



MODERN LANGUAGE STUDIES ABROAD

MLSA Ambassador Profile

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

Name: Jordin Howell
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School: University of Memphis
Program: MLSA at the University of Costa Rica
Session: Summer 1
Courses: Undergraduate Level – Intermediate Spanish Language

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

I wanted to be fully emerged in the Spanish language while experiencing a new country. I chose to go through MLSA because it was accredited by my school, had amazing reviews, and a great selection of countries to choose from. I loved the scheduled excursions and the home-stay options that were given by MLSA as well.

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

I think the most interesting experience that I had was going to the Costa Rica v Trinidad y Tobago football (soccer) game. On the way to the game we met some locals and had an amazing time talking to them and bring a part of something that is so integrated into their culture. It was very exciting and it was amazing to see everyone in the stadium so connected and into the game.

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

I missed my family so much. On the first day, I was so overwhelmed. I even cried a little. My host mom made me coffee and talked to me until I started to feel a little less stress. After this first sprint of culture shock, I started to calm down. It was really important that I made friends. They were able to make me feel like Costa Rica was my home away from home. Creating that support group while I was abroad is really what helped me to adjust quicker and feel more stable in this new environment.

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

I took Intermediate Spanish 1 and 2. These courses were 100x more effective than any classes I took while on campus. I feel like I was slightly underprepared when I arrived due to the extreme difference between a classroom setting and being emerged in the language. Even after the first week, my host family could tell a dramatic difference in my



language skills. I HIGHLY recommend this program to anyone I talk to due to that level of improvement.

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

The trip to La Paz Waterfall and Nature Park was one of the most memorable moments of my trip. I was in awe of these enormous waterfalls and climbing through the different levels. It was *the most* beautiful place I have ever been in my life. Even the drive there was gorgeous due to the misty mountain views and luscious green landscapes. I loved how many different animals were there as well. I was able to be two feet away from a Toucan. I will never forget any of it for the rest of my life.

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

I have a new appreciation for culture. I knew that different culture had different beliefs, ways of doing things, and languages, but I never realized how diverse life is. I didn't expect to experience culture shock, despite everything I read. I think that this experience has changed my view on life dramatically. I just want to explore the world and continue to meet as many amazing people as I can. There is so much to learn about others, but really it teaches you about yourself. I made friends that will last a lifetime, my Tica family still checks in on me, and a piece of my heart will always still be in Costa Rica.

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

Yes! I actually can't stop talking about it. I have already recommended it to so many of my tutoring students that have talked about different options for their study. I think this is something that everyone should do in their life and I really want to be a part of helping people make that decision.



Jordin after hiking down to the pool in front of one of the waterfalls at La Paz Waterfalls on one of the optional MLSA excursions.



Jordin during an independent trip she took to go white water rafting at Rios Tropicales in Costa Rica.



Jordin proudly sporting a University of Costa Rica t-shirt while enjoying a trip to the Butterfly House.