

MAESTRO Spanish for Educators

Alajuela, Costa Rica

Program Purpose

This program teaches Spanish and culture in order to facilitate effective communication between educators and the growing community of native Spanish-speaking students and their parents. Participants will be exposed to a variety of cultural settings and will have the opportunity to meet local teachers.

With the growing Hispanic population in the United States, these programs are an exceptional opportunity for teachers to be exposed to the culture and language of their students and parents. By learning about the Latin American educational setting, it will be easier to relate to students and the common struggles they face in US classrooms. It is remarkable what educators can take from the program and bring back to their classrooms, schools, and districts.

Program Highlights

- **Spanish Classes** – 4 hours/day of Spanish classes (except the 1st Monday of the program) to provide/improve Spanish skills
- **School Visits** – Visit 3 typical-styles of schools in Costa Rica: Public, Private, and Votech (volunteer) Transportation to the schools is included.
- **Lectures** – Lectures on Costa Rican culture, educational system, and relationships among teachers, parents and students in order to better understand Spanish-speaking students in US classrooms are included.
- **Additional Optional Visits** – Visits will include trips to local cultural points of interest and to a social organization for children.
- **2 Weekend Excursions** – Visit Arenal Volcano and Baldi Hot Springs and to Tortuga Island - Costa Rica's national treasures!
- **Homestay** – Lodging with a local Costa Rican family includes a private room, 2 meals daily (breakfast and dinner,) and laundry.

Who May Participate?

This program is open to all educators, academic faculty or those studying to be an educator. Unlike some of our other programs for educators, this program is open to all language levels, even absolute beginners. However, we recommend absolute beginners try to arrive a week or two early to take some extra Spanish classes.

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Sample daily schedule

(subject to change)

DATES	TIMES	ITINERARY
Sat or Sun		Arrive in Juan Santamaría International Airport Transfer from airport to homestay available for an additional cost. <i>*A Saturday arrival is recommended so that you can get to know your family and start to become comfortable in your new surroundings.</i> Spend time getting to know your host family and the neighborhood.
Monday	7:00 7:30 8:00-12:00 12:45 15:30 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay A member of the host family will show you how to take the bus to school each day. Orientation and meet the staff session Placement Test (oral and written) Walking tour of downtown Grecia. You will travel by public transportation so you know how to do so on your own for any free time you may have. A member of your host family will meet you at school to show you how to take the bus back each day. Dinner with host family
Tuesday	7:00 8:00–12:00 12:15 16:00 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay Spanish classes Welcome lunch at a typical local restaurant City tour of Alajuela & visit to Sr y Sra Wood Factory. Return to the school and/or host family Dinner with host family
Wednesday	7:00 8:00–12:00 12:30 1:30 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay Spanish classes Break for a snack or lunch (not included) Lecture: The Costa Rican Educational System Free afternoon Dinner with host family
Thursday	7:00 8:00–12:00 13:00-14:30 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay Spanish classes Break for Lunch (not included) Visit to a public elementary school Dinner with host family
Friday	7:00 8:00–12:00 13:00-14:30 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay Spanish classes (10:30 exam) Break for Lunch (not included) Visit to a private school Dinner with host family
Saturday	8:00 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay (time permitting) Arenal Volcano and Baldi Hot Springs Dinner (included)
Sunday	6:50 Dinner	Breakfast at homestay (time permitting) Tortuga Island Pacific Cruise Dinner with host family

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Monday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for a snack or lunch (not included)
	12:30-13:30	Lecture: Grammar Doubts (optional) <i>Please inform school in advance of any doubts you wish to discuss in the session</i>
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Tuesday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for Lunch (not included)
	13:00-14:30	Visit to a Votech school
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Wednesday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for a snack or lunch (not included)
	12:30-13:30	Activity: Dance Class Free afternoon
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Thursday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes (10:30 exam) Break for lunch (not included)
	12:30-15:30	Optional site visit: Visit the Gold Museum in San Jose <i>*Fee for taxi, bus, and entrance to museum not included.</i>
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Friday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes 11:30 – Graduation ceremony and receive completion certificates for 2-week participants
	14:00	Recommended local visit on your own: Alajuela Farmers Market
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Saturday		Breakfast at homestay 2 week participants: Departure 3 or 4 week participants: Free weekend or arrange additional activities through the onsite tourism office
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Sunday		Breakfast at homestay 3 or 4 week participants: Free weekend or arrange additional activities through the onsite tourism office
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Monday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for a snack or lunch (not included)
	12:30-13:30	Lecture: Grammar Doubts (optional) <i>Please inform school in advance of any doubts you wish to discuss in the session</i>
	Dinner	Dinner with host family

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Tuesday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for Lunch (not included)
	12:30-14:30	Round Table Activity – Advanced Reservation Required Meet with Costa Rican Teachers to discuss relations among school, parents, and community
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Wednesday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes Break for a snack or lunch (not included)
	12:30-13:30	Workshop: Traditional Games Time to share with local children Free afternoon
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Thursday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes
	8:30	Class Activity: Planting Trees – part of on-going conservation project
	10:30	Exam Break for lunch (not included)
	12:30-15:00	Optional site visit: Visit the Alajuela Bird Zoo & Rescue Center <i>*Fee for taxi, bus, and entrance to museum not included.</i> OR Optional site visit: PANI Orphanage* Advance Reservation Needed <i>*PANI takes care of children who attend a public school who have been physically and/or mentally abused. Transportation included</i>
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Friday	7:00	Breakfast at homestay
	8:00–12:00	Spanish classes 11:30 – Graduation ceremony and receive completion certificates for 2-week participants
	14:00	Recommended local visit on your own: Alajuela Farmers Market
	Dinner	Dinner with host family
Saturday		Breakfast at homestay (time permitting)
		Departure

*If you are able to bring educational materials or school supplies to donate, they will give it to the children during the school period. Any donations are greatly appreciated.

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Excursion descriptions

Tortuga Island Pacific Cruise

Approx. Length: 10 – 12 hours.

Each participant must get to the meeting point on his/her own.

Includes: Air-conditioned bus transportation to and from a meeting point (hotel in the Alajuela area). Small breakfast, lunch, soft drinks, snacks, live music and bilingual guide.



The Pacific Island Cruise is a one-day boat tour that leaves daily from Puntarenas, Costa Rica's major Pacific Port. Once on board the cruise, participants will pass some of the islands in the calm waters of the Gulf of Nicoya. Once at your destination, you might enjoy the activities that include: sunbathing, volleyball, bird watching, or relax in a hammock. A wonderful gourmet meal will be served accompanied with live music.

Optional Island activities available for an extra fee: Canopy adventure, kayaks - paddleboats, snorkeling excursion, and banana boat ride. What to bring: Casual clothes, bathing suit or shorts, towel, suntan lotion, camera, sun glasses, tight fitting hat, light weight long sleeved shirt, rubber sandals, tennis or boat shoes.

Arenal Volcano and Baldí Hot Springs

Approx. Length of tour: 12 hours

Each participant must get to the meeting point on his/her own.

Includes: Air-conditioned bus transportation to and from a meeting point (hotel in the Alajuela area), bilingual guide, lunch, entrance to Baldí Hot Springs, and dinner.

Located in northern Costa Rica, the Arenal Volcano is a natural phenomenon that attracts thousands of tourists due to its permanent volcanic activity, which on clear nights can seem like fireworks with intermittent explosions of ash and lava.

The trip initiates going to the north of the country. There is a stop in the town of Sarchí and continues until arrival to La Fortuna for lunch in a restaurant right in front of the volcano. Before entering the gardens where the thermal springs are located there will be a visit to Arenal Lake. Here students can walk on the road next to the Park and look for toucans, monkeys, coatimundis and other animals. The group will not enter this park. Once in the thermal water participants will be able to enjoy an optional massage or other treatment that must be reserved ahead of time. The optional activities are for an extra charge. Return to Alajuela will be after dinner. Since arrival to Alajuela is late at night participants must take a taxi from the final destination in Alajuela, to return to each host family.



Taxi to return home is not included in the price.

Do not forget to pack: swim suit, mosquito repellent, sweater and towel.