



Travel Newsletter

Institute
for Study
Abroad
BUTLER UNIVERSITY

COSTA RICA

Semester 1 2012

January 12, 2012



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Important Reminders

Documents

Before you get on a plane, make sure you have:

- Your **passport**
- Your **acceptance letter from UNA with program dates.**

If you don't have your passport with you, immigration will turn you away at the airport. You may need to show your acceptance letter from UNA with program dates at the airline counter to confirm your return date.

Payments

Make sure you have paid your **program fee** and/or taken care of your financial aid. We can't place you in housing if your program fee isn't paid.

Travel notification form

Send us your **travel notification form** if you haven't already done so. We need to know when to expect you in case you don't arrive on time.

Check In and Boarding Passes

Allow plenty of time

You should plan to arrive at the airport three hours before your international flight. This will allow you enough time to check in, get a boarding pass, clear security and make it to your gate.

Check in!

You must check in for your flight. Otherwise, the airline can assign your seat to someone else.

Checking your baggage

At your domestic airport, find out if your domestic airline has an agreement with your international carrier to check baggage. If so, your domestic airline may be able to check your bags all the way through to San José, and you will also receive your international flight boarding pass at your domestic airport.

If your bags can't be checked through to your final destination, you'll have to do the following once you arrive at your international departure airport: Claim your luggage, check in and re-check your luggage with your international airline, and go through security again to re-enter the gate area.

Get to the gate in plenty of time so you don't miss your flight!



Travel Problems?

If you are delayed and might miss a flight, you'll need to make arrangements to get on the next available flight. Contact your airline (not travel agent!) to make alternate flight plans.

Any student with a change in travel plans must call IFSA-Butler at 800-858-0229 to let us know about the change in plans. We will then inform our Costa Rica office of any delays on your behalf. We monitor messages on flight days, so please leave a detailed message if you do not speak with someone directly.

Be sure to include your name, location, airline, new flight number(s), departure and arrival times, and the name, telephone number and room number of your hotel (if necessary).

Call IFSA-Butler on our general line at 800-858-0229 to ensure that the correct person gets the message. Please do not leave a message about travel problems on your program advisor's voicemail or email.

Baggage Allowances

Check with your domestic and international airlines for baggage allowances. If you try to check luggage that exceeds their limits, you may have to repack or pay an excess baggage fee. Do not overpack!

We do not recommend bringing items such as surfboards and bikes. If you feel you must bring your own, call both your international and domestic carrier for information about packing and excess baggage fees.

Do not lock your luggage. The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has asked travelers to keep suitcases unlocked so they can be easily searched. Putting locks on your luggage can result in damaged, lost or delayed bags.

Security Check

You will have to undergo numerous security checks. Do not joke about having weapons or explosives. Be patient and cooperative with all airport personnel.

You may be required to turn on electronic equipment or remove batteries from electronics. Be sure your electronics are fully charged, and include the power cord or battery in your carry-on.

Your Carry-On Bag

Be sure to pack:

- Passport (and at least one copy of it)*
- UNA acceptance letter*
- Plane tickets or e-ticket confirmations*
- Cash, ATM card, credit cards*
- This newsletter
- Insurance coverage details*
- List of contact names, phone and fax numbers, and email for:
 - Parents and relatives
 - Study abroad advisor at your home college
- Camera
- Medications and prescriptions*
- Spare glasses/contacts
- Toiletries (liquids, gels and/or aerosols must be 3.3 ounces or less and fit comfortably in one clear, re-sealable quart-sized plastic bag)
- Something to read/listen to
- Water (purchased after clearing security)
- Change of clothes in case your luggage is lost

** Keep these items and other valuables secure and with you at all times.*

Host Family Packing

You might want to pack a small gift for your host families. Past students have found that chocolates, professional sports goods, calendars and products from their home regions all make good gifts.

You will live with two different host families while in Costa Rica. During the orientation in Monteverde, you will live with one host family for a week. Upon arrival in Heredia, you will move in with your host family for the remainder of the semester.

Travel Tips

Below are some tips for staying comfortable during your long flight and once you land:

- Wear loose, layered, comfortable clothes.
- Try to sleep as much as possible on the plane.
- Drink as much water as possible on the plane.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, which will dehydrate you.



Customs Forms

As your plane descends into Costa Rica, your flight attendants will hand out a few forms with customs and agricultural declarations (*declaraciones*). They limit the amount of alcohol and cigarettes that you can bring into the country. Do not bring explosives or flammable fluids. Remove the price tags and wrappings from any new purchases; you don't want to pay customs charges on new items.

If you have a question about declaring goods, declare them. It's not a problem to declare something you don't have to. However, if you neglect to declare something customs considers dangerous to agriculture or against the law, they may fine, deport or imprison you.

Clearing Customs

When you go through customs, the officials will ask the purpose of your visit. Tell them that you are a student from Universidad Nacional and present your **passport** and **declaraciones** (from the airplane). They may also ask to see the acceptance letter from your host university, so have it with you also.

If you are bringing any prescription medications with you, bring your doctor's prescription and have it ready to show to the customs officers. Usually officials don't ask about medicines, but have the prescription ready just in case.

Passing through customs is usually a quick procedure, and our students have never had serious trouble getting through. We recommend you dress casually but conservatively, blend in with the crowd and be as cooperative as possible.

If the official asks for your address, give him or her the address of our program office:

c/o Teresita Camacho Víquez
Programa IFSA-Butler
Universidad Nacional
Centro Comercial Plaza Heredia
Junto a la biblioteca Tierra y Mar
Heredia, Costa Rica

Lost Luggage

If your luggage doesn't come out of the carousel, see the airport officials to file a lost luggage claim **before you leave the customs area**.

If your luggage is scheduled to arrive before noon the next day, give the address of the orientation hotel (above).

If your luggage is scheduled to arrive after noon the next day, give this address:

c/o Teresita Camacho Víquez
Programa IFSA-Butler
Universidad Nacional
Instituto Monteverde
Monteverde, Puntarenas

Please note the airline may charge approximately \$100 to deliver your luggage to Monteverde.

Arrival Information

All students must arrive at the Hotel Bougainvillea on your program start date (see your program calendar).

Hotel Bougainvillea
Apartado 11-3100
Santo Domingo

Check-in begins after noon. You will share a room with two other students chosen at random (two double beds per room). All students will need to pick up an information sheet at the hotel reception desk.

Tell the hotel staff member, "Estoy con el grupo de la UNA." Orientation starts with a welcome breakfast at the hotel at 7 a.m. the following morning.

You are responsible for making your own way to the hotel; IFSA-Butler staff cannot meet you at the airport.

Traveling to Orientation

From Juan Santamaría Airport, Alajuela (SJO - main international airport for anyone who flies to San José): Take a taxi from the airport to Hotel Bougainvillea. The taxi company name is Taxis Unidos del Aeropuerto Juan Santamaría, and the taxis are red. The drive will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Tell the driver, “Necesito ir al Hotel Bougainvillea en San Luis de Santo Domingo.”

The cost should be around US\$22 (11500 colones). If the driver helps with your bags, you should tip him US\$1–\$2 per bag. You can contact Taxis Unidos at 2222-6865.

If You Arrive Early

If you arrive before the program start date, you’ll need to make hotel or hostel arrangements. Check your *Lonely Planet* or *Rough Guide* travel guide for information about hotels and hostels.

In Heredia, we recommend the orientation hotel, Hotel Bougainvillea:

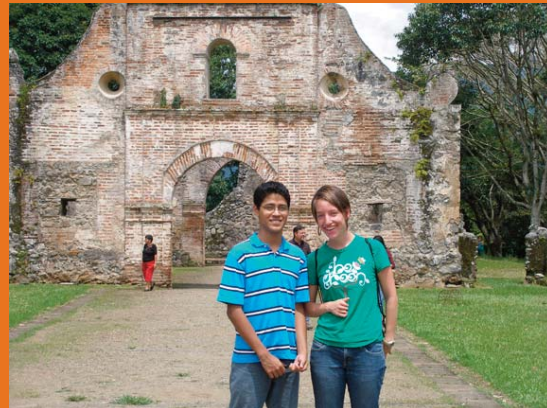
Apartado 11-3100
Santo Domingo
Toll free from U.S. and Canada: 1-866-880-5441
Phone from U.S.: 011-506-2244-1414
Fax from U.S.: 011-506-2244-1313
Email: info@hb.co.cr
Website: www.hb.co.c

Currency

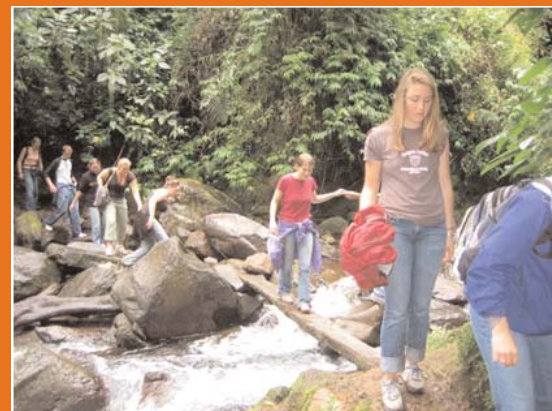
You can exchange currency at the airport. If you arrive late at night or on a weekend, you should definitely exchange a small amount of your currency at the airport. Banks give a better rate of exchange, but they are not open on weekends or holidays. You can also exchange money at the orientation hotel for a fairly reasonable rate. See *Preparing to Study Abroad Costa Rica* for more information about exchanging money.

Updated Calendar

We’ve included an updated program calendar in this mailing. Please check to see if any dates have changed. Remember all exam dates are provisional; you should verify exam dates after arriving at your host university before confirming your plane ticket home.

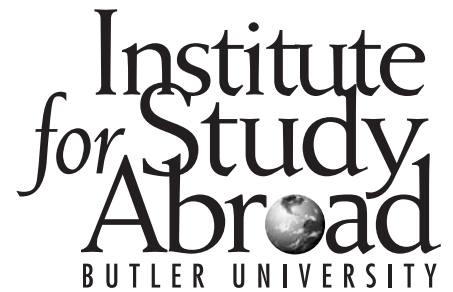


Questions? Call us at 800-858-0229 or visit us online at www.ifsa-butler.org.



Program Calendar

Costa Rica Semester 1 2012



	Heredia Intermediate	Universidad Nacional
Costa Rica Arrival*	January 22	January 22
Program Starts	January 23	January 23
Move into Housing	January 23	January 23
IFSA-Butler Orientation and Intensive Spanish Classes in Monteverde	January 23-29	January 23-29
Return to Heredia	January 29	January 29
Orientation in Heredia	January 30-February 3	January 30-February 3
UNA Registration	January 30	January 30
Semester 1 Classes Begin	February 6	February 6
Semester 1 Classes End	June 16	June 16
Final Exams	June 11-15	June 11-15
Last Day of Paid Housing	June 16	June 16
Program Ends**	June 17	June 17

* All students must arrive in San José on this date.

** All students should book their return flight on this date. The flight should leave from San José (SJO).

These dates are correct as of November 1, 2011, but must be regarded as provisional, given the mutability of Costa Rican university calendars.

Upon arrival at the overseas host institution, students should check the program end dates for changes before confirming return travel plans. End dates vary from department to department, and students must complete all course obligations prior to departure. In addition, students should not make plans to travel on the final day of exams since there may be exams **on** that day.

Program housing is available only until the date listed as "Last Day of Paid Housing" on the calendar.

Exams must be taken where and when scheduled. Under no circumstances may students request that an exam time be changed. In Costa Rica, exams are taken under formal examination conditions, and changes cannot be made for individuals.