



Since 1972
Xperitas
Nonprofit Immersion Travel

Costa Rica

Exploration Packet

Hello!

We are so excited that you are embarking on this experience with Xperitas! The following are a few guidelines to follow for a successful time abroad.

Observe what locals do. When in doubt, ask! Be an active listener; use context and gestures to determine meaning. Focus on the positive.

Strive to **use the target language** to communicate with group members and native speakers.

Try using new words that you've learned so you are more likely to remember them. When possible, jot them down.

Expect to be very tired, both physically and mentally, at the end of each day. Go to bed at a decent time since you will likely wake up early every day. You need to be on time and in good shape.

Eat well at meals. Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Experience the sounds, smells, and tastes the country has to offer.

Be alert, keep track of your own belongings, be cautious when crossing streets, look out for other group members, and stay safe!

Keep this booklet with you so that you can write notes throughout the day as you observe and learn things.

¡Te deseamos un buen viaje!

First Impressions

What are your first impressions of the country?

What are your first impressions of foods and restaurants?

What are your first impressions of the architecture?



GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS

Capturing your thoughts during your trip will help you remember the people and things that made an impression on you. What are the most memorable interactions that you've had so far with people and the local culture?

Expresiones y Frases Comunes en Costa Rica

Vocabulary in the Spanish language can differ depending on which country or city you are in. The following is a list of vocabulary words and phrases that are commonly used in Costa Rica.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
Pura vida	Está Bien/OK/Thanks
Tuanis	Awesome/Cool
Buena nota	A cool or nice person, i.e. Carlos es buena nota.
Brete	Work
Vamos jalando	Let's go/leave
Por dicha/qué dicha	How fortunate, fortunately/Thank goodness, luckily
Pachanga	Party
Chunche	Thing
Mae	Dude/Friend
Jalarse una torta	To mess up
Qué pereza	What a drag (when someone doesn't want to carry out an activity, or referring to being lazy about it)
Pa'que	Diminutive of 'para que,' very common when asking, "Why?"
Tico/a	Costa Rican
¡Qué chiva!	How cool!
Bronca	Problem
Suave un toque	Hold on a second
Amargado	Unhappy/bitter

SPANISH	ENGLISH
Baboso/a	Silly
Montado/a	Somebody who takes advantage of others, or borrows things without returning them
Dar pelota	Pay attention, listen to
¿Al chile?	Really?
¿Qué es la vara?	What's up?/What's going on?
Pulperia	Small corner store
Soda	Small restaurant with typical local cuisine
Upe!	Hello, anyone home?
Chema	Shirt
Leva	Sweater
Tata	Father
Quepis	Hat
Monchar	To eat
Boca	Small appetizer
Mejenga	Pick-up soccer game
Plata/Harina/Dinero	Money
Zaguete	A street dog
Chinear	Spoil
Por aquello	Just in case

Financial Information

The currency of Costa Rican colón.



FINANCIAL VOCABULARY

Using money requires knowing some specific terms. Fill in the target language vocabulary next to the English translation.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	ATM/Cash machine
	Bank
	Bill/Paper money
	To buy (verb)
	Cash
	Cashier
	Change/coins
	Cheap
	Cost
	Credit card
	Discount
	Expensive

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Money
	To pay (verb)
	Percentage
	Price
	Purse
	Receipt
	Sale
	To sell (verb)
	Seller
	To spend (verb)
	Tax
	Wallet

SHOPPING VOCABULARY

Try your best to speak like a local while you're out and about! Write out and practice the target language phrase or question next to the English translation.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	How much is this?
	How much are these?
	What is the price?
	Do you have anything cheaper?
	If I buy several, can you lower the price?
	Can I pay with a credit card?
	Do you have change?
	I'm a student.
	I'll take it/this.
	Here's ____ in change.
	Do you sell __?
	Can I help you?
	I'm looking for ____
	It's too expensive.

Shopping Journal Reflections

What are some differences and similarities between shopping in the U.S. and in your destination? For example, are prices set or do you bargain? Is shopping done in a mall setting, on the street, or some other location? How did you pay? Jot down any specific shopping practices you noticed in Costa Rica.

Describe your shopping experiences in general or a particularly memorable experience. Were you able to find what you were looking for using the target language? Did any vendors speak English with you? Did you encounter any difficulties while trying to make purchases?

Exploring Costa Rica

VOCABULARY

Visiting the sites is another opportunity to expand your language skills and learn some important vocabulary. Fill in the target language vocabulary next to the English translation.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Admission/Ticket (adult, student)
	Entrance
	Exit
	Map
	Market
	Monument, statue
	Museum
	Park (state, national, etc.)
	Path, trail
	Prohibited
	Tour, tour guide
	Tourist
	When does it open?
	When is closing time?
	How much is a ticket?
	Is it okay to take a photo?
	Excuse me, where is ___?
	Souvenir
	Sunscreen

Travel Journal Reflections

Notice the street signs, billboards, or advertising that you see around town. Describe how they are similar and/or different from what you see at home.

What popular products or brands have you seen or used that you had never used or heard of before?

What facts or history have you learned about Costa Rica that surprised you?

Describe a site you visited that has made an impression on you. Why did that particular site have such an effect?

Travel Journal Reflections

Do you see modes of transportation that you don't commonly see back home? What are they?

Compare getting around in Costa Rica and in your hometown.

What forms of exercise did you see people engaging in, if any?

Which sports are popular in Costa Rica? How did you determine this? Did you participate in these sports? If so, what are your thoughts?

What sports did you see people watching or playing?

Was it in person or on TV?

Comidas Ticas

The following are some typical foods that you may have a chance to try while in Costa Rica:

Breakfast: *Gallo Pinto* is the most common dish, which consists of rice mixed with black beans and spices, served with *natilla* (sour cream), scrambled eggs and fried plantains. A cup of hot coffee or fresh fruit juice usually accompanies the meal.

Lunch: *Casados* are a “marriage” of beans and rice served with some sort of meat or fish, along with a salad, fried plantains, white cheese and corn tortilla.

Dinner: A typical main dish in Costa Rica is *arroz con pollo* (rice with chicken) which can be served with different vegetables from the area like *camote* (sweet potato), *chayote* (a squash-type vegetable) and *yuca* (cassava). Seafood is also common thanks to the country’s proximity to both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

Small dishes before or in between meals are called *bocas*, like black bean dip, *chimichurri* (tomatoes and onions in lime juice) served with tortilla chips, or *ceviche* (fish/shrimp with onion in lime juice).

- Another common *boca* is called, *chifrijo*, which is a combination of *chicharrones* (fried pork skins) in *chimichurri* sauce with tomatoes and onions, usually accompanied with chips or a tortilla. There are also other traditional sweet corn dishes like *pozol* (corn soup) and *chorreadas* (corn pancakes).

Typical **soups** in Costa Rica are also very popular, such as *olla de carne* which is a soup with beef, potatoes, carrots, *chayote*, plantains and *yuca*, and *sopa negra*, or black bean soup.

Costa Rican **desserts** include:

- *Arroz con leche* (rice with milk),
- *Ensalada de frutas*, which consists of various tropical fruits, like papaya, banana, maracuyá and many more.
- *Tres leches*, a cake bathed in evaporated, condensed and regular milk with a whipped cream top.

And don't forget to say, *¡buen provecho!*, before you dig in to the delicious Costa Rican cuisine!

FOOD VOCABULARY

Eat like a local! Fill in the target language vocabulary next to the English translation.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Appetizer
	Bakery
	Beef
	Beverage
	Bill/check
	Boiled
	Bottle
	Bowl
	Bread
	Breakfast
	Cafe
	Cake
	Chair
	Cheers!
	Cheese
	Chicken
	Closed
	Cocoa
	Coffee
	Coffee shop

FOOD VOCABULARY

(Continued)

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Cola
	Cold
	Cup/glass
	Daily special
	Delicious
	Dessert
	Dinner
	Eggs
	Fast food
	Fish
	Food
	Fork
	Fried
	Fruit
	Grilled
	Hot
	Ice
	Ice cream
	Juice

FOOD VOCABULARY

(Continued)

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Knife
	Lunch
	Main course
	Meat
	Menu
	Napkin
	Noodles
	Open
	Pasta
	Pepper
	Plate
	Please
	Pork
	Potato
	Reservation
	Restaurant
	Restroom
	Rice
	Salad

FOOD VOCABULARY

(Continued)

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Salt
	Sandwich
	Sauce
	Seafood
	Side dish
	Soda/pop
	Soup
	Sour
	Spicy
	Spoon
	Sugar
	Sweet
	Tasty
	Tea
	Thank you
	Tip/Service
	To go
	Turkey
	Vegetables
	Waitperson
	Water

DINING VOCABULARY

Eating involves more than the food! Write out and practice the target language phrase or question next to the English translation.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
	Please wait to be seated.
	Please have a seat.
	Make yourself at home/help yourself
	What would you like to drink/order?
	Anything else?
	Try this.
	Enjoy your meal!
	How did it taste/did it taste good?
	A table for __, please.
	Could I see the menu, please?
	What do you recommend?
	What is this dish?
	To order (verb)
	I have an allergy/I'm allergic to ____.
	I'm a vegetarian.
	I want/ I would like...
	I do not want...
	... With/without...
	Excuse me (for a waitperson's attention)
	Could you please bring___?
	I'm hungry/I'm not hungry.
	One more (serving), please.
	Could we have the bill/check, please?
	Do you accept credit cards?
	Is the tip/service included?
	May we pay separately?
	That was delicious.

Dining Observations

El desayuno 7-10 am | Typically a hearty meal

El almuerzo 12-2 pm | Typically a hearty meal

La cena 7-10 pm | Generally a lighter meal

What are some of the memorable foods you've eaten?

What did you eat?	Where?	Did you like it?

Food Journal Prompts

What are some differences and similarities between eating out in the U.S. and in this destination? For example, do you wait to be seated? How do you get the attention of the server?

Are there any important words you used in a restaurant setting that were not included in this packet or the food vocabulary you used to prepare for your trip? Make a list of these words and their definitions.

Describe your favorite local dish, preferably in the target language. What are the ingredients? What do you like about the dish?

The Family Stay Experience®

Exploring your family stay community in Costa Rica.

Family Stay Reflections

How would you describe your family stay community to your friends and family back home? For example, where is it located? Is it a rural, urban, or suburban area?

What do you see, smell, and hear?

How are your surroundings similar to where you're from? How are they different?

Capturing your thoughts during your trip will help you remember the people and things that made an impression on you. What are some of your favorite memories from the Family Stay Experience®?

Living With Your Host Family

Who are the members of your host family? What are their first and last names?

How do you address them? Formally? Informally?

If you have host siblings, how old are they? Are they in school?

What does your host family like to do in their free time?

What times do they eat their meals? What did you eat with them?

What chores did you help with in their home?

How is your host family similar and/or different from your own family?

What have you learned about the local culture and/or what vocabulary have you learned that you would share with another student who will be participating in this experience in the future?

How do you see electricity and/or water being used in your host family's home?

Does your host family heat or cool their home? If so, how?

How do they wash clothes, and how often do they seem to do so? Do they have a clothes dryer?

What similarities and/or differences have you observed between the ways your host family uses energy and how you use it at home?

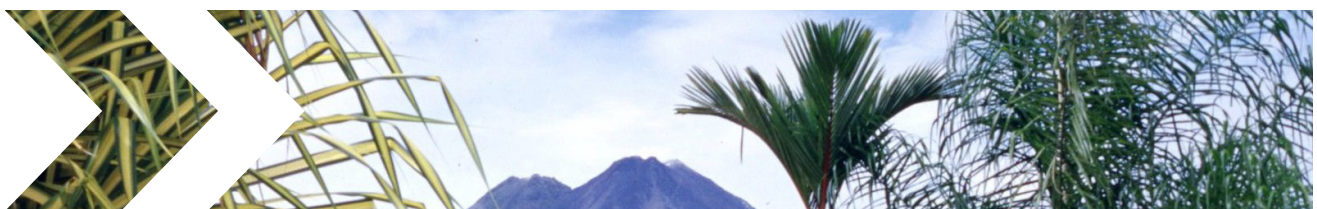
Observations & Cultural Perspectives

Question	Answer
What do you appreciate about your home after being away?	
What will you miss most about Costa Rica when you return home?	
Did you experience anyone making generalizations about the U.S. and/or U.S. Americans while you were abroad? If so, how did that make you feel and why?	
How has this experience changed your perspective on the culture and people of your destination?	

Muchas Gracias

Thank you for your commitment to language learning and for choosing Xperitas!

We wish you the best on your path to global citizenship!



End of Program Language Self-Assessment

At the end of your program, mark all the phrases below that you agree with.

- I can understand basic words on a menu.
- I am able to talk about how things taste to me, and my preferences.
- I know how to request the bill at a restaurant, and how to pay.
- I am able to ask what something is called.
- I can explain to a store clerk what I want, using circumlocution & gestures if needed.
- I am able to understand how much something costs and successfully make a purchase.
- I can learn and retain new vocabulary from my interactions with native speakers.
- When appropriate, I can bargain successfully.
- I can locate signs or ask for directions to the bathroom, a restaurant, a landmark, etc.
- I can act in a culturally appropriate manner towards local people.
- While out and about, I can understand what my teacher and/or the guide or bus driver is explaining to us.
- I can talk with my host family about what I did during the day and ask about their days.
- I'm able to talk about what we're eating or describe to someone what we ate.
- I can engage in conversation over dinner, and I am able to expand on my responses to my host family's questions.
- I am able to ask my host family questions related to the topics we are discussing.
- I am able to ask about places to visit and things to do.
- I can interact my host family's friends, telling them basic facts about myself and my school.
- When it comes to using my language skills, I have achieved the following personal goal(s):

Post-Travel Checklist

You've returned from your adventures abroad – now what? Below is a helpful post-travel checklist. We hope that you've returned with wonderful memories and success stories and we can't wait to hear all about your trip!

- ❑ Complete the Xperitas online survey - An invitation to evaluate your program will be emailed to you, your parents, and your teacher upon your return. Your feedback helps us improve our communication with our partners abroad and allows us to improve the overall experience for future participants.
- ❑ Share your photos with us! Enter the Xperitas Photo Contest [here](#) (or visit <https://xperitas.org/photo-contest>) and win prizes by emailing your photos to info@xperitas.org.
- ❑ Write a blog post! We love to hear from our community, so please consider sharing your experience with us in a blog post. [Click this link](#) (or visit <https://xperitas.org/resources/share-your-experience>) for helpful guidelines for writing a blog post then submit your story to info@xperitas.org.
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