Eco-Tourism in Costa Rica
San José, Costa Rica
March 11 – March 19, 2023
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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE
A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. Box 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2420

PHONE     (850) 644-3272
           1-800-374-8581
FAX        (850) 644-8817
           (850) 645-4659
EMAIL      IP-Info@fsu.edu
WEBSITE    international.fsu.edu
HOURS      8:00am - 5:00pm EST
           Monday - Friday

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergencies (Local Police) 911
Fire Brigade 118
Red Cross 128

US EMBASSY
U.S. Embassy San Jose
Calle 98 Via 104, Pavas
San José, Costa Rica

PHONE     (506) 2519-2000
WEBSITE   https://cr.usembassy.gov/

INTERNATIONAL CALLS
Making international calls from the US to Costa Rica:
First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “506” (the country code), then the specific area code and location number.

Time Differences: CST – Costa Rica observes Central Standard Time, which is one hour behind Eastern Standard Time, EST, and two hours behind Eastern Daylight Time. Costa Rica does not observe Daylight Savings Time.

HOUSING LOCATION
Students will be housed in various hotels around Costa Rica. Specific housing addresses will be provided closer to the program departure date.

STAFF CONTACTS
Meghan Leeds, Program Coordinator
EMAIL      mgleeds@fsu.edu
PHONE     (850) 645-2850

Sean McGinley, Program Leader
EMAIL      smcginley@fsu.edu
PHONE     (850) 644-9041

Lydia Hanks, Faculty Member
EMAIL      lhanks@dedman.fsu.edu
PHONE     (813) 340-2929
ACADEMICS

ACADEMICS MATTER

This program is first and foremost an academic one, so you should be prepared to invest as much time, effort and thought into your coursework as you do on your home campus.

Since classes are small, you will have more interaction with your fellow students and with faculty than you have on main campus. There will be a greater emphasis on participation in class discussions and attending organized excursions may be required for some courses. This means you must be prepared to maintain a high level of performance by being an active and committed participant in your class.

TUTORING RESOURCES

There are a number of tutoring resources available at Florida State University to assist you academically, both in Tallahassee and abroad. Online tutors in many subject areas are available through the following programs:

- Reading & Writing Center (RWC) - http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online
- Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) - http://ace.fsu.edu/
- University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services - https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (OAS)

OAS provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities and accommodations vary in nature, and though the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 do not apply extraterritorially, we do our best to accommodate our students. If you anticipate needing to request accommodations for a documented disability, please schedule an appointment with OAS by calling (850) 644-9566 (Voice) or (850) 644-8504 (TDD). For more information, visit https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas.

FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD

FSU students are encouraged to get involved with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society and the Global Citizenship Certificate program. These two resources provide special recognition as global-ready graduates.

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society

- garnetandgoldscholar.fsu.edu
- garnetandgoldprogram@fsu.edu

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society program facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of:

- Leadership
- Internship
- Service
- International
- Research

A student who has met the criteria in three of the five areas is eligible for consideration.

All study abroad programs organized through the International Programs Office qualify for the international experience portion of the International Area.

The Global Citizenship Certificate

- cge.fsu.edu/globalcitizen
- globalcitizenedu@fsu.edu

The Global Citizenship Certificate program helps undergraduate students develop invaluable cross-cultural skills and global competencies needed to be a global-ready graduate.

Students who enroll in the certificate take 1 required course, Global Perspectives, and 5 electives. The required course counts toward FSU Liberal Studies X, E-series, and writing requirements. Students can choose from 500+ courses to fulfill the elective course requirement.

In addition, students participate in 8 intercultural events on campus and a sustained international experience abroad, which you are about to do!

Enroll in the Global Citizenship Certificate before you leave to ensure your study abroad experience counts toward the certificate.
Some countries may require COVID-19 testing and/or vaccination to enter the country or for other purposes. Even if a country does not currently have such requirements, FSU cannot guarantee these or other measures will not be implemented before or during your program.

Once you are notified by International Programs to book your travel arrangements, you must submit your flight itinerary through the IP Student Portal. All flight information will be provided to the International Programs staff. It is important that they receive this information in order to monitor student arrivals.

We strongly advise you to purchase airfare and travel insurance directly with the airline when booking your flight; travel insurance typically covers flight cancellation fees, lost luggage, or other losses incurred while traveling, etc. Speak with your airline for details. Click here for more information about travel insurance and trip cancellation policies. Note: Airfare costs are not included in your program fee, and FSU will not reimburse any costs or fees associated with flight changes or cancellations due to COVID-19 should they occur.

- Keep your boarding pass until you have landed, cleared immigration and customs, and have collected your luggage.

- Have your passport accessible in your carry-on luggage.

- During your flight make sure to drink lots of water to stay hydrated. Get up and walk around once an hour to help your circulation. Do simple stretches while in your seat. Try to sleep; it will help you combat jet lag. Wear layers, as the temperature on the plane and in airports can vary.
ARRIVAL

ARRIVING IN SAN JOSE

Before you depart for Costa Rica, you must submit your flight itinerary to ensure airport transport can be arranged. Upon your arrival at the San Jose Airport, you will be greeted by a local Educational World Tours representative. They will transport you to your hotel where you will meet your program leaders/fellow students and check in to your room. More specific arrangements will be provided once we receive everyone’s flight itinerary.

If your flight is canceled, delayed, or you miss a connection on your way to Costa Rica, contact International Programs staff via email or phone.

Your program housing will begin on the start date of your program and end on the end date. If you plan on arriving earlier or wish to stay later, you must make arrangements to stay in a hotel. If your program requires a visa, you may not be permitted to arrive before the program start date. Consult your immigration introduction or visa packet in the IP student portal or contact IP-Visas@fsu.edu prior to planning independent travel before your program.

For planning purposes, you must check out of program housing on the morning of the last day of your program. You will be responsible for getting yourself to the airport in time for your departure.
HOUSING

Housing locations / addresses will be provided closer to departure.

Students will be housed in various hotels as they travel throughout Costa Rica.

All housing accommodations provide comparable facilities; however, we cannot guarantee that each residence will have the exact same amenities. Each student housing facility has safety and security measures, which may vary by location.

Rooming assignments will be made based on a combination of factors as indicated in the information you provide on the housing questionnaire in the IP student portal. You will receive your roommate assignments during check-in to program housing. Roommate assignments are made by our staff and cannot be changed.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the FSU IP Housing Rules & Regulations. Violation of any of the housing policies is grounds for dismissal. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the housing rules and regulations for your specific program. Refer to the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement and the Housing Terms and Conditions for details. You are required to sign the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

At the end of the program, the housing facilities will be inspected. They should be neat, clean and in the condition in which they were found. If your housing is left in an un-fit state or if any damages are found upon your departure, additional charges may be assessed to your FSU account.
PERSONAL TRAVEL, CLIMATE & PACKING

PERSONAL TRAVEL
Due to the uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, all program elements including the program calendar, weekly schedule, classroom environment, course delivery method, housing arrangements, transportation policies, and international or in-country travel restrictions are subject to modification at any time in order to comply with local public health restrictions as well as the policies and practices of Florida State University.

FSU’s current independent travel policy allows students to travel independently commensurate with any local, national, or international guidance and restrictions.

FSU will continue to review its independent travel policy as conditions abroad change, but there is a possibility independent travel could remain restricted or limited during your program. Failure to adhere to the independent travel policy could have significant consequences, including potential removal from the program.

Please wait until you have arrived and received your class/program schedule before booking any independent trips.

Do not plan travel that will cause you to miss classes or other required programming; strict academic standards are maintained on programs. Your grade may be reduced by any unauthorized absence from class.

For safety purposes, you will be instructed by International Programs to fill out a mandatory online independent travel form each time you plan on traveling outside of your program. More information will be provided to you in the IP Student Portal prior to departure.

CLIMATE
The weather is going to play a large role in how you pack for your time abroad. Monitor the weather before departure and research climate trends for your location to pack accordingly.

Costa Rica is beautifully warm all year, with an average annual temperature of 80°-90° Fahrenheit on the coasts and 75°-80° in the countryside and on the mountainsides. The most stable weather is between December and April. These months have little to no rain in most of the country. Other months typically have rain at some point of the day which has the benefit of vibrant, lively green throughout the natural views. As with all rainforests, precipitation could occur at any moment, so it is suggested that you bring a light-weight rain jacket and comfortable walking shoes.

PACKING
All airlines have different policies regarding the number, size, and weight of bags allowed on domestic and international flights. Fees for having too many bags or exceeding size and weight limits are steep, and also vary by airline. It is important that you determine the restriction on your particular airline before you pack. Please be aware that you will be responsible for carrying your own bags, packs, etc. Restrictions regarding carry-on baggage are different for each airline and sometimes vary depending on your originating, transferring and/or terminating airport. Also, requirements change based on current events. It is imperative that you check your specific requirements prior to your departure and plan accordingly.

Ensure your bag has a luggage tag with your name, address, and final destination. It is recommended that you pack 1 or 2 outfits in your carry-on in case of flight delays/cancellations or lost luggage.

We recommend researching ways to access a textbook as an eBook (electronic book) through the FSU Bookstore, FSU Libraries, Amazon, or other online sites. Keep in mind that not all textbooks are available as eBooks. If you wish to ship textbooks or other course materials to your study abroad location, reference the Mail section of this document and contact the International Programs office with any questions. Plan to bring textbooks and other required course materials with you. You will receive information from the International Programs office when it is time to register for classes with details about textbooks. As a reminder, textbooks are not included in the program fee and will most likely need to be purchased prior to departure.

Make several photocopies of the pages in your passport that contain the issue date, your signature, and your photograph. Leave one copy at home with your family and take another copy with you in case your passport is lost or stolen. Carry a copy separate from your passport when you are traveling.

You should not bring any valuable or sentimental items such as jewelry, expensive watches, expensive cameras, or keepsake items you would regret losing.
COMMUNICATION & ELECTRONICS

COMPUTERS
Students should plan to bring a laptop or tablet with them for use in their residence, while traveling, or when required for health reasons. We recommend doing the following prior to departure:

- Bring a plug adaptor so your computer can charge on a foreign outlet (laptops and cell phones do not require a voltage convertor, only a plug adaptor)
- Check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that your computer is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you may look into insurance through [http://www.safeware.com/](http://www.safeware.com/), a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.
- Do NOT pack your laptop or laptop charger in your checked luggage.

MAIL
Please share the following information with those in the US who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad.

Due to the brevity of the program: You will not be able to receive mail during the program.
EXPENSES WHILE ABROAD
When estimating your financial needs abroad, calculate the amount of money you will need for meals for the entire period of your stay; costs for your personal entertainment and social activities.

CURRENCY
Costa Rica uses the Colon as the national currency. Exchange some dollars for Costa Rican Colones before you leave the U.S. Don’t exchange more than $100, you just need enough to get you to your study abroad location and to a bank abroad. You can reference the current exchange rate [online].

CURRENCY & BANKING

BANCING
We recommend you set up online banking for your bank account(s) prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account(s) while overseas.

You should bring two types of cards with you:

Debit Card
- A debit card can be used to access funds from an ATM or bank.
- Make sure your debit/ATM card is linked to a checking account, rather than to a savings account, so you will have access to your funds.
- If you have a pin longer than 4 digits or based on letters, you may have trouble using it abroad. You will need to change your pin before departure.
- You should contact your financial institution for information regarding ATM transaction fees. You can limit the fees if your U.S. bank has a ‘sister’ bank in the host country and/or if you limit your withdrawals, though we do not advise keeping large sums of money on you or stored in your residence, even if a safe is provided.

Credit Card
- Credit cards are useful in the event of an emergency. If you need to visit a doctor or hospital, you will likely have to pay prior to the service, and then submit an insurance claim afterward.
- Credit cards are also useful for everyday purchases and offer excellent exchange rates. Mastercard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards overseas. A credit card with "chip and pin" technology is recommended, as this is the standard abroad.
- Consider applying for a credit card with no foreign transaction fees/international fees.

Before using an ATM or debit card overseas, we recommend the following:
- Contact your financial institution(s) before you leave the U.S. to make sure your ATM or debit card is activated for international use during the dates and in the locations in which you will be abroad.
- Keep a record of all credit/debit/ATM card numbers and the phone numbers you would need to call, with area codes, if they are lost or stolen. Keep this record in a safe place separate from your cards, and you should provide a copy to family at home.
HEALTH & WELLNESS

INOCULATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS

BEFORE DEPARTURE:
We encourage all students with underlying health issues that may increase the severity of infection should they contract COVID-19 to discuss their study abroad plan with their doctor/specialist.

Florida State University requires certain immunizations prior to your registration for classes. All newly admitted degree-seeking students (freshman and transfer) and non-FSU students will be asked to complete and submit the required Student Immunization Form through the IP Student Portal.

Familiarize yourself with the specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Click here for additional information available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site. Some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past locations the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm whether or not the previous travel requires additional inoculations.

WHILE ABROAD:
Your program fee includes international medical and evacuation insurance coverage through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI); Click here to access the policy online. The coverage will be effective for participants from the day the program starts until the day the program ends. It includes coverage for treatment of ill students, including those with COVID-19, as well as COVID testing for those who are symptomatic, or those who have had a known exposure to a person who tested positive. It does not cover preventative evacuation due to pandemics or preventative treatments such as vaccinations. There are Teleconsultation Services available. This policy is NOT intended to replace your domestic coverage.

Costa Rica has an excellent health care system. Students in need of emergency care will likely be treated at the El Hospital Cima in San Jose. Emergency care is free at the time of service.

Less urgent situations should be treated in one of the many nearby general practitioner or walk-in clinics. GP visits will incur a fee, which students are responsible for paying upfront. Students can file a claim for reimbursement through CISI.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Costa Rica is 18. This means that you will likely have the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol legally. It is in your interest to recognize that this right carries a great deal of responsibility. Should students violate the FSU International Programs conduct code regarding drugs and/or alcohol, they will undergo a student conduct code process, where outcomes are appropriately assigned. In short, know your limits, and drink in moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University does not tolerate the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in FSU study abroad programs. Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program and disciplinary action onsite or upon return to campus. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code: https://sccs.fsu.edu/.

MAPPING YOUR IDENTITIES
Our Mapping your Identities guide will help you explore your identities and evaluate your overall wellness to aid in your preparation for a successful and enriching study abroad experience. It will also help you understand others on your program and be better allies for them.
POLICIES & SAFETY

RULES, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SAFETY & SECURITY
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students apprised of any new information. For more information on IP’s security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Emergency and Risk Management, Tina Brooks, at 850.644.3786 or cbrooks2@fsu.edu.

- **Resources.** Even though you are not on the main campus, you have access to many resources should you encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support you in a variety of ways, including connecting you with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.
  - **Victim Advocate Program.** The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap.
  - **Counseling & Psychological Services at FSU.** Counseling and Psychological Services is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit https://counseling.fsu.edu/ for more information.
  - **Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness.** The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages you to make healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to life-long health and wellness. For more information, visit http://chaw.fsu.edu/.

- **The U.S. State Department** maintains a web site of information for Americans studying abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: http://studentsabroad.state.gov/.

- **The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/.

- **Waivers.** All IP participants must sign and submit a general Waiver of Liability & COVID-19 Waiver through the IP Student Portal.

- Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

- Always carry a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport with you. Keep another copy in your room separate from your passport. Leave one copy at home in the U.S. with your family or a relative.

- Use the buddy system—try to travel with friends as much as possible and always tell your roommates or friends where you are going and when you expect to return. Bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.

- **Valuables.** Students should not take sentimental valuables on their program. Students should not leave cash, passports, or other items of value unattended in their rooms. If a locker or safe is provided, students are strongly encouraged to use it to store anything of value at all times. Students should plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in their rooms. Students are responsible for ensuring their rooms are left secure at all times – do not prop open doors, do not leave doors and windows unlocked, do not give keys to anyone. If students notice others in the building leaving the main entrance door unsecured, they should notify FSU IP staff immediately, even if there are others living in the building who are not FSU program participants. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance that will cover their belongings while abroad, whether a standard homeowners or renters policy. The International Programs insurance policy does not cover loss or theft of participants’ possessions.

- **Pickpocketing.** In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. Beware of strangers who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or strange gestures. Smartphones and purses are often stolen in crowded areas, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. Keep them close to you and within your own sight, but out of the reach of strangers. Secure your valuables when you use public transportation, especially if you are travelling on an overnight train/coach.

- **Weapons.** You are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Weapons, such as guns, mace, pepper spray, and disguised or flick knives are illegal in many countries. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
TIPS & RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search:

https://letsgo.com/ (online travel guide)
http://www.state.gov/travel/ (US State Department’s information for Americans living abroad)
https://nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Too Good to Go (Find heavily discounted surplus food daily)
Dark Sky (With down-to-the-minute forecasts, you’ll know exactly when the rain will start or stop, right where you’re standing)
Mobile Passport (Authorized by US Government to get through customs upon return to the US. Allows you to use the dedicated mobile passport line in 21 participating airports)

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
International Programs Facebook
International Programs Twitter
International Programs Instagram

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