



MODERN LANGUAGE STUDIES ABROAD

## MLSA Ambassador Profile

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*We kindly request that reach out to our Ambassadors only if you are seriously considering the program.*

✓ **What led you to study abroad? Why did you choose your MLSA?**

I was led to study abroad after the insistence of my family and my Spanish Language professor. I saw it as an opportunity to further my education in Spanish, as well as learn about another culture. I chose MLSA because of the interplay the organization has had in the past with my university. The University of Memphis is a large participant in MLSA's Costa Rica Program, and that bond was important to me as I went for my first time abroad.

✓ **What was the most interesting cultural experience you had abroad?**

"Interesting" is a rather vague term, and as such, I have included a brief summary of a few of my more interesting experiences; Completely positive, rather harrowing, or awe-inspiring:

**Positive:** Though pure positivity is rarely completely satisfactory, one of the most pleasant bits of my experience was that of walking around in San Jose in the area immediately surrounding the National Theatre. I very much enjoyed the experience of seeing this area, and I had the opportunity to eat with another student at a two-floor restaurant, overseeing the street and the vendors. This was truly grand.

**Harrowing:** I had never used an ATM prior to my visit to the University of Costa Rica, and, as a result, I was unaware of the rules surrounding the machines. As a result, my card was taken by the machine at one point for an entire week. However, this led to my speaking to a number of locals, being forced to use the Spanish language, creating and strengthening relationships, and eating at a real Soda for the first time in my experience.

**Awesome:** Of course, I mean "Awesome" in the sense of something which may inspire awe. Frankly, in Costa Rica, I experienced so many things which inspired awe. I walked into a beautiful, vaulted church. I felt both white black sand between my toes. I watched the sun set over San Jose. I heard waterfalls larger than a skyscraper fall down, its pressure assaulting my ears. I saw tiny leaf-cutter ants carry blades of grass. There is so much beauty to be beheld in Costa Rica that I gush at the thought.

✓ **What was the biggest challenge/concern of your study abroad experience? How did you respond?**

I had never flown before this trip. If I may be so frank, this was horrific. I was scared due to the security, as I have heard many horror stories. I was petrified, but, because of the encouragement of some very kind passengers, I made it out without any great deal of panic picking at the edges of my being. Though to be frank, I still would eagerly support a bus or train option to Costa Rica. Oh, my.

✓ **What coursework did you take while abroad? How did courses abroad compare with your home university's classes?**

I studied Beginner Spanish II and Intermediate Spanish I. These courses, in spite of counting for Spanish II and III, seem, in my experience, to be roughly equivalent to Spanish II. However, being in the culture to such an extent has given me a greater understanding of the language than I believe a course could have given me.

✓ **What was the most memorable/meaningful aspect of your time abroad?**

It was meaningful for me to be able to stand out and stretch my lingual wings. I was able to fall in love with language, which is something that I feel I have been trying to do my entire life. This aspect of Studying abroad, of learning that I love language, was highly influential in my decision to change my major from nursing to English.

✓ **What impact did studying abroad have on you personally?**

As I alluded to in the previous paragraph, I have changed my major due to my love of language and literature. I am also minoring in Spanish and Religious studies. Frankly, I am following the things that I love, rather than that which is debatably more practical.



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- ✓ **What would you recommend to students considering studying abroad, especially to your country/program?**

“Do it, and don't you dare have the audacity to use money as an excuse.” Careful management of finances for a number of months is no reason to avoid such a formative, humbling experience.

### 1. Yo Amo a Costa Rica



Taken in San Jose Costa Rica, across the Street from the National Market, wherein I spent far too much of my money. This is where I first recognized that I'd brought a Union Jack on my excursion, in spite of being from the USA. Oh, well.

### 2. My First Oxcart



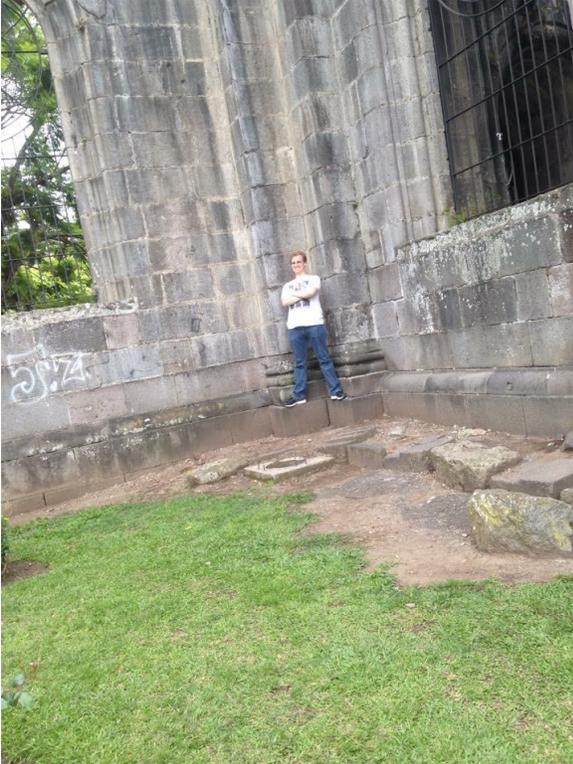
Taken at the National Market, this photo was taken right after I had learned the significance of the Oxcart to the Costa Rican Peoples. Further, this was my first unofficial excursion with my classmates, and it was very fun.



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### 3. About to Drop the Hottest Summer Album of 2015...



The Sheer scale of The Ruins was something to behold, and I found it quite beautiful. Once I had left, though, I realized that I had taken photos of the greenery and of others, but none of myself. Thus, after giving my cameraphone to a classmate, I lept onto the edge of the exterior of the ruins, crossed my arms (partially for balance, but mostly because I was wearing my Union Jack YET AGAIN) and smiled. This is one of my favorite photos from Costa Rica.

I would like all of those involved with this process to be made aware of the fact that I do, in fact, own more shirts than a Union Jack Duran-Duran T-shirt. It just so happens to be one of my favorites.