Country: Costa Rica
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Education in Costa Rica

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TESL 539
Fall 2012
Where is Costa Rica?

- Small country in Central America
- Between Nicaragua and Panama
- Pacific Ocean to the West & Caribbean Sea to the East
- Half the size of Ohio
- Covers 19,730 square miles
- Spanish for “Rich Coast” – explorers believed they would find a lot of gold in the country

www.costaricaview.com, 2012
The People of Costa Rica

- **Population** – 4,726,575 (2011)
  9/10 people from Costa Rica have ancestors from Spain
  129th Largest Country in the world

- **Ethnic Groups** – European and some Mestizo 94%, African 3%, Chinese 1%, Other 2%

- **Official Language** – Spanish

- **Literacy Rate** – 95% (over age 15 being able to read)

- **Major Industries** – Farming, fishing, manufacturing, services, tourism

- **Poverty** – 24.2% of population below poverty line
Current Issues in Costa Rica

- Deforestation—clearing of land, soil erosion, air pollution
- Acid Rain
- Effluents—waste materials are released into the environment
- Endangered species
- Poaching—The illegal killing of animals/fish
- Pollution
- Drug Trafficking
- Altitude sickness, Malaria, Dengue, & Hepatitis
- Insects and dangerous snakes
Education in Costa Rica

- Most literate population in Central America
- Was one of the 1st nations in Central and South America to offer free public education
- Elementary and high schools are found in almost every community.

- Years Compulsory – 9 years
- Average 28 students in a classroom
- Students are required to wear uniforms during their first nine years of education (in order to lessen social and economic distinctions)
- School year is from February to December (vacation from December to February and a few weeks off in July)

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Education in Costa Rica

**Elementary school** – kindergarten through grade 6
- Subjects – Math, English/ Spanish, science, social studies, religion and physical education
- Elementary School is 8am to 11am
- Students must pass a test each year in order to progress to the next elementary grade
- Move onto secondary school when 12 years old

**High school** consists of 5 levels, finishing at 11\(^{th}\) grade
- Must attend school until 16 years old
- High school – 11am to 2pm
- HS students must pass the Bachillerato test to receive HS diploma and admission to college
- Costa Rica has five public universities for students to attend
- Private universities are also an option
Classrooms in Costa Rica

- Schools in the city—noisy, polluted and sometimes dangerous
- There are some schools with one classroom, a library and an art room.
- Desks/tables for students to sit at
- Chalkboard in each room and a few have technology

www.globalgiving.org, 2012
Both at home and school, cooperation is approved and competition is discouraged.

When a teacher is absent, classes are usually cancelled and children are sent home.

Schools provide housing for teachers during the week. They go home every weekend.

Very conservative society, in which children have a high respect for their parents and adults.

Discipline comes from this respect.

Children are expected to follow the rules and instruction at both home and school.
Teachers in Costa Rica

- Need to speak English
- Have a college degree (in anything)
- Costa Ricans place a high value on appearance – teachers must dress professional and look neat
- Many schools do not require certification, but it is a plus, and might result in a slightly higher salary.
- On average, teachers must around 5 US dollars per hour.
- When hiring, schools usually make no differentiation between where ESL degrees were earned.
- Having a master’s in ESL will greatly improve your chances of landing a job!
- There are more teachers in Costa Rica then policemen!

www.globalgiving.org, 2012
English in Costa Rica

- English is the first foreign language in Costa Rica
- Second most taught language
- English is spoken almost everywhere and is taught in all public and private schools
- Costa Ricans believe English will help students advance in the career world
- Many businesses require employees to speak English
The Place of Education in Costa Rica

- Costa Rica has continued throughout the 20th century to make education a priority.
- The 1st president of Costa Rica, Jose Maria Castro, was a former teacher.
- President Figueres (elected in 1994) has promoted a computer in each classroom and has made English mandatory in the classroom.
- Costa Rica has over 100 libraries for students and adults to further their education.
Family Values

- Family bonds and values are very strong
- Average families seem larger than usual
- Extended families often live together
- Children will live with their parents until they finish college or get married
- The average Costa Rican desires to have a good job, get married, and have a family to take care of.
- Families value education and encourage children to pursue college
Costa Ricans are the 4th smallest Hispanic group in the United States.

Smallest Central American population.

Costa Rican populations are prominent in the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Los Angeles and Miami.

Since 1930’s, only 58,000 Costa Ricans have migrated to the US. This number has been increasing very slowly.

The Ten States with the largest Costa Rican population:
1. California
2. Florida
3. New Jersey
4. New York
5. Texas
6. North Carolina
7. Georgia
8. Pennsylvania
9. Massachusetts
10. Connecticut
Resources

Books–

Websites–
http://www.entercostarica.com/travel/192/Education.php
Resources

Images–


Resources

Images–


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