



**STUDY
ABROAD
ASSOCIATION**



GASTON
COLLEGE



COSTA RICA

Focus: Interdisciplinary

Length: 7 Days

Dates: December 14 - 20, 2024



WHY STUDY ABROAD ASSOCIATION?

Since 2009, SAA has been committed to customizing the most in-depth and affordable short-term, faculty-led study abroad and service-learning experiences. We have been working with colleges and universities across the United States to assist in achieving their international education goals. All programs revolve around our core values of Quality Education, Affordability, Sustainability, Customer Service, and Health and Safety.



Affordability

Our goal is to provide global experiences to as many students as possible. Faculty-led programs allow students, especially those who cannot study abroad for a long period, greater access. A worldlier point of view and deeper understanding of people should be attainable to every student in the US.



Health and Safety

Safety is our number one priority. To ensure our travelers are completely protected throughout the program, we carry a \$5m liability insurance policy and provide an all-inclusive travelers health insurance policy, comprehensive risk management procedures and training before the

program starts. Additionally, our programs include 24/7 on-ground emergency support and assistance.



Quality Education

All SAA programs are built on the foundation of education. We offer unique programs in various areas of study, including programs in underserved academic fields, such as: STEAM, Business, Allied Health and Culinary Arts. Every SAA program is crafted to achieve the goals of the faculty and institutions we're working with. Our extensive global academic network includes university partnerships, local faculty and subject-area experts, business owners, entrepreneurs, medical professionals, artists, NGOs, anthropologists, scientists, engineers, musicians, chefs, historians, community leaders, sustainability experts and more!



Customer Service

A dedicated SAA Team will assist you during the entire process. We fully understand the details and extent of work that goes into organizing faculty-led programs, so we are available to assist you at every point of your process.



Sustainability

We promote sustainability with all our programs, visiting local communities and projects in need, as well as establishing long-lasting relationships and positive impacts with everyone we collaborate with.



US Based

We are a fully insured and accredited US organization with the advantages of having direct operations in more than 30 countries. All payments can be made in US dollars via check or wire transfer to our US bank account.



PROGRAM PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION

Costa Rica is known for its rich cultural diversity, with influences from indigenous populations, Spanish colonial heritage, and more recent immigration patterns. Appreciate the Costa Rican culture requires an understanding and exploration of the country's cultural diversity, as well as a willingness to adapt and respect local customs and norms. Building positive relationships with Costa Ricans is based on mutual respect, friendliness, and a "Pura Vida" attitude.

During this 8-day program students will stay in Cahuita, a small town of just over one thousand inhabitants located on the southern Caribbean coast. Students will be involved in several projects with a focus on schooling and environment preservation. They will also take part in a cooking class, a Calypso dance class and will have time to wander to pick up the perfect souvenir at the craft market.

PRICE INCLUDES AIRFARE

10-14:2 From 12 to 16 travelers	15-19:2 From 17 to 21 travelers	20-25:2 From 22 to 27 travelers
\$3,605	\$3,410	\$3,250

Estimated single occupancy upgrade cost - \$500*

- Pricing is based on the number of students and faculty listed above (i.e.: 10-14 students: 2 faculty)
- A minimum of 10 students is required

*Note that any **single occupancy upgrades must be requested at least 100 days prior to departure** to be accommodated. At that time, we will check availability and confirm the exact price of single rooms. When we make the group reservations, we hold a block of multiple occupancy rooms and only book singles for the number of faculty listed above. If you know in advance you will need more single rooms, please let us know as soon as possible.





**STUDY
ABROAD
ASSOCIATION**

YOUR DEDICATED SAA PROGRAM TEAM INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGERS



Eleonora Mazzieri

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Laura Bianchi

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We are the dedicated SAA Team that will assist you during the entire program development process, provide your group pre-departure orientation with SAA, make all your arrangements onsite, and help through your return to the US. We are available to assist you at every point of the process!

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Our expertise and global network allow us to provide a variety of resources and academic support to enrich your program and manage the safety and wellbeing of your students and faculty. From high-level support services to working with your established on-ground partners, let us take care of the logistics and payments, making it easy for you to lead your program.

PRE-ARRIVAL SUPPORT

- **Creation of marketing materials**
- **Provide a dedicated pre-departure orientation for your program**

ON-SITE SUPPORT ALL PROGRAMS

- On-site Program Director to implement and oversee the program and serve as the 24/7 emergency contact
- Airport pickup/drop off
- SAA's [Travel Health Insurance](#) (see page 12)
- SAA's \$5m Liability Insurance
- On-site cultural, health, and safety orientation
- Accommodations to fit the needs of both you and your students, with breakfast each day
- Co-curricular, cultural and extracurricular activities
- All Ground Transportation
- Tips & Gratuities

OPTIONAL SUPPORT UPON REQUEST

- Arrangement of pre-program site visits (requires 6 months advance notice)
- Welcome and departure events
- Classroom space
- Service-learning and volunteer opportunities
- Meals besides breakfast
- Faculty instruction by local teachers and professors
- International Group Flights
- Add institution as additional insured on SAA's \$5m Liability Insurance



STUDY ABROAD ASSOCIATION

PROGRAM ITINERARY

DAY 1 - DEPARTURE - Saturday, December 14

Flight to San Jose, Costa Rica

Airport Transfer

Check in, Refresh and Relax

Orientation Walking Tour - *The group will become oriented with their neighborhood, the public transportation systems, nearby pharmacies, markets, ATMs, etc. Additionally, an in-depth safety briefing will be provided for what to do in case of an emergency.*

San Jose Walking Tour with Chepe Cletas - **TBC (according to the time of the group flight)** - *The capital city of San José is the economic, cultural and political heart of the country. This tour is run by Chepe Cletas a for-profit social business that is working to change perceptions about the capital city by showing new sides of the city, its history, and its culture to both national and international visitors.*

Welcome Dinner - *The group will be taken for an authentic dinner with a wide variety of menu options to cater for all diets.*

DAY 2 - CAHUITA - Sunday, December 15

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Transfer to Cahuita (Approx. 6 hrs)

On route stop to visit a Coffee farm - *We'll visit a small coffee farm, led by a family that has been growing organic coffee for the last two decades. We will have a tour of the coffee plantation and learn about sustainable coffee production and processing. The farmer/owner poses some very interesting questions about the supply chain.*

On route stop to visit Irazu Volcano - *the highest Volcano in Costa Rica. Walk along its crater and see it in its magnificence!*

Arrive to Cahuita - Check in and Group Dinner

DAY 3 - CAHUITA - Monday, December 16

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Cahuita National Park Naturalist Walking Tour - *In this amazing park students will see the best combination of jungle trek and beautiful Caribbean beaches just a few meters apart*

Cahuita National Park Service Projects - *Students will work with local naturalist guides on various projects inside the national park including - beach and park cleanup, installation of garbage and recycling containers, trail maintenance, and painting of ranger stations.*

Lunch Break

ZipLine - *The setting – big trees, stunning views – is perfect for a canopy adventure.*

Group Dinner & Introduction to Local Dance & Calypso Music - *Calypso music has a unique and interesting history behind its origin, popularity, and appreciation in the mainstream music scene. It is a type of folk song primarily from Trinidad though sung elsewhere in the southern and eastern Caribbean islands.*





PROGRAM ITINERARY

DAY 4 - CAHUITA - Tuesday, December 17

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Travel to Manzanillo (*approx. 40 mins*)

Naturalist Tour of Manzanillo and Gandoca National Park – *The Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife*

Refuge protects almost 70% of the southern Caribbean coast and includes some of the area's most beautiful beaches. The refuge officially begins at the Cocles River (one mile south of Puerto Viejo) and extends 19 miles south to the Sixaola River at the Panamanian border. The refuge protects beautiful beaches, coral reefs, lowland tropical forests and several of the country's most endangered habitats including the only jolillo palm swamp in Costa Rica.

Return to Cahuita

Traditional Caribbean Cooking Lessons - *Enjoy a great time sharing and learning about Costa Rica Caribbean cuisine and Afro-Caribbean culture. Costa Rican Caribbean cuisine is characterized using species, herbs and coconut derivatives.*

DAY 5 - CAHUITA - Wednesday, December 18

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Bribri Indigenous Community Visit -

(Medicinal Plants, Traditions, Chocolate Making)

Traditional Group Lunch

Bribri Waterfall

Return to Cahuita

Playa Negra - *This is Cahuita's long, black-sand beach. Top spot for swimming due to the clean, calm water.*

Optional - Surfing Lesson

Nocturnal Wildlife Tour Hike - *During the walk through the jungle you will have the opportunity to observe many animals and species that are very rarely seen during the day.*

DAY 6 - CAHUITA - Thursday, December 19

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Cahuita National Park - Coral Reef

Snorkeling - *The most popular feature of Cahuita National Park is its spectacular 600-acre coral reef. Although the reef has shrunk in recent years, it remains one of Costa Rica's most popular marine attractions.*

Free time at the Beach

Group Dinner & Caribbean Farewell Party

DAY 7 - RETURN - Friday, December 20

Breakfast & Day Briefing

Bus Transfer to San Jose Airport (*approx. 4 hrs.*)

Depart San Jose, Costa Rica for Home - ***For this program itinerary is necessary to book a late afternoon flight***





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Multiple Community Projects
- Cahuita National Park
- Bribri Indigenous Community Visit
- Introduction to Natural Products, Medicinal Plants
- Traditional Caribbean Cooking Lessons
- Introduction to Local Dance & Calypso Music
- Playa Negra
- Snorkeling
- Zipline experience
- Manzanillo National Park and Turtle experience

PROGRAM INCLUDES

- 7 Nights of Accommodation
 - 2-6 people per room for participants, each with their own bed and ensuite bathroom
 - Single for faculty/program leader with ensuite bathroom
 - Free Wi-Fi and daily continental breakfast
- All Ground Transportation
- All Meals
- Historical & Cultural Walking Tours
- Full Time On-Site Program Director Available 24/7 in case of Emergencies
- 24/7 On-Ground Emergency Support
- SAA's Mandatory [Health Insurance](#)* (see next page)
- SAA's \$5m Liability Insurance (COI available upon request)

NOT INCLUDED

- International Airfare
- Meals Not Specified
- Passport and Visa Fees (if applicable)
- Single Room Upgrade Costs for Participants
- Classroom/Meeting Space
- Optional Activities and Suggestions
- [Optional Travelers Insurance and/or CFAR/IFAR](#)
- Personal Expenses

ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS ARE 100% CUSTOMIZABLE

Is there an experience you'd like to provide the students that's not included in the itinerary?

Let's add it!

Are there sites that better fit your subject than the ones provided?

Let's swap them!

Tell us your dream itinerary and we'll work with you to make it a reality.



HOUSING AND FLIGHT IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION:

Accommodation selection will be based on group size, gender breakdown and availability. As a standard, SAA will book participants in shared rooms of 2-6 people per room, unless otherwise requested, with ensuite bathroom. Each participant will have their own bed. Program leaders will have their own private room with en-suite bathroom. Specific accommodations and locations will be confirmed once final enrollment numbers are submitted to SAA, usually 3-4 months prior to arrival. **Any single occupancy upgrades must be requested at least 100 days prior to departure to be accommodated.**

Accommodation are always centrally located and top rated (minimum rating of 8 out of 10). Daily continental breakfast and Free Wi-Fi included.

GROUP FLIGHT INFORMATION:

SAA would be happy to book a flight for your group! Due to the recent impacts to the airline industry and flight pricing, we cannot guarantee the cost of flights far in advance of booking the group flight and making the deposit payment on your behalf. As such, we do not include group flight prices in this program proposal. You can request a group flight by checking the box on the signature page of this proposal. We will then contact you about your group flight needs.

A few things to note about group flights in general, as you consider your options:

- Group flights are a great convenience as you will all arrive and depart at the same time, which is great and easy to manage. However, group flights may not be the cheapest option, as the airline must reserve more seats from their inventory across different flight classes.
- The airlines require that a group must have a minimum of 10 passengers traveling together on the same exact itinerary, both there and back.
- If you or any of your participants want date extensions, flight deviations, route changes, one-way flights, use of airline miles, etc., then you may want to consider having participants book their own flights. While a very small number of deviations may be allowed on group bookings, this varies by airline and cannot be guaranteed and will incur additional costs. Also note that any participants with alternate flight plans from the group will likely fly separate from the group.
- Seating assignments cannot be guaranteed for group flights, as they are at the discretion of the airline.
- Airlines do not open flight schedules until about 330 days in advance.
- Airlines have very specific deadlines and policies for group flights, which impacts SAA's deadlines and policies related to booking group flights, that are important to know.
- All group flight reservations require a \$100 per passenger deposit to be paid immediately upon making the reservation. SAA will send you a contract and payment information specific for your group flight as soon as you approve the group flight details.
- If SAA will be booking your group flight and any individuals in your group would like to request a different flight itinerary from the group flight, they **will need to submit this request via email to SAA at least 120 days prior to departure**. SAA cannot guarantee any individual requests will be accepted by the airline.
- Any special travel requests for the group flight cannot be considered until the group flight is booked, with the airline. Any special requests such as: meal requests (dietary restrictions, allergies), Frequent Flyer or Known Traveler Number or any specific seats requests will need to be included on the Ticketing Name List Spreadsheet that will be provided to you by SAA about one or two weeks prior to issuing the e-tickets for your flight. Please note that SAA cannot guarantee that the requests will be accepted by the airline.
- The airline utilization date is usually about 100 days prior to the departure. This is the date when we'll need to know the exact number of participants/seats. You will be required to utilize 90% of the seats held to avoid any penalties taken from your deposit.
- After the utilization date, adding passengers to the group is subject to availability by the airline and will likely cost more.
- Final payment for flights is due 90 days prior to the departure date. This is also the date the airline requires the ticketing name list with all the participants' details, including passport information.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

We want to make sure all students traveling from the USA to Europe are aware about the upcoming new requirements to enter Europe scheduled to start in 2025 where everyone will have to apply for the [ETIAS Travel authorization](#). "Study Abroad Association does not advise on any passport, entry/exit requirements or visa issues." This is being provided for informational purposes only.

Please note these important details related to this program. Many of these deadlines and policies are tied to accommodation and on-site arrangement needs. We are happy to review these on a case-by-case basis to meet your institutional needs.

SAA'S MANDATORY INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

For SAA to best mitigate risk and manage emergencies, we do not allow a waiver of our policy currently. SAA includes in the cost of the program a [GeoBlue international medical and travel health policy managed by LewerMark](#). In the case where a school has an institutional policy, participants will carry two insurances with SAA's medical and travel plan paying primary. This cost is covered in the SAA program fee and promotes operational efficiency for all our on-ground teams. SAA staff are familiar with the SAA insurance policy, understand where providers are located and how to contact them, and can manage emergencies abroad with greater speed and accuracy. A key feature of our policy includes a direct pay network abroad. This unique feature greatly reduces the possibility of the costly, inconvenient, and sometimes impossible task of securing payment to access treatment. The plan also covers pre-existing conditions and includes post-departure trip interruption transportation and lodging benefits, which cover any cases of quarantine needed onsite for COVID during the program. It also includes full coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation, as well as up to \$10k for Accidental Death and Dismemberment.

REFUNDS, PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS, AND CONDITIONS

- **Individual Participant Cancellation:** Up until the withdrawal deadline, deposits are refundable in the event of an individual participant's decision to cancel their participation. After the withdrawal deadline, no refund shall be provided, and the participant is still 100% responsible for final payment, regardless of participation or early departure.
- **Institutional Cancellation of the Program:** Cancellations by the institution are subject to the following policies:
 - Cancellation **150-100 days** before departure - SAA shall refund the deposit paid per person
 - Cancellation **99-80 days** before departure - SAA shall retain the deposit per person and will return any other recoverable costs available
 - Cancellations **79 days before departure to the arrival day** - No refund shall be provided
 - Refunds of payments made to SAA may take up to three months or more depending on timing of refunds made to SAA from overseas contractors
- Study Abroad Association may cancel any program for events beyond its control, such as a natural disaster or security concern in the program destination. Should a program need to be cancelled for safety reasons before the withdrawal date or while students are on-site, SAA will work with the institution to determine jointly the viability of running the program on a case-by-case basis. In such a case, SAA will make reasonable effort to return recoverable costs to the institution or students. Any refunds or future travel credits will be determined by the airline, hotel, transportation, and on-ground providers.
- **Replacement of Program Participant:** If an initial program participant is not able to attend the program or cancels for any reason other than those stated above, your institution may request a replacement participant to fill that spot. Additional fees may apply for such a change, such as ticket name change or single room upgrades.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND PAYMENT DETAILS



Please note these important details related to this program. Many of these deadlines and policies are tied to accommodation and on-site arrangement needs. We are happy to review these on a case-by-case basis to meet your institutional needs.

<p>Enrollment Confirmation Deadline:</p> <p>MONDAY, August 26, 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 days prior to departure the institution will send SAA the initial roster of participants • If the program does not meet the minimum number of participants by this date, the program can be cancelled without penalty • Upon receipt of the roster, SAA will send the deposit invoice for the number of participants on the roster
<p>Drop/Add Deadline and Deadline for any special housing requests:</p> <p>September 6, 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 days prior to departure is the last date to add/drop participants, including, students, faculty, or guest • 100 days prior to departure is also the deadline when any special housing requests must be made, such as a single-room upgrade
<p>Passport Information and Details Due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 days before departure SAA needs to receive passport details for all participants to confirm reservations on-site
<p>Withdrawal Deadlines:</p> <p>September 27, 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal or cancellation > 100 days before departure (September 6, 2024), SAA shall refund the deposit paid per person • Withdrawal or cancellation 99-80 days before departure (September 26, 2024), SAA shall retain the deposit per person and will return any other recoverable costs available • Withdrawal or cancellation 79 days before departure (September 27, 2024) to the arrival day, no refund shall be provided
<p>Program Payment Deadlines:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 days prior to departure \$500 per person is due and payable by August 26, 2024 • 90 days prior to departure, the second payment in the amount of 50% of the remaining amount is due and payable by September 6, 2024 • 60 days prior to departure, the third and final payment in the amount of the remaining amount is due and payable by September 27, 2024