

INTERACT

¿PREGUNTAS?

Student Booklet

Preparation Policies Enrollment Form

Valid 2020-2024



INTERACT TRAVEL INC.

2207 Velp Ave • Green Bay, WI 54303

Homestay has encouraged many students to improve their Spanish. Over 95% had an OUTSTANDING experience.
Monica Lentz, WI

Our singular purpose is serving Spanish Teachers and their students currently enrolled in grades 6-12. Interact was founded by a former Spanish Teacher in 1983. Today, Interact is still owned and operated by the same family, assuring a continuous commitment to the company's original goals.

We proudly serve over 500 schools nationwide, with the majority located throughout the Midwest. We are a family-owned business. Interact is a financially secure and stable organization. Our headquarters is located near historic Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin. We work exclusively with reputable and respected foreign tour companies headquartered in Spain, Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

We maintain the maximum amount of bond as required by the Airline Reporting Corporation. All tour funds are held in escrow. We maintain professional liability coverage. Plus, we are members in good standing of the Howard-Suamico Chamber of Commerce. Everyone is welcome to check us out by calling the Better Business Bureau.

Those who select us believe strongly in middle class values, common sense, responsibility, and accountability. The majority of our participants are from smaller communities where the opportunity to visit a foreign country is viewed as a privilege, not an expectation.

Our office staff is characterized by professional leadership combined with personalized attention. We answer the phone personally, travel to foreign language conferences, assist with school orientations, and frequently greet teachers in the foreign country.

Furthermore, we have created all the programs offered in our teacher catalogue. Each program is proprietary and an Interact original. Our professional staff have visited the foreign countries, stayed in the group hotels, eaten the group meals, and lived with the host families. Equally as important, our entire professional staff know and love what we're doing. We offer competitive student fees without sacrificing the quality of services.

What's included?

- International flights on major full-service carriers
- Roundtrip airport transfers abroad
- Modern charter motorcoaches
- Motorcoach luggage allowance of one checked suitcase and one carry-on bag
- Hotel accommodations (2 star or better with private bath) based on 4 students per room (3 in Spain and Peru)
- Group meals as specified in each itinerary
- Homestay accommodations and meals as specified in each location
- Admission fees for scheduled touring
- Inter-city travel as listed
- Full professional staff support throughout: bilingual guide and/or homestay director and/or bilingual courier
- Customary Tips to guides, couriers, and charter bus drivers
- Reimbursement for Guided Adventure expenses.
- The following taxes are also included: U.S. Departure Taxes, Foreign Airport Taxes which can be included in the airline ticket, Passenger Facility Taxes, Security & Customs Taxes, Hotel &/or Food taxes
- Tips for group meals and standard maid service

What's not included?

- Airline imposed luggage charges
- All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: souvenirs, phone charges, wifi, special diet requests, laundry, watersports
- Travel insurance
- Medical or emergency cancellation insurance
- Luggage handling
- Hotel surcharges for double or single rooms
- Beverages (other than offered) with group meals
- Fees for obtaining legal travel documents such as passports and visas
- Fluctuations in rate of foreign currency exchange
- Expenses caused by airline, bus or train scheduling or delays
- Mandatory new or increased fees/taxes/fuel or other surcharges (if any) levied on airline tickets, bus travel, at points of entry/exit by U.S. or foreign governments, municipalities, or administrations
- Transfers (if any) between airports within the United States
- Roundtrip transportation from your hometown to the international gateway city
- Foreign Airport Taxes which must be paid on site
- Any activity listed as option or optional means that the activity is available but at additional cost



GROUP SUPERVISION & SAFETY

I thank you for putting this together and keeping our children safe while letting them have a learning experience of a lifetime!
Nicole Cadena, IA

Our primary concern has always been and will always be the welfare of our students. Proper group supervision and safety are the two most important provisions of student group planning.

What are Interact's most important group supervision and safety provisions?

The greatest potential for a problem with student group supervision and safety would occur at night and dominantly where alcohol is readily available. Please review the Agreement on page 12 (particularly items #1 and #2). You will find that Interact has addressed the most critical issues in a forthright manner.

Great. But how does Interact know that students won't break the rules?

Interact doesn't. No one does. However, Interact's foundation is built upon mutual trust. Interact's excellent reputation has been earned over the course of four decades. Working together, Interact has stood the test of time. Essentially, if a parent doesn't trust their son or daughter, they should not allow them to participate.

What about supervision in the foreign country?

Naturally, the Organizing Teacher and Official Assistants have primary responsibility for supervising their students and enforcing Interact's written policies. Interact incorporates complimentary travel to Spanish Teachers in exchange for their extensive educational leadership, their hard work, and their valuable supervision that they provide to your sons and daughters. Complimentary should never be misconstrued with free.

Furthermore, a bilingual guide, courier or homestay director are available for assistance throughout. Interact wants you to know that foreign staff ensure a well-planned, secure program but are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing Interact's written policies.

In the event that an infraction, however rare, occurs, the Organizing Teacher or designated Official Assistant, contacts Interact directly around-the-clock.

Is there a Travel Advisory for my country?

Yes, the US State Department maintains a Travel Advisory for every country worldwide. This system was implemented in early 2018. Country Advisories range from Level 1 "Exercise Normal Precautions" to Level 4 "Do Not Travel". The State Department reviews and updates Travel Advisories based on security and safety information.

What if something unexpected happens?

An Alert is issued by the U.S. Embassy or consulate abroad. U.S. Embassies and consulates abroad issue Alerts to inform U.S. citizens of specific, temporary conditions in a country, such as demonstrations, union strikes, and weather events.

Is an Alert the same as a Level 4 "Do Not Travel"?

No. An Alert is not an Advisory. The Alert is removed or revised when the temporary condition has been resolved or has ended.

When will Interact cancel a planned program?

Interact will cancel a program if the State Department revises its respective Country Advisory Level #1-#3 to Level #4. In the absence of Level #4, Interact will operate - or modify - your program. Regardless, all Interact policies remain in effect. In the event that an alternate destination is available and can be confirmed, Interact will inform everyone with specifics.

In the event the State Department issues a Level 4, are the deposits refundable?

Interact cannot assure or insinuate that any refund, either partial or full, will be available. Interact works on behalf of their groups.

How can I protect our deposits?

This is an insurance issue. Interact strongly recommends the purchase of an optional "Cancel for Any Reason" travel insurance policy. Reivew Page 7 before you enroll.

We appreciate your going the extra step to help us make the trip the safest, most responsible, and enjoyable.
Beth Vander Wilt & Amy VanDerMeer, IA



CODE OF CONDUCT

Your team is GREAT!!! Best customer service around! When I call, I get a real person; when I email, I get a response VERY quickly! I can't say enough great things about the Interact team!!!!
Kris Campos, TX

Interact has the right, exercisable in its discretion, to cancel any student's participation in an Interact program, without refund or advance notice, if the student engages in any conduct that Interact deems harmful or detrimental to the Interact program or a danger to the health, safety or welfare of the student or any other participant in the Interact program, including, without limitation: (a) smoking, chewing, vaping tobacco, or electronic cigarettes; (b) possessing weapons of any kind or nature; (c) possessing fireworks or firecrackers; (d) engaging in body piercing or tattooing; (e) engaging in sexual conduct or inappropriate displays of affection; (f) being present in any bars, discos or other establishments that serve alcohol unless accompanied by the Organizing Teacher at all times during such visit; (g) violating curfew; (h) committing a crime or otherwise violating any law of the jurisdiction in which the student is present; or (i) violating any reasonable rule or regulation established by Interact, the Organizing Teacher or the Homestay Family. Interact reserves the right to deviate from or modify the Code of Conduct on a case-by-case basis.



TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

Are there any passport deadlines?

Yes, absolutely.

1. Participants must have their valid passport in their possession a minimum of 5 months prior to departure: for spring travel, September; for summer travel, January.

IMPORTANT: If you already have your passport, you should be aware that your passport will need to be valid for a minimum of 6 months following your return to the USA.

2. The Organizing Teacher collects copies of passports and submits them 125-days prior to departure: for spring travel, October; for summer travel, February.

Is there anything else we should know?

Yes. Interact recommends that each group leave one set of passport copies at home with a designated adult and carries one set abroad.

Interact also wants you to be aware that regulations are subject to change without notice. Each participant is responsible for obtaining, submitting, and carrying their own passport. If you are not a U.S. Citizen, it is your sole responsibility to contact the appropriate consular office for proper documentation.



MAJOR CARRIERS

Interact confirms student groups on major airlines. Interact does not book no-name, no-frills charter airlines. Group preparation is distinctly different from booking tickets online. Major airlines maintain and mandate their own policies and negotiated group rates. Airlines also confirm routings and flight times. Requests for specific airlines or flight schedules would result in a substantial increase in the published student fee. Interact does not guarantee non-stop or single plane service or any particular flight schedule. Interact cannot guarantee airline seat location or special meal requests. Interact does not accept or redeem frequent flyer miles, coupons, nor does it accept responsibility for frequent flyer mileage accrual.



DEPARTURE DATE

When do we know our departure date?

The specific departure date is confirmed approximately four months prior to departure. If you're traveling in spring, the specific departure date is confirmed in October. If you're traveling in summer, the specific date is confirmed in February. Regardless, we recommend that you retain travel flexibility because, although rare, airlines may cancel or change service that affects the departure date.



ROOMMATES

I was so proud of my kids. No behavior issues, no illnesses, no problems at all. They really stepped outside their comfort zones with all the things they encountered. All the adventures, food, and interactions will be memories they can carry the rest of their lives. Thanks to all involved. It was a great trip!
Matt Ford, MI

Can we select our own roommates for hotels and homestay?

Yes, of course. Your Organizing Teacher submits rooming preferences 125-days prior to your departure. If you're traveling in spring, October; if you're traveling in summer, February.

Student roommates must be of the same gender, even if you're related - no exceptions. Single rooms are not available for students.

Can we change roommates?

No changes are allowed either prior to departure or after arrival in your foreign destination. Revisions are made only when they pertain to a cancellation without replacement.



HOTELS

We assume we each get a room key, correct?

Not correct. A major cultural difference occurs here. Foreign hotels give only one key per room, regardless if the room is a single or a quadruple. Always leave the key at the front desk. If someone forgets it, you'll need to tip the porter or maid \$5 US for opening your room. Lost key charges of \$50 or more could apply.

Do we each get our own bed?

It's possible but it cannot be guaranteed. Expect to share beds, particularly in Latin America. At times, double beds may seem small compared to USA standards. However, if there are two pillows on a bed, it is considered a double.

Do we stay on the same floor of the hotel?

It's possible but it cannot be guaranteed. Hotels assign rooms, not Interact.

Who cleans our room?

Hotel maids. Tips for daily service have been included and prepaid. Always place small odds and ends in a drawer or your locked luggage; foreign maids will frequently throw them away if you don't.

Do we get unlimited towels?

No. This is another cultural difference. Foreign hotels supply one towel per person per day. The majority of foreign hotels do not supply washcloths.

Who does my laundry?

You do. Smart travelers pack a piece of clothesline for drying clothes in the bathroom. Never lay wet clothes on wood surfaces or on top of the furnishings. You might damage hotel furnishings and you'll be responsible for any damages.



SPECIAL DIETARY REQUESTS/ALLERGIES

How do I submit a request?

Give a specific list to your Organizing Teacher, who will submit requests from enrollment through 125 days prior to departure: for spring travel, October; for summer travel, February. Include as many details as possible. If the diet or allergy requirements are medically required, the student shall attach a physician's note to the request. Requests are forwarded to our country coordinators and suppliers.

What if I forget to submit my request?

Requests cannot be accepted after the 125-day prior deadline has passed.

Is there anything else I should know?

1. Obtain and carry a copy of the restrictions in Spanish.
2. After arrival, remind staff, such as the homestay director, homestay family, hotel administration and any provider supplying the meal.
3. Carry pre-packaged food items or cash to purchase food or special meals directly, if necessary.



SPENDING MONEY

How much spending money should we bring?

The typical student brings an average of \$50 per day for personal spending money. Budget an additional amount for the unforeseen.

How should we exchange money abroad?

While every method has positives and negatives, most of our groups prefer to carry debit or credit cards. In general, you'll get more in return by exchanging larger sums. Check with your financial institution to assure that whatever you choose will be available abroad.

Should we exchange money in advance?

At your discretion. You may want to exchange in advance if your arrival is on a weekend, major holiday, or during religious observances such as Semana Santa, when money exchange can be limited and difficult. Interact does not incorporate time for a full-group money exchange upon arrival in the foreign airport or during the first full day abroad. Specific foreign currency information is available from our [ONLINE TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE](#).



LUGGAGE, PACKING & PROPER DRESS

How much luggage is allowed?

One main bag plus one carry on. Size and weight of bags are subject to airline and tour bus restrictions: 40lb. for the main bag with 62" total dimensions (add the height plus width plus depth). Carry-ons are 40 lb with 45" total dimensions. Checked luggage fees and mandated airline fees are not included and are paid directly to the airline.



What if we bring additional luggage or oversize bags?

Charter motorcoaches only have room for one regulation size bag per participant. Participants who carry oversized bags and/or additional luggage will be denied motorcoach boarding and the Organizing Teacher will be required to accompany you in a taxi transfer at your expense.

Any packing hints or secrets?

1. Keep your luggage locked at all times (use TSA-approved locks).
2. Make sure your footwear is in good condition, waterproofed and well broken in. Wear shoes that are sturdy, with non-slip soles.
3. Pack enough clothing and personal essentials in your carry on so you could "survive" for several days in the event of loss or delay.
4. Outlet adapters are needed for most countries.
5. Use an indelible marker to print your name & address inside your luggage.
6. Keep a separate list, with receipts, of what you pack. You'll need it for insurance claims in the highly unlikely event that the airline would lose your bag.
7. Leave all valuables and keepsakes at home! Smart travelers wear only inexpensive costume jewelry and watches.

What should we wear?

Spanish-speaking countries are traditionally more conservative than ours. When visiting churches, shorts or inappropriate clothing are prohibited by church authorities.

Jeans are acceptable and are a smart choice inland. You'll be a great "ambassador" of your family, school, and community if you refrain from wearing shorts in the city. Cut-offs and revealing or ragged clothing are always considered inappropriate. As part of our group security, if your teacher, Interact guide or Interact Staff believes that your appearance or clothing will draw unwanted attention to your group, you'll be required to change. Within the hotel, students may not go barefoot or shirtless anywhere outside their rooms.

What if we lose something?

It is your sole responsibility to recover lost items and pay respective recovery fees. Our most common losses involve leaving personal belongings on the bus or in the hotel room. Although Interact is not responsible for locating lost property, we will assist in the process whenever possible.



I have been hounded by various travel companies, both at home and at school. THANK YOU for not being aggressive and taking up my valuable personal time to push your company. Thanks also for being honest and up-front. I know that what I see is exactly what I'll get.
Heather Huegel, IA

Any basic health hints?

Always wash your hands before eating. Be sure to pack towelettes or waterless hand sanitizer.

What about illness?

Although it can occur, it has been rare. A high percentage of the illnesses that you hear about may be linked to excessive alcohol consumption or stress caused by being unprepared for the cultural differences.

Are any vaccinations required?

Interact is not aware of any required vaccines. If we are advised otherwise by our government, you are assured that we would contact Organizing Teachers in a timely manner. Health organizations or family physicians commonly make "recommendations", which are not the same as a requirement. It is the sole decision and responsibility of each family to follow any such "recommendation".



Should we have health insurance?

Yes, many students are already covered by their parent's health insurance coverage. Ask your insurance provider "If our son/daughter would require medical care abroad, will you provide reimbursement if we present receipts after return to the USA?" If not, you can purchase it from the company of your choice. Health coverage is frequently included in Travel Insurance Plans.

Are medical cards accepted abroad?

No. Cash or credit card are required and payment must be made directly. Keep your receipt and file for reimbursement upon return to the USA.



PRE-DEPARTURE

Whenever there are pre-departure questions or concerns, parents and students will contact the Organizing Teacher first. If the Organizing Teacher is unable or unavailable to answer the question, please contact Interact by email: interact@interact-travel.com. Interact will respond in a timely manner and will include copies of all communication to the Organizing Teacher.

ABROAD

Individual communication, including the use of interpersonal communication devices or social media, inhibits the student from assimilating and experiencing the foreign culture. Posting information during your visit abroad is viewed as a security concern. The Organizing Teacher and Official Assistants are with students daily and maintain proper group communication.

If any situation occurs, the following system shall be followed:

1. The student informs the Organizing Teacher of the student's concern or issue.
2. The Organizing Teacher attempts to resolve the student's concern or issue. Students are strongly discouraged from calling home, including cell phone calls, prior to notifying the Organizing Teacher and allowing the Organizing Teacher to attempt to resolve the matter.
3. If the Organizing Teacher is unable to resolve the concern or issue, the Organizing Teacher shall inform Interact's foreign representative (i.e. guide, courier, or homestay director). If necessary, the Organizing Teacher or Interact's foreign representative will contact our Green Bay office.

If an emergency occurs and a parent needs to contact the student, the parent should call the Organizing Teacher, not their son or daughter. An emergency means that the student must return home immediately. Before calling the Organizing Teacher, please review the itinerary. There are instances where communication may be difficult or impossible: overnight train rides, bus rides in the mountains, overnights at jungle lodges, etc. Emergency contact information should be given to parents by the Organizing Teacher at least five (5) days prior to the student's departure. If you have not received emergency contact information at least five (5) days prior to the student's departure, please contact the Organizing Teacher as soon as possible.



CANCELLATIONS & SERVICE FEES

Great support as always. Helped so very much to ease the transition when we had to change Official Assistants one month out.
Jody Ziemann, WI

Are there non-refundable and non-transferable fees?

Yes. The operation of international student programs requires extensive long-term planning and costs are incurred far in advance of the actual departure date. Interact does not charge those who travel with us for the administrative costs of those who cancel. If you cancel without finding a suitable replacement, your initial deposit is non-refundable and non-transferable. All non-refundable fees and deadlines are clearly listed on page 12.

Are there service fees?

Yes. Group processing enables Interact to retain our competitive and affordable student tour fees, without sacrificing the quality of services. Service fees offset the costs incurred that require additional administrative preparation for individuals.

\$100 service fees are assessed for: *missing signature on a check or enrollment form* personal check not made payable to Interact Travel * refunding an overpayment *request for reinstatement *a passport copy that is received late.



OPTIONAL TRAVEL INSURANCE

Is travel insurance included?

No. However, optional travel insurance is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**.

There are generally three types of policies offered by insurers: basic, mid-level, and premium, with coverage and prices increasing accordingly. There are policies that allow you to "cancel for any reason".

Policies that allow you to "cancel for any reason" give you the most flexibility and the best option to back out over international travel concerns or unforeseen local conflicts such as school sports tournaments or family gatherings. Usually, this benefit is an additional charge on the plan. It doesn't matter why you want to cancel your trip - you just can. Regardless the reason, if you are outside 72 hours before the trip, you can cancel.

Prepare early. As soon as you have submitted your enrollment and deposit, start comparing travel insurance plans.



ADULT PARTICIPATION

Can adults participate?

Adult oriented activities are not part of our planning. Interact's programs are not suitable for adults who have difficulty walking at a very brisk pace, who are not capable of carrying their own luggage, who are not able to eat foreign food, or who require special assistance or attention.

Adults can enroll only if the itinerary is all-hotel and the Organizing Teacher specifically invites adults.

The adult agrees to:

1. Support the Organizing Teacher in any and all travel matters which may occur during the trip.
2. Serve as a role model by remaining alcohol-free and smoke-free for the duration of the tour.

What is the adult fee?

The adult fee is the student fee + \$450. The adult fee includes 1/2 of a double room to be shared with another adult participant. Single rooms are not available. Interact is not responsible for finding a suitable adult roommate. Adults are not allowed to room with students, the Organizing Teacher or the respective Official Assistants. The \$450 adult fee is non-refundable and non-transferable and is submitted with enrollment (\$900 deposit due with enrollment.).



SPECIAL FLIGHT OPTION (MUST BE 21)

Can I return later?

No. Participants are required to fly roundtrip, unless they are 21 years of age or older. The self-explanatory Special Flight Option form can be downloaded from our website.



PRACTICALITIES

Does a bilingual guide accompany our group?

In Latin America, yes. In Spain, the bilingual person who accompanies your group is a courier; local bilingual guides are prearranged for all historical visits.

Are tours narrated in Spanish or English?

When schools are combined to form a tour group, narration will be eclectic. Schools with a private bus can request their preference at time of enrollment: immersion or eclectic.

Are seats assigned on the tour bus?

No. This is arranged at the discretion of the Organizing Teachers. When schools share a tour bus, they usually agree to rotate location or assign seats.

Can we take photos or videos anywhere we want?

No. Please use discretion and show respect for the people. It's their country and you're their guest. Act accordingly. Flash pictures are prohibited inside museums and churches. Certain museums and touring sites charge a fee for taking photos or videos.

Will there be "down time"?

"Down time" is inevitable in group travel. Expect times when you simply have to wait for the group to be checked in at an airline or hotel. Be prepared, bring a book to read, write in your journal, or simply rest.

Will there be "free" time during the hotel portion of our program?

Normally, either your Organizing Teacher or one of your Official Assistants will accompany you. If they do not, all activities must be pre-approved in writing by the Organizing Teacher or an Official Assistant. They must know who is in your group of three or more, specific destination, departing time, and return time.

Does Interact arrange optional beach activities?

No. Interact does not plan or sponsor any beach activities in any way or manner. Those who participate in beach activities are advised to use common sense. If you don't have a valid drivers license, you shouldn't rent any type of motorized vehicle. If you have never operated a jet ski before, the foreign country is not the place to start. Participants accept full risk for any damages or injuries.

PREPARE PROPERLY: Students must have prior experience or proper training in the United States before being allowed to participate in that activity in a foreign country.

Traveling with students validates why I teach Spanish in the classroom. Providing students the opportunity to reinforce their learning of Spanish while opening their eyes to literally a world of possibilities is so important to me as an educator. You easily earned my trust in helping me to provide my students with these opportunities, while making me feel very cared for before and during each trip that I have planned with Interact.
Gabrielle Giuliano, IL

Every time I had an office need everyone was wonderful and efficient I have nothing but positive things to say which is a large part of why I continue to use Interact every time. I just finished my 4th trip with your company.
Jennifer Ries, IA



HOMESTAY PARTICIPANTS

The SOMOS humanitarian interACTION was amazing. Our students were able to communicate with children of all ages. Phenomenal!
Jackie Lemire, WI

Who selects host families?

Our homestay programs originated in 1986. Interact interviews and selects experienced reputable organizations and individual directors who understand our policies and believe in our philosophy and the immeasurable value of a homestay program. Local directors interview, monitor, and assign students-families. Directors maintain around-the-clock communication with both the Organizing Teachers and our Green Bay office. Here's a summary of each homestay:

SPAIN : Multiple Cities

Our most popular homestay cities include Avila, Salamanca, Segovia, Alcala de Henares, Toledo, Granada, Zamora, Bilbao, and Sevilla. All were originated and continue to be supervised by Linguatur, founded in 1971 by Juan Hernandez and family. Each city has its own dedicated native director. Homestay suitable for senior high school students.

COSTA RICA - La Guacima:

Manuel & Clara Cambronero and family have offered this homestay since 1994. The Cambronero family and all the host families live in La Guacima, Alajuela. In this authentic town, everyone speaks Spanish.

MEXICO : Merida Yucatan

Enrique & Rosario Cardenas and family have coordinated our Merida homestay since 1989. Enrique taught at the Technological Institute and earned his Masters degree from Michigan State. Host families are located in the modern Paseo Montejo prolongation ("suburb") area.

PANAMA : Altos de Betania

Marianela Valverde founded ILERI Language School in 1994. ILERI is a small, friendly school located in Altos de Betania, a residential community that is only 5 minutes from Parque Natural Metropolitano.

ECUADOR : Quito & Cuenca

Simon Bolivar was founded under European and Ecuadorian management, Kjetil Haugen and Luisa Cordova, in 1994. The school is officially registered and authorized by the Ministry of Education.

PERU : Cusco

The Santisteban family founded Excel Language Center in 1980. Excel is recognized and accredited by the Ministry of Education in Peru.

GUATEMALA : Antigua

Mario Castellanos founded Tecún Umán in 1983. It has earned a reputation as one of the best schools and is recognized by the Ministry of Education and by INGUAT, the Office of Tourism of Guatemala.

ARGENTINA : Buenos Aires

COINED was founded in 1971 and, today, offers language study-homestay throughout Latin America. Its high school program is unique and provides a total cultural experience in Buenos Aires, commonly referred to as the "Paris of South America"

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC : Santo Domingo

Under the leadership of Severino Polanco, Centro Guanin was founded in 2001. Centro Guanin is known for its equality, brotherhood and spirit of sharing. Dominicans are internationally renowned for their beauty, hospitality, genuine warmth, charm, and mile-wide smiles. Students stay with families in quiet middle class neighborhoods. All transfers are provided..

Really, homestays could not have been better – and those were the worst part of my trip last time [with another organization](#). My impressions were that Interact was very organized. I'm glad we put two students in a home together. That is certainly a strength to the Interact homestay feature. Absolutely two thumbs up!

Karen Tritt, KS



HOMESTAY TOURING SCHEDULES

Homestay families were great. We couldn't ask for nicer people. They took good care of our students.
Kim Ficele-Bowen, WA

Does our Organizing Teacher serve as our tour guide?

No. Tours are operated by reputable, bonded foreign tour companies who understand and respect Interact's philosophy and policies.



HOST FAMILIES

Do we speak Spanish all the time in the home?

Of course. The key is communication, not perfection. You'll speak Spanish with your host family and your roommate. Have fun, use gestures, keep a notebook and dictionary at your side.

How many students stay with each host family?

Two, although this may vary depending upon the specific city and date of travel. Student roommates must be of the same gender, even if they're related. The Organizing Teacher will have more information concerning living arrangements with host families.

Do we stay with middle class families?

Yes. Middle class USA is not the same as middle class abroad. Middle class characterizes our country. We are the wealthiest middle class country in the world. Unfortunately, we frequently fail to recognize this. Part of your experience is to experience life in another culture; enjoy those differences. The more you commit yourself to absorbing the foreign culture, the more you'll benefit from the experience.

Each homestay location has its own culture and personality. Your teacher will have more details about your specific location. Some are in smaller cities or quiet countryside locations while others are more cosmopolitan. Your homestay experience is short-term but high impact. For a few days, you'll have an opportunity to immerse yourself in a different culture. The overwhelming majority of participants have had a positive experience and many have formed lifelong bonds with their host families.

Do all families have teenagers or children?

No.

Do many families have teenagers or children?

Yes, but not necessarily teenagers. The majority have younger children and it's not unusual to have older family members staying at home.

Are our host families trained as tour guides?

Of course not. This is the greatest misconception about host families. You will be treated as a member of the family and will share in normal family activities. Host families are not responsible for entertaining you. For some families, watching TV is their favorite activity.

Are homes located close to one another?

Sometimes, but do not expect this - it can lead to unnecessary disappointment and undue worry. All homes are safe and secure.

Anything else?

Yes. Many host families will be more sensitive than what you're accustomed to. Be sensitive to their feelings and customs and practice extreme politeness. Responding negatively to an invitation and expressing disgust or dislike towards aspects of your host family's culture is considered rude.

A HUGE thank you to all of you at Interact for again providing us with a wonderful trip and the opportunity to travel. I am beyond blessed to have a job in which I "have" to take a trip every two years. You are all skilled at what you do, and I constantly remind the nervous parents that you would not be able to make this your family's business if you weren't as good as I say you are! We are already planning for our next trip!
Wendy Bixby, WI



HOMESTAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Should we bring a gift?** It's a wonderful gesture although it's not required or expected. If you do, bring an inexpensive, easy-to-pack, unbreakable gift that is appropriate for the entire family. Please do not bring age or gender specific gifts. Every family member may not be at home during your visit. History books are appreciated about your city, county or state. School, university, or professional sports logo items such as mugs, plates, or towels have been popular.
- Will we see our Organizing Teacher during homestay?** Yes, daily. Teachers accompany throughout. Additionally, in the unlikely event of an emergency situation, your homestay directors maintain around-the-clock communication with your teacher.
- Does the Organizing Teacher participate in homestay?** Generally, yes. In some locations, teachers may stay in a guest apartment or nearby hotel. Regardless, the Organizing Teacher and Official Assistants maintain the same high quality, daily contact with their students.
- Will my family eat together?** Generally, yes, meal time is more leisurely and more social than what we're accustomed to in our country. However, a lot depends upon the specific country, local customs, and touring schedule. In some locations, both parents work and both may not be home for each meal. As an example, in Spain, families are accustomed to eating dinner after 10pm. Because our students are there for only a few days, it is nearly impossible to make this cultural adjustment and remain healthy; therefore, it's common for Spanish families to serve the student dinner at an earlier hour.
- What if my host family offers wine or beer with the meal?** Host families receive a copy of our policies in Spanish and agree to abide by them. However, if this should ever occur, politely tell them "no, gracias." That should be the end of the situation. If it is not, contact your Organizing Teacher immediately so that the situation can be addressed and corrected.
- Will we need our own towels?** 95% of your host families provide them. Regardless, we recommend that you bring your own. Washcloths are virtually unknown outside of our country.
- Will my host "MOM" pick up after me like my real "MOM?"** No way. You are expected to keep your room clean and tidy. Ask for guidelines before washing clothes in the sink or tub. Certain detergents will damage the plumbing.
- Is there anything else that will help me prepare better?**
1. Many host families work Monday-Saturday. This means access to your home may be limited during the day.
 2. Because the majority of our participants live in the Midwest, we're not accustomed to the tropics. Those who live in tropical areas such as Florida, California, and Arizona are used to seeing chameleons in their homes (you'll even find them in luxury hotels). Please understand that chameleons or tiny tropical insects are part of the tropics - they are not a sign of uncleanliness.
 3. Take fewer showers (or baths) before departure. Take a cold shower or two.
 4. Keep a personal journal.
 5. Each school should consider keeping a group journal.

Our last trip was absolutely amazing. It was my first with a host family and it was so much more incredible that way! I got to have deeper and real conversations with my hosts about everything under the sun in a way that pulled me out of the "tour group guy" and made me more like "serious international traveler ready to devour knowledge guy."
Jeff Gerenscer, WI

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

AGREEMENT & RELEASE (the "Agreement")

1. I AGREE TO RELEASE, DEFEND, INDEMNIFY AND HOLD INTERACT TRAVEL, INC. ("ITI") AND ITS AGENTS AND EMPLOYEES, MY LOCAL SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND THE ORGANIZING TEACHERS AND/OR OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS HARMLESS FROM ANY AND ALL CLAIMS, LOSSES, DAMAGES, CAUSES OF ACTION, COSTS AND EXPENSES (INCLUDING REASONABLE ATTORNEYS FEES AND OTHER COSTS OF LITIGATION) ARISING FROM OR IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH: (A) MY PARTICIPATION IN AN ITI PROGRAM, (B) MY BREACH OR VIOLATION OF THIS AGREEMENT, OR (C) ANY ACT OR OMISSION THAT I COMMIT OR ENGAGE IN WHILE PARTICIPATING IN AN ITI PROGRAM, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY SUCH CLAIMS OR CAUSES OF ACTION ARISE SOLELY FROM ITI'S GROSS NEGLIGENT OR WILLFUL MISCONDUCT. NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, I AGREE THAT ITI'S LIABILITY, IF ANY, UNDER THIS AGREEMENT SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE TOTAL AMOUNT PAID BY ME FOR THE PROGRAM. I FURTHER AGREE THAT ITI ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOSS OF MY PASSPORT, AIRLINE TICKETS, OR OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, LOSS OR DAMAGE TO MY LUGGAGE OR PERSONAL BELONGINGS. IN NO EVENT SHALL ITI BE LIABLE FOR CONSEQUENTIAL OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES SUCH AS WITHOUT LIMITATION, LOST PROFITS OR WAGES. Each program begins with the takeoff of the international flight and ends upon completion of the return flight to the United States. ITI is not responsible for events beyond its control, such as acts of God, war, terrorism, strikes or government restrictions or delay caused by persons not controlled by ITI, such as airlines, bus companies, railways, and hotels. ITI reserves the right to terminate any participant's program at any time for reasons which appear to be valid. ITI SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT, WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTIFICATION TO MY PARENTS, WITHOUT ESCORT OR REFUND, AND AT MY OR MY PARENTS' EXPENSE, TO SEND ME HOME IF I AM UNDER THE AGE OF 21 AND I DRINK, SAMPLE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE ILLEGAL DRUGS OR VIOLATE ITI'S CODE OF CONDUCT STATED AT PAGE 3 OF THE PREGUNTAS STUDENT BOOKLET. ITI DOES NOT ACCEPT PARENTAL PERMISSION FORMS AUTHORIZING THEIR SON/DAUGHTER TO DRINK OR SAMPLE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. FURTHERMORE, I AM ADVISED THAT THEFT OR USE AND/OR POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION LOCAL, STATE, FEDERAL OR FOREIGN LAW AND MAY BE PUNISHABLE BY IMMEDIATE IMPRISONMENT. CONSULAR INTERVENTION WILL NOT BRING ABOUT THE RELEASE OF THE OFFENDER.

2. I agree that this is a supervised program and I am subject to the authority of my Organizing Teacher at all times. I further agree that ITI has the right to enforce the Code of Conduct stated at page 3 of the Preguntas Student Booklet, which is incorporated into this Agreement by reference. In addition, I agree to stay in my assigned hotel room/home from 10 p.m. - 7 a.m. unless I am with my Organizing Teacher, host family, or unless an emergency exists. I understand and agree that if I fail to abide by any of these policies, a collect phone call will be made to my parents by the Organizing Teacher or ITI. If ITI deems it appropriate, I agree that ITI may send me home without escort, at my or my parent's expense, with no refund granted.

3. I understand that if I am expelled from school or otherwise disciplined by my teacher, my school or by local authorities, or if I am charged with or convicted of any crime, or if I fail to meet any oral or written requirements for participation in the program as set forth by ITI, my teacher or school, I will be declared ineligible to participate in the ITI program and I will be subject to ITI's standard cancellation policy described below under the section entitled: "CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY".

4. If I become ill or incapacitated, I agree that ITI may take whatever action it deems necessary to preserve my health and safety including, without limitation, obtaining medical treatment for me at my expense, and/or transporting me at my own or my parents' expense back to my home for medical treatment. ITI is not responsible for the quality and timeliness of any such medical treatment received by me. I agree to pay any extra expenses incurred on my behalf by ITI for medical or other related reasons. If ITI has paid such expenses, I will reimburse them immediately upon my return. I also agree to reimburse ITI for all costs of collection, including reasonable attorney's fees and costs, relating to payment of medical expenses or any other amount due under this Agreement.

5. I agree that ITI is not responsible for my well-being when I am absent from ITI-supervised activities. I shall be exclusively liable for any financial obligations I may incur or any damage or injury I may cause while participating in an ITI program.

6. I agree that any social media or video likenesses taken of me while participating in an ITI program and any of my comments or statements may be used in future materials published or produced by ITI.

7. I certify that I am in good physical and mental health and that I have no special medical or physical conditions, nor any special needs or requirements, which would impede participation in the program, nor be of any harm or inconvenience to myself or the other participants.

8. I agree that I am solely responsible for obtaining and carrying proper travel documents, and if I am not a U.S. citizen, the appropriate visas for countries I am to visit. Further, I shall hold ITI harmless if I am unable to obtain the necessary documents for participation in the program. I understand that inability to obtain these visas or other documents does not constitute grounds for withdrawal with full refund; the standard cancellation will apply as listed the section below entitled "CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY".

9. I grant to ITI the right to select a replacement for my Organizing Teacher if he/she is unable or unwilling to participate in the program.

10. I understand that if events outside ITI's control require a change in the student fee that my Organizing Teacher will receive written notification with available options and deadlines.

11. I agree that ITI reserves the right to determine airlines and flight routings.

12. I agree that ITI and/or the air carrier have the right to substitute airlines, to make changes in equipment, in the published itinerary, in the departure and arrival dates, times, or cities, or to alter the itinerary and I agree to accept any such changes. No refunds will be made in the event of changes in the itinerary occurring prior to or after departure.

13. I understand that all information pertaining to my program, including statements and air tickets, are emailed directly to my Organizing Teacher.

14. This Agreement may not be modified except in writing signed by an authorized ITI representative. This Agreement shall be governed by, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin, without regard to conflict of law principles. All disputes, claims for relief, causes of actions, or counterclaims regarding the enforcement or interpretation of this Agreement shall be initiated and prosecuted exclusively in the state or federal courts having jurisdiction over Brown County, Wisconsin. I consent to the jurisdiction and venue of such courts and expressly waive all objections based on the doctrines of personal jurisdiction or forum non conveniens. I KNOWINGLY, VOLUNTARILY AND INTELLIGENTLY WAIVE MY CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO A TRIAL BY JURY WITH RESPECT TO ANY DISPUTES, CLAIMS FOR RELIEF, CAUSES OF ACTIONS, OR COUNTERCLAIMS THAT MAY ARISE UNDER THIS AGREEMENT AND AGREE THAT ANY LITIGATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNING THIS AGREEMENT SHALL BE HEARD BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION SITTING WITHOUT A JURY. I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT I HAVE REVIEWED THE EFFECT OF THIS WAIVER OF JURY TRIAL WITH COMPETENT LEGAL COUNSEL OF MY CHOICE, OR HAVE BEEN AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO PRIOR TO SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT.

15. I understand that ITI does not investigate or actively monitor the Organizing Teacher and Official Assistants. Instead, I shall perform any investigations, background checks, interviews and the like that I determine, in my sole discretion, are necessary prior participating in an ITI program. ITI HEREBY DISCLAIMS ALL REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES REGARDING ANY ORGANIZING TEACHER AND OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS, WHETHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, ANY REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY REGARDING THE CHARACTER OR BACKGROUND OF AN ORGANIZING TEACHER AND OFFICIAL ASSISTANTS.

16. No claim, regardless of form, arising out of or in connection with this Agreement, may be brought against ITI more than ninety (90) days after the date on which the cause of action accrued.

17. All of the terms and conditions of the ITI Preguntas Student Booklet are incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this Agreement. In the event of any conflict between the terms and conditions of this Agreement and the terms of the ITI Preguntas Student Booklet, the terms and conditions of the Agreement shall govern and control.

18. I acknowledge and agree that my participation in the ITI program shall be automatically cancelled if I miss any payment deadline. Time is of the essence with respect to all payment deadlines.

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

If I wish to voluntarily cancel my participation in the ITI program, I must notify ITI in writing of such cancellation: interact@interact-travel.com. The cancellation date is determined by the date that ITI receives my cancellation.

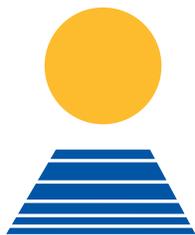
CANCELLATION WITH IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT:

Cancellation with Immediate Replacement is available through 125 days prior to departure. ITI's official form should be obtained from the Organizing Teacher. I will be entitled to a refund, less a \$200 processing fee, if I am able to find a replacement participant suitable to the Organizing Teacher. I understand that I am solely responsible for locating a suitable replacement.

STANDARD CANCELLATION (NO REPLACEMENT)

If I am unable to find a suitable replacement participant, the following shall apply:

1. \$450 is non-refundable & non-transferable through 125 days prior to departure.
2. From 125 days prior to departure through 50 days prior to departure: \$850 is non-refundable & non-transferable; optional tour fees are also non-refundable & non-transferable. Possible airline, touring, and hotel penalties are additional.
3. Less than 50 days prior to departure: no refund.



INTERACT

Interact Travel - 2207 Velp Avenue, Green Bay, Wisconsin, 54303
www.interact-travel.com