

Proposed itinerary overview

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | Arrival day Arrive at the airport + transfer to Coronado + Meeting families for dinner and rest | Welcome First day Orientation + Short Coronado walking tour + San José history and culture tour + visit Central Market | Coronado Sunday Farmer's Market visit + Free afternoon for optional activities |
| Coronado Short level placement test + First day of classes! + Volunteer project visit and orientation | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work + Tropical fruit tasting class | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + San José Museum visit | Coronado Classes | Central Pacific Weekend Travel to Central Pacific + Crocodile River Safari + Free afternoon to enjoy the beach or optional activities | Central Pacific Weekend Visit Manuel Antonio National Park (free time to enjoy the beach) + Travel to Coronado (late afternoon) |
| Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work + Costa Rican traditional food tasting class (corn specials) | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Coffee Plantation visit | Coronado Classes | Arenal Weekend Travel to Arenal + Visit Río Celeste National Park | Arenal Weekend Natural history hike at hanging bridges park + Travel to Coronado (late afternoon) |
| Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work + Coffee roaster visit and tasting in Coronado | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Visit La Paz Waterfall Gardens | Coronado Classes | Caribbean Weekend Travel to Caribbean coast + Free time to enjoy the beach or do optional activities + Caribbean food tasting class | Caribbean Weekend Bribri Indigenous Reservation Cacao Tour + Free afternoon for optional activities + Travel to Coronado (late afternoon) |
| Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work + Costa Rican cooking class | Coronado Classes + Volunteer work | Coronado Classes + Traditional masquerade workshop visit | Coronado Classes | Free day for optional activities! | Departure day Transfer to the airport |

Important notes:

- Volunteer work days and times may vary depending on the project with a minimum of 10 hours of work per week.
- One cultural activity and one excursion per week will be included, other activities will be optional. Days for these activities may change in the final weekly schedule, but not the overall plan.
- One-on-one paper correction and tutoring for volunteer class will be scheduled according to the student's volunteer work schedule. Students will be informed ahead of their appointment times.
- "Classes" include the different courses that the school will offer, therefore we are expecting different groups and levels on each course. Each class will consist of 15 hours per week.
- Class schedule may be transferred to the afternoon if this makes more sense for volunteer work, but overall times will remain the same for all students.

Activity descriptions:

San José history and culture tour + visit Central Market: a stroll through some of the main streets of San José that will lead us to the main attractions of the downtown area and help us get oriented for our time in Costa Rica. These will not only allow us to peek into the regular life of many *ticos*, but also discover the secrets of the Central Market.

Sunday Farmer's Market visit: we will visit the busy farmer's market that happens every Sunday morning in Coronado downtown. We will have the chance to see, buy and taste delicious produce, from *pipas* (coconuts) to fresh cheese. Why not buy for your host mom some of your favorite vegetables for the upcoming week?

Tropical fruit tasting class: we will study the texture, look, smell and most importantly: flavor of some tropical fruits, some you may already know, but others will surprise you and probably become new favorites!

San José Museum visit: the city has several contemporary and pre-Columbian art museums. We will visit one of the latter which hosts a broad collection of objects. With our local guide, we will learn more about the meaning of these objects, how they were made and why they were important. Through these objects we will be able to glimpse through history to the lives of the early cultures that populated Costa Rica and beyond.

Central Pacific Weekend: we will depart early to the coast. On the road to our final destination, we will have a nice boat ride through the Tárcoles River, an important water body that surrounds Carara National Park and for that, is home to many animals, including the mighty crocodiles and many species of birds. After experiencing the wildlife up close, we will continue to our hotel to have some free time and enjoy the beautiful beach and surrounding area. Bring your swimsuit and don't miss the sunset! If your adventure spirit is on, try a surf lesson, a zip-lining tour or go hiking. During the night, you will have the chance to explore the night scene in Jacó Beach: try some of the best restaurants in Costa Rica's West coast or enjoy some live music. Sunday will be our day to visit Manuel Antonio National Park, one of the best parks in Costa Rica for wildlife

watching, topped with stunning beaches. A local guide will show us hidden beauties and we will learn interesting facts about the forest and its dwellers. You will have the chance to enjoy the scenery from the water and the shade of palm trees.

Coffee Plantation visit: learn about one of the most important crops in Costa Rican (and world) history. Find out how coffee is planted, harvested and processed in a working plantation and processing facility.

Arenal Weekend: once again, we will be departing early to enjoy some of the nice things that the Arenal Volcano area has to offer. Arenal is one of Costa Rica's active volcanos, although now dormant, it remains one of the most impressive sights in the country. A perfect cone reflected in the calm waters of an artificial lake, put in place to produce hydroelectric energy in the 1970's. We will first visit another volcano with some secrets: Tenorio Volcano National Park which features the "blue river" of Río Celeste. A natural phenomenon that turns clear water into a deep light blue hue. We will hike through one of the most diverse forests in Costa Rica to study this phenomenon. After our adventure we will drive to the town of La Fortuna to our hotel to rest for the afternoon or explore the town life around the beautiful central park. On Sunday we will visit the forest from the unique perspective of some fun swinging bridges on top of the canopy. We will have the chance to learn about the rainforest from above, through and below.

Optional activities for Arenal:

- At night, a private reservation will open its doors so we can amaze ourselves with "the other" 80% of tropical wildlife which is only active during the night: spiders, snakes, colorful frogs and toads, but also mammals and other interesting insects will be out!
- Relaxing in the hot springs that descend directly from the volcano.

Coffee roaster visit and tasting in Coronado: by this point you are already an expert in coffee production and processing! However, our local and favorite coffee shop will take us further into the coffee world. Kaffa Café is a pioneer in the Costa Rican coffee scene. Its owner, Minor Alfaro invented a new pour-over method called the Vandola and he does his own roasting right here in Coronado. We will have the chance to get a roasting primer and a demonstration on the Vandola method with some of Costa Rica's finest coffee which is Minor's own choice.

Visit La Paz Waterfall Gardens: one of the must attractions close to San José city is La Paz. A beautiful park with several attractions including Central America's biggest butterfly garden, a humming garden, tons of tropical flowers, five impressive falls and even more! During a visit we will have the chance to see a lot of wildlife which will be a reference throughout your Costa Rican stay.

Caribbean Weekend: the Caribbean of Central America is a world on its own. A beautiful, lush natural setting with rich history and culture. You will be amazed how different this side of Costa Rica is from the rest, including nature, people and food. We will reach our hotel and soon depart to an animal rescue center where we will learn about the animals, the problems they face and the challenges that exist in conservation. We are also going to enjoy the best of the Costa Rican Caribbean cuisine which is far different from what you have already tasted, mainly influenced by

island culture. The main staples are favorites among Costa Ricans. On Sunday we will visit a Bribri reservation, one of the main aboriginal groups still represented in Costa Rica who now produces and sells high-quality cacao. We will learn some century's old wisdom and respect for nature along with the artisanal process of this very important crop in Latin American culture.

Costa Rican cooking class: nothing brings cultures closer than sitting in the table and enjoying some food! This time you will have the chance to get together with the school staff and cook one of our favorite recipes which we hope become yours soon!

Traditional masquerade workshop visit: a very fun, current and picturesque Costa Rican tradition is the "Mascarada": a collection of oversize dolls with characters varying from devils, witches and skeletons to public and political figures. We will visit one of the workshops where these are made in a traditional way and have a chance to talk with the artisan himself who is now third generation "mascarero".

Options for half-day activities:

To replace proposed activities or as optional activities during the week:

- **Hot sauce factory visit:** a visit to a small local hot sauce producer called Monoloco. We will learn about the production and sauces from the creators themselves. Of course, we will have the chance to try every step of the spicy sauce ladder with them. The hottest sauces only for the most "valientes". During this activity, we will also have the chance to explore the surrounding area including the most important public university in Costa Rica: Universidad de Costa Rica and see a bit of the student life there.

- **Medical equipment factory visit:** the most important export in Costa Rica is not coffee or bananas! Medical instruments account for the biggest percentage in export value for the country accounting for some 16% of all exports. Find out what is Costa Rica doing in this field and what is behind these numbers from one of the key players in the industry.

- **Montserrat Cloudforest hike:** up the hill from the school, well after the road ends, a very small community of farmers called Monserrat is the starting point to our hike to the cloudforest. Working as a biological corridor between two National Parks: Braulio Carrillo and Irazú, Locos por el Bosque private reserve is home to many species of plants and animals. With some luck we can observe beautiful birds like the Emerald Toucanet and the Resplendent Quetzal. This adventure hike will lead us to a volcanic river and a lookout point of a beautiful waterfall canyon.

- **Volcán Irazú + Cartago city history visit:** drive through the rural agricultural landscape of Costa Rica's mountains to visit this active volcano. Learn a bit more about the geology and history while visiting the odd landscapes of Irazú, one of Costa Rica's highest peaks. On the way, we'll go through downtown Cartago and visit the site of an important religious peregrination accounting for some 1-2 million ticos.

- **Orosí Valley + Cachí + Cartago city history visit:** a beautiful agricultural valley, East of San José city. It is home to one of our first colonial churches and vast coffee farms. We will learn about the history of the town but also its current life. We will visit the Chachí Dam. This is one of Costa Rica's hydroelectric projects where we can learn about the importance of this type of energy production for the country, as well as its impact. On the way, we'll go through downtown Cartago and visit the site of an important religious peregrination accounting for some 1-2 million ticos.

- **Bajos del Toro Waterfall:** between two National Parks, the Bajos del Toro area is home to many waterfalls and natural attractions. We will visit one of them and have the chance to be amazed by the sheer scale and power of nature.

- **Sarchí traditional wooden ox-cart shop:** A woodwork workshop powered by hydroelectric energy dating back 100 years. Not only that, but at this shop we will have the chance to meet the artisans making the most exact geometric patterns that are now known as the Costa Rican "carreta tradicional" painting. Just a few blocks away, their most famous creation sits on Sarchí's Central Park, the biggest "carreta" in the world.

- **Universidad para la Paz visit:** a visit to the beautiful campus of UPEACE, a UN-sponsored and mandated institution that provides education and research opportunities aiming at social tolerance, cooperation and peaceful understanding. This will be the perfect excuse to include a very important topic in Costa Rican culture: the abolition of army almost 70 years ago.

- **Universidad EARTH visit:** an important Latin American high education institution in the field of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. We will learn about good practices in agriculture and sustainable production through some of the University's own projects.

- **Carpe Chepe nightlife tour:** a pub/bar crawl tour in downtown San José. Get to know how "locals drink"! The tour includes cool local guides, security, entrance to 4 local bars and a courtesy drink on each of these venues.

Options for full-day activities (or combos):

- Bajos Del Toro Waterfall + Sarchí + Zarcero (full-day combo): please see description above.

- Irazú Volcano + Cartago city history visit + Orosí Valley + Cachí (full-day combo): please see description above.