

Visa / Immigration Requirements

Tourist Visas with a valid US Passport

Any person with a US passport (or Canadian passport) that has **at least 3 months before expiration** can enter Costa Rica with no other documentation except the return flight.

- A tourist visa is NOT automatically 90 days. 90 days is the MAXIMUM. They have the right to give 5 days, 20 days, 30 days, 60 days, or whatever they choose.
- For this reason, the return flight around the 90-day mark is important to get the maximum 90-day tourist visa.

The 90 day return flight requirement:

- All students must have **proof of a return flight to the USA that has a date of return within 90 days of their arrival.**
 - You can do this as a round trip flight. However, you may have to pay change fees later to change the date to the date when your son is returning home for a visit.
 - Or you can purchase a **refundable one way return flight to the USA** and then cancel that ticket after the student is already in Costa Rica. This avoids any change fees to the ticket.
 - Make sure your son has proof of this ticket—a printed copy of the itinerary and confirmation number or something similar.
 - This is an airline requirement and will also make going through Immigration easier.
 - Airlines get fined if people enter Costa Rica and don't have a return flight. Costa Rica does not want to have to pay to deport people who stay past their 90 day tourist visa. So airlines require this to avoid fees and penalties.
 - Immigration officers may ask to see proof of this ticket in order to allow entry into Costa Rica. This is for the same reason (to not have to pay deportation fees).

Documents to Acquire a Longer Term Visa

In order to get an approved long-term VISA, we must first gather all Costa Rica immigration pre-requisites. Most of those pre-requisites can be obtained here in Costa Rica, but there are a couple of documents that only you can acquire for us (as they need to be acquired in the USA or the country of citizenship or/and residence).

1. Two original copies of your son's birth certificate- These original copies should not be older than six months. (**Only one copy should be Apostilled**)

2. If your son is over 18 yrs old, you must process his FBI Background Check (It must be from all 50 states)
3. Apostilled Adoption Decree if adopted

1. GETTING YOUR SON'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE APOSTILLED:

- To get the copy of the birth certificate you need to contact the **County Recorder Office for the city where your son was born**. If you are not able to go to the county office where your son was born, because is too far or you have no time to go, then no worries! This can be done via regular mail. Visit their website and get instructions and fee information on how to obtain it without having to go to the office. Processing times vary from 1-4 weeks.
- After you receive the Birth Certificate, you are now ready to get it Apostilled.
- The Birth Certificate can be Apostilled at the **Secretary of State where the birth certificate was issued**.
 - Please visit in person or call your local Secretary of State office to find out the specific instructions for your state and if there are any fees to pay.
 - This can be done in person if you are not too far from the office. This will get it done more quickly, but you should call first to confirm their hours of operation are accurate and someone can help you with your request.
 - Or this can be done by courier service (DHL/UPS/FedEx) as long as you include a check for fees, a cover letter explaining your request, and a return prepaid envelope.
 - Include in the packet:
 - Birth certificate to be authenticated with Apostille
 - Any fees requested by the Secretary of State
 - A prepaid return DHL/UPS/FedEx mailer to come back to you
 - A cover letter saying the following:

Parent Name & Address Date

Dear Staff Member, Please APOSTILLE this Birth Certificate for _(STUDENT NAME)_ so that he may apply for a Student Visa to Costa Rica to study abroad and learn Spanish.

Please find enclosed my son's birth certificate (to be APOSTILLED by the Secretary of State) and a pre-paid self-addressed envelope. Please use the pre-paid self-addressed envelope / mailer to return the certified birth certificate to me.

Sincerely,

Parent Name & Signature

Telephone number & email address

TIMELINE: It can take a week to a month. If you don't receive a response, call the Secretary of State office and check on the process. You may also call DHL or track the package to see the progress.

FEES: The only fees you should pay are:

- what the state charges you to certify the birth certificate,
- what the courier service charges you for the mailing envelopes.

Unable to get the documents in time?

We understand that parents are busy and it's difficult to gather all the documents to bring at the day of enrollment or even after enrollment. Therefore, if for any reason parents are not able to get the paperwork done, New Summit can process the documents (for an extra fee) from Costa Rica. But this will take much longer than if it is done in the USA.

Please let us know prior to enrollment or within the first 30 days after enrollment, **if you would rather have NSA take care of the FBI Background Check, and we will take care of it for you.**

Here is what the Apostilled document will look like:

