

Spanish on the Fly

Costa Rica

Costa Rica occupies a privileged spot in the heart of Central America between Nicaragua and Panamá, and is one of the safest countries in Central America. It is politically stable and its army was abolished in 1948. Although it is a small country geographically (slightly smaller than West Virginia), Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world offering a stunning collection of natural parks, biological reserves, and a series of protected regions filled with exquisite beaches, majestic mountain ranges, active volcanoes, and cascading waterfalls. Its natural beauty is complemented by mild, tropical weather, and friendly locals.

This country is made for the adventurous type with tons of activities available to get your heart pumping like white water rafting through the jungles, surfing at the world-famous surf spots Costa Rica has to offer (Salsa Brava, Witch's Rock, Ollie's Point, Playa Grande, Jacó Beach, Cabo Matapolo, Hermosa, Puerto Viejo, and many others), kayaking, scuba diving, snorkeling, sailing, wind surfing, and fishing; and those are just the water sports. Visitors can also enjoy the breathtaking volcano hikes, horseback riding, golfing, or zip lining through the rainforest canopy; the possibilities and memories to be made are endless. Costa Rica is a remarkable place to learn the Spanish language and experience a fascinating culture. It is no wonder the national motto is Pura Vida (pure life) as it encapsulates the Costa Rican ideology of loving life, nature, and family while living peacefully and "purely." Costa Rica is the perfect destination for improving your Spanish as well as your knowledge of this beautiful country.

A roundtrip flight cost from Miami, FL to the capital, San José costs as little as \$150.00 if booked a couple months in advance. The cost of living is very dependent on your lifestyle, but even if you are used to a life of luxury, you will still find Costa Rica to be a bargain. Despite having one of the highest standards of living in Latin America, purchasing power is greater in Costa Rica than in the U.S. The exchange rate is about 500 colones to the U.S. dollar. San José's cost of living ranks close to last when compared to 144 cities worldwide. An average, mid-range meal in a restaurant is about \$10.00.

Academia Tica

Academia Tica in Playa Jacó offers the exciting opportunity to improve your Spanish and surfing skills simultaneously. The school offers host families or apartments and there are many other accommodation options in town to suit all pockets. Academia Tica offers a weekly cultural and leisure program, which includes tours of the city for newly arrived students, as well as a once-a-week cooking classes or food tastings of traditional Costa Rican specialties, dance classes (salsa, cumbia, meringue), or trips to a salsa disco. There is also a tour each week, such as a trip to a coffee plantation and processing plant in Moravia, a trip to the University of Costa Rica, a tour of the jade or gold museum in San José, or a trip to the market in San José.

AMIGOS

Founded in 1965, AMIGOS is an international, non-profit organization that provides quality leadership and community service opportunities for young people while concurrently contributing to the well-being of hundreds of communities throughout the Americas. During its 42-year