



VOLUNTEER INFORMATION & EXPECTATIONS

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Workshops

Workshops provide time and space for you to guide the *niños* through various lessons and activities to help them explore their interests and connect with each other. Workshops, or *tallers* as they are called at Domingo Savio, are hour-long learning experiences in the afternoon that volunteers led to help the *niños* cultivate and develop new skills. Domingo Savio has developed specific workshops that are routinely held each week, such as cooking workshops, but volunteers also have the autonomy to create their own workshops two to three times a week where they use their personal skills and talents to organize a learning experience for the *niños*. Although workshops are a learning experience for the *niños*, they are also a chance for volunteers to develop close relationships with *niños* and for *niños* to grow their relationships with other members of the Domingo Savio community. Most of all, the workshops are fun and engaging, and they often cultivate a love for learning among the students!

Cultural and Language Immersion

Domingo Savio is prepared to take in volunteers with a wide range of Spanish skills, and many use the volunteering opportunity Domingo Savio provides to achieve complete immersion in the Spanish language and Chilean culture. Immersive experiences have shown to be the most efficient way to language fluency, so expect to see growth in your Spanish and intercultural communication skills!

Explore Santiago

While you're not mentoring *niños* or spending time with the *tías*, spend some time exploring what Santiago has to offer! Immerse yourself in the rich Chilean culture as you wander through the lively markets of *La Vega Central*, savoring traditional cuisine and sipping on world-class Chilean wines. The surrounding Andes Mountains offer an array of outdoor activities, from hiking to skiing, while the city's numerous museums and art galleries offer further cultural engagement. Take advantage of your free time to see Santiago's beauty!

RECOMMENDED EXPERIENCES & SKILLS

Before arriving at Domingo Savio, successful volunteers have the following skills:

Spanish Language Experience

For volunteers with little Spanish experience, that is okay! However, those with little Spanish experience are required to stay at least 3 months to provide ample time to adjust to the new language and integrate into the Domingo Savio staff. For volunteers who are conversational in Spanish, a minimum commitment of 2 months is required.

Past Experience Living Abroad

Many volunteers have experience living independently abroad prior to volunteering at Domingo Savio. While the Domingo Savio community can provide some support, the volunteer experience places heavy emphasis on independence. Outside of the weekly commitment to volunteering, you will be responsible for your own housing, transportation, and meals.

Willingness to Engage and Connect with Domingo Savio Staff and Participants

Volunteering at Domingo Savio will give you the opportunity to speak and connect with a wide variety of people from diverse backgrounds. Through earnest and curious engagement with the Domingo Savio community, volunteers not only find the most personal fulfillment during the volunteer process but play an integral role in maintaining and expanding the community. You will be a representative of both your home country and Domingo Savio staff for the surrounding community, an amazing opportunity that comes with responsibilities.

Independence, Creativity, and Flexibility

While Domingo Savio seeks to create a stable environment for the *niños*, some days can be chaotic! Many *niños* are in the midst of difficult or transitioning home or school environments, but they can feel at home in Domingo Savio. Some days, the preconceived schedule can fall to the wayside in favor of spontaneous activities. Be flexible and creative throughout this! While it can be difficult, Domingo Savio focuses on creating a safe space for the *niños* rather than following any educational curriculum. Be ready for plans to shift!

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the aforementioned skills, Domingo Savio volunteers are expected to do the following:

Hourly Work Expectations

All volunteers must be at Domingo Savio from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM. Domingo Savio is open Monday through Friday. Some volunteers come every day and others come only a few days a week. You will set your days with the Tías before your arrival.

This is when the niños arrive at Domingo Savio and start the workshops. Domingo Savio's doors are always open if you wish to come early to plan workshops, spend time with the Tías, or find other ways to help, but engagement outside of these hours is not required.

Upon arrival of the first niños for the day, your workshop should be planned and ready. These workshops should include a weekly cooking workshop and an English workshop. The other days are free for you to design workshops in subject areas you are interested in, or you can see what workshops have been done in the past to get inspiration! Past workshops have included computer skills, dance, arts and crafts, cultural lessons, and language studies such as English. Volunteers are encouraged to be creative, utilize their personal skills and talents, and take risks when designing new workshops!

Outside of workshops, some volunteers may arrive earlier when the organization opens in the morning, depending on their agreements and commitments with the Domingo Savio staff. Beyond workshops, previous volunteers have also worked with the Domingo Savio staff on administrative, marketing, and social media tasks. Depending on the volunteer's skills, they may be asked to help in other areas of the organization, as well.

Request for Absences

If you would like to request off for a non-emergency purpose, please contact and notify the Domingo Savio staff *at least 48 hours in advance*. The staff at Domingo Savio is very flexible and accommodating of travel and other absences, but to give them time to prepare for your absence, please let them know ahead of time if you plan to miss volunteering.

If you are ill or next to request off for an emergency purpose, please notify the staff at Domingo Savio as soon as possible.

Be an Ambassador for International Culture

Domingo Savio prides itself on being a place that brings together international cultures, and as an international volunteer, you will play a critical role in this process. International volunteers are encouraged to share traditions or practices from their personal culture or native country within their workshop lesson plans to expose the niños to various cultures from around the world. Be ready for lots of questions about your home and what your life is like, and plan activities to share your culture! This can include cooking traditional food from your home country, engaging with media, such as movies, books, or music, from your home country, or sharing other customs and traditions. The tía love to have the international volunteers cook one traditional dish from their home country during their time at Domingo Savio.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Accommodations

Volunteers have the option to find housing independently or live with Tía Olga. If you are interested in living with Tía Olga, contact her individually to determine the details and possibilities of arranging your stay. She will be very flexible to accommodate your budget. If you find housing independently, expect to pay around \$300/month. If you want to live with international students or in some of the younger neighborhoods, we will connect you with past volunteers to help.

Good places to begin looking for housing include temporary student housing that is typically less costly than Airbnb's or other commercial housing options. Please reach out to the Domingo Savio staff to get in contact with these housing options or previous volunteers who have housing connections.

Meals

Domingo Savio will provide all volunteers with a full Chilean lunch and an *once* daily. Lunch is provided if you come during the hours that it is served at the organization, typically around 12 PM. The Tías, volunteers and interns eat together at this time before the children come. The *once*, a Chilean meal that is smaller than typical dinners and usually consists of bread, cheeses, and milk (similar to an afternoon snack). *Once* is served to volunteers and staff with the niños.

Most travel websites budget less than \$25 USD per day for food and groceries, but, of course, food prices always vary based on the time of year and your location in Santiago, Chile. Past volunteers have found that it is easy to spend much less per day. For more information, we recommend conducting your research to determine food and grocery prices in your region.

Transportation

Upon arrival in Chile, you can purchase a Bip card. This will give you access to all public transportation. The metro and bus system is very modern, clean, safe, and accessible. You can access public transportation from anywhere in the city with a Bip card. Each ride will cost .50-.75 cents.

Please see the Chilean Bip! card website for more information on how to purchase a card and use the metro system.¹

Health and Safety

For US Citizens, please visit the State Department website for information about traveling to Chile.² All US citizens are given a 90 tourist visa upon entry into Chile. Volunteers staying longer than 90 days should apply for a longer visa or make accommodations to renew the 90 tourist visa during their stay by traveling to another country and returning. *This information was last updated 11-21-2023.*

For international volunteers from other countries, please consult any information your government provides about international travel for guidance on visas, vaccinations, and other logistics.

Additionally, many people volunteering abroad choose to invest in an international insurance policy. One option is GeoBlue Insurance, but there are many other options, and we recommend that you research these policies and determine which insurance policy is best for your circumstances. If you are a student at a university, many universities have a relationship with an insurance provider, and they could possibly provide you with a discounted rate.

¹ <https://santiagochile.com/bip-card/>

² <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Chile.html>