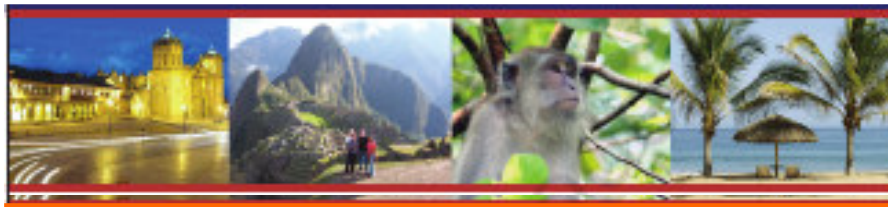




VOLUNTEER & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM 2009

**Cusco, Peru
San Jose, Costa Rica
Asheville, North Carolina**

For those who live it!



About Máximo Nivel / Máximum Level

Máximum Level was founded as an intensive language institute, and over time has developed its expertise in both volunteer programs and adventure and cultural travel. Máximum Level now has offices in Cusco, Peru and in San Jose, Costa Rica. 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 and/or Costa Rica – two 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/or conservation of Peru's and Costa Rica'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 running Windows XP, high-speed Internet connections including office-wide WIFI access, a small library, 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 main teaching rooms have a surround sound system, DVD player, cassette player, and TV.

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 and Costa Rica.

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

Máximo Nivel offers volunteer and internship projects in Peru and Costa Rica. These projects provide the unique opportunity to live and work in Peru and/or Costa Rica 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 Cusco, Peru or San Jose, Costa Rica. However, we also offer volunteer and internship projects in other areas and cities including: Arequipa, Trujillo, Puerto Maldonado, and Urubamba (in Peru); and the Pacific and Caribbean coastal areas (in Costa Rica).

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 under the supervision of a local manager 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.**

Orphanages/Childcare

Poverty, abuse, and alcoholism have left many children in Peru and Costa Rica 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 Peru and Costa Rica, 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 both in Cusco and San Jose. 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 and/or Costa Rica 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 in the *English Learning Rooms* 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 or San Jose, Costa Rica.

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 Peru, Costa Rica, South America, Central 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 in Peru and/or Costa Rica. 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 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 1st year or 2nd 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

3rd and 4th 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 and Costa Rica are two of the most bio-diverse countries in the world. Opportunities abound for conservation projects in the Rainforests of Costa Rica and Peru and in Peru's Andean mountains. Máximo Nivel offers unique, tailor-made volunteer projects including:

- Turtle conservation (Costa Rica only)
- Biodiversity inventories
- Eco-Tourism work in protected areas
- Animal care
- Re-forestation
- Eco-Agriculture

TURTLE CONSERVATION (Costa Rica Only)

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 Costa Rica's turtle population does not become endangered. The nesting season of

the Lora turtle runs primarily from May to December, peaking in December with well over 1 million turtles arriving on the beach to nest.

Volunteers will be placed at turtle projects on either the Pacific or Caribbean coast, depending on project needs. 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 Andean mountains to the warm and tropical Caribbean coast of Costa Rica and include university-run zoos 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

Costa Rica and Peru 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, while Costa Rica is the jewel of Central America and offers visitors the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, rainforest, and more. At the same time, Peru and Costa Rica 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' and Costa Ricans' 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 four to six 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.

Things to Bring

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 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 is to prepare for a warm and often humid climate. The coastal areas are steamy and hot with lots of sunshine; and the San Jose (Central Valley) region is warm by day and cool by night with intermittent sunshine and light rain.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST – PERU

- Teaching clothes[†]
- Day pack
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Hiking boots
- 2 pairs of pants (lightweight)
- 2 T-shirts
- 1 short-sleeved shirt
- 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[†]
- 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

Spanish Language

Máximo Level 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.

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

Visas

A valid passport is required to enter and depart Peru and Costa Rica. You must also provide evidence of return or onward travel. U.S. and European citizens do not need a visa for a tourist stay of up to 90 days in Costa Rica and 183 days in Peru. For most volunteers, this is sufficient to cover the time you’ll be in-country. If you are on an extended project, visa renewal is easy to do via an overnight trip to Bolivia, Nicaragua, or Panama.

Housing

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

In Costa Rica, volunteers stay in a Costa Rican 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 or two 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 (10-20 minutes) from Máximo Nivel's office.

Traditional Family-Stay

Family-stays are all with pre-approved families and include breakfast and dinner Monday through Saturday. All of our host families are middle-class and live in homes and areas that are attractive. All family-stays include a private room and most include private 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 (10-25 minutes) or within a 5-15 minute bus or taxi ride from Máximo Nivel's office.

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 very centrally located and are within easy walking distance or a short taxi ride to the Maximo Nivel 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 Maximo Nivel offices.

Hostel

There are also many inexpensive hostels throughout Cusco and you may elect this option if you want to save money while still remaining 100% independent. Máximo Nivel works with three 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 office.

Hotel (3-Star)

Cusco and San Jose have a great deal to offer in terms of hotels, ranging from 1-star to 5-star accommodations. Máximo Nivel works with two 3-star hotels, both of 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, Peruvian rice and/or potatoes, and a sweet 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 the 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 and San Jose. 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 - 2009

Peru

1 Week	2 Weeks	3 Weeks	4 Weeks	5 Weeks	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	8 Weeks
\$550	\$950	\$1,150	\$1,350	\$1,525	\$1,700	\$1,875	\$2,050
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	\$1,400	\$1,600	\$1,775	\$1,950	\$2,125	\$2,300
10% of the program fee is donated to the organization that you work for.							

Depending on the time of year and your specific project, discounts may apply to the above prices. Please contact us: info@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

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 in Peru and/or Costa Rica, 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 or Costa Rica, 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. Multinational Underwriters is one such company, and can be contacted via their website www.mnui.com. **Note:** Máximo Nivel is in no way affiliated with Multinational Underwriters, nor do we receive commissions or any kind of referral fee.

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—info@maximonivel.com

What should I expect with regard to living conditions?

Depending on your project destination, volunteers are provided housing in either volunteer residences, hostels, or with 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 Nivel 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 implement and assist with volunteer projects. 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?

Carrying extra money depends on your personal spending habits, and you may want some 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 and Costa Rica tend to be problematic to use and are NOT recommended.

The best method for getting money is to simply use ATMs. Most banks in Peru and Costa Rica offer 24-hour ATM access.

Do I need a Visa to enter Peru or Costa Rica?

Depending on where you are from you may or may not need a special visa to enter Peru or Costa Rica. Most people, including those from the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Europe, automatically receive a 90-day tourist visa upon entering Costa Rica and 183 days upon entering Peru.

Will I have phone and Internet access?

Máximo Nivel'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 and San Jose. 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 you experience an emergency while you are in Peru, please contact Máximo Nivel immediately. If your family needs to reach you they can do so via the following numbers:

Máximo Nivel (Cusco Office): +51 84 25 7200

Máximo Nivel (San Jose Office): +506 2253 9220

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

Is the water safe to drink?

Tap water in Peru 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 and Costa Rica have vaccinations for Hepatitis A and Tetanus. Typhoid and Yellow Fever are sometimes recommended, but are not necessary. Malaria is not a threat in either Costa Rica or Peru. 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 arriving in Peru.

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 and Costa Rica 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 in Peru.

Contact Máximo Level

Please contact us with any questions.

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

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Payment Options by Internet



Payment Options in Peru and Costa Rica



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