

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



AMISTAD INSTITUTE COSTA RICA

COMBO PROGRAMS (COMBINATIONS)

INTRODUCTION

Vibrant Costa Rica has something for anyone interested in creating change and a spirit for adventure! While smaller than West Virginia, Costa Rica offers fascinating opportunities at every turn. Whatever your interests on helping others are—eco-tourism, social, children at risk, helping communities—you'll find a lot of activities and opportunities in this tropical and secure paradise to do so.

Amistad's Combo Programs offer amazing opportunities to experience one of the most exotic and undiscovered destinations in the world, all while volunteering in unique conservation and social projects. Amistad is glad to invite you to consider our Peace Corps alternative, which allows you to help children at risk, teach local people, and put your skills to work in grassroots-level development and conservation efforts. During your free time, explore volcanoes, beaches, raging rivers, and virgin forests. Observe the abundant wildlife or get to know the warm, hospitable people of Costa Rica. Even better, with this programs we plan everything for you!

Combination Programs in Costa Rica at a glance.

Start dates: 1st and 3rd Monday of every month.

Program length: Varies from one week up to one year.

Accommodations: Host families, guests' houses, hostels, B&B, etc. We always offer 3 meals per day and laundry service.

Language requirement: It depends on the program, but a minimum of Basic Spanish is always required.

PLEASE READ THE COMPLETE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY!

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353

Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



OUTLINES...

Eligibility:

- Must be at least 18 years old, or bring a written document from parents.
- Must be eligible to receive a tourist visa to Costa Rica.
- Must be flexible, in good health, and have a real desire to contribute.

Location: For the Spanish lessons and the Training in Cultural and Volunteer issues, the participants will stay in Santa Bárbara of Heredia. For the other portion of the program it depends on the selected area.

Insurance: Amistad Institute can arrange a Traveller Insurance when you arrive to Costa Rica, it will cover from the first day of your stay to the last. Prices are affordable; please ask about this prior to your arrival.

Pre-Departure Material: Amistad will send you a Pre-Departure document, and a placement sheet with important information about your program.

Support: Amistad has a phone number for questions and comments that works all the official time (Monday-Friday, 8-5), and two **emergency** phone numbers.

BUT YOU GET EVEN MORE!

- Pick up from the airport.
- Certificate for the Spanish lessons, the Cultural Training; and for your participation in the project.
- Local in country support.

FEES (2006)

Lenght	Program	Fee
4 weeks	Challengers	\$2,500
4 weeks	Costa Rica Escapes	\$1,200
4 weeks	Camp	\$1,500
2 weeks	Mini-Adventure	\$750
1 week	Seasonal Break	\$500
1 week-1 year	Spanish & Volunteer	Check the chart in the program description
Extra Spanish week		\$350 **
Extra Volunteer Week		\$200

** This fee only applies for Volunteers

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



WHAT TO SEND?

Please submit your application package.

- Application form
- 1 letter of reference with the name, phone number and email of the person that is recommending you. (It can be sent by email)
- Application fee- \$150 (will be deducted from the program fee).

Please remember this complete package of information has to be at the Institute prior to your arrival, or we cannot assure you a place. Also keep in mind we do not reimburse application fee.



WHAT IS NEXT?

After we receive your complete application package, a letter of acceptance and an invoice for the program fee will be sent to you.

Once you purchase your airline ticket and give us your arrival information, we will send you a participant package with your placement sheet (information about your hosting and project), and the Pre-Departure information sheet.

You must pay the rest of the fee, the first day of classes.

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



PROGRAMS DESCRIPTION

CHALLENGERS (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRED)



A new program in which you can show your skills, and abilities in several ways. You need to try to get the best Spanish grades, be the best doing adventure sports, survive at the JUNGLE without facilities, and participate in a volunteer project with success.

The first week you will participate in Spanish lessons from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 m.d. Including in the Fruits & Nuts, and the Latino Dancing lessons.

The second week you have to prove to be the best ones in several adventure sports as white water rafting, waterfall rappelling, kayaking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, and the sports rally.

The third week you are going to have to survive in the jungle, your group will be alone in the jungle, only with your strenghts, habilities and basic things to survive (food, drinkable water, tent, sleeping bags, flashlights, etc)

The next week is going to put under proof your volunteering skills, you will help other people to improve their lifestyle... building, repairing, cleaning, teaching, etc.

And the best part... you can win some prices!

- * \$ 1,000 each of the members of the team
- * One week in a nice beautiful hotel (all included)
- * Scholarship for Spanish lessons (according to our requirements)
- * Extra adventure activities (depending on the season)

SPECIAL CONDITION FOR THIS PROGRAM

In this program we only accept groups of six (3 men and 3 women), and the acceptance in the program depends on the existence of other group to compite with.

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences and the
simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



COSTA RICA ESCAPES (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRED)



Orientation in Heredia (7 days)

Your Costa Rica experience starts in the city of Heredia living with a host family. Begin your odyssey with our program orientation, including intensive Spanish classes and Latino culture lessons. **Activities:** Guest lectures, Spanish lessons, dancing lessons, food lessons, and other, previously agreed with participants, host families and Staff.

Cultural Immersion and Village Stay (7 days)

Depart to a previously chosen small beautiful village, and find a warm welcome there. Share your love and your talents with disadvantaged children in the area at a local school, while you practice your new language skills. Work will include teaching English, distributing lunches, cleaning the kitchen, playing games and singing songs with the children and various craft activities.

Community Service Work (7 days)

Move on to stay with a loving host family in a rural village for another week. Work in a community project and interact with the local people. Don't forget to practice your Spanish language skills with your host family and community members! **Activities:** Help renovate the village school, painting, repairing the school building, leveling the playground, fixing fences, and cleaning the grounds. Enrich your Costa Rica experience playing traditional games and soccer with local youths, and joining a Spanish theater play!

Explore Costa Rica (6 days)

Get ready for your Costa Rica Odyssey! In Costa Rica, there is something for every one – explore exotic locales boasting unsurpassed beauty, bask lazily on pristine beaches, journey through virgin rainforest, and everywhere be greeted warmly by hospitable people.

Activities:

Please ask for the activities available in this week, depending on the season.

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



CAMP (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRE)



A very special program designed for Middle and High School's students with a chaperon. It is a program designed to study Spanish, learn about Costa Rican culture and enjoy the natural environment of a National Park.

The first fifteen days, students (and chaperon) will be taking Spanish lessons. From Monday to Friday. From 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 m.d.

The rest of the day the group will have free time to share with each other or with their host families. We can also arrange activities for the group if it is requested.

The last fifteen days, Volunteer work in a National Park just two hours ago from San José, and 15 minutes far from the most visited beach (by young people) in Costa Rica, Jacó Beach.

At the National Park, volunteers will help making and repairing trails, little bridges and others. Also they will help cleaning the area, picking up garbage, giving tours to visitors, etc. Participants will live in the Rangers' House, and the rangers will share with them their food and experiences. And of course volunteers will be practicing a lot of Spanish.

With this Camp participants will learn Spanish, but also the importance of take care of the natural resources, and even more... they will learn that is not something somebody else is doing, but all of us can help with this important action.

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



MINI-ADVENTURE (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRED)



Sample Program outlines

Arrival (Day 1): Volunteers will arrive in Heredia. Introductions will be held with the host families and, depending on the day, with the Program Staff. Volunteers spend the rest of the day with their families.

Day 2: Orientation in our Heredia Campus. Orientation covers host family or anticipated living conditions, safety issues, climate expectations, volunteer projects, and related topics. Immediately following the orientation, our leaders will take you for a visit of the local community of Heredia.

Day 3- 10: Depending on your project, you will be working with children or helping the community in other aspects. Share your love, skill, and creativity with the local people and kids. Volunteers will have time to explore the surrounding areas. Heredia offers many beautiful features that represent the wonder of Costa Rica. Explore the nature, culture, and life of the community and its surroundings in your free time. Our local field staff will give you any assistance that you may need.

Discover Costa Rica (4 Days)

Get ready to explore Costa Rica! With this special program you are going to enjoy amazing adventures – explore exotic and beautiful places, walk calmly on pristine beaches, journey through the forest, and everywhere be greeted warmly by hospitable people.

Activities:

Please ask for the activities available in this week, depending on the season.

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



SEASONAL BREAKS (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRED)



Arrival (Day 1): Airport pick up and meeting the host families.

Day 2: (Monday)

8:00 a.m. Introducing volunteers to school students and staff.

9:00 a.m. Start working at school.

11:00 a.m. Help to serve the lunch. Play games with the children during the break.

12:00 a.m. Go to lunch.

1:00 p.m. Go back to school to start school's renovation.

Day 3: (Tuesday)

8:00 a.m. Go to work at school's renovation project.

12:00 m.d. Canopy tour.

Day 4: (Wednesday)

9:00 a.m. Start working at school.

11:00 a.m. Help to serve the lunch. Play games with the children during the break.

12:00 a.m. Go to lunch.

1:00 p.m. Go back to school to start school's renovation.

Day 5: (Thursday)

8:00 a.m. Go to work at school's renovation project.

12:00 m.d. Waterfalls' Rappelling tour.

Bring your cameras for this one as the photo opportunities are marvelous.

Day 6: (Friday)

9:00 a.m. Start working at school.

11:00 a.m. Help to serve the lunch. Play games with the children during the break.

12:00 a.m. Go to lunch.

1:00 p.m. Go back to school to start school's renovation.

6:00 p.m. Go out as a group to eat dinner and dance.

Day 8: (Saturday)

Good Bye Ceremony and Participation Diploma at school with students and families.

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353

Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



SPANISH and VOLUNTEER (SPANISH KNOWLEDGE IS NOT REQUIRED)



This is one of the most rewarding and exciting Amistad's Programs, with Spanish and Volunteer you are going to be able to combine Spanish lessons in the morning, and volunteering in a local project in the afternoons. So, you will be serving and learning at the same time.

With Spanish and Volunteer you are going to enjoy a deep, easy and nice review of the Spanish language during the morning (from 8:00 to 12:00), you are going to have 2 hours to go to your house to eat lunch, and at 2:00 you are going to be ready to start working in your volunteer placement, having with this, extra conversational time and a lot of practice.

You can choose from a large variety of projects located near our Campus and your host family (about 15 minutes by bus the farthest one), and you are going to be able to choose different areas (Teaching, Gender, Gold people, Cultural, and more)

This special program is suitable for all ages and applications, and it is designed to provide language skills and functional fluency, while also providing real life and fully practical experiences.

Because this is such a special program, it has its own chart of fees, so please take a look at these special prices. Only for people wanting to learn Spanish and also volunteer.

SPANISH-VOLUNTEER	
1 WEEK	\$360
2 WEEKS	\$720
3 WEEKS	\$900
4 WEEKS	\$1,000
EXTRA WEEK	\$250

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353

Heredia, Costa Rica

*Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!*



HOME STAY WITH COSTA RICAN FAMILIES



Participants will live with a Costa Rican family. Each student is matched with a carefully selected family. The student will have his/her own bed but may need to share the bedroom with other volunteers of the same gender depending on availability.

Bathrooms are typically shared with the family. Three meals are provided: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Home stays are conveniently located, close to downtown and the Institute, and in safe neighborhoods.

Our home stay program provides students from around the world with a unique opportunity to experience Costa Rican life first-hand. Life with a host family makes it possible for students to practice what they have learned in the Institute, discover Costa Rican culture, and make friendships that last a lifetime.

Amistad also offers volunteers the opportunity to extend the stay with the family after the Spanish program or when they come back from the volunteer projects. Students should check with the Institute to determine if the family is available. The student will then pay to the Institute for the extra nights with the family.

**www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica**

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



CULTURAL IMMERSION (SOME FEATURES OF THE CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAM ARE ALSO INCORPORATED INTO THE 2-WEEK SPANISH LANGUAGE AND TRAINING PROGRAM.)



IMMERSE YOURSELF IN COSTA RICAN LIFE BEFORE YOU START YOUR VOLUNTEER PROJECT.

It is wonderful if you are able to speak Spanish. However, knowledge of the Spanish language alone might not be enough to help you fully explore the beauty of Costa Rica, its nature, culture, lifestyles, and challenges. Therefore, Amistad has developed a unique, one-week cultural immersion program for volunteers who already speak Spanish fluently, and also for the ones that doesn't (we also teach this program in English).

The cultural immersion program does not focus on teaching the Spanish language. It offers you opportunities for cross-cultural learning via volunteer training, home stays with a Costa Rican family, village visits, Latino dancing and/or Spanish karaoke, food lessons, travel around local areas, and discussions on different issues—all conducted before you start your project. This program will help you develop your confidence and enrich your volunteer experience so that you can complete your program successfully while making a wonderful contribution to the local community. Return home with extraordinary memories of a lifetime.

This program also offers detailed information about your project, host family, local community, safety issues, cultural contrasts, climate, etc. Participants are encouraged to ask questions and initiate discussions. The training program generally runs for approximately 2 hours a day; in their free time, volunteers may explore a local bazaar, nearby villages, and local lifestyles.

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



FAQ



WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT CONCERNING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF MY PLACEMENT?

The living conditions of your placement will depend on where you are assigned. For example, if you are placed in eco-tourism, you may stay at a tourist lodge. There, you may share accommodations with other international volunteers. If you are placed in an environmental awareness project or another developmental project, you will live with a host family with simple facilities. Most placements will have electricity. Our host families are educated, well-respected, and experienced with international students. Few members of host families may speak English, but remember you have to practice your Spanish and try not to speak English.

WHAT SHOULD I REMEMBER TO BRING WHEN I LEAVE FOR COSTA RICA?

You may like to bring special items such as a pocket-sized English/Spanish dictionary, binoculars, camera and film, walking shoes, traveler's checks, cash and/or credit cards, swim suits. Also you can bring casual clothes for nightlife and fine dining, your favorite Costa Rican travel guide, sandals, sunglasses & hat, necessary medication, rain jacket, and seasonal clothes. It is best to provide your own towels as towels may not be provided or it would be below your standard of expectation. You may also be able to buy all those things in Costa Rica. It would be greatly appreciated if you bring a little present for your host family.

CAN I CHANGE MY VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT IF I BECOME DISSATISFIED?

Amistad will consider the request of a volunteer for a location change, but we only change the placement if the reasons for the request are unresolvable and necessary as per agreement with us. In addition, change of placement is only possible if there is an available spot in the other project. Remember that if you ask to be change, you are going to have to cover the expenses that you can incur in to do so.

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



CAN I SCHEDULE MY OWN VOLUNTEER SERVICE FOR THE DATES THAT INTEREST ME?

Spanish language classes begin every 1st and 3rd Monday of every month. Volunteers / students arriving early, need to pay for extra nights. We can also arrange your stay in hostels that will cost you around \$15 per day including breakfast. That is why we recommend that volunteers arrive one or two days before they start their classes (may not always be possible). Amistad suggests that volunteers adjust their flight schedule according to language program schedules. Interns and volunteers can stay and wait at a hostel or host family at their own expense if they arrive too soon before or too late after the program begins.

Lessons would not be replaced under any circumstance.

HOW WILL I GET TO HEADQUARTERS FROM THE AIRPORT?

There is nothing to worry about. One of our staff members or representative will be waiting for you at the Juan Santa Maria International Airport terminal in Alajuela. He or she will be holding a sign showing your name. Please do not forget to send your detailed flight itinerary so these arrangements can be made. It is important to be patient and look carefully for your name at the airport. It is often very crowded. Please understand we do not reimburse any expense related to the pick up if you miss the person that is waiting for you.

WHAT EXTRA MONEY SHOULD I BRING?

Carrying extra money depends on your personal spending habits. Amistad will manage your food and room from the first to the last day that you are enrolled in our program, so there will not be a need for more money. However, you may want some extra money for your personal expenses, and additional travel. In some cases, volunteers choose or need bus travel to get to their projects. An extra \$5 to \$10 per day will be useful for local travel, internet cafes, etc.

WILL I HAVE ACCESS TO MODERN COMMUNICATIONS, SUCH AS E-MAIL, TELEPHONE, OR THE POST OFFICE?

It all depends on your placement. Many placements are located in small villages. However, there is access to e-mail, telephone, and a Post Office in most places around the country. This information will all be given to you before your departure to Costa Rica.

CAN I COME WITH A FRIEND, OR CAN I BE PLACED NEAR OTHER VOLUNTEERS?

Amistad allows volunteers to come with a friend or even with a large group. Sometimes you may be placed in the same or nearby homes, lodges, and projects.

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353

Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences

and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



WHAT VACCINATIONS WILL I NEED FOR MY TRIP TO COSTA RICA?

This all depends on what vaccinations you already have and what country you are coming from. We suggest that you consult a travel doctor from your country before you arrive. Please visit www.cdc.gov for more information.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OBTAINING A VISA?

There is no special visa arrangement for volunteers in Costa Rica. All nationals who intend to enter Costa Rica will need a proper visitor visa. You will get a 30, 60, or 90 day visitor visa to the nearest consulate of Costa Rica. For more information please visit <http://www.costarica.com/Home/> or call nearest Costa Rican Embassy or consular. Our volunteers work on a tourist visa. We can arrange an extend of period when you are in the country.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET TO MY HOST SITE?

As we are located very near the airport, participants are to make their destination Juan Santa Maria International Airport. We will pick you up from the arrival lobby of the airport (remember to be patient and look carefully for a sign with your name). Volunteers deciding not to travel with us to their projects on Fridays will be provided with directions and will travel at their own expense. Program fees also do not cover travel to the project area.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO TRAVEL TO COSTA RICA?

There are three seasons of travel to Costa Rica during the year: High Season (related to the dry season, from December to April), Peak season (Christmas, New Years, and Easter), and the Green Season (also called the Low Season or the rainy season, from May to November). If you live in the Northern Climates, you will probably consider winter the best time to visit. However, persons from other areas of North America and Europe might find the rest of the year equally pleasant. They also might find it quite a bit more affordable. Other travellers prefer the country when there are fewer tourists - during the Green Season, but Costa Rica has a nice weather all year round, so you would no find extreme weather at any time of the year.

DO I NEED TO SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE PROGRAM?

Volunteers should have Spanish language skills. All volunteers interested in participating in one of our programs are encouraged to join the language and cultural classes. Our culture and language classes include an intensive introduction to the Spanish language, which you will learn quickly once you are immersed in the culture. Remember we are also a Spanish Institute, so all our Spanish Programs are complete and professional.

www.amistadinstitute.net

(506) 834.5353

Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



WHAT SHOULD I DO IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY IN COSTA RICA?

If you failed to meet our representative at the airport within 3 hours after your arrival, please proceed with the instructions that will be provided in advance in your placement details). We will reimburse part of your taxi and hotel bill (must not exceed \$20). Please bring your hotel and taxi bill to our office. We will give you a check or money order. If your flight changes suddenly, or if you experience some other emergency while you are working at your placement, please contact our office to the numbers that we provide in your placement sheet.

IS THERE AN ORIENTATION PROGRAM?

There will be an orientation that will include project slides explaining the local climate, local people, safety issues, and other issues concerning your stay in Costa Rica. The orientations will be given in our Campus in Santa Barbara, Heredia, before the start of the program.

WILL THE PROGRAM PROVIDE ANY SORT OF INSURANCE FOR THE VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED?

Amistad can arrange unexpensive insurance from the date of program starts to the end. Please contact us for more details.



www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica

Our programs provide imagination, great experiences
and the simple personal touches that everyone is looking for!



SAFETY



International travel presents risks for travelers, especially with the threat of international terrorism. We suggest that all volunteers consult their own governments before participating in our programs. These links provide travel information:

British Foreign Office Advice
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/>

American State Department Advice
http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html

Australian Government Advice
<http://www.dfat.gov.au/>

Canadian Government Advice
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/destinations/menu_e.htm

**AMISTAD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE RESULTING FROM YOUR
NEGLIGENCE IN FAILING TO TAKE APPROPRIATE TRAVEL ADVICE OFFERED
BY YOUR HOME COUNTRY.**

www.amistadinstitute.net
(506) 834.5353
Heredia, Costa Rica