

International Camper Exchange Program

2025 Destinations

Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA is pleased to offer seven ICEP programs for the summer of 2025. All of the ICEP programs offer teens cultural experiences through youth-to-youth interaction, service learning opportunities, and leadership development. Participants will experience a way of life that is different from their own. The ICEP experience is valuable preparation for life in a world that is becoming increasingly global. The destinations being offered this summer are **Chile, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, Spain, Sweden, and Uruguay.**

ICEP destinations are subject to change and/or cancellation due to natural disasters, other acts of God, or political, social, or economic unrest of a particular country or region.

The following is a brief description of our host countries and a general description of each of our ICEP programs. Please note that these descriptions are based on last year's program and are subject to change.

**All program dates include check-in and check-out at camp.*

CHILE

Our partner in Chile is the YMCA in Valparaíso. Participants will fly into Santiago and then be shuttled by bus out to Valparaíso where the majority of the program takes place. Participants will have homestays and work on community service projects in the poorer hillsides of Valparaíso at daycare facilities and/or local schools and YMCAs. Service projects in the past have included a lot of time helping with painting projects and volunteering with the Y's Teen Leaders. Educational travel will take place in Santiago, Viña del Mar, and Valparaíso. June, July and August are winter months in Chile, and the weather tends to be cold, averaging around 50-60 degrees during the day and dropping into the 40s at night. While there is no snow in the metro areas the group visits, participants should be prepared to come to Chile with plenty of warm layers.

Program Highlights

- Build strong relationships with the YMCA Teen Leaders through activities, homestays, and service projects
- Work with students at the George Williams School
- Participate in cultural experiences such as empanada-making and salsa dancing
- Take a trip to the Andes and meet other teen leaders at their YMCA resident camp

Accommodations

Accommodations on ICEP Chile will range from homestays to dorm-style housing in community centers, hostels, and a camp with bunk housing.

36 nights total

4 nights at CCC/CB

2 nights on overnight flights

15 nights YMCA housing

9 nights in Chilean homestays, in and around Valparaíso

1-2 nights Santiago hostel

4 nights YMCA Camp, Andes trip

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- It will be winter in Chile at the time of the program and while winter temperatures are more moderate in the areas we are visiting, participants choosing this destination will need to bring winter clothes and be prepared for a range of conditions.
- This program has multiple service projects working with young children in poor neighborhoods and schools.
- Most Chileans only speak Spanish. You don't need to know Spanish for this program, but it is helpful to have an interest in the language and learn a few phrases.
- The group does a lot of walking up and down steep hillsides in Valparaíso.

JAPAN

Our YMCA partner in Japan is the Tochigi YMCA. Their main YMCA is located in the city of Utsunomiya, which is approximately two hours north of Tokyo by train. The group will stay in a house owned by the YMCA, where participants will sleep on tatami mats and have access to a kitchen. On occasion, the group may prepare their own meals or a meal will be prepared for them at the housing. While in Utsunomiya, the group will spend about one week living with homestay families. Service work in Japan is well balanced between physical and social service. Past groups have volunteered at the YMCA kindergarten, joined a river clean-up project, learned about local agriculture, and run activities at two summer camp programs for Japanese children. Cultural activities will include interaction with Japanese teens through a high school international club, a YMCA camp, a traditional tea ceremony, and excursions to Tokyo and Nikko, a popular hiking destination and home to many of the Japanese "Onsen's" (baths).

Program Highlights

- Connect with high school students at a local school's international club

- Try Japan's unique cuisine, wear a kimono, and participate in a Japanese tea ceremony
- Run activities and games with Japanese children at day camps
- Explore Tokyo on an overnight excursion

Accommodations

ICEP Japan's main base throughout the program is a YMCA house. Other accommodations on the program include dorm-style housing in youth centers and cabins, a hotel, and private homes for their homestay. Participants will often sleep on futons and tatami mats in their housing.

36 nights total
 4 nights CB/CCC
 1 night traveling
 6 nights homestay
 3 nights at a YMCA camp
 2 nights hotel in Nikko
 1 night in Youth Center in Tokyo
 18 nights in YMCA housing

Special Considerations

- ICEP Japan is fully immersed in Japanese food culture (a lot of noodles and fish) – not a lot of American options are available. Food options can be limiting for strict vegetarians and fish products are used widely, even in broths.

NEW ZEALAND

Our partnership in New Zealand is with the Auckland YMCA. The program is based out of the Shakespear Lodge, located on the Hibiscus Coast north of Auckland. Shakespear Lodge operates as a camp and outdoor center during the summer months and becomes vacant during the winter season. ICEP New Zealand participants complete a number of environmental-based service projects in some of the country's regional parks. Past projects have included removing invasive plants, planting trees, and trail work. The group will also work on social service projects including running activities for youth at Shakespear Lodge Holiday Camp and spending time with kids at an after school program through the North Shore YMCA. Participants will explore New Zealand's unique geographical features on two road trips on the north island and also spend time learning about Maori culture and history.

Program Highlights

- Help preserve New Zealand's unique environment—plant trees, remove invasive species, and help maintain trails in various regional parks

- Run activities and develop counselor skills during Holiday Camp for New Zealand youth
- Visit two Maori communities to learn more about New Zealand's indigenous culture, experience the formal process of entering onto a marae, and meet Maori youth during a school visit
- Hike dormant volcanoes, sea kayak, and explore New Zealand's stunning coastline

Accommodations

ICEP New Zealand is housed for the majority of the program at the Shakespear Lodge – a small camp (off-season) with private bunks for boys and girls. In addition, the group will stay in hostels or dorm-style facilities when traveling on road trips.

35 nights total

4 nights CCC/CB

2 nights traveling

20 nights Shakespear Lodge

9 nights dorm style housing or hostels on mini excursions around Auckland

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- This itinerary includes a lot of hiking and other physical activities. It's very important that participants are able to walk on potentially steep terrain and are comfortable hiking up to five miles at a time.
- June, July, and August are winter months in New Zealand - average temperatures are 60s during the day
- 24+ hour flight.

PERU

Our partner in Peru is the YMCA in the capital city of Lima. The group will be based out of this YMCA, where they will stay in dorm-style housing. While in Lima, the group will visit historical sites around Lima, make multiple trips to a local Y-sponsored orphanage for children with disabilities, and take part in cultural activities at the Y including box-drum lessons, cooking classes, and dance classes. The group will spend 3 days in a poorer suburb of Lima doing construction work, 3 days at a coastal camp in Azpitia helping prepare for the summer season, and about one week in homestays with families in Lima. Towards the end of the program the group will fly to Cusco to explore the Sacred Valley, visit Machu Picchu, and visit with children at an afterschool program.

Program Highlights

- Visit with children from the YMCA-sponsored Arcos Iris Orphanage
- Help build roads, rock walls, or medical facilities in a poor suburb of Lima
- Travel 11,000+ ft in elevation to the small city of Cusco and take an excursion to Machu Picchu
- Interact with Peruvian teens through cultural activities such as cooking and language classes

Accommodations

ICEP Peru is based in dorm-style housing at the YMCA facility in Lima. The group will also stay in private homes for their homestay, a hotel while in Cusco, and in smaller YMCA facilities in Independencia and Azpitia.

36 nights total

4 nights CCC/CB

2 nights traveling

12 nights Lima YMCA

1 night YMCA camp in Azpitia

2 nights Independencia community center

7 nights Cusco and Aguas Calientes hotels

8 nights homestays

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- Cusco is at an elevation of 11,000ft. The group will take time to acclimate during the first couple of days.
- This itinerary has a hiking component. It's very important that participants are able to walk on potentially steep terrain and are comfortable hiking up to five miles at a time.
- This program includes service in very impoverished areas of Peru and has multiple visits to orphanages for children with sometimes severe mental and physical disabilities.
- June, July and August are winter months in Peru. Temperatures are in the 60s, dropping to the 50s at night.

SPAIN

Our partner in Spain is YMCA of Spain, based out of the capital city, Madrid. This program was a new partnership that began in 2023. The group will be based out of multiple YMCA Spain centers throughout the country in Madrid, Salamanca, Zaragoza, and Salduero. While in the cities, the group will be facilitating games and activities at private and public social camps. The group will also travel to Camp

Salduero, where participants will serve as LITs/Counselors for an English Immersion Camp. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about YMCA Spain's International Protection Program that provides support to refugees from various countries. At the end of the program, participants will travel back to Madrid for some cultural tourism.

Program Highlights

- Be a part of brand new partnership
- Practice your counseling skills at social camps in Madrid, Salamanca, Zaragoza, and Salduero
- Explore and learn about the rich history of Spain
- Stay in a former monastery in Salamanca and visit one of the oldest Universities in the world

Accommodations

The group will be housed in dorm-style housing in Salamanca, Zaragoza, and Salduero. The group will also stay in a hotel when in Madrid. There are no homestays as part of this experience.

36 nights total

4 nights CCC/CB

2 nights traveling

10 nights in Madrid hotel

7 nights in Salamanca residency

7 nights in Zaragoza residency

6 nights in Camp Salduero

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- June, July, and August are summer months in Spain. The temperature is much warmer and dryer than summer in New England.
- Dinner is later in the evening. Be aware that meals may not occur when expected.
- The Spanish spoken in Spain is different than in the Americas and can be more formal and have different accents. You don't need to know Spanish for this program, but it is helpful to have an interest in the language and learn a few phrases.

SWEDEN

Our partner in Sweden is the YMCA Camp Brevik. Participants will fly into Stockholm where they will spend their time sightseeing and visiting a local YMCA to run day camp activities for children. The group will spend three full weeks at the Camp Brevik international leadership camp where they will be mixed into cabins with Swedish and American campers. Daily activities will focus on cross-cultural communication, leadership development, and of course, fun camp activities. The group will also take part in an 8-day canoe trip on the Swedish Archipelago, where participants will sleep outside each night and cook meals over camp stoves or fires. After the final week of camp, BCCYMCA participants will stay on to complete an

additional week of service at Camp Brevik. Participants will help facilitate camp activities for Adventure Camp – a program for children with dyslexia learning to speak English.

Program Highlights

- Attend a full session of camp fully integrated with Swedish teenagers
- Experience white nights on an 8-day hajk (canoe trip) in the Swedish Archipelago
- Run camp activities for children at Camp Brevik

Accommodations

While in Stockholm, the group will stay in a hostel for a few nights before heading to Camp Brevik. At Camp Brevik, the group will be housed in camper cabins with bunk beds, much like BCCYMCA.

36 nights total

4 nights CCC/CB

2 nights traveling

4 nights in a hostel in Stockholm

19 nights at Camp Brevik

7 nights Hajk (canoe trip)

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- ICEP Sweden includes an 8-day canoe trip where participants will camp out each night on islands and be expected to learn how to cook outside and set up camp.

URUGUAY

Our partner in Uruguay is the Montevideo YMCA. Upon arrival in Montevideo, the group will travel outside the city to YMCA Camp Artigas where they will spend 1-2 weeks bonding as a group, taking part in a winter camp with Uruguayan teens, and doing service work in local schools. The group will visit rural schools in the area to play games with kids and help renovate the schools and grounds. After camp, the group will travel back to Montevideo, the capital city. They will spend about 10 nights in homestays, meeting up during the day in beautiful seaside Montevideo to explore the city. While in Montevideo, the group will visit multiple urban schools to teach basic English lessons and practice their counseling skills by teaching favorite camp games. ICEP Uruguay stands out from other programs in the amount of Spanish that is used throughout the program, as well as the time spent with Uruguayan teens. Participants will leave the program with strong connections to their Uruguayan host families.

Program Highlights

- Go to camp with Uruguayan teens
- Tour the Ciudad Vieja or “Old City” of the capital, Montevideo
- Practice your Spanish with your Uruguayan homestay family
- Plan camp activities for young Uruguayan children at rural and urban schools and community centers

Accommodations

The group will be housed in dorm-style housing and homestays.

36 nights total

4 nights CCC/CB

2 nights traveling

8 nights Montevideo YMCA

10 nights Camp Artigas

12 nights in homestay

**exact number of nights in each location is subject to change*

Special Considerations

- It will be winter in Uruguay during June, July, and August. Because of the proximity to the coast, the weather can be very cold and damp. It is common for the itinerary to change unexpectedly because of the weather.
- Uruguayans eat a lot of red meat but vegetarians were accommodated pretty well.
- Uruguayans tend to stay up very late at night and then wake up early to start the day. Make sure to get the rest you need.
- Many Uruguayans only speak Spanish. You don't need to know Spanish for this program, but it is helpful to have an interest in the language and learn a few phrases.