PROJECT INFORMATION PACKET

Olas & Cerros 2022

Table of Contents

AMIGOS DE LAS AMERICAS 2
- WHAT IS AMIGOS? 2
- VISION 2
- MISSION 2
- VALUES 2

HISTORY OF AMIGOS IN COSTA RICA 4

COUNTRY OVERVIEW 5
- Colonial & Post-Colonial History 5
- Government 7
- Economy 7

GEOGRAPHY, CULTURE, FOOD, CLIMATE, & TRADITIONS 9
- People & Culture 9
- Food 10
- Traditions 11
- Climate 12
- Geography 12
- Resources For Further Information 14

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE 15

AMIGOS HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM 2022 16
- Program Goals 16
- Program Pillars 16
- Program Components 16
- Role of the Volunteer 17

PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION 18
- Project Theme 18
- Work area description 18
- Partner Organizations 19
- General Project Calendar 21
- Possible Excursions and Activities 22
- Packing List 23

PROJECT STAFF TEAM 25

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

AMIGOS DE LAS AMERICAS

WHAT IS AMIGOS?

AMIGOS is a leader in international youth development, creating a world in which young people realize their full potential as leaders and global citizens. We provide extraordinary opportunities for youth to design and lead projects in collaboration with U.S. and Latin American peers and partner organizations across the Americas. Our strong partner network, built over 50 years, enables authentic engagements in communities across the region.

Since its start, AMIGOS has operated continuously in various countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Currently, AMIGOS works in seven countries in Latin America (Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay) and the U.S. running youth leadership programs. AMIGOS always works through partnerships with local organizations and with members of host communities in Latin America and the U.S., with projects led by young people.

VISION

A world where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

MISSION

Amigos de las Américas inspires leaders through authentic service and immersion experiences.

VALUES

- **Safety First and Always:** We prioritize the health and safety of AMIGOS volunteers above all.
- **Youth Leadership:** We believe in the capacity of youth to become leaders for positive change.
- **Transformational Outcomes:** We strive to transform volunteers and communities in measurable ways.
- **Community-Led:** We create socially and environmentally conscious partnerships through collaboration with communities throughout the Americas.
- **Diversity Throughout:** We promote diversity of volunteers and stakeholders and work to break down barriers.
- **Respect:** We maintain respect, transparency, and high standards in everything we do.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

DIVERSITY

The updated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement at AMIGOS was approved by our Board of Directors in September 2021. It reads as follows:

AMIGOS believes in the power and wisdom of all people. We embrace diversity at AMIGOS with respect to race, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, age, ability, gender, and sexual orientation.

We commit to eliminating barriers to representation and inclusion within the AMIGOS organization and in our programs. We uplift different life experiences, belief systems, and opinions through our work with volunteers, communities, and partners.

For more information on Diversity & Inclusion at AMIGOS, you can visit our webpage.

HISTORY

AMIGOS was founded on the principle that young people can change the world. In 1965, a 29-year-old pastor from Houston, Texas named Guy Bevil led a team of teenagers into rural Honduras to support in the fight against a growing polio epidemic. Serving communities in remote areas of the country, this group of 181 youth and 36 adults helped protect people from the crippling disease and established friendships that crossed borders. This service had a bold impact on the lives of these young people and, as a result, they returned more mature, culturally aware, and inspired to continue serving communities at home and abroad.

The AMIGOS model of developing critically engaged young leaders remains highly beneficial to youth today. AMIGOS programs have evolved to be more responsive to the changing priorities of host communities and inclusive of young people across the Americas. Today, our projects cover a broader array of activities in health and education and focus on building skills in youth of both the United States and Latin America. More than 30,000 alumni have carried on the passion and commitment that started over 50 years ago. Our successful history supports the belief that young people have the power to rise to any challenge and make a difference.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

HISTORY OF AMIGOS IN COSTA RICA

The year 2022 marks AMIGOS' 40th year working in Costa Rica. Over this period, our projects have changed dramatically in response to Costa Rica's relative successes in its economic, political, environmental, and health conditions. While we used to partner with governmental organizations and focus on public health issues, we have shifted our approach to work more on building leadership skills in local youth, facilitating cultural exchange, and promoting an ethos of environmental conservation and civic engagement.

AMIGOS has been working in Pérez Zeledón, in the southern part of the country, since 2003 implementing conservation themed projects. From 2003-2011, we worked in communities in the region and held leadership workshops for youth. Starting in 2012 we changed our model for the Perez Zeledón summer project and started to combine home stays and work in communities with volunteer work in the country's famous national parks. Youth from Costa Rican communities along with AMIGOS volunteers completed trail maintenance projects in the parks while learning about important conservation topics and participating in fun recreational activities to facilitate cultural exchange. Then in 2018, we launched the Palmares summer project which combined the community component of AMIGOS programs with weekend long leadership camps. We hope to continue these programs in Costa Rica once the COVID-19 situation stabilizes around the globe.

In 2021, we launched our first gap program in Pérez Zeledón in the spring. The model combined our years of knowledge in the region and approach to community involvement with our rigorous safety measures for COVID-19. In the summer of 2021, we also launched three new explore summer projects, one in the central region and the other two in the Caribbean region.

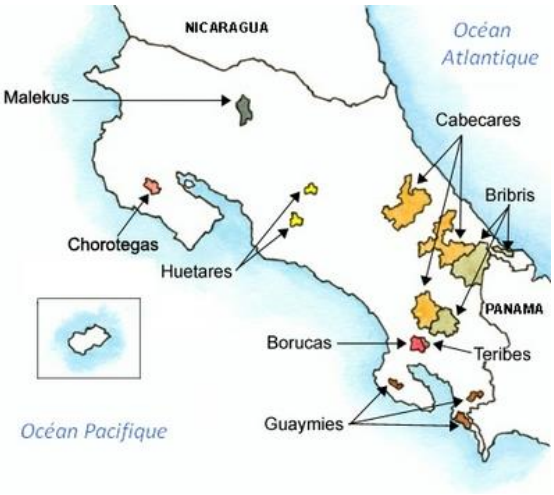
For this year, 2022, we will continue with our Explore models from last year and have added two additional programs. We included a new program in the Southern region of the country, which includes Pérez Zeledón, and we added another project to the Caribbean region that incorporates our homestay component. We have worked to build strong ties with the new organizations and look forward to working with them for years to come.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

COLONIAL & POST-COLONIAL HISTORY

The pre-Columbian times:



Costa Rica's history starts with the movement of tribes southward from North America during the last Ice Age between 13,000 and 17,000 years ago. The first evidence of human settlement in Costa Rica comes from around 10,000BC (12,000 years ago). That is far earlier than originally thought. Indeed, the 12,000-year-old settlements found in 2016 by the Reventazon River are the oldest evidence of human life found in Central America up until now. Between then and the European arrival in the 15th century, Costa Rica was home to at least 25 indigenous groups. Each group had its own culture and way of living.

In the territory occupied by Costa Rica, sedentary life and agriculture were consolidated around the year 800 AD. Socially, there is a growing differentiation between members of the indigenous communities, and it gradually reaches a hierarchical system whose figures range from cacique (chief), a military and religious nobility who rule over regular workers and slaves. In this period, agriculture is complemented by hunting, fishing, and gathering. The craftsmanship is diversified and there is a genuine development of the main settlements, which have aqueducts, roads, bridges, houses, and temples.

The arrival of the Spanish and the colonial era:

In the early sixteenth century, the territory of Costa Rica was home to some 400.000 indigenous people, most of which were in the North Pacific and the Central Valley. The east coast was the realm of the Caribs, while the Borucas, Chibchas, and Diquis resided in the southwest. Some fled, while many others perished from the deadly smallpox brought by the Spaniards. Having decimated the indigenous labor force, the Spanish followed a common policy and brought in African slaves to work the land. Numbers quickly decreased to 120.000 individuals in 1569 and 10.000 in 1611, mainly by epidemics brought from Europe, but also due to the ill treatment of the conquistadors.

At first, the control of the local population by the conquerors was difficult, due to the political fragmentation of the indigenous tribes and the conflicts between the Europeans themselves. However, since 1570, the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities significantly extended their influence, at least in the central highlands and the Pacific region, since the Atlantic would remain largely unconquered due to its remoteness, unbearable climate, and indigenous resistance. Costa Rica, which was part of the "Captaincy General of Guatemala", was a rather poor and isolated province. The only wealth the settlers had were its fertile soil and favorable climate, which allowed them to engage in agriculture in the Central

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Valley. From the nineteenth century, the desire of Costa Rica to procure a stable relationship with the world market is achieved with the production and exportation of coffee, which becomes the axis of the capitalization of agriculture.

Independence and the beginning of democratic life:

Costa Rica obtained its independence on the 15th of September 1821 and adhered itself to the Federal Republic of Central America. However, the Federal Pact was dissolved de facto between 1838 and 1839, and each province declared its independence. It is in this context that Costa Rica became a republic in 1848.

Along with other Central American countries, Costa Rica participated in the war against William Walker in 1856. Walker was an American filibuster who had planned to take over Central America, mainly to export slaves and to profit from the prospects of an interoceanic canal. During the battle of Rivas, Nicaragua, on the 11th of April 1856, Costa Rica's national hero, Juan Santamaría, stood out for his heroic efforts.

Early on, Costa Rica adopted a policy in favor of teaching with the aim of ensuring the survival of democratic institutions. Free and compulsory education was established in 1869. Militarism has not been successful, and the functioning of the country is solidly based on three clearly defined powers. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the country also experienced social and economic transformation through the expansion of coffee exports and the institution of universal suffrage in 1889. The leaders adopted a liberal educational reform that benefited all Costa Ricans and strengthened our democratic pillars.

The birth of the Second Republic and the abolition of the army:

During the period of the military junta, a new constitution, which maintained the social legislation of the period of Calderón Guardia (1940-1944), is adopted. This gives rise to the Second Republic, in which we still are to this day. The new constitution creates an independent electoral power (the Tribunal Supremo Electoral or Supreme Electoral Tribunal) responsible for ensuring the transparency of future elections. On the other hand, José Figueres decided to abolish the army, considering that it involved unnecessary expenses and that it did not guarantee stability.

The commitment to peace:

For over 60 years, Costa Rica has had no army, betting on the instruments that international law provides for solving disputes between nations. The abolition of the army has allowed the financing of education, health and access to potable water and electricity. Since 1949, elections take place regularly every four years and the political change is part of the values and political principles of Costa Rica. The country's commitment to unarmed peace was confirmed in 1983, when President Monge declared the perpetual, active and non-armed neutrality of Costa Rica in armed conflict. The compromise with peace had and extremely significant international boost in 1987, when President Oscar Arias Sánchez received the Nobel

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Peace Prize for his contribution to the signing of the peace accords that put an end to the armed conflicts in Central America.

Sources:
Molina Jiménez, Iván; Palmer, Steven. History Of Costa Rica: Brief, Updated and Illustrated. San Jose, Office of The University of Costa Rica, 1997.
"History of Costa Rica." *Centralamerica*, www.centralamerica.com/costa-rica/history/.
The Costa Rican Embassy to Belgium. "History: Costa Rica Embassy." History | Costa Rica Embassy, costaricaembassy.be/en/costa_rica/history/.

GOVERNMENT

Costa Rica is a democratic, free, and independent republic. Its government is popular, representative, alternative, and responsible, exercised by three supreme powers which are distinct and independent of each other: Executive Power, Legislative Power and Judicial Power. The Costa Rican State also has a Supreme Elections Tribunal with the same independence as the other powers. This body is in charge exclusively of organizing, directing and supervising all acts concerning suffrage.

The Executive Power is composed by the President of the Republic, two Vice presidents and a Cabinet of Government chosen by the President. The President of the Republic is, simultaneously, Head of Government and Head of State. The President and Vice Presidents are elected every four years by direct vote of all citizens over 18 years. There have been uninterrupted elections since the promulgation of the current Constitution in 1949. The current President is Mr. Carlos Andrés Alvarado Quesada, who took office on May 8th, 2018, will be transitioning power to Costa Rica's 49th elected president Mr. Rodrigo Chaves Robles on May 8th, 2022 for the following four years.

Administratively, Costa Rica is divided into seven provinces which are subdivided into 83 cantons and these, in turn, into 463 districts. The cantons are ruled, with limited capabilities, by a Mayor and a Municipal Council; both the Mayor and the Council are popularly elected.

Sources:
The Costa Rican Embassy to Belgium. "Government: Costa Rica Embassy." Government Structure | Costa Rica Embassy, costaricaembassy.be/en/costa_rica/government/.

ECONOMY

In many aspects, Costa Rica is a success story in terms of development. It is considered an upper middle-income country, which has shown a steady economic growth over the past 25 years. This growth resulted from an outward- oriented strategy, based on the openness to foreign investment and gradual trade liberalization.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Costa Rica is also a global leader for its environmental policies and accomplishments, which have helped the country build its Green Trademark. The pioneering Payments for Environmental Services (PES) program has been successful in promoting forest and biodiversity conservation; making Costa Rica the only tropical country in the world that has reversed deforestation. The combination of political stability, social contract and steady growth has resulted in one of the lowest poverty rates in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the proportion of the population with incomes below US$ 5.5 per person per day decreased slightly from 12.9 to 10.7 percent between 2010 and 2016.

Despite Costa Rica's strong health system and timely crisis response, the pandemic had a heavy toll on its economy. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted 4.1 percent in 2020, the largest drop in four decades, driven by sharp declines in investment and private consumption. One out of five workers were unemployed by Q4 2020. Despite strong mitigation efforts, incomes of the bottom 40 percent declined 15 percent last year and an estimated 124,000 people fell into poverty, lifting the poverty rate to 13 percent in 2020. The crisis also interrupted Costa Rica's incipient fiscal consolidation built on important reforms in 2018 and 2019. Additional spending needed to respond to the crisis, combined to a sharp decline in revenues, resulted in 8.5 percent of GDP deficit, and the recession pushed the debt-to-GDP ratio to 67.4 percent by end-2020.

The GDP was projected to recover by 3.8 percent in 2021, reaching pre-pandemic level by end-year. Growth is expected to remain strong in 2022 and then gradually converge to its potential (around 3 percent). Continued progress with respect to vaccination in Costa Rica and worldwide will support a gradual recovery of tourism and related jobs and exports. The government is expected to implement its fiscal consolidation plan over the medium term. Improvements in the labor market are expected to lead to a gradual decline in poverty rates over the coming years.

In this context, two pressing development challenges stand out: the fiscal situation and persistent inequality. These challenges affect the basic pillars of the Costa Rican development model: inclusion, growth, and sustainability.

Sources:
World Bank. "The World Bank in Costa Rica." World Bank, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/costarica/overview#1.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

GEOGRAPHY, CULTURE, FOOD, CLIMATE, & TRADITIONS

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Famous for being the happiest country in the world, the people of Costa Rica are welcoming and friendly, yet sophisticated and proud. The priorities of the country are evident in its progressive social and environmental policies. Education and healthcare for all are fully supported. They believe in education and healthcare and make it freely available to its people. They are proud of their long-standing history as a democracy. In fact, they are the oldest and most stable democracy in the region. Additionally, Costa Rica is a model of eco-stewardship with more than 25% of its territory preserved from development allowing it to conserve its incredible biodiversity for generations to come. This is most evident in Corcovado National Park. Furthermore, the culture and traditions reveal their passion for democracy, freedom, and equality for all.

Corcovado National Park

Ticos! The Costa Rican people affectionately refer to themselves as Ticos. This term is rooted in how they play with the Spanish language. On occasions, Costa Ricans have the tendency to add the suffix –tico to a certain word. It can be used to indicate smallness in something but can also carry an affectionate or 'cute' meaning. It further states the point that the Costa Rican culture is one that doesn't take itself too seriously. This wonderful quality lays at the root of their peaceful and kind nature.

Pura Vida is not only the motto of Costa Rica, but it is also a label for the Costa Rican culture, way of life, and its primary ethos. Directly translated, it means "pure life," but in Costa Rica, it carries a greater importance. "Pura Vida" has evolved to be a national symbol to be proud of. Locals and ex-pats share pride in the Good Life, the Pura Vida, that Costa Rican values espouse. It is used as both greeting and farewell, as a cheer, and as a description and an emphatic statement.

Costa Rica's Indigenous Territories Map

Costa Rica is a cultural melting pot. It shows indigenous origins and Spanish colonial influence with a peppery splash of other immigrant cultures, such as Jamaican and Chinese. The official language is Spanish, but there also pockets of Bribri, creole, Mekatelyu on the Caribbean coast, and English. There are 8 indigenous people groups: Maleku, Chorotega, Huetar/Quitirrisi, Cabécar, Bribi, Térraba/Teribe, Ngöbe, Brunca/Boruca. There are 23 indigenous territories.

Costa Ricans are proud of their values. And they are proud of their world leadership in pioneering sustainable environmental and

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

conservation policies. The locals go out of their way to propagate their environmental ethos by helping visitors appreciate the natural beauty of their land and wildlife.

Sources:
"Culture Of Costa Rica." Centralamerica, www.centralamerica.com/costa-rica/culture/.
"What does Pura Vida mean? Costa Rican way of life". www.bestcostaricantours.com. Archived from the original on 2019-12-07. Retrieved 2015-10-08.
www.state.gov Background Note: Costa Rica – People
"Universidad Estatal a Distancia - Institución Benemérita de la Educación y la Cultura". uned.ac.cr.
https://www.puravidauniversity.eu/territorios-indigenas-costa-rica/

FOOD

Costa Rican cuisine is hearty, savory and always satisfying. While it doesn't have the spice of Mexican or the grilled skewered meats of Argentinian food, it has a style all its own: like an easy chair or a meal from your grandmother's kitchen, Costa Rican cuisine is always there for you at the end of a long day.

Plato Casado

Generous portions, fresh-brewed coffee and fruit of every shape, size and color fill the tables of all Costa Rican homes. Maybe it is the tropics, but there is a dedication to freshness unequaled in the U.S. Everyday Costa Ricans visit the bakery for fresh-baked bread and every week they visit the local farmer's market for fresh in-season fruit and vegetables, meat, and cheese.

If there were two words that would sum up Costa Rican food, then those two words would be "rice" and "beans". Pretty much every traditional meal comes with them. Alongside your rice and beans, you may see sweet plantains, fried eggs, avocados, meat, fish, cilantro, tomatoes, fresh fruit, and anything else that grows local and fresh! Costa Rican fare is nutritionally well rounded, and nearly always cooked from scratch with fresh ingredients.

Below you will find an overview of some of the most famous and common Costa Rican dishes in Pérez Zeledón. Please always remember to be appreciative of the food that is offered to you. Many people across the globe may not have access to as many food options as you may be used to. AMIGOS expects volunteers to immerse themselves in the local culture and to adapt to the local diet and lifestyle to the greatest extent possible.

- Gallo pinto: black beans and rice with cilantro, onions, garlic, salt, and Salsa Lizano; common for breakfast and dinner
- Platano frito: Fried plantains (sweet ones are called maduros and savory, smashed ones are patacones)
- Casados: a one-plate meal that includes black beans, rice, a meat, fried plantains, and one or more side dishes
- Picadillo: diced cooked vegetables such as potatoes, green beans, carrots, zucchini, with or without meat
- Fruta (such as pineapple, papaya, watermelon, bananas).

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

- Sopa: soup
- Arroz con pollo/camarones: chicken and rice/shrimp and rice
- Ceviche: popular seafood dish with fish or shrimp that is tossed with lime and lemon juice
- Trucha: trout, often served with yucca and vegetables
- Arroz con leche: rice pudding

Sources:
"Culture Of Costa Rica." Centralamerica, www.centralamerica.com/costa-rica/culture/.
Firestone, Matthew; Miranda, Carolina A; Soriano, César G (2010). Costa Rica. Footscray, Vic.: Lonely Planet. pp. 49–52.
Mead, Rowland (2005). Costa Rica. New Holland: London. pp. 28–31.
Van Velzer, Ryan. "Costa Rican Cuisine." Costa Rica, www.costarica.com/culture/costa-rican-cuisine.

TRADITIONS

Costa Rica is a very diverse country with a rich mix of traditions and customs. The following are some examples:

La Liga vs. Saprissa

- Soccer, Mejenga or *bola*, in Costa Rica, is the most beloved national pastime. Today, six leagues currently form the Costa Rican Soccer Federation. First division soccer is the country's most popular and hosts 12 teams. Many Ticos from Pérez root for either La Liga (Alajuela) or Saprissa (from San José).
- When you enter someone's home, it may be a good idea to take your shoes off to be polite. When visiting people's house, you should remove your shoes and wear flip-flops inside the house instead of going barefoot. It is considered rude to place your feet on the furniture.
- Costa Ricans generally take pride in their appearance and dress well.
- When greeting one another, a side cheek kiss is common (right cheek touching right cheek). Women kiss women, and women kiss men, but men do not kiss men. Instead, they either shake hands or give each other a one-armed hug. In formal or business settings, a firm handshake is the typical greeting. However, this practice has changed since the beginning of COVID-19 and people now greet each other from far or with an "elbow shake".
- Tico time or *"la hora tica"* is generally observed by many Ticos. Ticos can sometimes arrive late (often by 30 minutes or more) to meals, appointments, and get-togethers. Many Ticos don't view late arrivals as rude, and their tardiness is not meant to offend.
- Many Ticos in communities where you will live grow coffee, caña (sugar cane), or other crops. They refer to their farmland as "la finca." Definitely ask community members about what they grow, how they process it, and where they sell or export to learn as much as you can about their work.
- Costa Ricans celebrate civic holidays with parades that involve school bands and local folklore group parades.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

As a volunteer, you will be a guest in someone else's community, which represents a unique opportunity to experience and learn about Costa Rican culture. As a guest, please try to reflect a sincere appreciation for everything that your host community has to offer and let them know that you are thankful for their support.

CLIMATE

Costa Rica has a mainly tropical climate with year-round warm to hot temperatures. Costa Rica has a tropical and subtropical climate, with two primary seasons. In most of the country, the dry season lasts from December to summer in April. Summers are hot, dry, and cloudy. The wet or rainy season lasts from May to November and overlaps the dry season towards the end. The conditions are humid and overcast with frequent rainfall in many regions. Temperature variations are low, and the average annual range in Costa Rica is between 17.2°C (63°F) to 27.2°C (81°F). January sees the lowest temperatures of the year, while April records the highest. Temperatures above 37.8°C (100°F) frequently occur during the dry season. The average annual temperatures range from 27.2°C (81°F) on the coastal lowlands to 20°C (68°F) in the Cordillera Central, and below 10°C (50°F) on the highest mountain peaks.

Costa Rica receives an abundant average annual rainfall of 1981.2mm (78"). September and October are the wettest months, and the rainy season contributes up to 90% of the annual precipitation. The Caribbean slopes along the Cordillera Central receive the highest rainfall of 5003.8mm (197"), and many places receive at least 2540mm (100") annually. The eastern plains and coasts, and the southernmost part of the Pacific Coast are equatorial with rainfall throughout the year.

Costa Rica has several microclimates based on altitude, topography, local geography, and rainfall. The tropical location and proximity to large water bodies influence the climate. Thus, Monteverde, located in the cloud forest at an altitude of 1,440 m (4,662 feet) above sea level, has a predominantly rainy season between April and November and an average temperature of about 18°C (64° F) which makes it a fresh, but humid region. On the other hand, Parismina, as a coastal community, has very humid and high temperatures. The Atlantic coast has an average temperature of 26° C (79°F) and the rainy season with higher precipitation goes from May through August and October to December.

Sources:
https://www.weather-atlas.com/en/costa-rica-climate
https://www.monteverdeinfo.com/monteverde-area-maps-facts-and-links
https://en.climate-data.org/north-america/costa-rica/limon/tortuguero-324843/

GEOGRAPHY

As a stable and prosperous nation, Costa Rica is both a biodiversity hotspot and ranked among the world leaders when it comes to tackling environmental issues. Costa Rica accounts for only 0.03 percent of the earth's surface (has only 51.100km2). However, it contains nearly 6 percent of the world's biodiversity. Its natural wealth, both in species and ecosystems, is partly explained by its geographical position. Situated between the North and South America continents, Costa Rica has served as a bridge of countless species of animals and plants for thousands of years. Another factor to consider is the broad

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

expanse of both coasts: Caribbean coast (255kms) and Pacific coast (1103 kms). The mountain range also provides numerous microclimates and a territorial sea of 589.000km2.

The system of national parks and reserves covers an area of 1342 hectares or 25.6% of its land area. These areas include islands, beaches, rain forests, active volcanoes, hot springs, caves, river canyons, and waterfalls. This biological heritage, the product of millions of years of evolution, presents us a spectacle of a nature unprocessed and undomesticated. The services these ecosystems provide to humanity are abundant. On one side are the environmental services: wood, timber, plants, barks, roots, leaves, seeds, fruits, flowers, to name a few, which have fueled the culture, industry, and scientific research. On the other side are environmental benefits: control of erosion caused by rain and wind, water protection, soil, fixation and carbon storage, which mitigate the greenhouse effect and biodiversity.

Costa Rica is considered among the most progressive nations on Earth with respect to climate change. In 2010, departing president Óscar Arias announced that Costa Rica would become the world's first carbon-neutral country by 2021. On February 24, 2019, the Government of Costa Rica announced their National Decarbonization Plan, which aims to create a completely green economy in terms of transportation, energy, construction, agriculture, and land usage by 2050.

Costa Rica's environmental credentials are impressive: more than 98 per cent of its energy is renewable, forest cover now stands at more than 53 per cent after painstaking work to reverse decades of deforestation, and around a quarter of the country's land has been turned into protected parks and reserves.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

We encourage you to learn more about Costa Rica by looking into these resources. Remember that there are many sides to any story, and every culture and country is complicated with many perspectives. We recommend researching on your own or asking your Project Staff if you have any question or doubt about the topic.

Books
The Ticos: Culture and Social Change in Costa Rica by Richard Biesanz
Costa Rica: A Traveler's Literary Companion edited by Barba Ras
Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America by Adrian Forsyth
Green Phoenix: Restoring the Tropical Forests of Guanacaste, Costa Rica by William Allen, Samantha Burton
The Quetzal and the Macaw: The Story of Costa Rica's National Parks by David Rains Wallace
Mamita Yunai by Carlos Luis Fallas
Unica Mirando al Mar by Fernando Contreras
Costa Rica, Cocina y Tradición by Isabel Campabadal
Nosotros los Hombres by Jorge Debravo
Cocorí by Joaquin Gutierrez
Movies
El Regreso / Hernán Jiménez (2011)
Caribe (2004)
Clara Sola (2021)
First Lady of the Revolution: The Henrietta Boggs Story (2016)
OSA: The Jewel of Costa Rica (2015)
A Bold Peace (2016)
Articles and Websites
Information about Costa Rica's indigenous population and territories: https://www.puravidauniversity.eu/territorios-indigenas-costa-rica/
"Reaching for a Zero Emission Goal" By Paul Rubio: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/21/climate/costa-rica-zero-carbon-neutral.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FCosta%20Rica
www.ticotimes.net
http://www.pbs.org/edens/costarica/
https://www.lonelyplanet.com/costa-rica/history
www.nacion.com
Music
Toledo
Cocofunka
Malpais
Check out what's currently on Spotify's Costa Rica Top 50 chart!!

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

Every country has its own set of idioms, mannerisms, and phrases. There are even language differences from one community to the next. No need to worry though; your Spanish classes at the beginning of your program will serve you very well and will allow you to interact with locals. Below is a list of regional vocabulary that you should learn. For those of you who want to go above and beyond, check out the link below the vocabulary list for some websites with interactive learning tools.

Spanish word	Definition
Tico	Slang for Costa Rican (costarricense)
Mae	Slang for dude
Buenas	Hello/good morning/good afternoon (usually used when entering a place or home)
¿Qué me dice?	How's it going?
Vos*	"You," singular (informal), **not vosotros,** *explanation here: http://study-spanish-language.com/grammar/conjugating-vos/*
Tuanis	Cool, nice, awesome
A cachete	Very good/ it's all good
Pura vida	Great, hello, you're welcome, life is good, cool, take care… ETC!
Por dicha/ Qué dicha	Fortunately/ how fortunate
Upe	Knock, knock (people say this when standing outside someone's home, rather than knocking on the door)
Mejenga	Friendly/casual soccer match
Jugar bola	To play soccer
Una soda	Small restaurant to get typical, generally cheap, food
Pulpería	Small corner store
Con gusto	You're welcome
Chunche	Thing

**Usted* and *Vos* – For "you," many Costa Ricans use either *usted* or *vos*. *Usted* is generally more widely used outside the Central Valley, vos is mostly only used in the capital. Costa Ricans also mix using *usted, vos* and tú within a relationship, which is itself a sign of closeness. For example, an abuela might sometimes refer to a baby as *usted*, or *usted* can be used between novios. Look at the following for conjugations of *vos*: *http://study-spanish-language.com/grammar/conjugating-vos/*. More vocabulary practice: *http://www.languageguide.org/spanish/vocabulary/* or *https://www.duolingo.com/course/es/en/Learn-Spanish-Online*

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

AMIGOS HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM 2022

All AMIGOS programs and project areas are different! They are uniquely designed to fit the needs of our volunteers, partner agencies, host communities and the regions we work in. However, all programs are designed to meet the same goals, pillars, and components in order to achieve organizational goals.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Develop young people's personal leadership capacities.
2. Strengthen young people's commitment to community engagement and service.
3. Increase young people's cross-cultural capacity and competence.

PROGRAM PILLARS

Service – Volunteers will gain the ability to recognize and identify critical issues within their communities, establish support networks to participate in community life, and take action to affect positive social change. They will identify ways to engage in social impact initiatives locally, nationally, and globally.
Leadership – The ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance; the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out.
Cultural Humility – The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural humility encompasses being aware of one's own world view, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, and gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. Training and Curriculum
   Volunteers build their leadership and community development skills through hands-on training. All programs include leadership, community service, and cross-cultural humility training. Volunteers have a hands-on training throughout the experience.
2. Language and Cultural Immersion
   Volunteers are immersed in the culture and language of their host country by interacting with locals in the pod, collaborating with partner agency members, and participating in cultural activities and excursions.
3. Community Service
   Volunteers learn about design-thinking and begin to think through the design of a service project that they will carry out upon arriving back home.
4. Mentorship
   Every volunteer is mentored by a staff team member and receives personalized feedback on their development as a leader throughout their experience.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

5. Reflection and Continued Engagement

   Volunteers are guided through various reflection activities during their experience. Upon successful completion of a program, all alumni are encouraged to climb our leadership ladder to continue building their leadership skills as members of our project staff teams, our training teams or through other opportunities.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

As you prepare for the adventure that lies ahead, think about your role as an AMIGOS as a member of a team and group of fellow peers. How do you hope to integrate into the group while also learning about the local culture?

Keep in mind that sometimes it may be hard to find tangible benefits to your experience throughout the trip, because it won't be easy. However, your primary role as a volunteer on our programs is to LEARN about the local culture, to PRACTICE your Spanish with fellow group members and locals, to SUPPORT the work of your partner agency though your volunteer service work, to FACILITATE group activities, to SHARE your passions and to serve as a CATALYST for change and multi-cultural understanding.

You are a:

- Community action promoter
- Representative of your home community and your country
- Representative of AMIGOS
- Representative of your partner agency
- Guest in a foreign country and community
- Organizer, motivator, facilitator, role model, student, and friend
- Spanish-speaker
- Humble human being – you're going to discover that there is much more to learn than we have to teach. Be open to learning all that you can, and let your local contacts share their experiences and wisdom with you!

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

PROJECT THEME

The Program is oriented for Volunteers to learn about Community Adaptation to Climate Change from the conservation efforts made by both of our partner agencies in education, research and wildlife protection. You will explore community efforts to adapt to climate change in Costa Rica. From sea turtle protection on the Caribbean coast to the cloud forests in the Central Valley, you'll get hands-on with local conservation projects. You will dig into the root causes of climate change and how international actions affect local communities. And get to know Tico culture by living with a host family for part of your stay!

WORK AREA DESCRIPTION

On this program, we will be in three primary sites. We will start the program in Turrialba, then we will travel to our next location in Parismina and we will conclude with debriefing in Heredia.

Site one: Turrialba

The first two weeks the program will take place in Turrialba. Located between San Jose-Central Valley and the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, Turrialba presents a warm humid climate that allows for different types of agricultural crops to be cultivated and for dairy farming to take place as some of the main economic activities in the region. Turrialba is home to the Turrialba Volcano, with an elevation of 10,958 ft is the second tallest in the country. Turrialba is home to over 26,700 people and it has been a very famous tourist destination in Costa Rica due to its many ecological attractions, national parks, and private ecological reserves.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Site Two: Parismina

Barra del Parismina is located on the Caribbean coast in the province of Limón at the mouth of the Reventazón river. Parismina is a community with 400 people about halfway between Tortuguero and Limon on the Tortuguero canals. There are at least three marine turtle species that nest at the Parismina beaches, among them the leatherback and the green sea turtles. The community relies mostly on eco-tourism and fishing as its main economic activities.

Site Three: Heredia

Heredia is known as the "City of the Flowers". It's located in the Heredia Province and it's part of the Great Metropolitan Area. It's a city with a lot of natural areas and cultural activities, such as the national mascarada parade in Barva. Barva is where we will be located, it's the most mountainous area of Heredia, so the weather is warm during the day, but it cools down in the evening. It's home to the dormant Barva Volcano and it's located in the buffer zones of the Braulio Carrillo National Park that connects Heredia with the Caribbean.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

For this project, we will have two main partner organizations:

CATIE

The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) is a regional center dedicated to research and graduate education in agriculture, and the management, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It's a center that specializes in formulating integral solutions to address the complexity of the current problems that agriculture and natural resources are facing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is in Turrialba Costa Rica, but its members include Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Venezuela, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the State of Acre in Brazil.

Mision: Increase sustainable and inclusive human well-being in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting education, research, and outreach for the sustainable management of agriculture and conservation of natural resources.

How we will collaborate: CATIE has different research-based projects. Some of the volunteering may include: trail maintenance, harvest gathering (for cacao for example), crop maintenance for coffee or cacao, botanical garden maintenance, reforestation among other activities.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

ASTOP

The Association for Saving the Turtles of Parismina (ASTOP) is a community-based organization in Parismina dedicated to the protection of sea turtles as a means for a sustainable development for their community.

ASTOP was established in 2001. A small group of local people were concerned about the future of sea turtles that were nesting on their beach as they noticed an increase in environmental issues and sea turtle poaching activities. They decided to take action and ASTOP was born in partnership with the Costa Rican coast guard.

Hunting turtles to resell or eat their eggs was a common practice in Costa Rica until the country, committed to biodiversity conservation, announced a law in 1999 that strictly banned sea turtle poaching and the sale of turtle products. A decade later, poaching dropped from 98% to 38%.

ASTOP integrates local community members as much as possible to promote sustainable development for the whole community, both human & non-human.

In collaboration with biologists & research centers, they collect data about sea turtles to take part in the monitoring and scientific research in this field. Concurrently, ASTOP is involved in conservation to safeguard a healthy environment for the egg-laying by collecting trash on the beach and joining in with recycling actions in partnership with another district association.

How we will collaborate: Volunteers will have the chance to:

- Visit and volunteer at the hatchery,
- Learn how to identify turtle nests,
- Walk the beaches for nesting turtles,
- Clean up the local beach areas,
- Take part in organic gardening,
- Facilitate educational activities with local youth and kids, and more!

While in Parismina, you will live with a host family with another volunteer. ASTOP will introduce us to the community and to your respective host families. They are very eager to get to know you and welcome you to their community.

To learn more about ASTOP, visit their website: https://www.parisminaturtles.org/

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

GENERAL PROJECT CALENDAR

Please keep in mind that dates are subject to change, as the summer gets closer. Your Project Staff will guide you through the final calendar during briefing and through the whole summer.

The following is the tentative Project Calendar:

Calendar of Activities	
Day 1	Arrive to the airport in Alajuela. Spend 1 night at a hostel near San José.
Day 2	Eat breakfast at hostel in San José and travel to Turrialba. Get settled at site 1, dinamicas, briefing activities.
Day 3-4	Briefing + Quarantine in Turrialba at CATIE: Spanish classes, briefing activities, outdoor fun, COVID tests, icebreakers, team building and group tone setting. Introduction to Climate Change workshops.
Day 5-11	Site 1 – Turrialba-CATIE: Volunteering with the partner agency at the botanic garden and agricultural plantations.
Day 11	Travel to Parismina, get settled in with your host family, take a walk around the area.
Day 12-18	Site 2 – Parismina: Volunteer in community service conservation activities and participates in community adaptation to climate change workshops, intercultural activities, spend time getting to know your host family!
Day 19-21	Travel to Heredia, get settled in hostel. Excursion to a conservation area in the buffer areas of the Braulio Carrillo National Park. Debriefing, Reflection, and group activities.
Day 21	Fly out of the San José airport! Hasta Luego!

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

POSSIBLE EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Turrialba Volcano

Day trip to visit the Turrialba Volcano through Hacienda la Central. The hike will take participants to the second tallest volcano in the country (3,340 m-10,958 ft). Volunteers will get a chance to learn about the "burnt forest", the volcanic landscape and agriculture of the area.

Red de Emprendedoras en Turismo Sostenible:

Day tour with the RETUS Tours. Retus was established in 2017, it's a women group who promote community-based ecotourism projects with the goal of linking travelers who desire to learn about the unique ecology of our environment and experience of being part of our daily lives.

Parismina Cultural Activities

ASTOPS hosts different cultural activities that are led by its members in the community center areas, some include:

- Costa Rican cooking class
- Local dance class
- Bracelet making class
- Parismina handcraft fair

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

PACKING LIST

You should bring clothes you already have from home and are comfortable wearing! You do not need to purchase a whole new wardrobe. Bags can get lost on their way to Costa Rica. Please remember to pack any essentials; including a change of clothes, toiletries, and prescription medications, in your carry-on luggage to tide you over should that happen.

Please be sure to read to entire packing list and all the extra tips. Remember that you will be living in in a tropical and humid climate during the rainy season. For the first part of the trip, you will be in cooler mountainous areas and the second half of the trip at the beach with a much warmer climate. **Note: Costa Rica is close to the equator and the sun is very strong. Always wear sunscreen even if it is cloudy outside. Pay special attention to the suggested quantities.** If you have questions while you are packing, please do not hesitate to email us: amigosprogramas@amigosinternational.org

Clothing

- ☐ 1 pair of jeans
- ☐ 2 pairs of work pants that you don't mind getting dirty (good for hikes and for excursions)
- ☐ 2 pairs of shorts
- ☐ 1 pair of sweats, or yoga pants for exercise or for hanging around the house
- ☐ 5 comfortable t-shirts for working outside and/or exercising
- ☐ 1 nice shirt (polo, blouse, button-up, or t-shirts)
- ☐ 1 skirt or dress (if desired)
- ☐ AMIGOS polo
- ☐ 1 warm fleece jacket
- ☐ 7 pairs of underwear & socks
- ☐ 2 bras (if desired)
- ☐ 1 set of warm & conservative sleepwear
- ☐ 1 set of light weight sleep wear for a warmer climate
- ☐ 1 pair of comfortable closed-toed shoes/tennis shoes
- ☐ 1 pair of hiking boots
- ☐ 1 pair of flip flops
- ☐ 1 pair of rubber sandals (e.g. Tevas, Chacos, Crocs, etc.)
- ☐ 1 conservative swimsuit

All Volunteers Should Bring

- ☐ 2 BinaxNOW brand COVID test kits
- ☐ 1 waterproof rain jacket (should fit over warm fleece jacket)
- ☐ 1 bottle of sunscreen (SPF 50 or greater)
- ☐ 1 hat with a brim (a baseball hat is fine)
- ☐ 2 reusable water bottles (1 liter each).
- ☐ 1 mosquito net and hanging supplies (refer to Required Immunization and Medication List)

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

- ☐ 1 pair of garden/work gloves
- ☐ 1 bottle of mosquito repellant
- ☐ 1 alarm clock (with batteries if needed)
- ☐ 1 headlamp with red lighting (required for turtle conservation community service)
- ☐ 1 wireless hand watch
- ☐ 1 umbrella
- ☐ A day bag/small backpack for carrying stuff on short trips
- ☐ Thermometer and basic first aid kit
- ☐ 5 washable face masks
- ☐ Disposable face masks
- ☐ Prescription medications (if applicable)
- ☐ Toiletries: soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, shampoo, conditioner, razor, deodorant, hairbrush.
- ☐ 1 Washcloth and 1 towel (quick drying is recommended)
- ☐ Luggage Locks (these are useful for independent travel)
- ☐ Spanish-English dictionary
- ☐ *Health, Safety, and Travel Guidelines*
- ☐ *Project Information Packet (this packet)*
- ☐ Money & ATM card
- ☐ Passport & two copies of the first page of your passport
- ☐ COVID negative test results
- ☐ Plane tickets, if applicable, and confirmation codes for e-tickets

Recommended Items

- ☐ Exercise wear (shorts, leggings, joggers, etc.)
- ☐ Small, inexpensive camera and extra batteries or charger
- ☐ Journal & pens
- ☐ Small photo album with extra pictures of yourself or your family to give away
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Portable solar lamp
- ☐ Wireless music device and headphones

Optional Items

- ☐ Reading books (limit 2 - you can exchange books with others)
- ☐ Board games & cards
- ☐ Multi-vitamins

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

PROJECT STAFF TEAM

Cinthia Collazo, Project Director

My name is Cinthia Collazo, I am a Uruguayan who currently lives in Canelones. I am a social worker, doing her final thesis at the Universidad de la República. I have a minor in early childhood education and child care.

I have been working with children and their families for five years, in CAIF centers (government run pre-schools and daycares). Here I facilitate workshops on diverse topics of interest with an interdisciplinary team. I also specialize in gender and generations violence, child abuse, and mental health.

I worked with AMIGOS in 2014 and 2015, as a Supervisor In Matagalpa, Nicaragua and Oaxaca, Mexico. What I love about AMIGOs is the possibility of generating global networks, I believe in the power of the communities. I like to dance flamenco, sing, read and above all I love cats. It is a pleasure for me to return to AMIGOS!

Karla Farfan Miguel, Health and Wellness Coordinator

My name is Karla Farfan Miguel! I am from Lakewood, New Jersey but am currently living in Montclair, NJ as I finish my bachelor's degree. I major in Justice Studies, concentrate in paralegal studies, and minor in Spanish, economics, and leadership through civic engagement. This will be my first time ever working with Amigos.

I have worked with nonprofits in the past that focus on civic engagement, student government and I am currently working on establishing one myself that focuses on peer mentorship for first-generation and undocumented students. My interests include reading, writing, and watching movies.

To say I am excited about this summer is an understatement. I look forward to working with you all.

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Keylor Aguilar Loaiza, Project Coordinator

Hello! My name is Keylor Aguilar Loaiza, I am a student of Political Science and Philosophy at the University of Costa Rica (UCR).

I was an advisor to the Minister of Labor and Social Security of Costa Rica and I am currently an advisor to a Deputy of the Republic. I have worked with non-governmental organizations on children and adolescents issues, I was also part of the Costa Rican Government team that presented the fifth and sixth report on the state of the rights of children and adolescents before the UN in Geneva, Switzerland. I have participated in international forums on alternative care, child labor, education, health and participation of minors.

I am from a rural canton called Turrialba, I like good coffee and I am a nature lover, camping and living in connection with nature, I like to play sports and I try to carry my life full of tranquility, peace, solidarity, empathy and sympathy. I am very excited to meet you and be able to share, I hope to be able to collaborate with you as necessary and that this experience is very rewarding. And finally, I love listening to music, of different genres and rhythms.

Brooks Harmon, Project Coordinator

My name is Brooks Harmon. I'm from a little town in California, but I go to school in Massachusetts (Smith College) and I am currently studying abroad in Spain (University of Córdoba).

I study primary education and literary translation, focusing on poetic translation. I've mostly worked in elementary schools and libraries.

I was a volunteer with Amigos back in 2018 and I'm so pumped to be back!! I have a lot of experience working with younger kids, so working with young adults is relatively new to me but I am super excited! In my free time, I love to write, sew, cook, and explore nature! I can't wait to get to know you all soon!

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.

Get Connected

When you join an AMIGOS Program, you're becoming a part of a 55+ year tradition and a family of over 29,000 alumni. Get connected with your fellow volunteers and learn more about what adventures await by checking out these AMIGOS resources:

- ***AMIGOS Field Notes*** - blogs from AMIGOS volunteers in the field
- ***@amigos_americas_costarica***- official AMIGOS Project Instagram for Costa Rica

Copyright © 2022 Amigos de las Américas, All Rights Reserved.