SPANISH IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

JUNE 26-JULY 26, 2020
SANTA ANA, COSTA RICA
SJ01
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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE
A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. Box 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2420

PHONE 850.644.3272
1.800.374.8581
FAX 850.644.8817
850.645.4659
EMAIL IP-Info@fsu.edu
WEBSITE international.fsu.edu

HOURS 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. EST, Monday - Friday

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergencies/Police/Main 911
Fire Department 118
Ambulance 128
Police (in the city) 117
Police (outside of the city) 127

U.S. EMBASSY (San José)
Calle 98 Via 104, Pavas
San José, Costa Rica

PHONE
In Country (506) 2519-2000
From U.S. 011-506-2519-2000

EMAIL consularsanjose@state.gov
WEBSITE https://cr.usembassy.gov/

INTERNATIONAL CALLS
Making international calls from the U.S. to Costa Rica: First
dial “011" (for international call), followed by “506" (the
country code), then the specific area code (dropping the first
zero) and location number.

Time Differences: CET - During the summer, Costa Rica is
one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

COSTA RICA OFFICE
Centro Lingüístico Conversa
Santa Ana, Costa Rica

PHONE 011-506-2203-2071 OR 2072
TOLL FREE PHONE 1-888-669-1664
WEBSITE http://www.conversa.com/

PROGRAM LEADER
Dr. Jose Gomariz
850.7284396 (office phone)
jgomariz@fsu.edu

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergencies/Police/Main 911
Fire Department 118
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jgomariz@fsu.edu
ACADEMIC MATTERS
This program is first and foremost an academic one, so you should be prepared to invest as much time, effort and thought into your coursework as you do at your home campus. Since classes are small, you will have more interaction with your fellow students and with faculty than you have on main campus. There will be a greater emphasis on participation in class discussions. This means you must be prepared to maintain a high level of performance by being an active and committed participant in your classes.

FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD
FSU students are encouraged to get involved with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society and the Global Citizenship Certificate program. These two resources provide special recognition as global-ready graduates.

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society program facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of Leadership, Internship, Service, International, and Research. A student who has met the criteria in three of the five areas is eligible for consideration. All study abroad programs organized through the International Programs Office qualify for the international experience portion of the International Area. Visit http://garnetandgoldscholar.fsu.edu/ or email GarnetandGoldProgram@fsu.edu to learn more.

The Global Citizenship Certificate program helps undergraduate students develop invaluable cross-cultural skills and global competencies needed to be a global-ready graduate. Students who enroll in the certificate take 1 required course, Global Perspectives, and 3 electives. The required course counts toward FSU Liberal Studies X, E-series, and writing requirements. Students can choose from 500+ courses to fulfill the elective course requirement. In addition, students participate in 8 intercultural events on campus and a sustained international experience abroad, which you have already done! Enroll in the Global Citizenship Certificate to ensure your study abroad experience counts toward the certificate. Visit cge.fsu.edu/globalcitizen to learn more about the benefits, criteria, and requirements. You can also email us at globalcitizen@fsu.edu with questions.

TUTORING RESOURCES
There are a number of tutoring resources available at Florida State University to assist you academically, both in Tallahassee and abroad. Online tutors are available through the following programs:

- **Reading & Writing Center (RWC)**
  http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online

- **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**
  [http://ace.fsu.edu/](http://ace.fsu.edu/) ACE provides free tutoring in many subject areas, including accounting, biology, chemistry, economics, math, statistics, and physics.

- **University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services**
  https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (OAS)
OAS provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities and accommodations vary in nature, and though the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 do not apply extraterritorially, we do our best to accommodate our students. If you anticipate needing to request accommodations for a documented disability, please schedule an appointment with OAS by calling 850-644-9566 (Voice) or 850-644-8504 (TDD). For more information, visit [http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc](http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc).
VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS

- **Passport:** You must hold a U.S. passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your return from your program.

- **Copy of Passport Pages:** After you receive your passport, make several photocopies of the pages that contain the issue date, your signature, and your photograph. Leave one copy at home with your family, securely send one copy to our Tallahassee office, and take another copy with you in case your passport is lost or stolen. Carry a copy separate from your passport when you are traveling.

- **Flight/Visa Restrictions:** Due to airline restrictions, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.

- If you intend to study abroad for two consecutive semesters, contact an Immigration Specialist to verify if additional steps are required for immigration purposes: IP-Visas@fsu.edu.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NON U.S. CITIZENS AND U.S. CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD:
If you are a non-U.S. citizen or U.S. citizen living abroad, contact an International Programs’ Immigration Specialist at IP-Visas@fsu.edu. You may be required to apply for a visa on your own or you may have additional visa requirements and expenses.

All visa information is correct at the time of publication, but terms, fees, and guidelines are subject to change without notice.
**FLIGHT INFORMATION**
There is no group flight for this program and your Program Fee does not include airfare. As previously stated, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed due to airline restrictions. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.

You should make arrangements to arrive in San Jose, Costa Rica on the **start date** of the program, June 26, 2020, and depart on the **end date** of your program, July 26, 2020, as stated on the International Programs website and IP student portal. The on-site Orientation is mandatory for all students.

The main group airport pick-up will be scheduled for approximately 1:00 p.m., local time, on June 26. A finalized time will be communicated to the group prior to departure. It is recommended that you arrive in time for the group pick-up, keeping in mind that is may take up to one hour for immigration and customs clearance.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please notify International Programs, Dr. Gomariz and/or Andy Kaufman as soon as possible. You can contact FSU International Programs at 850-644-3272, Dr. Gomariz at 850-728-4396, and Conversa at 011-506-4001-2947. When calling Conversa, ask for Andy Kaufman and identify yourself as part of the Florida State University group.

If you arrive before or after the group pick-up time and need to arrange your own transportation to Conversa (located in Santa Ana, Costa Rica), airport taxis or shuttle fares usually cost around $25.

Your program housing will begin on the start date of your program and end on the end date. **IF YOU PLAN ON ARRIVING EARLIER OR WISH TO STAY LATER, YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO STAY IN A HOTEL.**

On the end date of the program, group airport transports will be arranged by Conversa in groups based on flight departure times. Morning flights out of SJO tend to have less instances of flight delays.

**IN TRANSIT**
- **Domestic flights.** Arrive at the airport ticket counter **two hours** before your departure time. Check with your specific airline to find out the recommended pre-flight allowance.
- **International flights.** Arrive at the airport ticket counter **three hours** before your departure time.
- **Keep your boarding pass** until you have landed, cleared immigration and customs, and have collected your luggage.
- **Have your passport and immigration letter** accessible in your carry-on luggage.
- **During your flight** make sure to drink lots of water to stay hydrated. Get up and walk around once an hour to help your circulation. Do simple stretches while in your seat. Try to sleep; it will help you combat jet lag. Wear layers, as the temperature on the plane and in airports can vary.

**ARRIVING IN COSTA RICA**
Upon arrival to SJO, you will go through immigration and present your passport to the immigration officer. If you are asked for your address while in Costa Rica by an immigration officer, provide the Casa Conversa address (Casa Conversa, Avenida 6, Calle 0, San José, Santa Ana, Costa Rica). Once you clear immigration, proceed to pick up your luggage to go through customs. Once you have cleared immigration and customs, you will be outside of the airport secure area.

As you walk outside, look for a Conversa sign and Dr. José Gomariz, who will be wearing an IP t-shirt. It is highly encouraged that you also wear your IP t-shirt for faster identification. A shuttle will transfer the whole group to the Centro Lingüístico Conversa in Santa Ana where you will have a welcome lunch and reception. A full on-site orientation will follow on the day after arrivals.

You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance when booking your flight. Travel insurance typically covers flight cancellation fees, lost luggage or other losses incurred while traveling, etc. Speak with your airline for more information. If your flight is canceled, delayed, or you miss a connection notify the International Programs staff via email or phone.
HOUSING
Students will stay with a Costa Rican family in the town of Santa Ana, located just down the hill from the Conversa campus. Placements will be one student per family. Arrangements are made by Conversa housing coordinators who select and monitor the families.

Students will have a private bedroom and a private or shared bathroom equipped with hot water. Air conditioning is not standard in all Costa Rican homes. Students will eat breakfast and dinner daily with the family, aside from program travel days. Lunch and a morning snack will be provided at Conversa. Students can expect at least one load of laundry per week to be handled by their family.

Rooming assignments will be made based on a combination of factors such as type of program, housing preference, availability and special needs as indicated in the information you provide on the Medical, Special Needs, Housing questionnaire in the IP student portal.

We cannot guarantee that each residence will have the exact same amenities. Each student housing facility has safety and security measures. They may vary by location.

International Programs will endeavor to provide accommodations that are appropriate and comfortable. This includes attempting to place students in nearby homestays (walking distance) to one another. Any issues with housing must be reported to the Program Leader, Dr. Gomariz, immediately.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the Housing Rules & Regulations. Violation of any of the housing policies is grounds for dismissal. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the housing rules and regulations for your specific program. Refer to the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement and the Housing Terms and Conditions for details. You are required to read and sign the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement in the IP student portal as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

At the end of the program, the housing facilities will be inspected. They should be neat, clean and in the condition in which they were found. If your housing is left in an un-fit state or if any damages are found upon your departure, additional charges may be assessed to your FSU account.

TRANSPORTATION
Conversa has shuttle buses that run between a meeting point in Santa Ana, Casa Conversa, to the Conversa campus each weekday. Casa Conversa is walking distance from all homestays. Students will take the shuttle to arrive at Conversa in time for their morning class each day and take the shuttle to return to Santa Ana after their courses and campus activities for the day have finished. The shuttle schedule will be provided at the onsite orientation.

Santa Ana is a very walkable town. A bus service also serves the town and connects it to nearby areas (such as San Jose). Taxis and rideshares are also available.

HOST FAMILIES
We aim to distribute host family assignments to students two weeks prior to departure.

It is culturally appropriate to bring a gift for your host family. This does not have to be an expensive item, but it will show appreciation to the family for allowing you to stay in their home during your time in Costa Rica. Gift suggestions may include, but are not limited to:

- Cookbooks with American recipes
- U.S. paraphernalia (things from Disney World, NBA, NFL, etc.)
- American candy and gum (i.e. M&M’s, Hershey, saltwater taffy, etc.) especially if there are children in the family
- American soap, lotion or scented candles (i.e. Bath & Body Works products, etc.)
- Tablecloth and/or placemats
- Clothing or items with FSU logos
- Scenic potholders, aprons, mugs and glasses
- Regional foods to make a special dinner
- Coffee mugs
- Chocolate
- Calendars with U.S. scenery

CLASS SCHEDULE
Classes will take place from Monday through Thursday, between 8:30 am to 4:00pm. There are breaks between classes, with a snack provided by Conversa in the late morning. A finalized class schedule will be distributed at the on-site orientation.

PROGRAM EXCURSIONS
As part of the Spanish Immersion Experience program, you are required to participate in cultural excursions. Excursions will take place on Fridays, and some include an overnight stay. A tentative social/cultural calendar will be provided at the pre-departure orientation, and a finalized calendar will be provided on-site. Departure times as listed on the calendar are firm, and punctuality is expected for these excursions. If you miss the scheduled transport for any social/cultural excursion, you are to contact Dr. Gomariz immediately.
PERSONAL TRAVEL

Independent travel outside of Costa Rica is NOT allowed during the program. Students who wish to travel outside of Costa Rica are advised to do so before the program begins or after the program ends.

You are no doubt eager to explore Costa Rica. The academic schedule is arranged so that you will have free time to travel. During the program, you will have a whole weekend for independent travel. Please wait until you have arrived and receive your class schedule before you book any independent trips during the duration of the program.

Waiting until classes have started will allow you to make travel plans around the following factors:

- Academic deadlines for exams, papers and presentations. You do not want to book a once-in-a-lifetime trip only to discover that you have a major assignment due around that time.
- You will receive a finalized cultural calendar of activities upon arrival.
- The travel plans of your peers. One of the joys of studying abroad is the opportunity to build friendships through travel and shared experiences.

Do not plan travel that will cause you to miss classes; strict academic standards will be maintained on the programs. Your grade will be reduced by any unauthorized absence from class.

Summer programs may have mandatory academic excursions that take place over a weekend. If you are participating in a summer program, you should be flexible with your weekend plans.

For safety purposes, you will be instructed by International Programs to fill out a mandatory online independent travel form each time you plan on traveling outside of your program. More information will be provided to you in the IP student portal prior to departure.

CLIMATE & PACKING

All airlines have different policies regarding the number, size, and weight of bags allowed on domestic and international flights. Fees for having too many bags or exceeding size and weight limits are steep, and also vary by airline. Determine the restriction on your particular airline before you pack. You will be responsible for carrying your own bags, packs, etc. Restrictions regarding carry-on baggage are different for each airline and sometimes vary depending on your originating, transferring and/or terminating airport. Also, requirements change based on current events. It is imperative that you check your specific requirements just prior to your departure and plan accordingly. Use the IP luggage tag you received to ensure your bag is marked in capital letters with your name, address, and final destination both on the inside and on the outside of the bag. It is recommended that you pack 1 or 2 outfits in your carry-on in case of flight delays/cancellations or lost luggage.

Make several photocopies of the pages in your passport that contain the issue date, your signature, and your photograph. Leave one copy at home with your family and take another copy with you in case your passport is lost or stolen. Carry a copy separate from your passport when you are traveling.

Information regarding textbooks and course materials will be distributed at the pre-departure orientation.

When packing, please remember that churches and other sacred sites may not allow shorts, tank tops, or miniskirts. You are advised to bring a cardigan or light jacket to cover your shoulders with for such visits, whether you plan to attend service or visit as part of a tour. It is advisable to bring a raincoat and an umbrella. The weather in Santa Ana can be humid and stays approximately in the mid to upper 70s. Because you will be in Costa Rica during the beginning of the rainy season, you can expect frequent showers in the afternoon. The temperature can be fairly cool in the morning or evening, so bring a sweatshirt or sweater. You will want to bring an overnight bag for weekend trips, as full-size suitcases cannot be accommodated by the program cultural excursion transportation (bus). The weather may change according to your destination. It is especially hot on the beaches, but in the mountains, the temperature is considerably cooler. Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions by bringing clothes that can be layered.

You may want to wear more jeans and long pants instead of shorts. This is a personal choice; however, in the past students have mentioned that they felt a little too casual and “tourist-like” wearing shorts in the city. However, when visiting the Pacific Coast, shorts maybe a better choice than long pants.

You should monitor the weather before departure to plan accordingly: https://www.accuweather.com/en/world-weather.

You should not bring any valuable or sentimental items such as jewelry, expensive watches, expensive cameras, or keepsake items you would regret losing. You also don’t want to bring any electrical appliances such as hair dryers, heaters, etc. The electricity in many countries is twice as powerful as in the U.S. and will cause those items to burn out.

Things to consider when packing:

- Bring comfortable walking shoes
- For outdoor excursions, you will need hiking-appropriate shoes. We will be hiking in rain and cloud forests, where trails may be wet. Flip-flops are highly discouraged for outdoor activities.
- Shorts can be worn while at the beach, however, you may also want to bring some long pants, light sweats or dry fit clothing for the evenings and to protect yourself from mosquitos. For hiking, wear long pants.
- You may wish to bring a swimsuit for excursions to coastal areas, as well as a back-up in case one swimsuit is wet from the previous day’s use.
- You may want to bring one more formal outfit in case you go somewhere nice with your host family, but this is uncommon.
- It is required to bring your own towels, they will not be provided by the host family (beach/pool and personal)
- Items we recommend that you purchase while in the U.S.: sunblock, mosquito repellent, bath towels, hiking boots, sandals, battery-powered reading light, travel alarm clock, rain jacket or poncho, small lock for your valuables, umbrella
- Bring your own prescription and non-prescription medications.
- Consider bringing a Spanish/English dictionary

Reference the International Programs packing list for more packing tips!
MAIL
Please share the following information with those in the U.S. who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad.

Letters and postcards may be sent to the following address:

Centro Lingüístico Conversa
#SJO 218
P.O. Box 025331
Miami, FL 33102-5331

We recommend that your friends and family do NOT mail you any packages or important information of value while you are in Costa Rica – all packages have to clear customs, and taxes and high shipping costs may be applicable. If you must have something mailed, Fed-Ex, DHL or UPS are the best options. Please contact the Conversa staff directly upon arrival if you require mailing instructions.

CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION
Staying connected to your family and friends while you are abroad is extremely important. Establish a communications plan prior to departure. Whether it’s setting up a Skype meeting every Sunday night, sending them messages over WhatsApp, or checking-in with them on social media, make sure you keep in touch! For example, it is recommended that your contact any family or friends that may be monitoring your trip upon arrival at SJO.

Though it is not mandatory to use your cell phone abroad, consider one of the following options. Do your research to see which option is the best fit for you:

Add an international plan through your current service provider. This tends to be the most expensive option. Talk to your service provider for details. Each provider offers varying international plans.

Purchase a sim card in-country for your current phone. You will need to unlock your phone and make sure your phone is GSM-capable before departure. You can buy a prepaid SIM plan, either for phone calls only or for calls and data.

Purchase an inexpensive phone with a local plan in-country and pay for more minutes/data as needed.

We strongly suggest that you do not buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone in the U.S. to take abroad. Students who have done this in the past have frequently found the phones do not work. It is far cheaper and more efficient to buy the pay-as-you-go phone abroad.

Use the Wi-Fi available around the city while the phone is in airplane mode. Make sure to turn off roaming before you leave, just in case. Otherwise you might end up with a very large phone bill when you return to the U.S. Apps you can easily use while connected to Wi-Fi include Skype, FaceTime, Viber, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel abroad so you will be able to activate the account.

If you have access to a landline phone, you can purchase a calling card to make international calls. We advise that you wait until you have arrived in Costa Rica to purchase a calling card because many of the ones in the States are costly. The calling cards are readily available at local corner shops.

Phone calls in Costa Rica are charged by the call and all local calls are charged. Therefore, if you use your host family’s home phone line, you must first ask their permission and it is polite to offer to pay for the time you spend on personal calls.

COMPUTERS
The Centro Lingüístico Conversa has wireless Internet available for student use. Internet cafés and a library are also available in Santa Ana. Some public areas in Santa Ana have historically offered free Wi-Fi. Please note that it is not a guarantee that all host families will have Wi-Fi networks in their homes available for student use.

Many students choose to bring their own laptops. If you want to bring your laptop, we recommend doing the following:

- Check if your computer has a built-in transformer that is capable of handling the different voltages. Please note that 3-prong outlets are rare in Costa Rica.
- Please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk. Check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that it is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you may want to check into laptop insurance through [http://www.safeware.com/](http://www.safeware.com/), a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.
- Do NOT pack your laptop or laptop charger in your checked luggage.
**EXPENSES**

In estimating your financial needs while you are abroad, calculate the amount of money you will need for meals for the entire period of your stay; your transportation and lodging costs for any personal trips you will be taking, and your personal entertainment and social activities costs. **Do your research!**

- A good way to estimate what you might need in Costa Rica is to assume that whatever you spend here in the U.S. (in dollars), you will spend the same (numerical) amount in local currency. Take that dollar amount and convert to the local currency using the current exchange rate.

- Keep in mind when budgeting that the meals during the program are covered during class days (breakfast and dinner with the host families and lunch and a snack at Conversa). Any meals that are eaten out on free days, weekends, or additionally during the week are at personal cost. Estimated meal costs for program weekend excursions are $10-$20 per lunch and $15-$25 per dinner.

- For a 4-week summer program, it is recommended that you budget at least $500- $1000 (depending on your weekend plans and personal spending habits).

**CURRENCY**

Costa Rica uses the Colon as the national currency. Exchange up to $100 for Colones before you leave the U.S. You will just need enough to get you to Santa Ana and to a bank abroad. US Dollars may be accepted as a form of payment in Costa Rica (especially at large chains, such as supermarkets), but change will be provided in Colones. Visit [http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/) for the current exchange rate.

**BANKING**

We recommend you set up online banking for your bank accounts prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account while overseas. The easiest way to access money is from an ATM. You can use a Debit Card at any ATM to withdraw cash whenever you need it though there will often be a withdrawal fee. Keep in mind you may encounter restaurants and shops that only accept cash during your travels.

Bring or have access to at least one credit card in the event of an emergency. If you need to visit a doctor or hospital, you will likely have to pay prior to the service, and then submit an insurance claim afterward. Credit cards are also useful for everyday purchases and offer excellent exchange rates. **MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards overseas.** A credit card with “chip and pin” technology is recommended, as this is the standard abroad.

Before using a credit or debit card overseas, we recommend the following:

- Contact your financial institution(s) before you leave the U.S. to make sure your debit card is activated for international use. You will also need to inform them of your dates/location abroad. If you fail to contact your financial institution(s), it is not unusual for credit card companies to “freeze” an account if suspicious or fraudulent activity is suspected. Please also inquire about any international transaction fees associated with your card(s).

- **Make sure your debit/ATM card is linked to a checking account, rather than to a savings account, so you will have access to your funds.**

- If you have a pin longer than 4 digits or based on letters, you may have trouble using it abroad. You will need to change your pin before departure.

- You should also contact your financial institution for information regarding ATM transaction fees. You can limit the fees if your U.S. bank has a ‘sister’ bank in the host country and/or if you limit your withdrawals, though we do not advise keeping large sums of money on your person or stored in your residence, even if a safe is provided. If a safe is not provided, we encourage students to lock valuables in their suitcase when leaving the housing accommodation.

- Keep a record of all credit/debit/ATM card numbers and the phone numbers you would need to call, with area codes, if they are lost or stolen. Keep this record in a safe place separate from your cards, and you should provide a copy to family at home.

For those who receive financial aid, ensure that any student loans you have requested will be available for disbursement during the term you are abroad. Disbursement usually occurs after students have left the U.S., so make arrangements for your check to be deposited, if that is your chosen method of disbursement.
IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS
Florida State University requires certain immunizations prior to your registration for classes. All newly admitted degree-seeking students (freshman and transfer) and non-FSU students must complete the required Student Immunization Form. If you fall into one of these categories, you will be required to submit this form through the IP student portal.

It is very important that you make yourself aware of specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Additional information is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site: www.cdc.gov/travel/. Please note that some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past location(s) the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm whether or not the previous travel requires additional inoculations.

Be sure to bring sufficient quantities of your prescription medication with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor and be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available elsewhere. In particular, Adderall and Concerta are not available in all countries. Don’t postpone discussing your prescription needs with your doctor. You will likely need to work with your insurance company to cover your vacation prescription. If you experience difficulty in obtaining a prescription for your time abroad, seek assistance from our office.

We also recommend doing the following:

- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair and/or the prescription if you wear glasses or contact lenses.
- Complete routine medical and dental care before you leave.
- A tetanus booster shot is suggested if you have not had one within the past 10 years.

The CISI insurance provided is included in your program fee and the policy is available on our website: http://international.fsu.edu/Documents/HealthSafety/CISIInsurancePolicy.pdf. You will want to familiarize yourself with the coverage details. This policy is NOT intended to replace your domestic coverage.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Costa Rica is 18. This means that you will likely have the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol legally. It is in your interest to recognize that this right carries a great deal of responsibility. International Programs has a strict code of conduct relating to the use of alcohol, violations of which will likely result in a judicial hearing with the possible outcome of being dismissed from the program. For instance, no hard liquor is permitted in program housing or facilities, and no open containers are allowed on FSU-sponsored transportation and excursions. As you are staying in homestays, intoxicated behavior poses a risk and inconvenience to your host family and may be reported to program staff as a violation of the code of conduct. In short, know your limits and drink within moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in FSU study abroad programs. Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program and disciplinary action onsite or upon return to campus. International Programs’ policies follow either the U.S. law or local law, whichever is more stringent with regard to drug use. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim’s rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code at: http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/.
POLICIES & SAFETY

RULES, POLICIES & PROCEDURES
Florida State degree-seeking, transient, and special students are bound by the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the FSU General Bulletin and Student Handbook. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these before you leave. You may locate the FSU General Bulletin online at http://registrar.fsu.edu/ and The Code of Student Conduct at https://dos.fsu.edu/srr/conduct-codes/student-conduct-codes. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities updates any changes to the Code of Student Conduct.

SAFETY & SECURITY
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students apprised of any new information. For more information on IP’s security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at 850.644.7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

- **Resources.** Even though students are not on the main campus, they have access to many resources should they encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support students in a variety of ways, including connecting students with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.
  - **Victim Advocate Program.** The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu.
  - **University Counseling Center.** The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit https://counseling.fsu.edu/ for more information.
  - **Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness.** The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages students to make healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to life-long health and wellness. For more information, visit http://chaw.fsu.edu/.

- **The U.S. State Department** maintains a web site of information for Americans studying abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: http://studentsabroad.state.gov/.

- **The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/.

- **Waivers.** All IP participants must sign and submit a Waiver of Liability through the IP Student Portal.

- **Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.**

- **Always carry a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport with you.** Keep another copy in your room separate from your passport. Leave one copy at home in the U.S. with your family or a relative.

- **Use the buddy system—try to travel with friends as much as possible and always tell your roommates or friends where you are going and when you expect to return. Bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.**

- **Valuables.** Students should not take sentimental valuables on their program. Students should not leave cash, passports, or other items of value unattended in their rooms. If a locker or safe is provided, students are strongly encouraged to use it to store anything of value at all times. Students should plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in their rooms. Students are responsible for ensuring their rooms are left secure at all times – do not prop open doors, do not leave doors and windows unlocked, do not give keys to anyone. If students notice others in the building leaving the main entrance door unsecured, they should notify the IP staff immediately, even if there are others living in the building who are not FSU program participants. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance that will cover their belongings while abroad, whether a standard homeowners or renters policy. The International Programs insurance policy does not cover loss or theft of participants’ possessions.

- **Pickpocketing.** In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. While traveling in some areas beware of beggars who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or excessive body movements. Phones and bags are often stolen in crowded areas. Keep them close to you and lock your pack zippers with a combo lock. Secure your valuables if you are traveling on an overnight (“sleeper”) train.

- **Weapons.** Students are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Furthermore, mace and/or pepper spray may be illegal in the countries that you visit. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
TIPS & RESOURCES

TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
These comments came from students who recently attended our study abroad program in Costa Rica:

- Really strive to make yourself adhere to Conversa’s “Spanish only” rule – even with your fellow English-speaking students!
- Involvement with host families can provide great leaning and bonding experiences, as well as an opportunity to try some home-cooked Costa Rican food.
- Take advantage of your immersion in a Spanish-speaking location and pick up on some of the more conversational aspects of the language.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search.

http://www.tripadvisor.com (online travel guide)
http://www.letsgo.com/(on-line travel guide, check out the “HotLinks” button)
http://cnn.com/WEATHER/ (daily weather forecasts)
https://www.roughguides.com/ (travel guide)
https://nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Google Translate (instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages)
Dark Sky (With down-to-the-minute forecasts, you’ll know exactly when the rain will start or stop, right where you’re standing)
Mobile Passport (authorized by U.S. Government to get through customs upon your return to the U.S. Allows you to use the dedicated mobile passport line in 21 participating airports).

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

Connect with International Programs on social media
International Programs Facebook
International Programs Twitter
International Programs Instagram

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