



Oficina Central
Playa Tamarindo
C.C. Tiquicia Tropical 2do Piso (Frente
Hotel Zullymar)
Santa Cruz – Guanacaste
Costa Rica
Tel.: +11 506 2653-2673 & 8878 6106
E-Mail: info@coastalspanish.com
www.coastalspanish.com

Playa Tamarindo

Population: 6,000-10,000

Province: Guanacaste (North-Pacific side of Costa Rica)

Playa Tamarindo, on Costa Rica's west coast on the Nicoya Peninsula in Guanacaste, is one of the country's most spectacular beaches. The white sand and crystal clear waters attract nature lovers, surfers, giant turtles and sun seekers all year round. Sports of all kinds are available: kayaking, surfing, snorkeling, diving, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, canopy and mountain biking. The town also offers art galleries, handmade crafts from around the world and a wide variety of restaurants and cafes. Tamarindo's night life includes discotheques, live concerts, many bars, a casino and local "fiestas" that move from town to town but are never far away.

Playa Tamarindo as with other beach towns on the northern Pacific coast receive the least amount of rain in the country. Temperatures range between 72°F (22°C) and 92°F (34°C) during the whole year. Cool winds from northern latitudes can lower the temperature pleasantly along the coast. It's not a coincidence that the majority of Costa Rica's resort hotels are nestled along the shores of the Pacific northwest where sun is the name of the game. The winter or rainy season begins in May. A typical day at this time of the year has beautiful fresh mornings with sunshine and a blue sky. Showers are no more than one to two hours a day in the evening or at night and it's not unusual to have few days without rain. From mid July to the end of August we have a little summer called "El veranillo de San Juan". It stops to rain and it is summer again until the end of August. September brings the rain until the beginning of November.

As a beach location, Playa Tamarindo is a well known tourist destination. Students must understand that they must do their best in interacting with locals and avoiding tourist traps. This will maximize their immersion experience while still enjoying this paradise.

FOOD

In Tamarindo, you will find practically every type of cuisine represented and restaurants to satisfy the most and the least demanding tastes. "Tipico" food in Costa Rica is varied and distinct, simple and delicious.



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SOME COMMON MENU TERMS

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Al carbon..... | charcoal/broiled | En temporada | In season |
| Asado..... | broiled | Gaseosas..... | Soft drinks |
| Batidos..... | milkshakes | Coteleta..... | Cutlet |
| Coctel..... | cocktail | Empanizado..... | Breaded |

“Soda” is a small restaurant cafe where a limited menu provides inexpensive meals.

TIPPING IN RESTAURANTS

It is not a custom to tip taxi drivers, waiters / waitresses here. In a restaurant situation, there is 10% automatically added on your bill as a service charge. However, this should not stop you from showing your appreciation of a service received if you feel it deserves merit. In addition, there is a 13% tax levied by the government on all restaurant bills besides the 10%.

SUN

Being 8 to 10 degrees from the equator presents a much more serious risk for acquiring a flaming sunburn than further up the Northern Hemisphere. Take precautions and use a hat or effective sunscreen when exposed to the sun’s rays. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasized. The concern is greater when

you are at the beach or in the ocean since salt and water are ideal reflectors.

MEDICATION

If you are taking any medication, be sure to have a full supply with you, In case necessary also bring your prescription, and have a doctor’s note in case of emergency. Aspirin, acetaminophen, cold medicine, anti-itch ointment, and other commonly used pharmaceutical products are easily available at drug stores or supermarkets. In Tamarindo there are two drugstores that will be able to supply a large variety of medications. For any unforeseen emergencies, there is a private clinic with an ambulance in Villareal, In case of an emergency, please contact us or any of our administrative staff.



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IMMIGRATION AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

If you have a passport from the U.S.A., Canada, and most European Countries (see list below for specifics), you can obtain a 90-day or a 30-day visa from the airline issuing the ticket. This visa grants you tourist status for a period of one to three months. You must also have at least US\$ 500 and a departure ticket when entering the country. If you have a question, check with the nearest Costa Rican consulate.

There is an approximate 14.000 colones tax (\$28), payable at the airport when you leave the country. If you wish to stay longer than your 30- or 90-day visa, you will need to leave the country for 72 hours, in order to re-new your visa.

EXCHANGING MONEY

The currency in Costa Rica is called “colones” and is found in denominations of 1.00 of a colon coin to a 50,000 colones bill. The exchange rate tends to fluctuate slightly, therefore, you can look in the newspaper or call a bank for the latest exchange rate. Most of the banks in town are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

United States dollars are the preferred foreign currency. Banks will charge a 1% commission to exchange traveler’s checks, but not on exchanging cash. It is recommended to have most of your money in U.S.A., preferably in small denominations (US\$ 10, 20 or 50).

Visa, Mastercard, and American Express credit cards are accepted in many places in Tamarindo.

TELEPHONES AND INTERNATIONAL CALLS

Telephones in Costa Rica are listed under the name of the owner of the house (not necessarily the same as the occupant), which could make it impossible for your family in North America or Europe to obtain your phone number through information. Please inform your family of your address and phone number.

The cost of local calls in Costa Rica varies with the length of the call. All telephone calls in Costa Rica are toll calls and charges are assessed per second and per call. Your house mother will appreciate short informational chats rather than lengthy conversations. A personal arrangement between student and house mother regarding the use of the phone will prevent misunderstandings.



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International phone calls should only be collect or payable on a credit card (i.e AT&T, MCI or Sprint) if made from a home or the Institute (phone numbers for these services are listed at the end of the guide). If it is necessary or an emergency, you can make a regular international phone call from the Institute and pay the receptionist for it. For any of the above mentioned services, please be sure to ask any of the administrative staff for assistance.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Robbery and common thievery present problems. A degree of common sense along with a few tips can help you in preventing any unfortunate experience from happening.

- Try to avoid wearing expensive and/or flashy jewelry or watches; these present easy targets to be janked off.
- Don't carry your money/wallet in your back pocket; place it in your front pocket, a traveler's money pouch, or in a bag held securely to your front.
- When traveling independently, always go in groups of two or three.
- Try not to walk in parks or doubtful neighborhoods by yourself during the evening.
- Be aware of your perimeter while in crowds.
- Keep a record or copy of your identification, traveler's checks, credit card numbers, etc, in a safe place.
- Make sure that someone knows where you are at all times. If you are traveling on weekends, leave emergency phone numbers with your family and friends. If you are delayed on your return, call your host mother and let her know.
- If you have a very expensive piece of jewelry, watch, or camera, be prepared to watch them attentively.

These hints also apply, to a much lesser degree, outside of San José. If you are at the beach, leave your valuable belongings where you are staying or camouflage them well when you are swimming, etc.

The best way to avoid a negative experience is to act confident and aware, and use traveler's caution. Yet, it is important not to sacrifice friendliness or you won't come to know the kindness and humor of some very congenial people.

PASSPORT AND PHONE NUMBERS

By law, you must always carry your passport or tourist card. A photocopy of your passport (including the photograph and date of entry) can satisfy this requirement. The



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enormous quantity of foreigners entering Costa Rica make it necessary in order to preserve control. If you can't present this documentation, the immigration official may take you to a police station to obtain the information from there.

Emergency phone numbers, such as the school's and your host family's should always be on your person. A list of important phone numbers (such as C.S.I's, police, and airlines) is provided in the back part of your Student ID.

GREETINGS

In greeting a person, Latins tend to place more emphasis on physical contact than most North Americans or Europeans. When men are greeting men, they shake hands. When women are greeting men or other women, they apply a light kiss on one of the sides of the person's face, sometimes accompanied by a light embrace.

FOR WOMEN

Costa Rican men enjoy flirting with women, even accompanied ones. It usually consists of a whistle or an oral comment, such as "bellísima", "mi amor", "machita", or something to the effect. Rarely does it involve contact. It can be quite disturbing if you are not used to it and the best advice is to just ignore it, don't make eye contact, and keep on walking.

YOUR HOST HOME

Participants are encouraged to live with Costa Rican families. Coastal Spanish Institute takes great care in selecting typical Costa Rican families who will welcome you warmly, familiarize you with the Costa Rican way of life, and give you every opportunity to practice speaking the language. Most houses are within a 5 to 10-minute bus ride from the school. Nevertheless, the school offers the service of pick up every morning and the one drop off in the afternoon, back to host families. School residence, hotel, or hostel accommodations are also available upon request.

On the first day, a member of your host family will be responsible for bringing you to the meeting place of the pick up and drop off.

You will be given breakfast and dinner at your host home. The typical *tico*



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breakfast consists of eggs, “gallo pinto”, bread, fruits, tortillas and coffee. Cereals, peanut butter, and such items are very expensive and are not usually found on the table.

If you are going to be late for your evening meal., or not coming in at all, please remember to phone your family. In addition to being the courteous thing to do, it lets the homemaker know whether to prepare your meal and keep it warm, leave it in the refrigerator, or not make anything for you that evening.

Laundry service is also included only for those who are in the homestay program. It is essential that, upon your arrival, you find out what are the customs for doing laundry in the particular household and let your house mother know are the specifics about your clothing.

All homes have hot water in the showers; however 95% of these showers use what is know as a “thermo-heat”. You adjust the temperature of the water by how much water pressure you let out. The less water that comes out the hotter it gets and vice versa. There might be a switch on the wall that connects this system. Due to the tropical climate, showers are used instead of tubs.

Each family has been asked to supply you with a house key so you may come and go freely. However, it is appreciated if you inform your host family if you are going away for the weekend or coming home late. If you plan to have a visitor, be sure to left your house mother know and see if it is alright with her.

MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION ON YOUR HOST FAMILY

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM PAST STUDENTS

- Bring a suitable inexpensive gift from your country to your host family.
- Learn the family member’s names and favorite topics of conversation.
- Inquire about “house rules” for use of bath, kitchen and television.
- Learn and respect mealtime hours and special family observances.
- Read the family’s newspapers and magazine to share their interests.
- Keep your bedroom tidy and presentable, particularly before going out.
- Try all of the family’s food at least once. If you can’t handle any particular item, tactfully inform your host mother and suggest an alternative.
- Inquire about house key (s) and preferred “curfew” hours.
- Ask your Costa Rican family for suggestions about places to go and things to do. If you are invited to go out with members of your family, go at least once.



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- Offer to go “Dutch” if you are invited places with members of your Costa Rican family, especially to bars, restaurants, cinemas, sporting events, or places where discretionary income may be limited. Most Costa Ricans are generous with guests, even if it hurts their budget.
- Avoid asking direct questions of your family members about their political, religious, or philosophical views until you become better acquainted than you will be during the first weeks.

ON SPEAKING SPANISH

The following are some suggestions for improving your ability with the Spanish language:

- Speak Spanish as much as possible: at home, at the Institute, and with friends.
- Don't be shy about making mistakes. Most people are quite patient and helpful. In fact, most of them feel honored that you should want to learn their language.
- Keep a notebook of new words, when ever you hear a word you don't know, write it down. It then becomes more familiar. You might want to divide a notebook into categories, i.e. adjectives, nouns, prepositions, and prepositional phrases, etc.
- Review your grammar: verb tenses (especially the subjunctive), gender of nouns and accordance of articles prepositional phrases, etc.
- Use an all Spanish dictionary: you'll learn more in the long run. It will take longer at first, but your vocabulary will increase rapidly.
- Expose yourself to Spanish: listen to conversations and the radio, watch Costa Rican television, read newspapers and magazines. The greater the exposure, the faster you will learn.



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HOLIDAYS & CANCELLATION POLICIES

The Institute observes a number of national holiday during the school year and will be closed on those days. No refunds or substitutions are made for days missed due to this reason. Scheduled field trips and excursions will not be affected and always take place. Holidays are:

January 1: New Year's Day; April 11: Juan Santamaria, March 28 & March 29: Holy Thursday and Good Friday; May 1: Labor Day; July 25: Anexion Partido de Nicoya a Guanacaste, August 15: Mother's Day; September 15: Independence Day; October 12: Dia de las Culturas; December 25: Christmas Day.

General policies

- Full payment is expected in full the first day of class
- A deposit of a 25% cost of your program is required at the time of enrollment
- No refunds after program session begins.

Cancellation

- More than 30 days notice from session start date, deposit will be refunded less a \$50 cancellation fee.
- Less than 30 days notice from session start date, but more than 14 days notice, deposit will be refunded less a \$100 cancellation fee.
- Less than 14 days notice from session start date, no refund is made.
- All cancellation notices must be submitted in writing – or email is preferable due to the immediacy of delivery.

Early Departures

- Should an early departure be strictly necessary, a monetary credit (not a time credit) will be placed on file for one year. The amount of the monetary credit is calculated by subtracting the price paid less the cost of the number of weeks used. Note: school prices change yearly.