

**make
the *World*
your home**



YFU SOUTH AFRICA

2026-2027

Discover the world on a high school study abroad programme with Youth for Understanding South Africa!

Explore a different culture, learn a new language, and join our community of global citizens!



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About YFU South Africa

Youth for Understanding (YFU) is one of the world's oldest and largest youth exchange and study abroad organizations and has been trusted to provide cultural exchange opportunities for more than 270,000 high school learners since 1951.

The initial purpose of YFU was to bring young post-second world war German youth to the United States to experience democracy by living with American host families and attend high school for one year. The idea spread from there, and today YFU is one of the largest and most respected international exchange organizations in the world.

YFU is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization with offices in 50+ countries. In South Africa, YFU opened its doors in Cape Town in 1994, and received the first group of exchange students from Germany in 1995. Since then, YFU South Africa has received and sent hundreds of high school learners on our intercultural study abroad programmes to Europe, Latin America and other parts of the world.

YFU's mission is to advance intercultural understanding, life-long learning, global competencies, mutual respect, and social responsibility through transformational educational exchanges for generations of youth, families, and communities.

**creating
citizens
of one
world**





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How Our Programmes Work



YFU high school study abroad participants can choose from over 20 different destinations in Europe and Latin America. Our most popular countries include Germany, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Chile and Argentina, but we also offer programmes to more 'exotic' countries such as Estonia, Paraguay, Slovakia and many others.



YFU's philosophy is that one only manages to fully integrate into a new culture over a period of one year. Therefore, we regard the 1-year programme as our 'Golden Standard'. However, we also offer shorter study abroad experiences, namely for a semester (5 months), a trimester (2-4 months) and short exchanges of 4-8 weeks.



All our programmes are educational, homestay experiences. This means that YFU students are placed with a carefully-selected local host family for the duration of their exchange. YFU host families come in all shapes and sizes and represent the culture and diversity of the host country. YFU students are not guests - they truly become a part of their host family and often build life-long relationships.



Except for some of our short 'holiday programmes' all YFU students attend a local high school in their host country. This means that they have a unique opportunity to experience a different educational system, learn the local language through full immersion, and explore different subjects and a different style of teaching.



Besides the usual high school programme, certain YFU partner countries offer programmes with specialization in sports, visual arts, film/movies, fashion, tourism, nature, catering, archaeology, music, drama and dance. Please refer to our latest programme catalogue for further details about available specializations!



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The Benefits

Through our educational study abroad programmes, YFU students acquire a passion for life-long learning, as well as the skills and knowledge to thrive and contribute to cultural diversity. You will learn an additional foreign language or have the opportunity to perfect your communication skills in a language you have been learning for some time. By immersing yourself into a different culture and experiencing life in your host country from the inside out, you will acquire the intercultural skills that will open doors for further study and international career opportunities.

Benefits for YFU high school exchange students:

- Learn to speak a foreign language fluently
- Obtain a formal language certificate after your exchange
- Understand a different culture from within through immersion
- Gain a new, global perspective and develop a sense of social responsibility
- Discover and develop personal strengths such as self-reliance and confidence
- Gain a second family and 'home away from home' on the other side of the world
- Experience a different school system and standard of teaching and learning
- Build better decision making, problem solving and conflict resolution skills
- Build intercultural friendships and meet other young leaders from around the globe
- Prepare for further study or career opportunities in an international environment
- Increase your chances of obtaining scholarships and career opportunities
- Become part of the global YFU community of global citizens

*take part
in a
lifelong
journey*



How to Apply

You can apply to participate in the YFU programme if you:

- Are a registered high school learner or recent matriculant
- Are between 15 and 18 years old (at the time of the programme start date)
- Are achieving an academic performance of at least 60 % (grade C)
- Are independent, mature, curious, open-minded and adaptable
- Are willing to reach out to people of a different background than your own
- Have your parents' and school's support and approval to apply
- Are eager to learn about a new culture and to share your own culture
- Understand that the YFU programme is not a holiday and that you will be required to fully participate in school, family life and everyday activities and chores
- Are willing to learn a new language or to perfect your foreign language skills
- Would like to stay involved in YFU after your exchange.

Do I need to speak the local language of my host country?

No, most of our partner countries (except France) do not require prior knowledge of the local language. However, an intensive language course before you go abroad will assist you to quickly adapt to your new life with your host family and at school!

Does my family have to host an exchange learner while I go abroad?

No, this is not a requirement for participation. However, we encourage the families of YFU programme participants to consider hosting as a way of giving back, and making it possible for a learner from another country to experience South Africa.

How to apply?

The first step is to download and complete the pre-application form ([available here](#)) and email it to Lena@yfu.org.za, together with the following additional documents:

- A copy of your ID or passport
- Your most recent term report
- Your full academic report for last year
- A head and shoulder picture of yourself.

Once we have received these documents, we will arrange a personal meeting with you and your parents and guide you through the next steps in the process!



Programme Fees

YFU South Africa is a not for profit organisation. All programme fees are used to cover the costs of providing programmes in South Africa and in our partner countries. While the breakdown of costs varies slightly depending on the host country and the length of the study abroad programme, the average breakdown of costs is:

- 30% for international travel and insurance (medical, travel and liability)
- 60% for the placement and support of students in the host country
- 10% for the selection and preparation of students in South Africa.

Typical Fee Structure

- 1-year high school programmes: R95,000 – R230,000
- Semester programmes (5 months): R90,000 – R190,000
- Trimester programmes (2-4 months): R90,000 – 140,000
- Short programmes (3-8 weeks): R85,000 – R130,000

What is included:

- Selection and preparation
- International travel
- Travel & medical insurance
- Placement with a carefully screened and selected volunteer host family
- Enrollment in a local high school
- Pre-departure preparation orientation in South Africa
- Post-arrival, mid-term and re-entry orientations in the host country
- Personal YFU contact person
- 24h emergency support
- General administrative support
- Assistance with the visa application

What is not included:

- Your personal spending money
- Visa application costs
- Passport application fee if you do not have a valid passport
- Excess luggage fees (if required)
- Domestic travel to and from closest international airport of departure from South Africa
- School books, school transport and other educational materials
- Excursions, school trips or holidays during your exchange



For more information about the programme fees, please refer to our detailed programme overview on the following pages. Please also take note of the additional fees for language courses, specializations or optional add-ons offered by YFU in the host country. Fees may change due to exchange rate fluctuations.

ARGENTINA



FACTS

Capital: Buenos Aires
Language: Spanish
Population: 46 million

Fun Facts:

2nd largest Latin American country
 Famous for soccer, beef, tango
 Known as 'The land of silver'

¡Hola! Are you looking to swim in beautiful rivers, relax at the beach, and hike through the Andes? Argentina has a diverse blend of fascinating cultures, with Italian and Spanish heritage as well as many other influences. Argentineans love a good 'asado', as well as 'empanadas' and 'yerba mate'. Choose Argentina as your host country and find out what they are!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Short Intensive Language	Jun 2026 - Aug 2026	R 118,000	2 weeks of high school, followed by intensive Spanish classes (various levels available) at a language school during the remaining 6 weeks.
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 153,000	Sports specialization available in Rugby, Hockey, Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, Rowing, Martial arts and Swimming. Cost: R 8,400. Optional trip to Bariloche in Patagonia: USD 500 Optional trip to Iguazu Falls and Brazil: USD 400
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 141,000	
Year	Jan 2027 - Jul 2027	R 147,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jan 2028	R 135,000	



AUSTRIA

FACTS

Capital: Vienna

Language: German

Population: 9 million

Fun Facts:

Mostly covered by mountains (Alps)

Ideal for hiking and skiing

Borders 8 other countries

Giant mountains, green valleys, forests, and lakes make Austria a prime destination for you to explore. Mountain climbing, skiing, hiking, cycling, and boating are just some of the activities YFU exchange students to Austria can experience. Austria is also globally recognized for its classical music, and for being the birthplace of famous composers such as Mozart.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Year	Sep 2026 - Jul 2027	R 181,000	<p>An additional language course, either in person or online, is compulsory for students with little or no prior knowledge of the German language (below level A2). Additional fee: R 11,550.</p> <p>A Dance specialization is available for the year and semester programme starting in September 2026. Additional fee: R 14,000.</p>
Semester	Sep 2026 - Jan 2027	R 153,000	
Trimester	Oct 2026 - Jan 2027	R 125,000	





FACTS

Capital: Brussels
Language: Flemish (Dutch)
Population: 6.5 million

Fun Facts:
 Dutch-speaking part of Belgium
 Located in the country's North
 Cities: Antwerp, Ghent, Brugge

Helaba! In the Flanders region of the Kingdom of Belgium, you'll find yourself speaking Dutch. Embark on a cultural adventure and see the lush wooded landscapes, glistening rivers, and beautiful valleys of your new home! Just as they are proud of their cultural and educational achievements, Belgians appreciate their cuisine, which includes delicious chocolate and waffles.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 123,000	Additional fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory school admin fee, approx. R 1,000 per month • School trips and excursions: approx. R 3,000 - R 12,000, depending on the length of the programme • For students over the age of 18, the embassy charges an additional visa fee of EUR 350
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 127,000	
Year	Aug 2026 - Jul 2027	R 145,000	
Trimester	Jan 2027 - Mar 2027	R 126,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jul 2027	R 144,000	





FACTS

Capital: Brussels

Language: French

Population: 3.6 million

Fun Facts:

French-speaking part of Belgium

Located in the country's South

French fries originated there

Bonjour! In the Wallonia region of the Kingdom of Belgium, you'll find yourself speaking French. and unlike our programmes to France, Wallonia does not require you to have prior knowledge of the French language! Your Belgian host family will welcome you with hospitality as you explore their country's diverse traditions, beautiful arts, neoclassical architecture - and, of course, their traditional food, which includes the famous French Fries.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jul 2027	R 169,000	Prior knowledge of French is advantageous, but not required.
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 146,000	The year programme includes a 3-5 day cultural trip to Paris.
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 138,000	Students who are 18 at the time they apply for a visa will be charged an additional fee of EUR 350 by the Belgian embassy.





BRAZIL

FACTS

Capital: Brasilia
Language: Portuguese
Population: 214 million

Fun Facts:
 Rio de Janeiro is not the capital
 Largest South American country
 Home to the Amazon rainforest

From the samba-filled streets and sun-drenched beaches of Rio de Janeiro to the intricate web of rivers and jungles of the Amazon, there's always something new to explore in beautiful Brazil! You'll live like a Brazilian, gathering with your host family for meals and enjoying dishes like churrasco or feijoada. Along with the famous Carnival, you will experience a diverse music and dancing scene, as well as futebol (soccer), the national pastime of Brazilians.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 159,000	Prior knowledge of the Portuguese language is not mandatory, but it is highly recommended to take a basic language course prior to the start of your exchange. The short 6-week programme in Jul/ Aug 2026 does not include school attendance, but an online Portuguese language course with two lessons per week.
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 143,000	
Short	Jul 2026 - Aug 2026	R 107,000	
Year	Jan 2027 - Jan 2028	R 159,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 143,000	



CHILE



FACTS

Capital: Santiago de Chile
Language: Spanish
Population: 19.5 million

Fun Facts:

Has the world's driest desert
 The coastline is 6500 km long
 Has a very diverse geography

¡Hola! Whether you want to hike the Andes, kick back on the beaches, or even explore thriving cities, Chile is a country with something exciting for you! Chileans say that their country is the 'fin del mundo' – so if you've ever wanted to journey to the 'end of the Earth', Chile is the place for you! Chileans are exceptionally welcoming, and family life is treasured: parents, siblings, and extended family often live, eat, and enjoy social events together. Influenced by its location and extreme geography, the Chileans are strong, proud, extremely innovative, and caring.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Year	Feb 2026 - Jan 2027	R 153,000	Students are expected to learn Spanish during their exchange and should have a basic knowledge of Spanish upon arrival. Specializations in Arts and Music are available at an additional fee.
Semester	Feb 2026 - Jul 2026	R 139,000	
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 154,000	
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 140,000	
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 129,000	



FINLAND



FACTS

Capital: Helsinki

Language: Finnish / Swedish

Population: 5.6 million

Fun Facts:

Has over 87,000 lakes

Finns love to go to the sauna

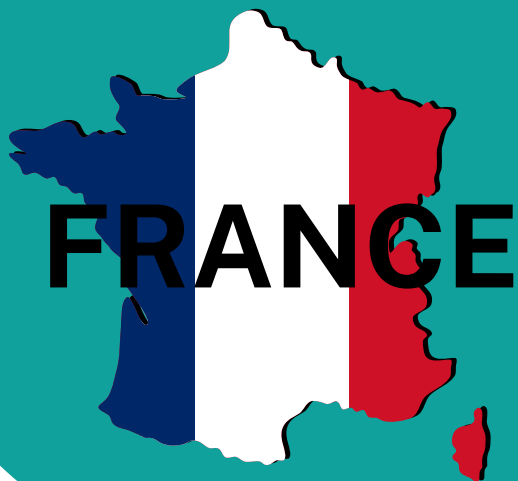
The sun does not rise in winter

Finland is home to thousands of lakes and winter snow, represented by the blue and white colors of the Finnish flag. Finnish families get together on weekends to visit lakeside cottages or forest cabins, often watching and playing sports like ice hockey, skiing, soccer, and track and field. Last but not least, Finland has one of the best education systems in the world!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fee	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 153,000	Students need to be motivated to learn the Finnish language, including through additional language courses and tutoring.
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 141,000	
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 129,000	Students may be placed in Swedish-speaking families as both languages are widely spoken in Finland.





FACTS

Capital: Paris
Language: French
Population: 68 million

Fun Facts:
 Largest country in the EU
 Has Europe's highest mountain
 World's most visited country

Bonjour! Known for food, art, dance, music, literature, and much more, France is a country that is easy to fall in love with. You will experience the joy of living, or 'joie de vivre', as well as the world famous French cuisine. Enjoy some of the daily French activities like discovering traditional crafts, visiting a local farm, or attending a concert!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fee	Additional Information
Summer Camp	Jul 2026	R 109,000	2-week programme with a language course and hostel accommodation during the week/ host family stay on the weekend and a 2-day trip to Paris.
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 119,000	Students must have prior knowledge of French (A1 or higher). Daily school lunches are included in the programme fee. A private school option is available for an additional fee of approx. R 40,000 (year)/ R20,000 (semester).
Trimester	Oct 2026 - Jan 2027	R 113,000	
Trimester	Jan 2027 - Mar 2027	R 121,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 139,000	



GERMANY

FACTS

Capital: Berlin
Language: German
Population: 83 million

Fun Facts:
 7th largest European country
 There are 20.000 castles
 It borders 9 other countries

Germany is a breathtakingly beautiful country with a unique and rich history and a diverse modern culture. One of the most popular study abroad destinations in Europe, Germany offers an inclusive and exciting exchange experience at every turn. Germany has something exciting to offer for anyone!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Fees	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 158,000	<p>Compulsory intensive online language course for students with no prior knowledge of German: R16,000.</p> <p>Students who have already graduated from high school in their home country can be accepted if they graduated less than 4 months prior to the start of the exchange programme.</p>
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 136,000	
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 132,000	
Year	Jan 2027 - Jan 2028	R 158,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 137,000	
Trimester	Jan 2027 - Apr 2027	R 133,000	



HUNGARY

FACTS

Capital: Budapest
Language: Hungarian
Population: 9.7 million

Fun Facts:
 Has 44 letters in its alphabet
 Home to 1300 thermal springs
 It borders 7 other countries

A rare blend of the old and new, this 1,000-year-old country is quickly becoming one of Central Europe's most popular. From gorgeous lakes and rivers to breathtaking architecture and complex cities, Hungary offers a remarkable and balanced experience for any exchange student. Come experience the rich arts, music, language, of this unique and beautiful culture!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 131,000	Specializations in music or sports available at a fee of USD 300. Enrolment in a Waldorf school is possible at an additional fee of USD 300 (semester and year programme).
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 115,000	
Trimester	Aug 2026 - Nov 2026	R 97,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Apr 2027	R 97,000	Monthly cultural trips to neighbouring countries and different cities are offered at a cost of USD 70 to UDS 400.
Trimester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 113,000	





FACTS

Capital: Madrid

Language: Spanish

Population: 47.2 million

Fun Facts:

Has 4 other official languages

Famous dishes: Tapas & Paella

People have two surnames

‘¡Viva España!’ These are the words you will be saying as you explore the vibrant culture and rich history of Spain while becoming part of a family, attending school, and learning what it means to be Spanish! Family is an important aspect of Spanish culture, and from tapas to paella, Spanish food offers something delicious for everyone to try.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Trimester	Sep 2026 - Dec 2026	R 145,000	<p>Students should have a basic knowledge of Spanish before they start their exchange programme.</p> <p>All programmes to Spain are implemented by our local YFU partner organization Juventud Y Cultura.</p> <p>Additional fees are charged for students with allergies or special placement requirements, as well as late applications or individual travel arrangements.</p>
Short Term	Sep 2026 - Nov 2026	R 135,000	
Short Term	Nov 2026 - Jan 2027	R 135,000	
Semester	Feb 2027 - Jun 2027	R 179,000	
Trimester	Feb 2027 - Apr 2027	R 135,000	





SWITZERLAND

FACTS

Capital: Bern

Language: German/ French

Population: 8.7 million

Fun Facts:

Famous for cheese & chocolate

There are 4 official languages

Has Europe's highest mountain

Once you see the breathtaking beauty of the Alps, lakes, and castles of Switzerland, you'll realize why Swiss culture revolves around nature and the outdoors. Have a YFU exchange experience in one of the most ecologically aware countries in the world! Most Swiss speak French or German, but Italian and Romansh are also national languages. Connecting with nature is as much a part of the Swiss culture as is enjoying music, museums, and theaters. Hiking, jogging, soccer, skiing, mountaineering, ice hockey, and cycling are also common activities.

Programmes in 2026

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Year	Aug 2026 - Jun 2027	R 203,000	Students are usually placed in the German-speaking part of the country. School transport of up to CHF 60/ month is included. Students who cannot speak German at level A2 or higher are required to take additional language lessons (not included in the programme fee).
Semester	Aug 2026 - Jan 2027	R 170,000	





FACTS

Capital: London
Language: English
Population: 67.3 million

Fun Facts:
 There are 40+ different dialects
 Brits drink their tea with milk
 The UK invented the postal stamp

Visit the United Kingdom and get a taste of beautiful ancient cities, castles, royal gardens, and small villages. After school, you and your new friends might play rugby or cricket, two of the most popular sports. If you want to explore the rolling hills and romantic coastlines of a country rich with culture, make the United Kingdom your home with YFU and our partner organization InterStudies!

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Year	Sep 2026 - Jun 2027	R 490,000	The programme to the UK is implemented through our partner organization InterStudies. Host families in the UK receive financial compensation for hosting an exchange student (this is included in the programme fee). The programme fee also includes the mandatory school fees charged by schools in the UK.
Semester	Sep 2026 - Jan 2027	R 247,000	
Trimester	Sep 2026 - Dec 2026	R 218,000	
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 267,000	
Trimester	Jan 2026 - Mar 2027	R 218,000	





FACTS

Capital: Montevideo
Language: Spanish
Population: 3.4 million

Fun Facts:
 Smallest Spanish-speaking country
 Has more sheep than people
 Has the longest national anthem

Uruguay offers picturesque scenery of beaches, dunes, and large lagoons. Experience the intimate beauty of Uruguay, where the people are warm and the land is welcoming. You'll enjoy getting to know the people of this small but unique country! As in most Latin American countries, families in Uruguay tend to have close-knit relationships. Apart from experiencing the Uruguayan family life, you'll also have the chance to enjoy the country's delicious cuisine.

Programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	Dates	Programme Fee	Additional Information
Short Intensive Language	Jun 2026 - Jul 2026	R 99,000	This 6-week programme combines a homestay experience with an intensive Spanish language course (100 hours), a field trip to a local high school and various optional local activities and excursions.
Semester	Jan 2027 - Jun 2027	R 137,000	A 40-hour Spanish language course can be added for an additional fee of USD 550.
Year	Jan 2027 - Jan 2028	R 155,000	





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