

COSTA RICA

HIGH SCHOOL IMMERSION

Participant Workbook



Important Contact Information

UNITED STATES

Common Ground International

PO Box 174

Lafayette, CO 80026

Tel: (303) 684-5557*

Fax: (303) 684-5558

info@commongroundinternational.com

Your name and Phone #

*This number also rings to the Common Ground Office in Costa Rica – your family is welcome to leave messages for you at this number. In case of an emergency, please try to reach us on our cell phones. Then you can call the office number (US) and leave a message for us to get back to you at our closest convenience.

COSTA RICA

Medical or safety emergency: 911

Program Leaders - Call / Text using WhatsApp

Leslie Foster (program coordinator): 1- 303 638 9270 Kristina Mickel - 1-843 270 7764

Kelly Damare - 1- 919 349 0995

Anna Sofia Foster- 1 - 720 636 0041

* The best way to connect is using the app Whatsapp with the above phone numbers.

Lapa Verde Language School

Address: Del Mcdonalds, 100m sur, Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica

Daniela Leon, General Manager (Spanish only): danilapaverde@gmail.com cell: 506-8326-9371

Homestay Family Members: _____

Homestay Phone Number: _____

Directions to Homestay: _____

Phone Numbers of students who live near me:

Participant Handbook - Spanish Immersion in Costa Rica!

This Handbook is designed to help you prepare for your experience, and to help you get the most out of it. The Handbook is yours to keep, and while some pages contain questions, we encourage you to use the blank pages to record your thoughts and observations.

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Emergency Contact Information

Costa Rica Embassy, Hospitals, Clinics, Pharmacies, etc.

Emergency number in CR: 911

Local coordinator name and number: Dani Leon 506-8326-9371

Name	Location	Phone	Notes
US Embassy in CR	WVRG+W84, C. 98, San José, Favorita Sur, Costa Rica	US Citizens with emergencies call 506-2519-2000.	https://cr.usembassy.gov/ Medical Practitioners List
Emergencies Police	Santo Domingo, Costa Rica: +506 2244-0114 Avenida 13 y Calle 2 Félix A Montero	911	
Fire	Santo Domingo, Costa Rica: +506 2244 0158 – Avenida 1 y Calle 1 Ignacio Bolaños		
Hospital Clínica Bíblica: Private Hospital San Jose, best hospital when in Santo Domingo & Central Valley	At: Avenida 1 & Central, Calles 14 & 16, downtown San José	2522 1000 2522 1030 (emergencies)	https://www.clinicabiblica.com/index.php/es/
Hospital Max Terán Valls Closest Hospital to Manuel Antonio, about 30 minutes	La Managua de Quepos, 200 south from the airport, Quepos.	Tel: (506) 2777-3221 (506) 2242-6680 Email: fguerrom@ccss.sa.cr	
Clínica Medicenter La Fortuna **All major injuries or accidents have to be transferred 50 minutes by car/ambulance to the public hospital in Ciudad Quesada.	150m oeste de Iglesia católica de La de, La Fortuna de San Carlos, Costa Rica	+506 2479 8990	

Pre-Program Action Steps

- For US citizens: Enroll in [STEP](#): Smart Travelers Enrollment Program
- For Canadians: [Canadian travel advisory system](#)
- [Overseas Advisory Council](#)
- Read and be familiar with country specific [CDC health recommendations](#)

Travel Insurance Policy

CGI purchases a travel insurance policy (through [iNext plan](#)) for each participant that includes such things as:

- Trip delay
- Travel medical coverage
- Medical evacuation
- Loss of baggage

Things to note:

- Your program includes basic travel medical insurance with trip interruption, delays, lost bags, etc. If you have any uncertainties about your upcoming adventure, it's a good idea to consider additional travel insurance coverage. If you're looking for a Cancel for Any Reason policy, we suggest you shop for it [here](#) and act quickly as it often has to be purchased within two weeks of your initial deposit.
- The Travel Medical Coverage is a reimbursement plan. This means that if you visit a clinic, hospital, pharmacy, etc. you will need to pay out of pocket for services, SAVE your receipts and submit them for reimbursement to iNext.
- You can view your policy description [HERE](#).
- You will receive an email from iNext one to two weeks before departure with your policy information.

Common Ground International Immersion Mission Statement

Common Ground International aims to provide its Spanish Immersion Program participants with training and experiences that will help them acquire the Spanish language and learn about the culture and country. The opportunities we provide will help participants develop their oral and intercultural communication skills, and genuinely experience the culture such that they may effectively communicate with native Spanish speakers in a variety of settings. We also believe that an immersion experience can be a life-changing opportunity that challenges comfort zones, preconceived ideas and stereotypes, breaks down barriers and can result in tremendous personal growth. Our mission is to help participants meet their language goals and cultural understanding as well as experience personal growth in an area of their life through a combination of the following:

- 1.) **Pre-departure preparation:** The objectives for this pre-departure preparation are:
 - To understand what an “immersion” experience entails
 - Learn an overview of the country: geography, time change, currency, food, climate
 - Learn about homestay families: expectations, standards of living, common cultural customs
 - Review Itinerary: day to day details as well as excursion details
 - Learn about the organizations that you will be working with
 - Review behavior contract and emergency contact information
 - Set your goals and expectations for the trip
- 2.) **Language and cultural immersion:** The objectives for this component are:
 - Learn and participate in intensive Spanish classes taught by native Spanish speakers
 - Live and INTERACT with a local Costa Rican Family
 - Begin to understand cultural similarities and differences
 - Communicate with Costa Ricans in a variety of settings
- 3.) **Service-Learning Projects:** The objectives for this component are:
 - Learn about the populations and the communities that you will be working with
 - Be involved in the planning and coordination of these outreach opportunities
 - Participate in meaningful and relevant service-learning projects in communities in Spanish
 - Engage with other Costa Rican adolescents from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds
- 4.) **Adventure travel:** The objectives for this component are:
 - To explore a variety of bio-diverse “hot spots” in Costa Rica with a local guide in Spanish
 - Learn about the wildlife, flora and fauna of these habitats in Spanish
 - Stay safe

What is an immersion program?

By definition, an immersion program is an experience designed to expose you fully to the host language and culture by having you live within it. The completeness of this exposure is aptly illustrated by the metaphor of submerging oneself in water; for better or worse, no part of you remains untouched by the new environment.

By having to complete everything from the most basic daily activities to more complex educational objectives within this context, you realize quickly that language and culture affect every aspect of our lives and determine many of our reference points of “normal” and “right.” Living and working within someone else’s reference points is at once exciting and disorienting, eye-opening and challenging.

Immersion is uncomfortable at times, and it is by allowing yourself to fully “be” in those difficult moments, as much as the enjoyable moments, that you can bring depth to your experience and learning. As you face personal challenges, it is useful to reflect on why a given situation is stressing you out or rubbing you the wrong way. What part of you is being offended or frustrated? Perhaps it’s your sense of what’s right, what’s logical, what’s safe, what’s important, what’s humane, what’s healthy, what’s funny or what’s fair.

The gift that cultural immersion gives participants is the chance to examine their own assumptions and begin to understand their own perspective by clashing with the parts of them that are so deeply ingrained that they’re not even aware of them. If you can begin to see that your own perspective, judgments, and assumptions are just as arbitrary and culturally bound as those of your hosts, you will take the first step in being able to interact with people who are different from you in a way that is respectful, objective and free of judgment. This is because, bit by bit, you will be less inclined to use your own cultural norms as an unconscious measuring stick of the “right” way to live, but instead see them as just one of an infinite number of ways to live life. This is the learning that we hope will take place,

What this program IS:

- An educational experience for you.
- First and foremost, a language / leadership program. It’s a chance to grow as a Spanish speaker by pushing yourself to think and speak in Spanish at all times and grow as a leader in various foreign contexts.
- A chance for you to move outside your comfort zone and understand your own perspective by observing how you react to the host country, culture and language.
- An opportunity for you to share your stories and culture.

What this program IS NOT:

- An English-speaking vacation in a Spanish speaking country.
- A charity mission, in which you will “save” the poor by offering short-term volunteer work in a vacuum.

Common Stages of Cultural Adjustment (aka Culture Shock)

Everyone deals with immersion in a new culture differently. However, there are four very common stages of cultural adjustment that many people experience (in their own time). You may experience a few or none of these stages during your time in Costa Rica, but it's helpful to be aware of them:

1. **The Honeymoon -- Initial euphoria and excitement.** In this stage, you feel able to handle anything; your experience may be characterized by:
 - Excitement with new sounds, sights, smells.
 - Intrigue with both similarities and differences between the host culture and your home culture; little differences between life at home and life in your host country (i.e. walking to school, having to go to four different stores to get what you need, etc.) seem charming and enjoyable.
 - Lots of interest in learning, very motivated and cooperative.
 - Eagerness to please, may smile and nod a lot to indicate understanding when really you don't.
2. **Culture Shock -- Irritation and hostility.** The novelty of the new culture has worn off. Your feelings in this stage may include:
 - A focus on the differences between your host culture and your home culture.
 - Stereotypes and prejudices surface; you have one frustrating interaction and blame the entire country and culture, rather than the individual.
 - Small differences or problems feel like major catastrophes, and what used to be charming is now just annoying. You become stressed and depressed; your sleep and appetite may be affected.
 - Homesickness and missing your family and friends in the U.S.
3. **Gradual Adjustment -- Finding humor and perspective.** In this stage, you decide to make the most of your experience. You may have these reactions:
 - Increased familiarity with (and acceptance of) the host culture, its logic and values.
 - Periodic lows, but more often highs, as adjustment gradually takes place.
 - You start to have a sense of humor about yourself and your mistakes; you recognize that you like some parts of the host culture better than your home culture.
 - A stage of deeper learning about life abroad and questioning of your previously held assumptions about the world.
4. **"Feeling at Home"-- Adaptation and Biculturalism.** You now appreciate certain aspects of foreign culture and critique others more objectively. Other reactions at this stage include:
 - You maintain allegiance to your own country, but also feel at home in the "foreign" country.
 - You're no longer negatively affected by differences between the host culture and the U.S.
 - You can move freely between your home culture and your new culture, living and working to your full potential in both.

The effects of culture shock and how to deal with them

Unmet expectations can trigger discomfort in any immersion program. The things that Common Ground participants often comment on are:

- The pace of Monday - Friday and how busy the program is.
- Bed isn't as comfortable as at home.
- Not sleeping well because of the bed and ambient noise.
- Weather is different than expected.
- Food and dietary norms are tough to adjust to.
- It's harder than expected to interact with the host family; not being able to express even simple ideas is isolating and frustrating.

Some of the physical and psychological expressions of cultural stress

- Exhaustion, fatigue or changes in your appetite.
- Major concern over small health problems.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Craving for things from home (food, amenities, etc.) and homesickness.
- Strong desire to interact only with Americans/foreigners.
- Fits of anger and frustration, or alternatively, depression alternating with elation.
- Superior attitude toward host nationals. You find yourself complaining about, and criticizing, everything.
- Feelings of rejection, isolation and loneliness.
- Feeling like a child.

A few strategies for coping with cultural stress:

- **Personal Supports:** Ways of Thinking and Feeling
 - Understand the stages of cultural adjustment.
 - Analyze your situations and reactions.
 - Identify what helps you manage stress.
 - Identify new ways of thinking positively.
 - Investigate real facts.
- **Physical Supports**
 - Eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest
 - Identify any weaknesses (e.g. alcohol abuse, binge eating) and make plans to manage them.

Struggling with the language and culture during immersion doesn't mean something is wrong; it's normal, and if you're not having a hard time at all then you're probably not letting yourself fully "be" in the local culture. In our experience, the best way to deal with these difficulties is to recognize them for what they are – an expected and important part of immersion - and take the most positive approach to either resolving or accepting each situation.

Living with a Host Family: A Guide for Immersion Participants

Staying with a host family is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in local culture, build meaningful relationships, and gain new perspectives. Learn practical tips, how host families are selected, and what to expect during your stay.

How Host Families Are Selected

- Host families are carefully chosen by our local partners based on their interest in cultural exchange, safety, and ability to provide a welcoming environment.
- Selection includes interviews, home visits, and background checks to ensure participants' well-being.
- Families are briefed on the goals of the immersion program and agree to support participants' learning and adjustment.

How You are Matched with Your Host Family

We carefully match participants with host families based on the following priorities:

- *Mobility & Health Needs*: We consider any health conditions or mobility requirements to ensure accessibility and appropriate support.
- *LGBTQ+ Inclusivity*: Participants who identify as LGBTQ+ are matched with families who are open and supportive.
- *Dietary Restrictions & Allergies*: All dietary needs and allergies are taken into account to ensure safe and comfortable meals.
- *Preferences (Children, Pets)*: Where possible we match preferences regarding children or pets in the home.
- *Proximity to School*: Once the above factors are considered, we assign participants to families closest to the school.

What to Expect from the Host Family Experience

Just like every family is different in your country of origin, so are the host families on your program. Each family has their own set of daily rhythms, household systems, values, beliefs and opinions. Be open to learning about your host family. Be curious; they will do things different from what you're used to, train your brain to refrain from judging, but instead ask "WHY". Why do they do things this way? Remember doing things different from you is not bad, it's just different and often there is a good reason. Be curious, investigate and try to figure out WHY!

- **Host Family Orientation**: Upon arrival, host families will:
 - Provide a house tour indicating how to adjust temperature for showers, laundry process, how to enter and exit the home securely, explain house rules, provide Wifi information.
 - Indicate any areas of the house that are off limits, etc..
 - Clarify breakfast and dinner meal time expectations.

- **Daily Life:** You'll participate in everyday routines, including meals, conversations, and family activities. Be open to new foods, customs, and schedules.
- **Communication:** Language barriers are common. Use patience, gestures, and translation tools. Don't hesitate to ask questions or clarify misunderstandings.
- **Respect & Flexibility:** Remember you are a guest. Ask what the house rules are and respect those and other cultural norms you notice. Adapt to differences in lifestyle and expectations.
- **Building Relationships:** Engage with your host family, share about yourself, and show appreciation. Small gestures—like helping with chores or sharing a meal—go a long way.
- **Understanding Local Perspectives:** Just like in your own country, people in the country you're visiting may have strong opinions shaped by their culture, history, and personal experiences. At times, your host family might share views that feel surprising or reflect cultural biases, especially when you talk about your volunteer work or social issues. These moments can be challenging, but they're also opportunities to better understand the complexities of another culture. Try to listen with curiosity and compassion, even when you don't agree.

Practical Tips for a Positive Stay: First Conversations and Creating Connections

Starting off on the right foot with your host family can set the tone for a positive and enriching immersion experience. Here are some practical tips and conversation starters to help you connect from day one:

- **Be Curious and Observant:** Notice how your host family does things and follow their lead. Ask politely about customs you don't understand.
- **Communicate Needs Early:** Be sure to include dietary restrictions, medical issues and/or any special accommodations needed on your registration paperwork. CGI will ensure your host family is advised and prepared to meet your needs.
- **Participate in Daily Life:** Your involvement shows respect and builds connection.: Join family activities and community events. Offer to help with meals, chores, or family activities. This not only helps you bond but also gives you more opportunities to practice Spanish in real-life situations.
- **Practice Your Spanish:** Don't hesitate to ask for help with Spanish. Most host families enjoy supporting guests as they learn. If you're unsure about a word or phrase, ask them to correct you or explain.
- **Ask Questions:** 1) Ask if and how to access hot water showers. Many times the showers work slightly differently - less water pressure often equals hotter water. But don't expect the same scalding shower and pressure you may be accustomed to. 2) Make sure you know where the bathroom trash can is located (usually) right next to the toilet. Toilet paper can NOT be flushed. 3) Locking and Unlocking doors could include multiple steps, holding your breath a certain way... ask for a demonstration and practice before it really counts!
- **Ask more questions to find common ground:** showing curiosity about your host family's life and culture is a great way to break the ice. Consider asking:
 - What sport is most popular here?
 - What is your favorite local food?
 - How many people are in your family?
 - Which musicians or music styles are popular?
 - What are the most important holidays or traditions?
 - Where did you grow up? What was it like?

- **Express Gratitude:** Thank your hosts regularly. A small gift from your home country can be a thoughtful gesture.
- **Exchange Contact Information:** Share your WhatsApp number or preferred messaging app to make communication easier during your stay.

Remember: Your host family is excited to share their culture with you. Approach each interaction with openness and respect, and you'll quickly feel at home.

Program Values and Expectations

- **Mutual Respect:** Approach your experience with humility and openness. Recognize you are an outsider and a guest in the community.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be attentive to local traditions and avoid imposing your own views or habits.
- **Learning Mindset:** Embrace challenges and discomfort as opportunities for growth. Reflect on your experiences and share insights with your group.
- **Team Support:** Stay connected with fellow participants and facilitators. Communicate any concerns promptly so we can support you.

If You Encounter Challenges...Tell us!!!

- **Address Issues Early:** If you feel uncomfortable, have a problem or are not sure if something is normal or not, talk to your trip leaders or if you feel comfortable, speak with your host family. Most issues can be resolved with open communication. You will also have an opportunity to complete a weekly check-in form where you can express your concerns, doubts, etc.
- **Seek Support:** CGI Trip leaders are available to help with cultural adjustment, conflicts, or emergencies.

Final Thoughts

Your host family experience is at the heart of the immersion journey. Approach it with openness, curiosity, and respect, and you'll build lasting connections and memories.

What to Expect in Your Spanish Classes

Please review the following information to help you prepare for your Spanish classes and get the most out of your experience.

Spanish Class Structure

- **15-20 Hours of Instruction**
Participate in 15-20 hours of small group Spanish language classes
- **Small Group Learning**
Classes are designed for small groups (3-8 participants) to ensure personalized attention and active participation.

- **Taught by Local, Trained, Native Spanish Speaking Teachers**

All classes are led by professional, local instructors who are trained in Spanish language acquisition and passionate about teaching Spanish. Many of your trip leaders are also language educators and here to support you with your Spanish learning questions.

Placement & Personalization

- **Placement by Language Ability**

You will be placed in a class according to your oral and receptive (listening and understanding) Spanish skills to ensure you are learning at the right level. We want you to be challenged yet poised for success. Trust the placement process.

- **Ongoing Assessment**

Our teachers will take time to get to know you and your classmates, observing your progress and adjusting lessons as needed to best support your learning. If your teacher feels that you will be more appropriately challenged in another class they will make a recommendation to the academic advisor.

- **Class Placement Adjustments**

If your class seems too hard or too easy on the first day- *paciencia!* please allow for an adjustment period of one full day. This gives both you and your teacher time to get to know each other, assess your current level through your communication skills, and make any necessary adjustments. If you still feel that you need a class change after the end of the first day, please speak directly with your trip leader. We want to ensure everyone is comfortable and appropriately challenged.

What to Expect on the First Day

We understand your eagerness to start learning and be placed in the right class from the beginning—that's our goal too. While initial placement is based on your online assessment, there may be differences between written and spoken skills. Please allow teachers some time on the first day to make any necessary adjustments.

1. **Introductions**

Meet your teacher and classmates.

2. **Getting to Know One Another**

Participate in activities designed to help everyone feel comfortable and connected.

3. **Informal Assessment**

Your teacher will conduct informal assessments to confirm class levels and make any necessary adjustments.

4. **Weekly Plan** On Mondays your teacher will give you a brief overview of the plan for the week so that you are familiar with the topics that will be covered throughout the week.

5. **End of Class on Monday:** Class teachers will meet with the CGI leadership team and the language school academic coordinator to suggest any necessary class changes. CGI Leadership will also be checking in with you Monday during coffee break and after class to see how you are feeling about your class placements.

6. **Class Materials:** On Tuesday, once all class adjustments are made, you will get your class materials and handbook. This is a great place to keep notes, homework assignments, etc..

Class Experience

The goal is to speak Spanish only in class. While some teachers may know a bit of English, they are instructed to use little or none. This is your chance to turn your Spanish head knowledge into spoken communication. Here are some things that you can expect in class:

- **Thematic Grammar and Vocabulary**
Each class will include a thematic introduction to grammar concepts and high-frequency vocabulary.
- **Practical Language Use**
You will have practical opportunities to use Spanish in class, with your host families, and in the community. The goal is to be able to immediately practice the Spanish you are learning in real-world applications with your host family and out and about in the community.
- **Focus on Oral and Receptive Proficiency**
The primary focus is on developing your speaking and listening skills for real-world communication.
- **Interactive and Hands-On**
Expect dynamic and engaging classes with conversation practice, games, role plays, and other interactive activities.
- **Nightly Homework**
Students can expect some nightly homework to reinforce classroom learning.
- **Daily Schedule**
Classes are held Monday through Friday, with a 20-minute coffee break each day to relax, socialize, and recharge.

Communication & Support

- **Open Communication**
Your feedback is important! If you have questions or concerns about your class, do not hesitate to reach out to your trip leaders or teachers. You will also have an opportunity to complete a weekly check-in form where you can express your concerns, doubts, etc.

We look forward to a fun and productive immersion experience together.

¡Vamos a aprender y disfrutar!

Traits of Successful International Students and Volunteers

1. **Flexibility:** Although embarking on a trip abroad with realistic and accurate expectations is necessary to ensure professional behavior, you must also expect the unexpected. You may have modified job duties depending on the needs of the organizations with which we're working, and itineraries may shift at the last minute due to local circumstances. The expectation for all of us is that we always remain engaged and attentive, and that we coolly adapt to changing circumstances and demands.
2. **Patience:** The pace of life and work in developing countries is often much slower than what Western volunteers are accustomed to for several reasons. Latin American societies tend to place less value on punctuality, are less project-oriented, and have more limited transit and communication infrastructure than do their Western counterparts. AS our work abroad has taught us program after program, in order to maximize effectiveness and maintain a positive attitude, you should focus on relationships with local community partners and the people that they serve instead of trying to force an agenda. It's best to let things develop at a natural pace.
3. **Openness:** Immersing yourself in a foreign culture is a rare and rewarding opportunity - take advantage of it by welcoming new perspectives on the world. You will be going into an environment where many things will not immediately make sense, so be careful not to jump to conclusions. Respect, tolerance and an open mind are essential to averting unprofessional behavior precipitated by culture shock and ethnocentrism.
"Volunteers should either have a really open worldview or have a willingness to have their worldview opened. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your prejudices. If you think that you do not have any, then you are pretty naïve."[2]
4. **Humility:** Traveling to a place with an unfamiliar language, new rules, and a foreign culture will give you the unique opportunity to discover just how little you know. You may often find yourself asking for assistance to complete basic tasks, such as navigating a city or purchasing food. Regardless of your accomplishments or status in your home country, you will be a novice overseas; this is a realization that can be difficult sometimes. Collins and Wendt suggest answering the following Life Experience Assessment questions to help you understand the knowledge and experience of the people you're working with abroad.
 - a. What knowledge and skills do the people from this community possess that I do not?
 - b. What life experiences do they have which are different from mine?
 - c. What are some of the obstacles they have had to overcome in their lives?
 - d. What challenges do they face daily that I do not?
 - e. What are some of their personal and professional strengths?
 - f. What can I learn from them?
5. **Enthusiasm and a positive attitude:** Students on Common Ground's immersion programs each face different circumstances and obstacles with their host families, Spanish learning and volunteer work. We have found that the difference between students who have largely positive versus negative experiences has little to do with the actual challenges they faced, but everything to do with their attitudes.

Phone Service in Latin America

How will you get coverage in Costa Rica? You have some options...

- You can keep your phone on airplane mode for the duration of your trip and just access messages, emails, etc. using WIFI. WIFI is available at your host family and at language school.
- You may purchase an international e-sim through e-sim companies such as Airalo. This is an economical solution to have data while you travel. This does not give you a local number, so you will not be able to make local calls, but you can make calls through WhatsApp.
- Buy a local, physical sim card (unlocked phones) through local providers such as Kolbi, Claro, Movistar
- Check your cell phone provider's international plans before you depart.

Here's how:

1. Before you leave the US:

- Call your service provider to check if your phone is unlocked for international SIM card use while traveling. Be sure to emphasize that you only need it unlocked for international use, not domestic use – this may put your provider at ease.
- Make sure that your phone can use a GSM network. CDMA and LTE networks are not common.
- If your provider won't unlock your phone, you can Google "cell phone unlock codes" and find ample services willing to help you unlock your phone.

2. Getting the right chip & activating your new line:

- In Costa Rica, you have options with several carriers: Kolbi, Claro & Movistar. We personally prefer Kolbi, but they all work about the same.
- You want to ask for a "*chip de nueva linea*" and mention "*pre-pago*" or pre-paid.
- Show the person in the shop the phone you will be using. Ask them if it will work fine for your phone: *¿Ese chip funciona bien para mi teléfono?*
- Make sure the shop attendant writes the number of your new line on the card, and save that card. It will also have your "PIN" number on it, which you will need to enter each time your phone dies or is shut off and back on. Memorize it or store it in a place you can easily access it if needed.
- If the attendant hasn't set up your chip yet, you can ask them for help: *¿Me ayuda insertar el chip y activar la línea?*

YOU DO NOT NEED TO WORRY ABOUT INCURRING ANY CHARGES WITH YOUR HOME SERVICE PROVIDER WHEN YOUR NEW CHIP IS IN YOUR PHONE.

3. Reloading your pre-paid line:

- You can buy more minutes and data at many supermarkets. You can either ask the cashier to charge your number directly or by purchasing a phone card.
 - In the case of the cashier reloading your card electronically, you need only to pay an amount greater than the equivalent of \$1, and it should be recharged as soon as s/he enters your phone number
- After any successful recharge, you will receive a text message with the amount you added to your line, and your line's total current amount.
- Most cards offer a way to check your balance through your phone. Every service is a little different, but it's either a text message sent to a number or calling a specific phone #.

Apps to download on your phone

Before you depart on your program and while you are on program make sure you have these apps downloaded on your phone AND you know how to access them and use them:

- **WhatsApp:** We use this app for our group chat, to communicate with program leaders and you can use this to communicate with your host family too!
- **Google Docs:** We use many different google docs while on program. Your volunteer project, program itinerary, flight pick-up information and other documents will be shared via google docs.
- **Google Maps or Waze:** are the two best maps to locate locations in Costa Rica. While Apple maps works, it is not as accurate as Google Maps or Waze. We will share your host family location with you via a google map point.

Dinero, Plata, Monedas, Efectivo, Pesos, Colones, Dólares...

- In Costa Rica the currency is called Colones. Approximate Exchange Rate: \$1 = 500 Colones in Costa Rica .
- Costa Rica is more of a cash-based economy, so it's good to always have some *colones* (CR) with you, and be familiar with the bills and coins.
- Also, it's nice to pay with the smallest bill or coin possible, since it might be difficult for some vendors to break larger bills and make change.
- Credit cards are accepted by most businesses, but you generally incur an additional charge. Many businesses now accept ApplePay.
- Avoid travelers' checks, Mastercard, and relying on US dollars in Costa Rica; they are a burden to exchange.
- The easiest option is to use local ATMs to get *colones* for spending money. Just make sure that you tell your bank and credit card companies when you'll be in Costa Rica so that they don't flag your account for identity theft or fraud and disable your card. Check the exchange rate here: <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

Orientation Notes: Keep these things in mind

Saludos, saludos, saludos!

Don't forget that taking time to greet people warmly is just basic good manners in Costa Rica. Whether you're passing a neighbor on the street, walking into a store, or coming home to your *familia tica*, it's very important to greet people when you first see them. (*Hola, Buenas. ¿Cómo está?* works nicely in any situation.) Don't forget to smile :), and with your *familia tica*, a kiss on the cheek (women to women, men to women) or a handshake (men to men) is always appropriate when saying hello and goodbye! Don't be shy!

Remember that you're a guest

Once you get settled in Costa Rica, some of the little differences of everyday life may become annoying. Remember that you're a guest here. Try to avoid comparing life in Costa Rica to life in the U.S. After all, you didn't travel all this way for things to be the same! Try to stay open to new experiences of all sorts, especially when you feel frustrated.

Your plans are going to change

Things work differently in Costa Rica than they do in the United States. While this is part of what gives Costa Rica its charm, it can be frustrating for North Americans who are used to detailed planning, strict schedules and efficient use of time. Life here is more laid back, and also subject to more changing factors. You will enjoy your time much more if you're able to be flexible and roll with the changes!

Usted vs. Tú (and Vos)

You may have learned that in Spanish *Tú* is used in informal situations, or among one's peers, friends and family, while *Usted* is reserved for formal situations and showing respect to someone of a higher age, rank, or position. In general, this is true, but in Costa Rica it's a bit different. Here, *Usted* is used almost exclusively – even among close friends, family members, and when talking to children. You may hear *Tú* slipped into conversation occasionally, but often it's reserved for moments of expressing strong affection (romantic or not). You may also hear *Vos* occasionally – it's not *Vosotros*, but another informal second person pronoun like *Tú*. It has its own set of verb conjugations, which are not crucial for you to learn. While you're in Costa Rica, best to stick with *Usted*.

Getting Directions

In Costa Rica, 1 block counts as 100 meters. So, if you ask someone for directions to the bank, they will likely indicate with their hands, and give an answer like "*sigue recto doscientos metros, coja a mano derecha ciento cincuenta metros y el banco está a mano izquierda.*" (Go straight two blocks, take a right and go a block and a half and the bank is on the left-hand side.)

Piropos

Females traveling in Costa Rica (or anywhere in Latin America) should be prepared to hear *piropos* when they are out in public. A *piropo* is a suggestive comment, generally made by a man to a woman in passing. These can range from flirtatious compliments to vulgar sexual remarks. Women may also hear catcalls and men making hissing noises at them on the street. While it may be hard to get used to this, it's

best not to respond just keep your eyes ahead, keep walking, and ignore the source of the comment. Generally, this behavior is harmless, but it is important to ignore it.

Dinero, Plata, Monedas, Efectivo, Pesos, Colones

Approximate Exchange Rate: \$1 = _____ Colones

Costa Rica has a very cash-based economy, so it's good to always have some *colones* with you and be familiar with the bills and coins. Also, it's nice to pay with the smallest bill or coin possible, since it might be difficult for some vendors to break larger bills and make change.

If you have a problem...

Living and studying in a new culture comes with a lot of unexpected challenges, which can be stressful and overwhelming. If something comes up during your time in Costa Rica that you can't handle alone, we expect you to discuss it with one of the Program Leaders. They are onsite to make sure you stay safe and have the best experience possible. Don't hesitate to talk to them about any kind of problem or concern you may have.

Agua Potable

It's fine to drink tap water in Costa Rica. If you have any doubts about the safety of the water in a certain area, just ask.

¿Agua caliente? Tal vez..

You may or may not have hot water in the shower at your homestay. You should ask your *mamá tica* to show you how the shower works. The shower heads in Costa Rica are different from those in the US, and if there is hot water available, you will need to learn how to properly turn it on.

Papel Higiénico = Toilet Paper

Most Costa Rican plumbing isn't designed to handle paper products of ANY kind. So, be sure to throw your toilet paper (and any feminine products) in the wastebasket near the toilet. If you don't see a wastebasket, ask your *mamá tica* if it's okay to flush the paper or not.

La Comida = Amor

In Latin culture, people show their love with food. Your *mamá tica* may serve you far more food than you can eat and seem concerned if you don't finish it. If this is the case, don't be afraid to say that you like the food but it's *mucho*, and you need *menos*. Also, be honest about the food! If something is served that you really like or dislike, say so! Your *familia tica* wants you to be happy – there will be no hard feelings if you graciously explain that you don't like certain foods.

El Cariño = Affection

Ticos, like most Latinos, are more physically affectionate with each other than North Americans tend to be. You may find your *familia tica* embracing you, sitting close, taking your hand, etc., while you still feel like you barely know them. If this makes you uncomfortable, don't be afraid to speak up and explain that in your culture it's different, and you need a little more space.

Tell your *familia* when you're coming and going

Your *familia tica* will worry about you, regardless of your age. Also, you should ask permission before inviting someone over to your house, and never bring a complete stranger home.

Costa Rican Menu Items

...what you might find at your local *soda*

Desayuno

- *Gallo Pinto* (“spotted rooster”) – A mix of rice and beans, usually flavored with bell peppers, onion, garlic, cilantro, and of course, Salsa Lizano
- *Empanada* – A fried half-moon turnover that contains a filling such as cheese, beans, or meat

Almuerzo/Cena

- *Casado...de pollo, de pescado, de chuleta, de carne en salsa, vegetariano, etc.* – The traditional lunch plate in which you just pick the meat, and it comes accompanied by rice, beans, some kind of salad, fried plantains, and picadillo
- *Arroz con...pollo, lomito, mariscos, etc.* – A plate of seasoned rice mixed with small bits of the meat of your choice, often including diced vegetables or beans as well
- *Olla de Carne* – Traditional beef and root vegetable soup
- *Sopa Negra* – Soup made from the *caldo* (broth) that black beans are cooked in, egg, and seasonings

Acompañamientos (side dishes)

- *Picadillo* – A mix of diced squash, potatoes, and sometimes ground beef, boiled and seasoned
- *Maduros* – Ripe plantains, usually sliced and browned in oil or baked in the skin
- *Ensalada verde* – A simple cabbage- or lettuce-based salad with tomato and onions
- *Ensalada rusa* – A cold salad of beets, hard-boiled-egg, mayonnaise and seasonings

Para Tomar




- *Refrescos/Naturales/Liquados/Batidos* – Natural fruit drinks, like smoothies, made by blending one kind of fruit with your choice of water or milk. Often sugar is added if the fruit is tart. Typical flavors: blackberry, pineapple, cas, papaya, strawberry, guanabana and passion fruit.




Postres


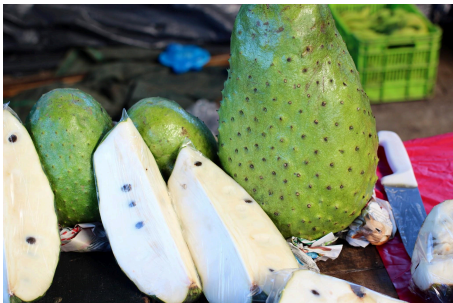

- *Tres leches* – White cake soaked in a sauce made from whole milk, condensed milk, and evaporated milk, and then iced with a with a fluffy sugar- and egg-based icing
- *Arroz con leche* – A sweet rice pudding, often flavored with cinnamon and raisins.




Costa Rican Fruits




Traveling to Costa Rica offers an exciting opportunity to explore a vibrant array of tropical fruits that are both delicious and unique. As you immerse yourself in the local culture, you'll encounter fruits like guanabana, cas, and dragon fruit, each with distinct flavors and textures. These fruits not only enhance your immersion experience but also provide a refreshing way to engage with the natural beauty of Costa Rica. Prepare to experience the delightful surprises that await in every market and roadside stand!

Uchuva (ground berry)	<p>Sometimes called ground berry, <i>uchuva</i> (ooh-choo-vah, though often pronounced oo-choo-ah, sans v) is a tart-but-sweet little berry that is absolutely perfect for snacking!</p>	
Guayaba (Guava)	<p>The original guava of Costa Rica fruits! Its bitter rind protects a gorgeous, light pink interior with hard seeds. In Spanish, this fruit is known as guayaba (gwie-yah-bah) and should not be confused with guaba (gwah-bah), which is an entirely different fruit!</p> <p>Anyway, guava is delicious and sweet and juicy and supple, and can be enjoyed either as a raw fruit, as a juice, or in a preservative/jelly.</p>	
Manga (Mango)	<p>We know, we know – mango?! How original. Except, in Costa Rica, it can be! The truth is that there are dozens (and dozens) of mango varieties here. And if you like mango, you'll have a blast exploring them all. Some are sweeter, others are juicier, and still others have unique flavor profiles. Be sure to buy manga (mahn-gah), though; in Costa Rica, mango refers to a wilder variety of fruit with flesh that's quite stringy.</p>	

<p>Maracuyá (Passion Fruit)</p>	<p>Just so you know, right off the bat, passion fruit is a textural experience. We're talking crunchy seeds, coated in pulpy (some would say gooey) flesh, sealed inside a membranous pouch... And it's delicious!</p> <p>We know – it doesn't sound like the most appetizing of Costa Rica fruits. But trust us, passion fruit is one of the good ones! You'll need to know that there are two main varieties: granadilla (grah-nah-dee-yah, or sweet passion fruit) and maracuyá (mahr-ah-coo-ya, or tart passion fruit). The former, you break open and eat with a spoon (most people don't eat the membranous pouch but it won't hurt you, either) and the latter, you blend with water and sugar into a natural beverage.</p>	
<p>Pejibaye (Peach Palm Fruit)</p>	<p>The fruit of a specific type of palm tree, these starchy fruits can be found year-round and almost everywhere, both raw and prepared. If you've never given them a try, we recommend purchasing prepared – they'll be the pretty, persimmon-like fruits sitting in water – so you know what you're after. Peel, cut in half around the center seed (the fruit will separate easily), and fill the inner seed holes with a mini-dollop of mayo.</p>	
<p>Mamón Chino (Rambutan)</p>	<p>Rambutan is one of those fruits that has a season – and that season is “often.” While you won't find them quite year-round, it's never long before they grace feria displays again. To eat them, pick fruits that are on the very red-to-speckled black side, break them open with a dull table knife or a fingernail, and suck the lychee-like fruit off the seed. (Don't eat the seed.)</p>	

<p>Cas (Sour Guava)</p>	<p>One of three “guavas” on our list, cas is the nearly undisputed king of refreshing fruit drinks. Tart, thick, and just a tad grainy (think: pears), this tropical pick is a Costa Rican favorite and almost a year-round offering on restaurant and smoothie menus.</p>	
<p>Guanabana (Soursop)</p>	<p>You'll hear them described in many ways but personally, we think that guanabana (gwah-nah-bah-nah) is about as close as you come to vanilla ice cream that grows on a tree. Yes, it's fruitier than vanilla ice cream, but it has a mellow, creamy thing going on that sends us to ice cream territory in our sensory memory. And it's delicious!</p> <p>While you can find and eat raw guanabana almost year-round in Costa Rica – simply cut it open and scoop out the flesh, but be careful of the large, black seeds! – it's infinitely more popular when served as a fresh fruit drink. Order it with a milk base (un natural de guanabana en leche, ¡por favor!) and you'll see what we mean about ice cream!</p>	
<p>Mamón (Spanish Lime)</p>	<p>If you see something that looks like enormous bunches of grapes at the feria, it's probably mamón (mah-mone). Similar to a lychee, these green-skinned Costa Rica fruits have a peeled-grape quality with a citrusy kick. To eat lychee, peel off the outer skin (which is thick) and suck the translucent yellow pulp off of the seed. That's all! They're delicious, though, and easy to knock back like popcorn.</p>	

<p>Anona (Cherimoya)</p>	<p>Cherimoya, a type of custard apple, can be pretty hard (but not impossible) to find at your local farm stand. If you happen upon them, though, be sure to try them! They're mellow, sweet, and creamy, very similar to a soursop.</p> <p>That said, anona (ah-noe-nah) is its own fruit. While soursop is most often blended into drinks, anona is more frequently eaten with a spoon and great gusto.</p>	
<p>Pitaya (Dragon Fruit)</p>	<p>You may have heard of, or even eaten dragon fruit before, but did you know that Costa Rica has its own special variety? Known as the red-fleshed Costa Rican dragon fruit (species name <i>Selenicereus costaricensis</i>), pitaya (pee-tie-ya) is a striking yet delicate cactus fruit a bit reminiscent of kiwi.</p>	
<p>Piña (Pineapple)</p>	<p>While pineapple is readily available in the United States the piña of Costa Rica is in a class above the rest. The Costa Rican pineapple comes in multiple varieties and sizes but all share a sweet commonality. Costa Rica even has a pink pineapple that is hard to find in Costa Rica but exported to other countries. Enjoy a slice, bowl or in a fresh juice smoothie.</p>	

<p>Jocote</p>	<p>While many of us think of Costa Rica fruits as a sweet treat, many Ticos actually prefer to eat jocotes when “green,” or unripe: Slice them open, squeeze out a touch of lemon/lime juice and salt, and enjoy! Or, choose ripe jocotes – they turn orange and get soft – and down as a sweet, sweet treat. Be careful, though, as ripe jocotes are easily damaged when packaged and taken home!</p>	
<p>Manzana de Agua (Water Apple)</p>	<p>Malay apple, or water apple, may be native to the other side of the world, but it has now taken over the Costa Rican countryside. The trees grow everywhere and you’ll often see telltale signs of a manzana de agua (mahn-sahn-ah day ah-gwah): a thick tree canopy, surrounded by a carpet of pink flower needles (like pine needles, but much more supple).</p> <p>Malay apples are best when crisp, but not mushy, so be sure to choose fruits that are deep pink/fuschia and have only a bit of give. Enjoy!</p>	
<p>Platano (Plantain)</p>	<p>Green or ripe, plantains can be savored throughout their various stages and are one of the staples in Costa Rica’s kitchens.</p> <p>Green plantains are mashed and fried to make the country’s delicious patacones or boiled up and added to many dishes such as frijoles and of course, part of the mouth-watering layered vigoron dish.</p>	

Tiquismos / Costarricensismos

(common Tico slang & Phrases)

a la par – next to	baboso, bestia – a stupid person
a medias – to share the cost or go fifty-fifty	batear – to guess
a pata – on foot	brete – work
agüevado – depressed or bored	buena nota – a nice or cool person or thing
¿al chile? – seriously?	buenas – Good morning, good afternoon
camote – crazy	campo – room or space
carajada – thing	chile - a joke
chiva, chuso – cool, great	choza, chante – house
chunche – thing, stuff	comerle a alguien – to talk bad about a person
¿Cómo amaneció? – Good morning! How do you feel this morning?	compa – friend
despabilado - to be on top of things	¡Diay! – an interjection, like um, well,
dolor de jupa – headache	estar de chicha – to be angry
estar de chicha – to be angry	estar en la luna – to daydream
estar hecho leña – to be in a bad state	estar legal – to be good, cool, great
fregar – to be broken	gato – a person with blue, green, light eyes
grosero – rude	¡Guacala! – Used to express disgust.
güila – kid	hablar paja – to talk nonsense
irsele a la onda – to forget	¡Jale! – let's go!
joder – to bother	jugar de vivo – to brag or act cool
¡Lárguese! – Beat it!	llegar a la hora del burro – to arrive late
macho/a - a person with light skin	mae/maje – buddy, dude, man...
media naranja – your perfect mate	mejenga – casual fútbol game
menudo – leftovers, loose coins/change	meter la pata – to put one's foot in it
miche, pleito – fistfight	¡Ni modo! – Cannot do anything about it
no darle la gana – to not want to	no entender ni papa – to not understand anything

no es vara – it's not a lie	Ojo! – Be careful!
palo – a tree	papi – father or sweetheart
pasar la brocha – to have an ulterior motive	pelota de gente – a large group of people
pepiado/a – to be head over heels in love	por dicha – luckily, fortunately
por si las moscas – if it happens (just in case)	pulpería – a small corner grocery store
pura vida – perfect, pure life	puros dieces – very well
¡Qué cáscara! – What nerve!	¡Qué rico! – How good (food, feeling, etc.)!
¡Qué tirada! o ¡Qué rollo! – What a mess!	rojo – a 1000 colón bill
ruliar – to sleep	sacarse el clavo – to get off one's chest
¡Salado! – Tough luck! / unlucky	se la juega – to know how to manage or handle something
ser chineado – to be spoiled	suave – wait
tallado – broke (no money)	tata – father
teja – A 100 colón coin	tener chispa – to be intelligent, on top of it
tuanis – very good, cool	¡Un tirito! o ¡Un toque! – Just a moment!
¡Upe! – Anybody home?	vacilar – to have fun
vacilón – Fun	vieras – you should have seen
vuelto – change (money) from a transaction	

La Cultura Latina

Now that you've spent some time in Ecuador, you may be noticing some of the differences between Ecuadorian culture and your home culture. Below is a list of some fundamental elements of culture found throughout Central and South America.

**Have you seen or experienced these elements of culture in Ecuador?
Give examples from your experience so far.**

Personalismo – a very strong emphasis on personal relationships/connections as a basis for building trust and working together in any context (sometimes described as “ritual politeness”). For example, the fact that a doctor would never simply ask a patient what is wrong without first greeting them warmly, inquiring about their general well-being, their family, recent events, etc.

Familismo – a very strong emphasis on the family unit, which takes priority over the individual and serves as his or her support system. For example, the fact that a young person might forego a professional opportunity in favor of staying close to family, or being available to care for grandparents, parents, nieces or nephews, etc.

Respeto – a high regard granted people because of their age or higher position in a hierarchy (granted, not *earned*, as it might be in the U.S.) or because of perceived admirable character traits, like integrity or courage. For example, children are unlikely to challenge parents' viewpoints or talk back to their grandparents

Un poco de introspección- Journal Prompts

First Impressions and Cultural Experiences

1. Describe your first 24 hours in Costa Rica. What sights, smells, sounds, and interactions with people stood out to you?
2. Draw and label your room at your host family's home. How does it compare to your room back home?
3. Reflect on a local dish you've tried. What were its flavors, ingredients, and how was it prepared? How does it compare to food from home?
4. Describe a cultural tradition or daily routine you've observed. What surprised you about it?

Language Learning and Communication

5. Write about a new Spanish word or phrase you learned this week. How did you use it in conversation?
6. Describe a challenging interaction you had while speaking Spanish. How did you overcome it?

Nature and Environment

7. Describe a natural landscape or wildlife encounter that left an impression on you. What did you see, hear, and feel?
8. Reflect on an outdoor activity you participated in. What did you learn about Costa Rica's ecosystem?

Personal Growth and Challenges

9. How has the concept of "challenge" played a role in your experience here? Reflect on a difficult experience and how you responded to it.
10. What changes have you noticed in yourself during this trip? Are you more adaptable, flexible, outgoing, or experiencing other shifts in behavior?
11. Identify three ways you've been pushed outside your comfort zone. How did it make you feel, and how might you continue challenging yourself at home?

Cultural Comparisons and Reflections

12. What aspects of Costa Rican culture or daily life have surprised you the most?
13. Compare the daily schedule in Costa Rica to your routine at home. What differences have you noticed, and how have you adjusted?
14. Reflect on your interactions with your host family. How has living with them changed your perspective on Costa Rican culture?

Final Thoughts and Future Impact

15. What will you miss most about Costa Rica? What aspects are you looking forward to leaving behind?
16. As you prepare to return home, how has this immersion experience impacted you? Consider language growth, personal development, and your worldview.
17. How do you plan to incorporate the lessons learned during this immersion into your life back home?

These prompts are designed to encourage deep reflection on various aspects of the immersion experience, from cultural observations to personal growth and language development.

Coming Home: Returnee Resources

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

~T.S. Eliot

Returning home after being immersed in another culture can be just as challenging as it was to go in the first place. People who have spent time abroad often return home **broadened** by their new perspective, and also confused by how to re-integrate themselves back into their “old” life and home country, which they may see through different eyes. It’s not unusual to be bored, **conflicted**, or even depressed upon returning home. You may be **frustrated** that your friends and family just don’t understand, or don’t want to hear about your experience. You may feel “**reverse homesickness**” as aspects of your host culture seem to be slipping away, and struggle with not having an outlet for your new skills. Coming home can be hard.

But.

While your return from Costa Rica marks the end of one (hopefully) great experience, it’s also the necessary **first step** towards what can be a fulfilling and **exciting** way of life. What you choose to do with your experience is up to you, but if you want, you can build on in many ways and continue to **internationalize** your life right here at home. You learned more than just Spanish in Costa Rica. You went outside your comfort zone and immersed yourself in another culture – something few U.S. citizens ever do. If you choose, you can use this as a jumping off point to become a truly global citizen, and enjoy the **challenges** and **rewards** of moving between languages and cultures. We hope that the next few pages will help you process your experience, and explore **possibilities** for the future.

Back Home – Thinking About Your Experience

Now that you've been back in the U.S. for a few weeks, you may be able to step back and begin to understand your experience more than you could while you were in the middle of it. These questions will help you understand your experience – and how it has affected you - more fully.

What has been the hardest part about coming back to the U.S.? Why do you think that is?

Look back at your expectations from before the trip - were they met?

Were you forced to adapt, grow or change in Costa Rica? How?

Look at the stages of cultural adjustment...Did you experience any of these stages? How?

Has this experience changed your perspective about yourself and your life? How?

Has this experience changed your perspective about your culture and your country? How?

How to take your experience to the next level

take the time to...**express yourself!**

- Write a story about your experience and submit it to local newspapers (with photos!).
- Write about your experience for the Common Ground blog: Contact Leslie for details.
- Share your photos and stories from abroad in these study abroad magazines (be sure to check out upcoming photo and writing contests!):

www.glimpse.org

www.transitionsabroad.com

www.abroadview.org

get involved in...**your community**

- Find volunteer opportunities in your area that allow you to speak Spanish and get involved with the Latino community, doing something you enjoy: www.volunteermatch.org
- Got an important message to share about your experience abroad? Prepare a presentation for your school, church, or other community organizations.
- Find local people interested in speaking Spanish and Latin culture: www.meetup.com

consider the options for...**your education**

- Keep studying Spanish in high school, and you'll be in a great position to study abroad in Latin America or Spain during college. A directory of study abroad programs: www.studyabroad.com
- Contact your local university's Spanish or Latin American Studies or International Studies Department to learn about what those majors entail, and how graduates use them.
- Ever thought of doing your entire undergraduate degree abroad? Don't forget to include foreign universities in your college search. Learn about colleges that offer degree programs in English: www.collegeabroad.com

learn about the possibilities for...**your career**

- Contact your local Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to see if they know of any primarily Hispanic companies that take interns.
- Learn about bilingual careers: <http://www.omniglot.com/language/careers.htm>
- Explore resources for international careers & opportunities: <http://www.intlcareers.org/>

make a difference in...**your world**

- One of the best things you can do as a global citizen is stay informed. Use resources like Google News to search news sources from all over the world: <http://news.google.com/nwshp>
- Consider hosting an exchange student through the American Field Service: www.afs.org
- Explore volunteer and other opportunities abroad: www.goabroad.com

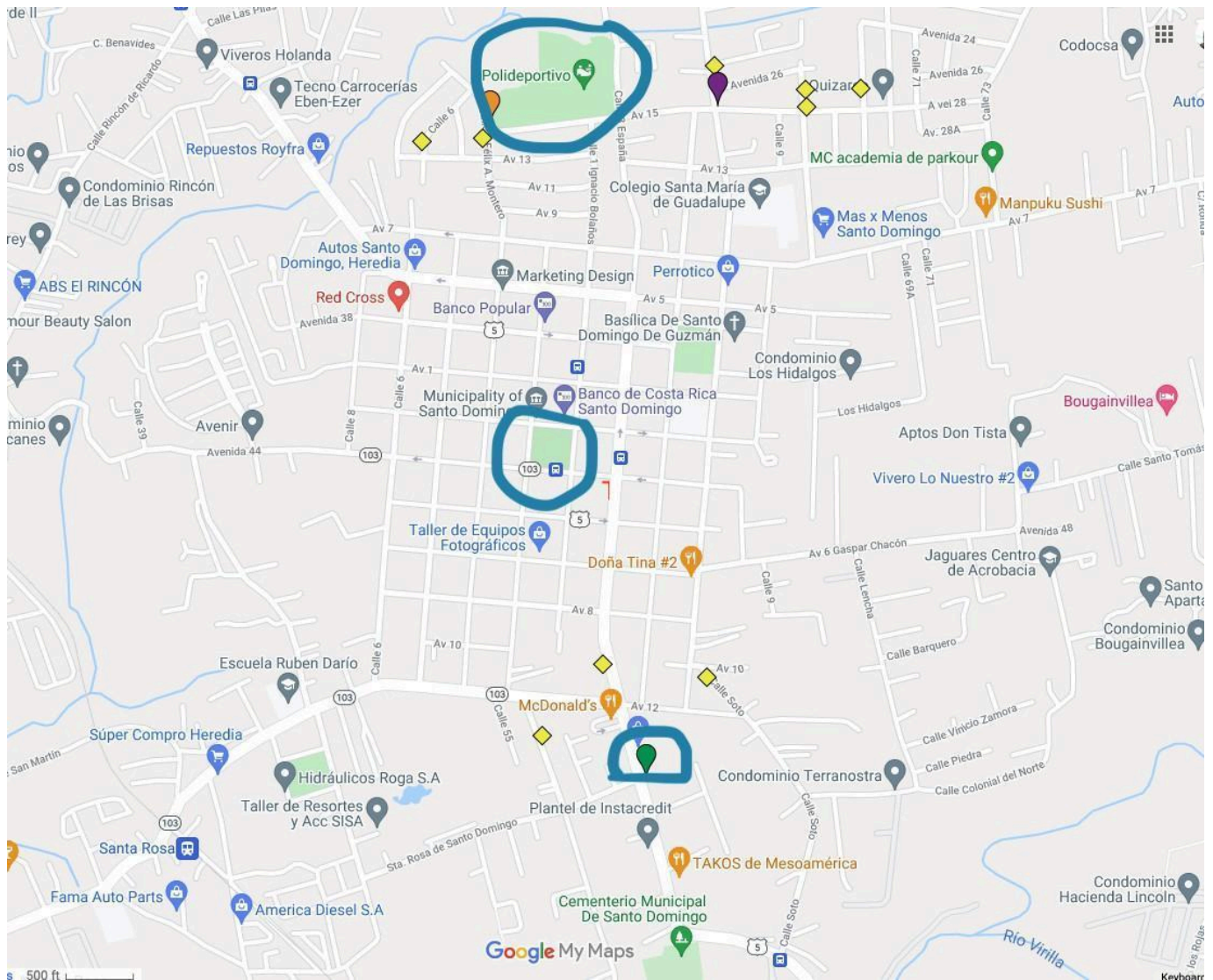
Keep in touch!

Now that you're back in the U.S., we hope you'll keep in touch with Common Ground – and each other! Don't forget that your program leaders' email addresses are in the front of this Handbook. Here's where else you can find us:

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [TikTok](#)

Common Ground Blog: <http://commongroundinternational.com/blog/>

Mapa de Santo Domingo, Heredia



- [1] <http://www.northwestern.edu/studyabroad/outbound-students/life-in-a-foreign-culture-tips-for-cultural-adjustment-while-abroad.html>
- [2] Mary Helen Richter, Volunteer, Mennonite Central Committee, Vietnam. Cited in Collinss and Wendt, 2003

103 Common Spanish Verbs

Verbos rojos = verbos irregulares

Acabar	to finish	Escuchar	to listen	Quedarse	to stay
Aceptar	to accept	Esperar	to wait for	Quejarse	to complain
Andar	to walk	Estar	to be	Querer (e-ie)	to want
Aprender	to learn	Estudiar	to study	Reparar	to fix, to repair
Ayudar	to help	Explicar	to explain	Romper	to break
Bailar	to dance	Guardar	to keep	Saber	to know
Beber	to drink	Gustar	to like	Sacar	to take out
Buscar	to look for	Haber	to have	Salir	to go out
Caber	to fit	Hablar	to speak	Seguir (e-i)	to follow
Caerse	to fall	Hacer	to make	Sentirse (e-ie)	to feel
Cambiar	to change	Herir (e-ie)	to injure	Ser	to be
Caminar	to walk	Ir	to go	Soñar (o-ue)	to dream
Cancelar	to cancel	Jugar (u-ue)	to play	Surgir	to arise
Cantar	to sing	Lavar	to wash	Tener (e-ie)	to have
Comer	to eat	Leer	to read	Terminar	to finish
Comprar	to buy	Limpiar	to clean	Tocar	to touch
Conducir	to drive	Llamar	to call	Tomar	to take
Conocer	to know	Llegar	to arrive	Toser	to cough
(ppl/place)		Llenar	to fill	Trabajar	to work
Contar (o-ue)	to count	Llevar	to carry, wear	Traer	to bring
Contestar	to answer	Llorar	to cry	Usar	to use
Correr	to run	Manejar	to drive	Valer	to be worth
Cortar	to cut	Mirar	to look	Vender	to sell
Creer	to believe	Mostrar(o-ue)	to show	Venir (e-ie)	to come
Dañar	to hurt, to harm	Necesitar	to need	Ver	to see
Dar	to give	Oír	to hear	Vestir (e-i)	to dress
Deber	to owe	Olvidar	to forget	Viajar	to travel
Decir (e-i)	to say	Pagar	to pay	Vivir	to live
Dejar	to leave	Pasar	to pass	Volar (o-ue)	to fly
Desear	to wish	Pedir (e-i)	to request	Volver (o-ue)	to return
Dibujar	to draw	Peinar	to comb		
Doler (o-ue)	to hurt	Pensar (e-ie)	to think		
Dormir (o-ue)	to sleep	Perder (e-ie)	to lose		
Empezar (e-ie)	to start	Poder (o-ue)	to be able to		
Emerger	to emerge	Poner	to put		
Encontrar (o-ue)	to find	Preguntar	to ask		
Enseñar	to teach	Prestar	to lend, loan		

6 Essential Spanish Verb Tenses

Notes about this Verb chart:

1. Subjects arranged in this order:

Yo	Nosotros
Tú	
Él, Ella, Usted	Ellos, Ellas, Ustedes

2. Patterned endings are underlined.

3. Example meaning of the 6 tenses in English. Substitute “do” with the verb you’re using:

Present	Preterite	Imperfect	Imperative	Present Perfect	Conditional
Do	Did	Used to do Was doing	Do it!	Have done	Would do (hypothetical, not past)

4. You will see examples of stem changers and reflexives, but this isn’t necessarily a reference tool for stem changes & reflexives.

Regular verbs: These are examples. Apply the patterned endings to all regular verbs.

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Examinar	examin <u>o</u>	examin <u>amos</u>	examin <u>é</u>	examin <u>amos</u>	examinab <u>a</u>	examinábam <u>os</u>			he examin <u>ado</u>	hemos examin <u>ado</u>	examinarí <u>a</u>	examinaríam <u>os</u>
to examine	examin <u>as</u>		examinast <u>e</u>		examinab <u>as</u>		examin <u>a</u> , no exam <u>ines</u>		has examin <u>ado</u>		examinarí <u>as</u>	
	examin <u>a</u>	examinan <u>an</u>	examinó <u>n</u>	examinaro <u>n</u>	examinab <u>a</u>	examinaban <u>an</u>	examin <u>e</u> , no exam <u>ine</u>		ha examin <u>ado</u>	han examin <u>ado</u>	examinarí <u>a</u>	examinarían <u>an</u>
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Respirar	respiro <u>o</u>	respiram <u>os</u>	respiré <u>s</u>	respiram <u>os</u>	respirab <u>a</u>	respirábam <u>os</u>			he respir <u>ado</u>	hemos respir <u>ado</u>	respirarí <u>a</u>	respiraríam <u>os</u>
to breathe	respir <u>as</u>		respirast <u>e</u>		respirab <u>as</u>		respir <u>a</u> , no resp <u>ires</u>		has respir <u>ado</u>		respirarí <u>as</u>	
	respir <u>a</u>	respiran <u>an</u>	respiró <u>n</u>	respiraron <u>an</u>	respirab <u>a</u>	respiraban <u>an</u>	respir <u>e</u> , no resp <u>ire</u>		ha respir <u>ado</u>	han respir <u>ado</u>	respirarí <u>a</u>	respirarían <u>an</u>
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Mover	muevo <u>o</u>	movem <u>os</u>	moví <u>o</u>	movim <u>os</u>	movía <u>a</u>	movíam <u>os</u>			he movid <u>o</u>	hemos movid <u>o</u>	moverí <u>a</u>	moveríam <u>os</u>

(o-ue)												
to move	<u>mueves</u>		<u>moviste</u>		<u>movías</u>		<u>mueve</u> , no <u>muevas</u>	<u>has movido</u>		<u>moverías</u>		
	<u>mueve</u>	<u>mueven</u>	<u>movió</u>	<u>movieron</u>	<u>movía</u>	<u>movían</u>	<u>mueva</u> , no <u>mueva</u>	<u>ha movido</u>	<u>han movido</u>	<u>movería</u>	<u>moverían</u>	

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Respond	<u>respondo</u>	<u>respondemos</u>	<u>respondí</u>	<u>respondimos</u>	<u>respondía</u>	<u>respondían</u>			<u>he respondido</u>	<u>hemos respondido</u>	<u>respondería</u>	<u>responderíamos</u>
to respond	<u>responde</u>		<u>respondiste</u>		<u>respondía</u>		<u>Responde</u> , no <u>respondas</u>		<u>has respondido</u>		<u>responderías</u>	
	<u>responde</u>	<u>responden</u>	<u>respondió</u>	<u>respondieron</u>	<u>respondía</u>	<u>respondían</u>	<u>responda</u> , no <u>responda</u>		<u>ha respondido</u>	<u>han respondido</u>	<u>respondería</u>	<u>responderían</u>

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Subir	<u>subo</u>	<u>subimos</u>	<u>subí</u>	<u>subimos</u>	<u>subía</u>	<u>subíamos</u>			<u>he subido</u>	<u>hemos subido</u>	<u>subiría</u>	<u>subiríamos</u>
to raise / go up	<u>subes</u>		<u>subiste</u>		<u>subías</u>		<u>sube</u> , no <u>subas</u>		<u>has subido</u>		<u>subirías</u>	
	<u>sube</u>	<u>suben</u>	<u>subió</u>	<u>subieron</u>	<u>subía</u>	<u>subían</u>	<u>suba</u> , no <u>suba</u>		<u>ha subido</u>	<u>han subido</u>	<u>subiría</u>	<u>subirían</u>

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Resistir	<u>resisto</u>	<u>resistimos</u>	<u>resistí</u>	<u>resistimos</u>	<u>resistía</u>	<u>resistíamos</u>			<u>he resistido</u>	<u>hemos resistido</u>	<u>resistiría</u>	<u>resistiríamos</u>
to resist	<u>resistes</u>		<u>resististe</u>		<u>resistías</u>		<u>resiste</u> , no <u>resistas</u>		<u>has resistido</u>		<u>resistirías</u>	
	<u>resiste</u>	<u>resisten</u>	<u>resistió</u>	<u>resistieron</u>	<u>resistía</u>	<u>resistían</u>	<u>resista</u> , no <u>resista</u>		<u>ha resistido</u>	<u>han resistido</u>	<u>resistiría</u>	<u>resistirían</u>

Irregular verbs: Irregularities highlighted in red:

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Abrir	abro	abrimos	abrí	abrimos	abría	abríamos			he abierto	hemos abierto	abriría	abriríamos
to open	abres		abriste		abrías		abre, no abras		has abierto		abrirías	
	abre	abren	abrió	abrieron	abría	abrían	abra, no abra		ha abierto	han abierto	abriría	abrirían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Andar	ando	andamos	anduve	anduvimos	andaba	andábamos			he andado	hemos andado	andaría	andaríamos
to walk	andas		anduviste		andabas		anda, no andes		has andado		andarías	
	andas	andan	anduvo	anduvieron	andaba	andaban	ande, no ande		ha andado	han andado	andaría	andarían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Caber	quepo	cabemos	cupe	cupimos	cabía	cabíamos			he cabido	hemos cabido	cabría	cabríamos
to fit	cabes		cupiste		cabías		cabe, no quepas		has cabido		cabrías	
	cabe	caben	cupo	cupieron	cabía	cabían	quepa, no quepa		ha cabido	han cabido	cabría	cabrían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Caerse	me caigo	nos caemos	me caí	nos caímos	me caía	nos caíamos			me he caído	nos hemos caído	me caería	nos caeríamos
to fall	te caes		te caíste		te caías		cáete, no te caigas		te has caído		te caerías	
	se cae	se caen	se cayó	se cayeron	se caía	se caían	caígase, no se caiga		se ha caído	se han caído	se caería	se caerían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Conocer	conozco	conocemos	conocí	conocimos	conocía	conocíamos			he conocido	hemos conocido	conocería	conoceríamos

to know people	conoces		conociste		conocías		conoce, no conozcas		has conocido		conocerías	
and places	conoce	conocen	conoció	conocerían	conocía	conocían	conozca, no conozca		ha conocido	han conocido	conocería	conocerían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Dar	doy	damos	di	dimos	daba	dábamos			he dado	hemos dado	daría	daríamos
to give	das		diste		dabas		da, no dés		has dado		darías	
	das	dan	dio	dieron	daba	daban	dé, no dé		ha dado	han dado	daría	darían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Decir (e-i)	digo	decimos	dije	dijimos	decía	decíamos			he dicho	hemos dicho	diría	diríamos
to say/tell	dices		dijiste		decías		di, no digas		has dicho		dirías	
	dice	dicen	dijo	dijeron	decía	decían	diga, no diga		ha dicho	han dicho	diría	dirían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Escribir	escribo	escribimos	escribí	escribimos	escribía	escribíamos			he escrito	hemos escrito	escribiría	escribiríamos
to write	escribes		escribiste		escribías		escribe, no escribas		has escrito		escribirías	
	escribe	escriben	escribió	escribieron	escribía	escribían	escriba, no escriba		ha escrito	han escrito	escribiría	escribirían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Estar	estoy	estamos	estuve	estuvimos	estaba	estábamos			he estado	hemos estado	estaría	estaríamos
to be	estás		estuviste		estabas		está, no estés		has estado		estarías	

	está	están	estuvo	estuvieron	estaba	estaban	esté, no esté	ha estado	han estado	estaría	estarían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative	Present Perfect		Conditional	
Hacer	hago	hacemos	hice	hicimos	hacía	hacíamos		he hecho	hemos hecho	haría	haríamos
to do/make	haces		hiciste		hacías		haz, no hagas	has hecho		harías	
	hace	hacen	hizo	hicieron	hacía	hacían	haga, no haga	ha hecho	han hecho	haría	harían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative	Present Perfect		Conditional	
Ir	voy	vamos	fui	fuimos	iba	íbamos		he ido	hemos ido	iría	iríamos
to go	vas		fuiste		ibas		ve, no vayas	has ido		irías	
	va	van	fue	fueron	iba	iban	vaya, no vaya	ha ido	han ido	iría	irían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative	Present Perfect		Conditional	
Morir (o-ue)	muero	morimos	morí	morimos	moría	moríamos		he muerto	hemos muerto	moriría	moriríamos
to die	mueres		moriste		morías		muere, no mueras	has muerto		morirías	
	muere	mueren	murió	murieron	moría	morían	muera, no muera	ha muerto	han muerto	moriría	morirían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative	Present Perfect		Conditional	
Oír	oigo	oímos	oí	oímos	oía	oíamos		he oído	hemos oído	oiría	oiríamos
to hear	oyes		oíste		oías		oye, no oigas	has oído		oirías	
	oye	oyen	oyó	oyeron	oía	oían	oiga, no oiga	ha oído	han oído	oiría	oirían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative	Present Perfect		Conditional	
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Poder (o-ue)	puedo	podemos	pude	podimos	podía	podíamos			he podido	hemos podido	podría	podríamos
to be able to	puedes		podiste		podías		puede, no puedas		has podido		podrías	
	puede	pueden	pudo	podieron	podía	podían	pueda, no pueda		ha podido	han podido	podría	podrían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Poner	pongo	ponemos	puse	pusimos	podía	podíamos			he puesto	hemos puesto	pondría	pondríamos
to put/place	pones		pusiste		podías		pon, no pongas		has puesto		pondrías	
	pone	ponen	puso	pusieron	podía	podían	ponga, no ponga		ha puesto	han puesto	pondría	pondrían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Querer (e-ie)	quiero	queremos	quise	quisimos	quería	queríamos			he querido	hemos querido	querría	querríamos
to want	quieres		quisiste		querías		quiere, no quieras		has querido		querrias	
	quiere	quieren	quiso	quisieron	quería	querían	quiera, no quiera		ha querido	han querido	querría	querrían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Resolver (o-ue)	resuelvo	resolvemos	resolví	resolvimos	resolvía	resolvíamos			he resuelto	hemos resuelto	resolveré	resolveríamos
to resolve	resuelves		resolviste		resolvías		resuelve, no resuevas		has resuelto		resolverías	
	resuelve	resuelven	resolvió	resolvieron	resolvía	resolvían	resuelva, no resuelva		ha resuelto	han resuelto	resolvería	resolverían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Romper	rompo	rompemos	rompí	rompimos	rompía	rompíamos			he roto	hemos roto	rompería	romperíamos

to break/tear	rompes		rompiste		rompías		rompe, no rompas		has roto		romperías	
	rompe	rompen	rompió	rompieron	rompía	rompían	rompa, no rompa		ha roto	han roto	rompería	romperían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Saber	sé	sabemos	supe	supimos	sabía	sabíamos			he sabido	hemos sabido	sabría	sabríamos
to know info	sabes		supiste		sabías		sabe, no sepas		has sabido		sabrías	
	sabe	saben	supo	supieron	sabía	sabían	sepa, no sepa		ha sabido	han sabido	sabría	sabrían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Salir	salgo	salimos	salí	salimos	salía	salíamos			he sabido	hemos sabido	saldría	saldríamos
to leave/go out	sales		saliste		salías		sal, no salgas		has sabido		saldrías	
	sale	salen	salió	salieron	salía	salían	salga, no salga		ha sabido	han sabido	saldría	saldrían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Ser	soy	somos	fui	fuimos	era	éramos			he sabido	hemos sabido	sería	seríamos
to be	eres		fuiste		eras		sé, no seas		has sabido		serías	
	es	son	fue	fuleron	era	eran	sea, no sea		ha sabido	han sabido	sería	serían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Tener (e-ie)	tengo	tenemos	tuve	tuvimos	tenía	teníamos			he tenido	hemos tenido	tendría	tendríamos
to have	tienes		tuviste		tenías		ten, no tengas		has tenido		tendrías	
	tiene	tienen	tuvo	tuvieron	tenía	tenían	tenga, no tenga		ha tenido	han tenido	tendría	tendrían

	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Traer	traigo	traemos	traje	trajimos	traía	traíamos			he traído	hemos traído	traería	traeríamos
to bring	traes		trajiste		traías		trae, no traigas		has traído		traerías	
	trae	traen	trajo	trajeron	traía	traían	traiga, no traiga		ha traído	han traído	traería	traerían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Venir (e-ie)	vengo	venimos	vine	vinimos	venía	veníamos			he venido	hemos venido	vendría	vendríamos
to come	vienes		viniste		venías		ven, no vengas		has venido		vendrías	
	viene	vienen	vino	vinieron	venía	venían	venga, no venga		ha venido	han venido	vendría	vendrían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Ver	veo	vemos	vi	vimos	veía	veíamos			he visto	hemos visto	vería	veríamos
to see	ves		viste		veías		ve, no veas		has visto		verías	
	ve	ven	vio	vieron	veía	veían	vea, no vea		ha visto	han visto	vería	verían
	Present		Preterite		Imperfect		Imperative		Present Perfect		Conditional	
Volver (o-ue)	vuelvo	volvemos	volví	volvimos	volvía	volvíamos			he vuelto	hemos vuelto	volvería	volveríamos
to return	vuelves		volviste		volvías		vuelve, no vuelvas		has vuelto		volverías	
	vuelve	vuelven	volvió	volvieron	volvía	volvían	vuelva, no vuelva		ha vuelto	han vuelto	volvería	volverían