

Faculty-Led

Brittany

Costa Rica 2014

Major: English (Writing for New Media)

Why did you choose Costa Rica?

I chose Costa Rica because I decided four months prior to the trip that I needed to travel outside of the country before I graduate - I never had before, so it was sort of a bucket list item.

Costa Rica as a Second Home: There were never any concerns about safety. When we had a free day to explore, we did so by foot in a small village. There are actually a lot of people that speak English in Costa Rica, so you do not necessarily have to know the language to get around.

“When I saw the markings of jaguar claws on a tree, that's when I knew the outdoor classroom was really something amazing.”

Academics: We were required to read daily, write in a journal, and attend lectures nightly, and write a final paper. There were also fun events that were scheduled, like a day to explore the Caribbean, rain forest hikes, a chocolate and coffee tour, and tons more. I could not believe how much of Costa Rica we explored in only two weeks.

I absolutely could not have taken the same class at Mount Mary and received the same experience. For example, learning about the symbiotic relationship between a tree and fungus while standing in the middle of a rain forest is totally different than learning in a classroom, where you cannot expect to really understand what that fully looks like.

Most memorable moment: One of my favorite landmarks was traveling to this small village on the Caribbean. We could only get there by boat. The people of this village were so humble and sweet. It was this mentality of really getting the fullest out of life that is Costa Rica. It captures a common saying of Costa Ricans, or Ticos, which is *pura vida*, meaning “pure life.” This is life without all the unnecessary stress and ensuring that you're making the most out of each moment.

A Piece of Advice: I am really grateful one of our assignments was to keep a journal. During the trip, it was hard to try to write each day, which I did, sometimes while riding down narrow roads along the mountains of Monteverde. In retrospect, I can now read through each entry and recall so much more than I could without the written words.

I would recommend prospective study abroad students to go even if you don't know anyone [on the program] because, by the end of the trip, you get to know everyone. This gives you a chance to meet people you may never have gotten the opportunity to connect with before.



Brittany at the beach on the Caribbean side of Costa

Contact Nan Metzger, Director of International Studies,
(414) 258-4810, ext. 459, or e-mail to metzgern@mtmary.edu.

