



## **SPANISH IN COSTA RICA**

The tropical option in the world of International House, a school with the Cervantes seal of approval, a cultural exchange with a difference, the travel opportunity of a lifetime.

## **NATURALLY**

## **COSTA RICA**

Just 51,000 square kilometres between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between Nicaragua and Panama - the country where a third of the land is given over to national parks, the oldest democracy in Latin America is to be found, there is no army, and the current President holds the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Its political stability has made it first choice for many international organisations like The University of Peace, EARTH University, The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and The EARTH council, which have set up their headquarters here, as well as many multinational corporations. Its topography, climate, flora, fauna and welcoming people have made it first choice for many visitors. Tourism caters for every taste from sun-worshipping to birdwatching, from eco-friendly to adventure.

## **SAN JOSE**

Most of the jewels of Costa Rica are to be found outside its cities, in the wealth of natural wonders that this tiny country has to offer. However, for those who prefer to explore closer to home, San Jose has shopping malls, museums, galleries, restaurants offering everything from fast food to haute cuisine, night life, butterfly farms and botanical gardens.

The Gold Museum and Jade Museum give insights into pre-Colombian life and art.

The National Theatre, an architectural gem inspired by French opera houses and financed by coffee taxes in the 19th century, hosts performances by the excellent National Symphony Orchestra and visiting dance companies.

## **AROUND SAN JOSE**

Compared to other capitals, San Jose is small and it is relatively easy to enjoy the attractions of the surrounding areas. Half an hour to the north-east, there is one of the largest expanses of intact rain forest in Central America. Half an hour to the north, In-Bio Park offers a tropical forest experience with an educational slant. You can be on a Pacific beach in two hours – or a Caribbean beach in three. An hour to the east, you can peek into the crater of an active volcano. An hour to the north-west, you can look across a valley into the green sulphurous lagoon of the widest volcanic crater in the world.

Three hours to the north-west, you can take an evening dip in the hot water of a river flowing out of a volcano while you watch its crater glowing in the dark. You can visit an Arabica coffee plantation, have the whole process explained and do some tastings. At Zoo Ave you can see many endangered species being cared for while they are being prepared for a return to the wild.

## **IH COSTA RICA**

The school is located in a pleasant, busy suburb of the capital city. The charming old house has 14 classrooms, a self-access centre with free use of the internet, wireless internet, and an open-sided cafeteria looking on to a large tropical garden. Although it is one of the newest recruits to the IH network, the school offers all the benefits that come from being a well-established

school. It has over 25 years' experience as the Instituto Britanico and is the leader in its field of teaching Spanish and English\* as second languages. Its founders are British educators dedicated to maintaining world class standards.

IH Costa Rica teachers are qualified and experienced and participate in ongoing professional development programmes. The school offers personalised attention in small groups and one-to-one and two-to-one tutorials. Its clientele, as well as many private individuals, comprises embassies, multinational businesses, and international voluntary organisations.

There are branches on the east and west sides of the city. The main premises boast a large walled garden of tropical plants where you can take a break or even take your classes.

## **SPANISH COURSES**

The Spanish Programme at IH Costa Rica offers courses in general Spanish from beginners to advanced. Uniquely, it also offers tailor-made, language-specific courses for professionals in their chosen field.

To give personalised attention to every student, groups are small. Tutorials are also available, one-to-one and two-to-one.

A feature of IH Costa Rica's Spanish Programme is the flexibility to accommodate learners' requirements outside the normal course structure.

### **General Spanish**

- Four levels of proficiency from beginners to advanced, in total covering the whole spectrum of the Common European Framework
- Top levels correspond to the levels of the Instituto Cervantes Diplomas
- Courses are flexible in length and timetable

### **Spanish for Professionals**

- Courses of varying length and intensity prepared for individuals or groups with specialised requirements
- Wide range of tailor-made courses in fields such as Agriculture, Health, Rural Development and Music
- Content, timetables and field trips by arrangement
- Intermediate level in general Spanish a prerequisite

### **Evaluation**

Students are evaluated internally by a combination of continuous assessment during the course (classwork and homework) and final exams (oral and written).

Students also have the option, dates permitting, to take the exams of the Instituto Cervantes for a qualification with wider recognition.

### **Doubly recognised by the Instituto Cervantes**

IH Costa Rica has the unique status in Central America of being both a Centro Asociado and an authorised examination centre of the Instituto Cervantes. Its training courses for teachers of Spanish are also officially recognised.

The Instituto Cervantes is the world authority in the teaching and testing of Spanish as a foreign language. It is administered by the University of Salamanca on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Education y Science. Centro Asociado status guarantees that the school meets a

range of quality standards that are applied worldwide by the Instituto Cervantes in both teaching and administration to help overseas students select a language school they can rely on. The Diplomas of the Instituto Cervantes are awarded by independent assessment and are recognised by universities, governments and businesses around the world as reliable evidence of ability. Examinations for the Diplomas are offered at all three levels three times a year:

### **Common European Framework**

- Diploma en Español (Nivel Superior) CEF C2
- Diploma en Español (Nivel Intermedio) CEF B2
- Diploma en Español (Nivel Inicial) CEF B1

Further information about the Instituto Cervantes can be found at [www.cervantes.es](http://www.cervantes.es)

## **SOCIAL PROGRAMME**

### **Cultural Exchange**

Courses include programmes of cultural exchange, enjoying various aspects of Costa Rican life with opportunities to practise the Spanish learnt in the classroom.

Every Friday, students are involved in a different activity outside the school that gives them an opportunity to experience local everyday life and make comparisons with their own values, customs and lifestyle. Each activity is also planned as an extension of the week's study, providing real-life practice of acquired syntax, vocabulary and register in speaking/listening activities with non-school Costa Ricans.

As a follow-up, students report and comment on their findings, comparing and contrasting the local way of life with their own. IH Costa Rica offers a variety of cultural activities in the city of San Jose – including theatres, concerts, museums and guided tours.

### **Out and about at weekends**

IH Costa Rica works with reliable local travel agents to put together themed packages so that, at weekends, as optional extras, students can go further afield in this country's stunning countryside and coastal regions to pursue shared interests. One such one-day tour has an early start, makes a stop for a typical breakfast en route, and includes visits to a coffee plantation, Poas National Park (the site of the world's widest volcanic crater), La Paz Waterfall Gardens following spectacular trails to the White Magic Waterfall, the largest butterfly observatory in the country and hummingbird gallery. After lunch, students enjoy a relaxing boat trip on the Sarapiquí river with its abundant wildlife and views of the different way of life enjoyed by the people who live along its banks. The return journey passes through the Braulio Carrillo National Park, one of the most important tropical rain forest reserves in the region. Many other tours can be arranged for one or two days with whatever focus appeals most to the students. Other favourites are whitewater rafting, visits to volcanoes, trips to the beach, and forest 'canopy' tours.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Student accommodation also offers opportunities for enjoying contact with the local culture. The school makes accommodation arrangements for students in a range of options: Homestay accommodation with families, self-catering in local hostals, and local hotels at various prices. As an important part of the cultural exchange, the recommended option is 'Homestay' with a local family that is used to hosting foreign students and is pleased to offer the experience of daily life as it is lived.

## **AIRPORT PICK-UP**

We offer a pick-up service to take students from the airport to their chosen accommodation.

\*Besides being a centre of Spanish teaching, IH Costa Rica also teaches English as a foreign language and is authorised by the University of Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) as an official examination centre and centre for teacher training.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Our website: [www.ihcostarica.com](http://www.ihcostarica.com) or contact us at [info@ihcostarica.com](mailto:info@ihcostarica.com)

**Apdo: 8184 -1000, San Jose, Costa Rica. Tel. + (506) 234 9054 COSTA RICA**

## **NATURALLY SPANISH IN COSTA RICA COSTA RICA**

Further information about the country and its attractions can be found at:

**[www.visitcostarica.com](http://www.visitcostarica.com)**