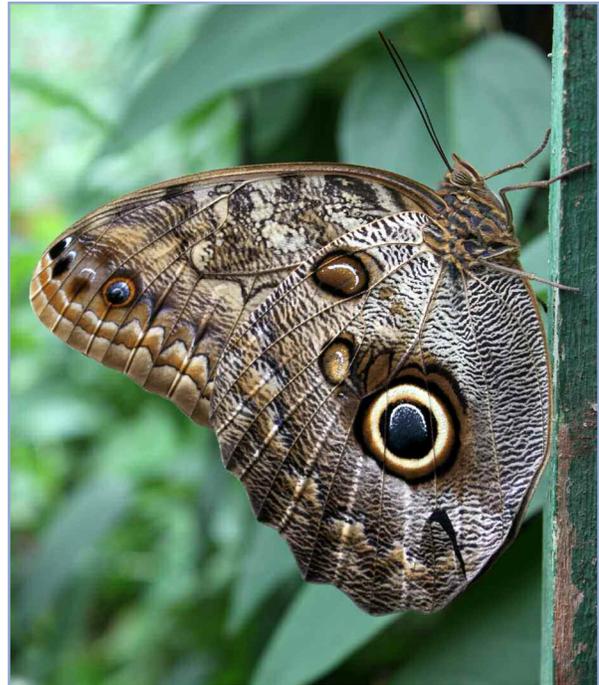
Summer Study Abroad & Community Service opportunity for high school & college students

# ECI Costa Rica Program 2017

Costa Rica is a beautiful country filled with exotic wonders! Small, democratic, and on the Central American isthmus, it's often referred to as the "Central American Switzerland" because of its long-standing political neutrality and dedication to peace in the region. Costa Rica, translating to the "rich coast," features incredibly diverse rainforests, active volcanoes, pristine beaches, an incredible array of wildlife, cascading waterfalls, a cloud forest, and so much more. Travel with ECI to this country that will delight your imagination!

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# Dear Parents and Students,

Edu-Culture International's primary goal is a true language and cultural immersion experience for each participant. Our programs provide the students with a truly intercultural perspective, as well as the best possible environment in which to strengthen their language skills. In Costa Rica, our young teens enjoy a **safe and fun opportunity** to experience one of the world's most peaceful and hard-working cultures.

We take great professional and personal pride in making ECI programs the absolute best of their kind. From our global coordinators to our local leaders, you will find ECI staff to be experienced, dedicated, and qualified educational professionals who provide guidance and support throughout the program. **We offer a comprehensive program that includes study at an excellent language school, living with Costa Rican families, and fascinating morning and weekend excursions.**

A key feature of this program is the **Community Service** component. This allows students to see for themselves some of the challenges faced by the local population, and to also, in a small way, make a difference. For the students this is one of the most rewarding aspects of the program.

The Costa Rica program includes excursions to some of the most ecologically diverse areas in this majestic country. We also incorporate Language Partners (generally local high school students) into our programs. **Language Partners** work to enrich language and cultural immersion by providing community integration opportunities and additional practice in conversational Spanish. Small groups of our students explore the town with their Language Partners, participating in various activities while discussing (in Spanish as much as possible) an

assortment of topics such as: local culture, entertainment, school, politics, travel, vacations, and sports.

Designed to be fun as well as challenging, ECI's programs provide students with an **unforgettable and exhilarating once-in-a-lifetime experience**. Participants gain a global perspective, **strengthen their future college applications**, and create lasting global friendships through this individualized and unique international adventure.



Marie Harris  
Director

# Overview

## Costa Rica

**Cost:** \$3,895 + Airfare  
(Please contact us for details about the chaperone group flight)

**Dates:** June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 11<sup>th</sup>

**Ages:** 14 - 18

**Accommodations:** Host family homestay

**Prerequisite:** No language prerequisite

*Group size limited to 20 students*

ECI students on the Costa Rica program immerse themselves in the Spanish language through cultural immersion in beautiful, safe, and family-oriented town of Grecia. While studying at the Academia Centroamericana de Español (ACCE) Language School each weekday afternoon, participants also have the opportunity to explore the wonders of Costa Rica with bilingual naturalist guides.

Our Costa Rica program is a custom-designed summer Spanish study program geared toward high



school students seeking an introductory immersion experience fused with adventurous scientific exploration. Participants enjoy fully chaperoned morning and full-day weekend excursions, and come back with stronger Spanish skills and newfound scientific knowledge and environmental awareness.

## During our Costa Rica summer program you will:

- **Study** at a prestigious language school for a two-week Spanish language course.
- **Discover** the exciting destinations of: Majestic Arenal Volcano, ecologically rich Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, and Manuel Antonio National Park.
- **Take part in** a variety of excursions such as: waterfall visits, zip-lining, swimming, cultural events and a local school visit.
- **Help** hands-on in a community service project.
- **Interact** with local students during Language Partner sessions.
- **Meet** other students from around the country.
- **Be Encouraged** by your chaperones & guides to exceed your language goals.
- **Immerse** yourself in the language, culture, and daily life of Costa Rica.
- **Enjoy** free time to explore Costa Rican wonders.
- **Stay** with Spanish-speaking host families.

# ECI Chaperones

ECI carefully selects chaperones on the basis of language ability, maturity, patience, judgment, professionalism, and their ability to earn the respect and trust of our teenage participants. Most chaperones are middle or high school Spanish teachers with extensive travel abroad experience; some are full-time ECI staff with educational backgrounds, and all are enthusiastic leaders, fully trained by ECI, and highly dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding on the global level.

The program includes up to three full-time adults: one trip leader and two additional chaperones, one of whom is also a bilingual naturalist guide.

## Price includes:

- All Spanish classes
- All accommodations
- All meals
- All transportation in Costa Rica
- All group activities, excursions, admissions
- Costa Rican departure tax.

## Price does not include:

- Airline tickets (Students can purchase airline tickets on the designated chaperoned flights via our travel partner, STA Travel: Contact ECI for details)
- Spending money
- Optional activities
- Cancellation / Interruption Travel Insurance Plan
- Medical Expense / Emergency Assistance Insurance
- Travel Delay Protection / Baggage Delay or Loss Coverage



# Student Eligibility for Costa Rica

## Natural Wonders:

- Be between the ages of 14 and 18
- No language prerequisite

## Participants on all ECI programs must:

- Have a valid passport
- Receive a positive teacher recommendation
- Be committed to speaking and improving their Spanish
- Be open to new experiences and unfamiliar cultures
- Be able to make responsible choices and act in a mature manner.

For additional information, please contact our main office:

**510-261-8182**  
**info@educulture.com**

Or visit our website at:  
**educulture.com**

Or call/message Whats app  
**+44 7970 881081**



# Spanish Classes

The principal objective of ECI's Costa Rica program is to provide students with quality language instruction while giving them a fantastic taste of Costa Rican natural wonders. The Academia Centroamericana de Español (ACCE) shares ECI's vision of providing students with much more than a textbook-only Spanish course. ECI works closely with the Academic Director at ACCE to ensure that students have many immersion experiences throughout the program, providing unique opportunities to develop language skills through daily practical application.

Academia Centroamericana de Español (ACCE) ECI's directors selected the school for its dedication to quality language instruction. All of the school's instructors are native Spanish speakers who have been carefully selected to teach.

## ACCE Features:

- Three different macro levels of Spanish classes, further divided into three micro levels, ensuring that every student receives instruction tailored to his or her individual language ability and learning style.
- Class size restricted to three students.
- Each class starts with a discussion of the previous and present day's activities. Following introductory conversation, a daily language topic is introduced and developed through practice and conversation.
- Classes are usually held in the afternoons Monday – Friday from 1:30pm – 5:00pm with breaks in between.
- Students receive a short homework assignment daily to reinforce learning.



“ The activities were very cool and I got to do things that I've never done before. Going to school, the hot springs and soccer games were some of my favorites. I had a very fun time and was happy that I went.

**Griffin Stein, Student**

# Program Town Description

## Grecia

Grecia, a market town famous for its rust red, twin-spired metal church, is an ideal place for studying Spanish in Costa Rica. One of many communities nestled around the fertile slopes of the Poás volcano, Grecia principally produces coffee and sugarcane, and its markets make for a fabulous immersion experience. At almost 4000 feet above sea level, Grecia enjoys a year-round temperate climate.

A beautiful Costa Rican town park lies in front of the famous metal church and the ACCE language school is only two blocks away.



## Homestay

Students stay with Costa Rican families in Grecia. Each family is carefully chosen and are native Spanish speakers.

You will enjoy eating all your meals with your family and spending evenings in a Costa Rican environment. Interacting with your host family will ensure your level of Spanish greatly improves. You will also learn about Costa Rican family life and culture first hand.

“ The local leaders and chaperones were so nice and friendly. My trip to Costa Rica was one of the most fun things I’ve ever done. I loved feeding the monkeys and the beaches were like paradise.

**Miranda Arnett, Student**

# Activities for Costa Rica Program

## ECI chaperones supervise a variety of exciting activities...

Some of our student's favorite activities include:

- Ziplining through the forest canopy
- Explorations of Arenal Volcano
- Adventures & Conversations with Language Partners
- Waterfall visits
- The quest to see the Quetzal
- Dinner and theater highlighting Costa Rican culture
- Indoor soccer
- Beach Activities
- Local school visit
- Excursions to nearby towns & villages

“ This was a great trip with great guides & chaperones. The zipline and hot springs were amazing, and I felt like living with other people my age in the casitas was a good learning experience!

*Andrew Olson, Student*

“ Griffin's enthusiasm was evident every time he called home. He loved Costa Rica, the activities, the people he met, and he gained confidence with his Spanish speaking. This wasn't like a summer camp, it was vacation! He's ready to move to Costa Rica.

*Brett Aronow, Parent*



# Community Service project

## A key feature of our program is the Community Service project.

More and more young people have the desire to include an element of worthwhile community service during their summer study abroad.

This will be a rewarding and valuable aspect of your experience in Costa Rica.

Our humanitarian Community Service project is usually carried out in one of the San José squatter communities with The Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation. Your first day begins with a short presentation, usually given by the director of the foundation, Gail Nystrom. The specific activities will depend on the foundation's needs at the time of your visit. In the past our students have assisted in day camps with the children in the community, painted murals, helped in the daycare, organized soccer games, and have performed puppet shows.

At some point during the project, the students tour the community. Our Program Coordinator, Amy Paschal, commented,

“ Many of the houses and living conditions are very basic - some of the houses have just tin roofing, so the experience tends to be a real eye-opener for the kids.”



# Excursions

## Arenal Volcano and La Fortuna

La Fortuna lies at the base of the Arenal Volcano, one of the twelve most active volcanoes in the world (and certainly the most active in Costa Rica). After lunch, hike through the rainforest on the El Silencio Trail to a fantastic aerial view from across the base of the volcano, gaining an amazingly up-close look at the natural environment surrounding Arenal (time and weather permitting).



## Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve

While hiking through Monteverde, you just might think you've walked into Jurassic Park. Surrounded by lush forest with giant ferns and enormous trees, you will have the opportunity to see some of the 100 species of mammals (including jaguar, puma, and howler monkeys), thousands of species of flowers and vegetation (including over 450 kinds of orchids), and 400 types of birds (including hummingbirds and toucans).

## Baldi Hot Springs

With Arenal Volcano looming above you, relax at Baldi Hot Springs. Enjoy a luxurious dip (or two or three or four!) in therapeutic, naturally heated waters while being awed by Arenal's glowing pyroclastic show. Relax in different sized pools hidden among lush gardens.



## Excursions *continued*



### **Manuel Antonio National Park & Beach**

Located on the Central Pacific coast, Manuel Antonio is a lush beachside community with breathtaking ocean views. One of the few places in the world where the rainforest comes right up to the beach, you might receive a few unexpected visits from animal life while sunning yourself! A morning hike to the protected beaches might turn up sloths, monkeys, iguanas, agoutis and is sure to provide a magnificent view from Punta Cathedral, a one-time island now connected to the mainland by a thin land bridge.

### **Canopy Tour**

Zip through the canopy suspended from a series of secured cables as the sights and sounds of the rainforest enliven your spirit. Approximately two-thirds of the rainforest's population makes its home in the canopy; prepare to come face to face with animals, vegetation, and exotic flowers.



### **Sarchí – Taller Eloy Alfaro**

Oxcarts, formerly a means of transportation, have become a colorful tradition in Costa Rica. Visit the Taller Eloy Alfaro, an oxcart factory more than 80 years old, where oxcarts still operate the same way they did when the factory was founded – almost entirely powered by water! Behind the factory is a painting area where the wagons are turned into radiant works of art. You'll also get to paint your own mini-oxcart wheel as a souvenir!

## What next?

Based on our years of feedback, we can safely say that, as a student, you will have the time of your life, make new friends, experience authentic Spanish culture, and gain a sense of independence and new-found confidence. As a parent, you will feel secure in the knowledge that ECI's programs are carefully planned and executed, that every detail is taken care of, both before and during the trip, and that a committed and experienced team of US and local leaders will ensure each program matches/exceeds your expectations.

### Need more information?

- Please email: [info@educulture.com](mailto:info@educulture.com)
- Check out our FAQs on the website - [educulture.com](http://educulture.com)
- Watch our informative videos - available on the website: [educulture.com/about/video-gallery/](http://educulture.com/about/video-gallery/)
- Read our blog posts on a wide variety of Study Abroad-related topics - [educulture.com/blog/](http://educulture.com/blog/)
- Take a look at our Facebook page and Twitter feed - [facebook.com/Edu.Culture.Immersion](https://facebook.com/Edu.Culture.Immersion)
- Take a look at our Twitter feed - [twitter.com/educulture](https://twitter.com/educulture)

### Want to talk to someone at ECI?

Call us at: **510-261-8182** or **Whats app +44 7970 881081**

### Ready to sign up?

Complete our online application - [educulture.com/apply](http://educulture.com/apply)

# Application Procedure 2017 Summer Programs

1. The fastest way to reserve a space on your chosen program is to use our online option for application and payment. Go to <http://educulture.com> and click the the **Apply Now** link.
2. Select your program, then Book Now. Complete the online Booking Form and make a \$1000 credit card deposit payment to reserve your spot. This deposit will be credited towards the total summer Program Fee.
3. Alternatively, you may complete the application page found at the end of this packet and mail it with a \$1000 check made payable to ECI.
4. You will receive an automatic receipt invoice, and shortly after other pre-departure information, including details about submitting a teacher recommendation form, medical authorization, and writing a letter to your host family.
5. A second payment of \$1000 is due 4 weeks after the initial sign-up and deposit payment.
6. The balance of payment is due by **April 30th, 2017**.

**Please note:** this is our general payment plan. To arrange a customized option or for any additional information, contact us at 510-261-8182 or at [info@educulture.com](mailto:info@educulture.com).

## Additional Payment Information – 2017 Summer Programs

- All deposits will be deducted from the Total Program Fee.
- It is your responsibility to make sure all payments arrive at ECI's office by their due dates. You must assume responsibility for late payments due to mail delays or other unlikely circumstances. Students whose payments are not received on time may lose their place in the program or be subject to a late payment charge.
- Applications made 60 or fewer days prior to departure will be treated on an individual space-available basis. Full payment will be due at the time of application, and completed application materials will be due within one week.

## Edu-Culture International (ECI) Refund Policy

Prior to December 3, 2016: **All Program Fee payments less \$150**

Between December 3, 2016, and March 4, 2017: **All Program Fee payments less \$500**

Between March 4, 2017, and June 3, 2017: **All Program Fee payments less \$1200**

After June 3, 2017: **No refund**

**Cancellations must be received by ECI in writing by the above dates for refunds.**

*Any student who is unwilling to abide by ECI guidelines or who is believed to jeopardize the welfare of others will be dismissed without refund of program fees and sent home at the expense of his/her parents. ECI reserves the right to cancel any program due to insufficient enrollment. In this case, all program fees would be refunded.*

**ECI DOES NOT** provide medical, travel or cancellation/interruption insurance. **Please ensure you arrange medical and travel insurance prior to departure.** You must have medical insurance to take part in one of our trips. We also strongly advise the purchase of cancellation/interruption insurance.

# Preliminary Mail-In Application Form

Please mail this page with a \$1000 check to ECI:

**ECI**  
**P.O Box 27470**  
**Oakland, CA 94602**

Check the program to which you are applying:

**SPAIN:**

- Individual program in Spain: Almeria, Andalusia
- Individual program in Spain: San Sebastián, Northern Spain

**FRANCE:**

- Individual program in France: French Alps
- Individual program in France: Hyères, Cotes d'Azur

**COSTA RICA:**

- Costa Rica

Please print the **student and parent email addresses** clearly on the form below, as future correspondence will be sent to you via those email addresses.

Parent Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Best Day Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Best Evening Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email \_\_\_\_\_

Student's School \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign Language Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Years of foreign language completed as of June 2017 \_\_\_\_\_

*(2 yrs. of middle school count as one year of high school)*