



# MÁXIMO NIVEL



## VOLUNTEER & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM 2010

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Cusco, Peru  
San Jose, Costa Rica  
La Antigua, Guatemala  
Asheville, North Carolina

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**For those who live it!**



## About Máximo Nivel / Máximum Level

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Máximum Level was founded as an intensive language institute, and over time has developed its expertise in teacher training, language immersion, and adventure and cultural travel. Máximum Level has grown rapidly since its inception and now offers its original Native English Program, Native Spanish Program, international volunteer and internship programs, and our TEFL/TESOL Certification program in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. Our success is based on our commitment to quality and to providing the highest level of service possible to all of our clients

Máximum Level provides a safe and organized environment for volunteers to come and learn about Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala – three of the most diverse countries in the world. We work in partnership with NGOs, the national police, municipal governments, hospitals and clinics, and other organizations to provide volunteer programs and organize development initiatives that benefit children and the conservation of Peru's, Costa Rica's, and Guatemala's natural environments. Our various projects provide food, clothing and other aid to orphanages and also fund free English classes for the poor.

Throughout your volunteer or internship placement you will have the support and guidance of our experienced Field Managers and in-country coordinators and you will have access to the entire Máximum Level staff – they will be your support team and will provide you with 24-hour assistance.

Máximum Level hosts between 30 to 100 foreign visitors and travelers each week. This combined with our other programs – Native English Program, Native Spanish Program, and our TEFL/TESOL Certification program – means that you will join a lively atmosphere filled with lots of opportunity for cultural exchange and opportunities to make friends from all over the world.

### Facilities

Máximum Level's offices have been designed with the needs of our clients and staff in mind. Every location provides modern computers, high-speed Internet connections including office-wide WIFI access, and a snack bar where every morning the coffee and tea are piping hot and FREE.

Every classroom is equipped with comfortable chairs, an oversized whiteboard, and a cassette and CD player. The common areas have international cable and/or satellite service connected to high definition TVs.

**Note:** Even though you will find our facilities very well-equipped, we strongly recommend you bring a laptop computer as this makes Internet access even easier and more convenient.

## **The International Volunteer Program Includes:**

- Official volunteer service certificate
- Letter of recommendation (upon request)
- Spanish language classes 2 hours/day
- Certified, native Spanish teacher
- Free Spanish placement exam
- Free Spanish textbook and materials
- Tandem Conversation Program
- Free Spanish tutoring Monday - Saturday
- Access to high-speed Internet and computers
- Office-wide WIFI access
- Free salsa lessons every Saturday
- Free coffee and tea
- Onsite snack bar and cafe
- Monthly International Party with open bar
- Movie Night every Saturday
- Emergency contact number 24/7
- A toll-free emergency hotline in the U.S.

## **We Take Good Care of You**

Máximo Nivel offers you a wide range of services to help make sure your program is both comfortable and enjoyable. We advise you on what to bring for your trip; what airlines to fly; what type of accommodation best suits you; how much money you need to bring; visa requirements (if any); and all of the ins and outs of day-to-day life in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.

From the moment you arrive, we put all of our efforts into making your stay enjoyable. We meet you at the airport and take you to your family-stay or other accommodation. We provide you with all the information you need regarding cash machines, shopping, trekking, sightseeing, and nightlife.

Every month our international program participants are invited to our monthly International Party including open bar and salsa dancing!

Every program participant is provided with an emergency telephone number to reach a member of the executive team 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

## Volunteer & Internship Projects

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Máximo Nivel offers volunteer and internship projects in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. These projects provide the unique opportunity to live and work in Latin America while experiencing the countries' rich cultural diversity and building your proficiency in Spanish. Through the various project opportunities you are able to make a contribution to global society while at the same time experiencing language and cultural immersion.

The majority of our volunteer and internship projects take place in and around Cusco, Peru, San Jose, Costa Rica, and La Antigua, Guatemala. However, we also offer volunteer and internship projects in other areas and cities including: Arequipa, Trujillo, Puerto Maldonado, and Urubamba (in Peru); the Pacific and Caribbean coastal areas (in Costa Rica), and in Guatemala City and the jungle (in Guatemala).

### Project Areas

Projects offer opportunities for international travelers and students to help out, develop skills, and even undertake in-depth study of a particular area in an international setting. Volunteer and internship opportunities include:

- Orphanage/Childcare
- Medical/Healthcare
- Environment & Conservation
- Teaching English
- Construction
- International Business and Tourism
- Not-for-profit/NGOs
- Social issues (Poverty, religion, etc.)

During your project, you will engage in daily activities working with a project director and Máximo Nivel's field managers. You will receive a full orientation and be fully supported by our staff. **However, it is important to remember that ultimately the success of your project depends on you and what you make of it. We strongly encourage you to be outgoing and "ready to pitch in" – in a busy environment with major funding and economic hurdles this will go a long way to ensure you are as deeply involved as you want to be.**

### Orphanage/Childcare

Poverty, abuse, and alcoholism have left many children in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala without families, depriving them of the parental love and care they need. Máximo Nivel's volunteer projects aspire to change these children's situation by providing caring and nurturing volunteers to work and play with them. The orphanages support and protect these children, but most are under-funded and need all the help they can get. Your assistance helps keep these children off the street, and helps provide them with a happy and productive childhood.

In Latin America, hundreds of poor children live and sleep on the street. Street children projects focus on getting these children off the street, and providing them with shelter, food, and education. Various educational, recreational, and health projects are ongoing to support these unfortunate children.

Depending on individual skills and interests, volunteers will act as mentors, help children with their homework, and teach English. However, your love and support are the most important elements for these disadvantaged children.

### **ORPHANAGES**

Volunteers at orphanages provide care for the children, help them with their homework, and organize workshops and playtime activities. You may work with other volunteers and/or teachers. Most orphanages receive either boys or girls, though there are a few that receive both girls and boys. The children – ages 5 to 16 years – value your care, attention, and friendship.

### **COMMUNITY CENTERS**

Máximo Nivel works with several community centers in Cusco, San Jose, and La Antigua. Community centers provide an important place where children can go after school to receive help with their homework and spend time in a safe environment. Volunteers assist children with their homework and organize educational activities.

### **DAYCARE AND NUTRITION CENTER**

Daycare centers provide housing, care, and food for working single mothers and their children. The children – ages 0 to 5 years – value your care, attention, and companionship while their mothers are working. These projects receive children whose mothers can't afford regular daycare services. As a volunteer you will care for the children and organize playtime activities. You will work with the resident psychologist, assistants, and possibly other volunteers. Volunteers are very much needed to bring energy and commitment to these centers.

### **SCHOOLS**

The aim of our school projects is to improve the quality of education for children and to better the knowledge of children in rural and/or inner-city communities. Many of our school-based projects focus on construction in order to improve the learning environment. Other activities for volunteers include putting on dance or theater classes, organizing classrooms, teaching English, and helping with classroom management.

## **Teaching English**

Máximo Nivel's volunteer projects in teaching English offer volunteers ample opportunity to explore the day-to-day life in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala while helping young students improve their English skills. Work includes teaching English (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, writing, listening, etc.) to primary, middle, and high school students 2-4 hours per day.

Most volunteers work at small community centers, orphanages, or shelters for street children. We also work with several local primary and secondary schools. At these projects volunteers work with and assist the fulltime teacher – a professional teacher certified in ESL (English as a Second Language). You will help teach regular English classes and also tutor the children and help them with their homework.

### **EARN YOUR TEFL/TESOL CERTIFICATION**

If you have at least 4 weeks and are interested in a career teaching English as a second language, Máximo Nivel offers you an excellent opportunity to earn your TEFL/TESOL Certification in Cusco, Peru, San Jose, Costa Rica, or La Antigua, Guatemala.

The certification in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) is recognized worldwide as a teaching qualification for teachers of English as a second language (ESL). The TEFL/TESOL program will show you how to effectively teach English to non-native speakers, and will equip you with both the theoretical and practical concepts required to teach English anywhere in the world.

Máximo Nivel's accredited 150-hour program includes 100 hours of classroom instruction and 25 hours of practical teaching and observation and an additional 25 hours of required self-study and research outside of the classroom. Both intensive and fun, the TEFL/TESOL program provides you with comprehensive training in a professional and supportive environment, and is available as a 4-week/onsite course or hybrid online/onsite course.

Following the TEFL/TESOL program you can apply for both volunteer and paid positions. Positions are available throughout South America, Central America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

### **Medical/Healthcare**

Máximo Nivel's health projects provide volunteers with the opportunity to work in hospitals, clinics, and with specialized projects providing healthcare to disadvantaged and at-risk people. Volunteers work alongside doctors, nurses, therapists, and other medical professionals in urban or rural areas.

Depending on your medical experience and Spanish language skills you may be asked to assist with check-ups, triage, suturing wounds, and giving vaccinations. Volunteers may also help with vaccination and public health campaigns.

***Placement in health projects requires notarized documentation of your medical school, nursing school, or other medical credentials.***

Medical placements ARE available for people without medical training. These volunteer projects are generally located in an urban hospital or clinic and often involve working with children who have mental or physical disabilities. Volunteers will generally help feed, bathe, and play with the children; and may be asked to assist in physical therapy.

Medical volunteers assist with general check-ups and examinations of patients, as well as assist in triaging emergency patients and possibly in traveling to patients' homes in rural areas to help with vaccinations and/or to care for patients who have become immobilized.

Depending on the volunteer's ability to conduct themselves in the Spanish language and the expertise they demonstrate, volunteers will be able to work as independently as possible.

Here is an excerpt from a volunteer-doctor in Peru:

I found this both humbling and empowering. That they can practice the quality of medicine that they do with the financial restrictions they face is very impressive. I felt it was very clever [of them] to have me work in topical medicine as it is very visual given my limited to non-existent Spanish. To me, anyone volunteering at the clinic is afforded an extraordinary window into medicine in Peru and they can make a real difference. [Volunteers] bringing additional money can also make an extraordinary difference as the cost of an X-ray is only \$6.00 and medicine is \$1.00, yet a number of patients cannot afford these small amounts, which could be life changing.

Healthcare volunteers should understand that independence in medical projects will always be determined by:

- a) Level of medical training and demonstrated expertise
- b) Ability to speak Spanish
- c) Age
- d) Personality and ability to take initiative
- e) Duration of program

**Here are some examples of volunteer duties based on medical training.**

#### Pre-med and 1<sup>st</sup> year or 2<sup>nd</sup> year of medical school

1. Clinic or hospital for low-income families
  - Triage: Taking weight, height, blood pressure, heart rate, temperature
  - Hospital wards: Making beds, cleaning, talking with patients
  - Materials: Preparing materials, sterilizing equipment
2. Clinic for mentally and physically disabled children
  - Activities: Taking the kids to the park or farm, organizing art and crafts workshops, providing individual attention
  - Mealtimes: Assisting during mealtimes, assisting with tooth brushing

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of medical school/Licensed doctor or nurse

1. Clinic or hospital for low-income families
  - Topico: Cleaning wounds, giving injections and sutures
  - Consult rooms and specialized departments: Assisting doctor taking physicals and histories
  - Campaigns: Giving vaccinations, taking records, drawing blood samples
2. Clinic for mentally and physically disabled children
  - Activities: Taking the kids to the park or farm, organizing art and crafts workshops, providing love and attention
  - Mealtimes: Assisting during mealtimes, assisting with tooth brushing
  - Physical therapy: Providing basic assistance with physical therapy

## Conservation

Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala are some of the most bio-diverse countries in the world. Opportunities abound for conservation projects in these ecological rich countries. Máximo Nivel offers unique volunteer projects including:

- Turtle conservation
- Biodiversity inventories
- Eco-Tourism work in protected areas
- Animal care
- Re-forestation
- Eco-Agriculture

### TURTLE CONSERVATION

Turtle conservation volunteers work on projects intended to protect turtle nests from human poachers, help manage sustainable egg-harvesting programs, and work in hatcheries to ensure the turtle populations do not become endangered.

Volunteers help in the research and conservation work, such as night patrolling, working in the hatcheries, collecting eggs, and measuring nests, and counting turtles. **It is important to note that volunteers must be in good physical condition and be willing to work 6 days/week. Work is often done at night and the early morning hours. Hot weather, rain, and insects are an unavoidable part of the turtle conservation experience.**

### **REFORESTATION**

These projects help rural communities and small villages to reforest areas that have lost native flora or fauna – encouraging and working with the local inhabitants to recover native species of trees, plants, and animals.

Volunteers work with professional environmentalists and other professionals, and project work includes some travel as well as office hours for planning and study. Depending on the volunteer's ability to conduct themselves in the Spanish language and the expertise they demonstrate, the project supervisors will let you work as independently as possible.

### **ANIMAL CARE**

Volunteers work on special projects including biodiversity inventories, turtle and/or bird conservation and other protection projects for rare and endangered animal species. These projects take volunteers from high in the mountains down to tropical beaches, and one project even includes a university-run zoo designed to protect, breed and re-introduce certain species back into the wild. Volunteers work with professional organizations and perform their duties side-by-side with scientists and other volunteers who are dedicated to these critical animal protection projects.

### **AGRICULTURE (Peru Only)**

Volunteers work in a small mountain community called Salkantay. The project is based on cultural exchange between volunteers and the local community. Volunteers work with the villagers during their annual harvest and planting seasons (depending on the time of year), and will work side-by-side with them as they tend their crops. Volunteers can also help at the local school and can learn how traditional textiles are made. Most villages speak some Spanish, but it is their second language; their native language is Quechua. **Volunteers on this project must be prepared to rough it.**

### **Construction**

Volunteers on construction projects work on repairing or building homes or schools for orphaned children or working on community improvement projects. Construction work is physically demanding, including digging, removing dirt, carrying bricks, mixing cement, plastering, painting, cleaning, and various other needs related to construction.

Working hours are normally Monday – Friday from 8:00am to 12:00pm and 2:00pm until 4:00pm, though this may vary based on weather, project needs, and construction schedules. At all times you will be supported by Máximo Nivel's field managers, but they will not be onsite at your project. Construction projects are led and organized by a local foreman who will determine your work program.

## Volunteer Expectations

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Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala offer environments that are simultaneously beautiful and challenging. Peru truly is the archeological capital of the Americas and offers numerous natural environments to enjoy, from coastal desert to highlands, to rainforest. Costa Rica is the jewel of Central America and offers visitors the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, rainforest, and more. And Guatemala is the center of bio-diversity and culture in Central America. At the same time, Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala are developing countries, and volunteers must bear in mind that there are power failures, water shortages, temperature fluctuations and other uncontrollable situations.

As well, Peruvians', Costa Ricans', and Guatemalans' conception of "time" can be difficult and frustrating for those accustomed to a more structured life. Work can often be delayed or interrupted because of lack of funding, holidays, weather, religious ceremonies and other unexpected events. Volunteers need to remain flexible, patient, and good humored. When traveling anywhere, it is best to leave behind your preconceptions and what you're used to - and enjoy the differences. After all, that's why you're traveling.

The volunteer experience is a commitment that includes a willingness to overcome challenges of various sorts. In cases where volunteers are experiencing difficulties, we strongly encourage creative and collaborative solutions. If you are put in an uncomfortable position, every effort will be made to accommodate you, but it is also important that volunteers remain flexible and understanding. Open-mindedness and patience will go a long way toward ensuring an enjoyable volunteer experience. There are certain rules that volunteers will have to work with. For instance, you will have to keep the promises you make to your volunteer project and inform us of any changes that may happen in your itinerary.

### Schedule

Most volunteers work between three to five hours per day. Depending on your project site this is generally from 8:00am/9:00am until 12:00pm/1:00pm and then there may also be some work (optional or required) in the afternoon. Please note that volunteers who are Teaching English generally do not work in the mornings, but do work during the afternoons and evenings from 4:00pm to 8:00pm, though this varies from project to project. Volunteer projects will generally start on Mondays or Tuesdays and will end on a Friday.

Most projects require you to take public transportation to get to the worksite. Travel time can range from 10 minutes to 1 hour. Please note that transportation costs to/from your project are NOT included in the project fee.

### Spanish Language

Maximum Level's volunteer programs *include* 2 hours per day of Spanish language training. This is optional if you choose not to take part. **Rural conservation projects do NOT include Spanish language training at the project, though you can study Spanish before moving to your project site.**

Máximo Nivel does not require volunteers to speak Spanish. Indeed, almost all projects are accustomed to hosting international visitors – and it's your help that is needed not your Spanish language skills. Note that medical placements are a notable exception as your Spanish language skills will determine the level of independence you'll have at your project.

## Things to Bring

The key to packing for a trip to Peru is to pack for a variety of conditions. The best way to deal with the extremes that Peru has to offer – the intense sun during the day, the cold mountain nights, and the heat and humidity of the Amazon Basin – is to dress using several layers.

The key to packing for Costa Rica and Guatemala is to prepare for a warm and sometimes humid climate. The coastal areas are steamy and hot with lots of sunshine; and San Jose and La Antigua are warm by day and cool by night with intermittent sunshine and rain.

### SUGGESTED PACKING LIST – PERU

- Teaching clothes<sup>†</sup>
- Day pack
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Hiking boots
- 2 pairs of pants
- 2 T-shirts
- 2 long-sleeved shirt
- 1 pair of shorts
- Thermal underwear
- Fleece jacket
- Hat or cap
- Towel and personal bath kit
- Sun block, lip balm, sun glasses
- Camera

### SUGGESTED PACKING LIST – COSTA RICA

- Teaching clothes<sup>†</sup>
- Day pack
- Comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots
- Sandals
- 2 pairs of pants (lightweight)
- 2 T-shirts
- 3 short-sleeved shirts
- 1 long-sleeved shirt
- 3 pairs of shorts and bathing suit
- Hat or cap
- Towel and personal bath kit
- Sun block, sun glasses
- Camera

### SUGGESTED PACKING LIST – GUATEMALA

- Teaching clothes<sup>†</sup>
- Day pack
- Comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots
- Sandals
- 2 pairs of pants (lightweight)
- 2 T-shirts
- 3 short-sleeved shirts
- 1 long-sleeved shirt
- 3 pairs of shorts and bathing suit
- Hat or cap
- Towel and personal bath kit
- Sun block, sun glasses
- Camera

### STUDY MATERIALS

- Laptop computer (if possible)
- Notebook and pen
- Spanish-English dictionary

# Native Spanish Program

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In three of the world's most cultural cities—Cusco, Peru, San Jose, Costa Rica, and La Antigua, Guatemala—Máximo Level offers its unique Native Spanish Program for intensive language training or extended study of the Spanish language. Máximo Level offers all levels of Spanish instruction, as well as special Medical and Business Spanish classes.

Máximo Level is not a typical Spanish School. We are an executive language center offering the most intensive and effective Spanish courses in Latin America. Máximo Level employs only the most experienced native Spanish instructors, all of them actual teachers—either certified in teaching Spanish as a foreign language or with their Bachelors and/or Masters in Education. We offer an incomparable service to improve your Spanish, whether you are looking for a 5-day crash-course or a 6-month extended program.

Máximo Level also offers our well-known Native English Program to Peruvian, Costa Rican, and Guatemalan learners. Via our optional Tandem Conversation Program, our Spanish clients can join free conversation practice when we team them up with local residents who are studying in our intensive English programs. This "tandem" conversation practice is an excellent addition to regular Spanish classes.

## Program Summary

On your first day, you will participate in a brief orientation, take a language placement test, and then be placed at an appropriate level. Throughout your language training, the teacher will continuously assess your ability in the four language skills – Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing; and the four language systems—Grammar, Vocabulary, Phonology, and Function.

### **BASIC**

Basic classes are for learners with no previous experience in Spanish. Learners will be taught basic grammatical structures, vocabulary, and will immediately begin speaking in Spanish, thereby gaining a concrete foundation in the language.

### **HIGH BASIC**

For learners with an elementary knowledge of the Spanish language, these classes focus on reinforcing grammar, teaching new vocabulary, and increasing speaking capacity, enabling you to express yourself clearly in daily situations.

### **PRE-INTERMEDIATE I & II**

These classes build on learners' previous experience with Spanish, reinforcing all areas of the language, with an increasing importance placed on speaking, reading, and vocabulary.

### **INTERMEDIATE I & II**

At this point, learners likely speak Spanish, but are still struggling with the more difficult grammar points. These classes focus primarily on conversation, reading, and vocabulary; as well as on increasing your grammatical accuracy by reinforcing areas such as the use of the 'subjunctive' and 'indefinite past'. Focus is on the ability to express yourself spontaneously and to interact across a variety of social situations with increasing accuracy.

### **HIGH INTERMEDIATE I & II**

These classes build on learners' conversational base in Spanish, and begin to more finely tune communicative competence by building vocabulary and introducing students to idioms,

slang, and points of 'common usage' in Spanish. High Intermediate classes also include emphasis on written expression.

### **ADVANCED I & II**

Advanced classes at the first and second level continue to fine tune learners' Spanish skills. Emphasis is placed on advanced communicative competence – the ability to communicate completely in the Spanish language, across all kinds of situations. Classes emphasize oral skills, sophisticated vocabulary, and increasing learners' understanding and ability to use idiomatic Spanish.

### **The Native Spanish Program Includes:**

- Official Spanish program certification
- Certified, native Spanish teacher
- Spanish placement exam
- Free Spanish textbook and materials
- Free Tandem Conversation Program
- Free access to high-speed Internet and computers
- Office-wide WIFI access
- Free Salsa lessons
- Monthly International Party with open bar
- Emergency contact number 24/7
- A toll-free emergency hotline in the U.S.

### **Accreditation**

As an internationally accredited institute, Máximo Nivel must adhere to strict codes of practice and maintain the highest professional standards.

In Peru, all of our programs are accredited by the Peruvian Ministry of Education. In Costa Rica, we are affiliated with Universidad Juan Pablo II. In Guatemala, the Universidad Rural provides credit for our Spanish courses there. In the United States, Brookhaven College (Texas) provides university credit for some of Máximo Nivel's programs. Via our partnership with Intesol Worldwide LTD, our TEFL/TESOL Certification program is also accredited by Ascentis in the United Kingdom and meets British Council requirements. Due to our accreditations, many of our courses are eligible for credit U.S. and European universities.



## Housing

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In Peru, volunteers stay at The Family House or in a Peruvian family-stay.

In Costa Rica, volunteers stay in a Costa Rican family-stay.

In Guatemala, volunteers stay at The Family House or in a Guatemalan family-stay.

For conservation projects and some rural work sites, volunteers stay in a volunteer house or sometimes in a family-stay. This is based on the specifics of each worksite and what is available at the time of your project.

### The Family House

The Family House bed and breakfast offers accommodations similar to a traditional family-stay, but with more independence and privacy. Volunteers stay in shared rooms with one, two, or three other volunteers. Your stay includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday through Sunday. Guests are given a key to their room and to the house and are free to come and go as they please. Laundry services are available for a small extra fee. The Family House is within walking distance (15-30 minutes) from Máximo Nivel's offices.

### Traditional Family-Stay

Family-stays are all with pre-approved families and include breakfast and dinner Monday through Sunday. All of our host families are middle-class and live in homes and areas that are attractive. Most family-stays include a shared room and shared bath. Many of the families have been hosting international travelers for years. Guests are given a key to the house and are free to come and go as they please, but they must respect the routine and rules of the family. All family-stays are within walking distance (10-30 minutes) or within a 5-15 minute bus or taxi ride from Máximo Nivel's offices.

### Private Apartment

Our private apartments are all modern, very comfortable, and fully furnished. Apartments come with equipped kitchens including plates and utensils required to live comfortably and cook for yourself. All apartments are centrally located and are within easy walking distance or a short taxi ride to the Máximo Nivel's offices.

### Shared Apartment

Like our private apartments, our shared apartments are all modern, comfortable, and fully furnished. Shared apartments all have 2 private bedrooms, though the bath is usually shared. The apartments are fully furnished with equipped kitchens including plates and utensils. All apartments are very centrally located and are within easy walking distance or a short taxi ride to the Máximo Nivel's offices.

### Hostel

There are also many inexpensive hostels available and you may elect this option if you want to save money while still remaining 100% independent. Máximo Nivel works with several different hostels, all of them clean and safe with excellent service and amenities including TV rooms, 24-hour kitchens, and more. All hostel accommodations include private rooms with private bath. All hostels are a 5 to 15 minute walk from Máximo Nivel's offices.

### **Hotel (3-Star)**

Cusco, San Jose, and La Antigua have a great deal to offer in terms of hotels, ranging from 1-star to 5-star accommodations. Máximo Nivel works with several 3-star hotels, which are modern and comfortable with all the necessary amenities plus breakfast included. All hotel rooms are private with a private bath. If you desire more luxurious accommodations please request the hotel option when you register.

### **Meals**

Volunteers are provided with three meals a day. A full breakfast is served every morning, and normally includes eggs, cereal, fruit, yogurt, tea and coffee, and other breakfast foods. Lunch is a light affair of soup or sandwiches; for volunteers working during lunch hours a box lunch will be prepared for you. Dinner is a more social affair as volunteers all gather together and talk about the day's activities. Dinner generally includes a small appetizer, main course of meat and/or pasta, salad and vegetables, rice and/or potatoes, and desert.

Vegetarians and other people with dietary restrictions can be accommodated. Please advise us ahead of time when making your reservation.

Volunteers who prefer to stay in apartments, hostels, or hotels do NOT receive meals or will have limited meal service. Corresponding discounts (or charges) are detailed on page 17.

### **Telephone & Internet**

Internet and telephone services are available at our offices seven days a week. Whereas computer and high-speed Internet access are *free*, international phone calls require a calling card.

Projects based in the rainforest or in rural settings will NOT have the same phone and Internet service as Cusco, San Jose, and La Antigua. Volunteers must be prepared for intermittent service or no service in these areas. In the most rural projects the only communication available is by shortwave radio.

## Volunteer & Internship Prices - 2010

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The following prices apply to Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. When registering, please specify if you plan to study in our Peru, Costa Rica, or Guatemala office.

### Guatemala

1 Week	2 Weeks	3 Weeks	4 Weeks	5 Weeks	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	8 Weeks
\$530	\$795	\$990	\$1,125	\$1,300	\$1,475	\$1,650	\$1,825
\$175 for each additional week							
10% of the program fee is donated to the organization that you work for.							

### Peru

1 Week	2 Weeks	3 Weeks	4 Weeks	5 Weeks	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	8 Weeks
\$530	\$795	\$990	\$1,125	\$1,300	\$1,475	\$1,650	\$1,825
\$175 for each additional week							
10% of the program fee is donated to the organization that you work for.							

### Costa Rica

1 Week	2 Weeks	3 Weeks	4 Weeks	5 Weeks	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	8 Weeks
\$600	\$1,100	\$1,385	\$1,570	\$1,820	\$2,070	\$2,320	\$2,570
\$225 for each additional week							
10% of the program fee is donated to the organization that you work for.							

***Discounts for our volunteer programs often apply.***

**Please contact us:** [international@maximonivel.com](mailto:international@maximonivel.com)

## **WHY PAY TO VOLUNTEER?**

As a volunteer you are giving your time and skills to help those in need, so many people naturally don't understand why they should pay to volunteer. Please note that your volunteer project includes a number of benefits listed below. As well, Máximo Nivel has a professional staff dedicated to finding and screening suitable projects and servicing our volunteers. The services we provide and the staff and support we dedicate to offering volunteer travel means that we must cover our operating costs to ensure your volunteer travel is well organized, productive, and of the highest quality possible.

- Official volunteer service certificate
- Letter of recommendation
- Spanish language classes 2 hours/day
- Certified, native Spanish teacher
- Free Spanish placement exam
- Free Spanish textbook and materials
- Tandem Conversation Program
- Spanish tutoring Monday - Saturday
- Emergency contact number 24/7
- A toll-free emergency hotline in the U.S.
- Access to high-speed Internet and computers
- Office-wide WIFI access
- Free salsa lessons
- Free coffee and tea
- Onsite snack bar and cafe
- Monthly International Party with open bar
- Movie Night every Saturday

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Do I need to speak a foreign language in order to enroll in the program?**

It is NOT necessary to speak Spanish before you arrive although it is always helpful. Remember that Máximo Nivel's volunteer and internship programs *include* 2 hours of Spanish language study Monday-Friday—this is optional if you choose not to participate in language classes.

### **Is there an orientation program?**

When you arrive in Peru, Costa Rica, or Guatemala you will be met at the airport, you'll be given a tour of our offices, and "checked in" to your accommodations. You will receive a full orientation on the first Monday after you arrive. You will also receive a brief orientation and introduction at your project site.

### **Does the program provide insurance for volunteers?**

Before you travel make sure that you are covered by medical insurance in case of accidents or emergencies. There are a number of companies specializing in international travel insurance. International Student Insurance is one such company, and can be contacted via their website [www.internationalstudentinsurance.com](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com). **Note:** Máximo Nivel is in no way affiliated with International Student Insurance, nor do we receive commissions of any kind.

### **Can I change my volunteer placement if I am dissatisfied?**

Máximo Nivel will of course make every effort to change a volunteer placement if the reasons for the request are genuine. Volunteers should note that it is only possible to change a project based on availability. When making a change, we will make every effort to find a similar type of project for you. Project changes can *only* be made on Monday and Tuesday.

### **Can I come with a friend, or can I be placed with other volunteers?**

Máximo Nivel allows volunteers to come with a friend or even with a large group. You may be placed in the same or nearby homes, lodges, and projects. It is important to inform us in advance, so that complete arrangements can be made for all of you. Please email us for group [discounts—international@maximonivel.com](mailto:discounts—international@maximonivel.com)

### **What should I expect with regard to living conditions?**

Depending on your project destination, volunteers are provided housing in either volunteer residences or host families. Various accommodations offer different amenities, but all are comfortably furnished with 24-hour hot water, and excellent security. Depending on availability, rooms may be shared or private, and bathrooms are generally shared. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided Monday – Sunday. Laundry services are offered for an additional fee. Please note that accommodations at rural project sites and for conservation projects are much more rustic and basic. Lack of hot water, power outages, and insects are part of the experience!

### **How many people will I be living with?**

Depending on your volunteer project you may be the only person living with a family of 3 to 5 people, or you may be in a residence with other volunteers.

## **How long do volunteers usually stay? Is there a minimum stay required?**

Máximo Level allows volunteers to stay 1 week or more; 1 week is the minimum length of stay. This allows some time to get accustomed to the living conditions and then time to work in your volunteer project. The longer the stay, the more productive it is likely to be. Most volunteers come for 2-4 weeks, but we also have many volunteers who join us for 6-12 months! We'll happily welcome you for as long as you want to stay.

## **How much extra money should I bring?**

Extra money depends on your personal spending habits. You will likely want extra money for personal expenses, sight-seeing, souvenirs, etc. Generally speaking, we recommend bringing about \$ 250.00 (USD) per week, or just bring your credit card. Note, travelers checks in Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala tend to be problematic to use and are NOT recommended.

The best method for getting money is to simply use ATMs. Most banks in Latin America offer 24-hour ATM access.

## **Do I need a Visa to enter Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala?**

Depending on where you are from you may or may not need a special visa. Most people, including those from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, automatically receive a 90-day tourist visa when entering Costa Rica and Guatemala, and receive up to 183 days when entering Peru.

## **Will I have phone and Internet access?**

Máximo Level's offices have international phone and fax service. As well, our clients and students have free access to our computer centers with high speed internet and WiFi connections; and all the computers run Windows and Microsoft Office. Access to our offices and Internet facilities are available 7 days a week.

Projects based in the rainforest or in rural settings will not have the same phone and Internet service as Cusco, San Jose, and La Antigua. Volunteers must be prepared for intermittent service or no service in these areas. In the most rural projects the only communication available is by shortwave radio.

## **What should I do in case of an emergency?**

If there is an emergency, please contact Máximo Level immediately. If your family needs to reach you they can do so via the following numbers:

Máximo Level (Peru Office): +51 84 25 7200

Máximo Level (Costa Rica Office): +506 2253 9220

Máximo Level (Guatemala Office): +502 7832 6608

Máximo Level (USA Message Center): +1 877 433 4141

### **Is the water safe to drink?**

Tap water in Peru and Guatemala is NOT safe for drinking, but water straight from the tap in Costa Rica IS safe to drink. Tap water can be purified by boiling it or adding purification tablets, such as *Micropur*, which can be purchased at most pharmacies. Generally speaking, bottled water is easy to buy in stores. Showering and brushing your teeth with water is rarely a problem.

### **Do I need vaccinations?**

It is recommended that travelers to Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala have vaccinations for Hepatitis A and Tetanus. Typhoid and Yellow Fever are sometimes recommended, but are not necessary. Malaria is not a threat in Peru, Costa Rica, or Guatemala. Other immunizations may be necessary depending upon the circumstances of your project and personal medical history. You should visit a travel-health clinic or your physician at least four weeks before traveling.

### **Should I bring any medicine?**

It is recommended that you bring medications for travelers' diarrhea. The best way to prevent traveler's diarrhea is to be careful of the food and water that you eat and drink. *Ciprofloxacin* (Cipro) or *Levofloxacin* (Levaquin) are good choices for treatment of traveler's diarrhea.

In Peru, *Acetazolamide* is the drug most often used to prevent altitude sickness. The usual dosage is 125 milligrams or 250 milligrams two or three times daily starting 24 hours before ascent, and continuing for 48 hours after reaching altitude.

See your physician for specific recommendations.

### **Are Peru, Costa Rica, and Guatemala safe countries?**

Yes, and you can relax while you are here.

That said, it's still important to use common sense.

- Be careful if traveling on buses, as petty theft is common.
- Ask for a receipt when you store your backpack or luggage.
- Do NOT carry your passport or any credit cards and cash that you will not need.
- Use only registered taxis.
- Do not walk into unknown areas by yourself at night.
- Avoid any contact with drugs, as laws are very strict.

## Contact Máximo Level

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Please contact us with any questions.

We are dedicated to making your volunteer and travel experience a great intercultural experience.

### ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

1854A Hendersonville Road, #250  
Asheville, North Carolina 28803 USA

**Tel:** +1 (828) 414-4204

**V-mail:** +1 (877) 433 4141

**E-mail:** [International@maximonivel.com](mailto:International@maximonivel.com)

### CUSCO, PERU

Avenida El Sol 612

Cusco, Perú

**Tel:** +51 84 25 7200

**E-mail:** [International@maximonivel.com](mailto:International@maximonivel.com)

### SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

del Antiguo Higueron 100 meters south and 50 meters east  
San Pedro-San Jose, Costa Rica

**Tel:** +506 2253 9220

**E-mail:** [International@maximonivel.com](mailto:International@maximonivel.com)

### LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

6a. Avenida Norte #16-A

La Antigua, Guatemala C.A.

**Tel:** +502 7832 6608

**E-mail:** [International@maximonivel.com](mailto:International@maximonivel.com)

### Payment Options



### THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING SPANISH

#### SPANISH IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD

By population, Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world, second only to Chinese. (Summer Institute for Linguistics, 1999)

There are 332 million native Spanish speakers in the world.

15% of the population in the U.S. speaks Spanish as their native language.

#### LANGUAGES MAKE YOU MORE VALUABLE

A person who knows 2 languages has the value of 2 people.

After English, Spanish is the most valuable language to know.

Your salary and your career opportunities increase when you speak a second language

#### START LEARNING SPANISH TODAY!

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Studying Spanish shows you are educated, knowledgeable, and worldly.

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