

Monica Williams
Summer Study Abroad in Costa Rica

Illinois State University is a great university that provides many opportunities for their students. I always knew I wanted to study abroad but I never knew I would be able to so soon. After only one year at ISU I was allowed to study abroad in Costa Rica. I was able to travel abroad to Ecuador with my high school Spanish class so I knew this would be an awarding opportunity. This was a dream come true as I always had wanted to do this, and the trip seemed like a great experience.

In a short two weeks we experienced a lot of what Costa Rica had to offer and I was allowed to further my education. Our host university, Universidad Nacional, gave us a course on the Costa Rican education system. This was interesting to compare to the United States as they are both similar and different. Over this time, we observed five different schools varying from public to private and in grade levels. This was amazing to see how different each teacher's pedagogy was and how a school is set up in Costa Rica. This was a great opportunity to interact with the children of the schools and learn more about them while practicing my Spanish! This entire experience was rewarding as I also want to earn a Spanish minor on top of my major in middle level education.

As we got to see all of the different schools, we also got to experience true Costa Rican culture. Every day I would walk to school and take in everything around me. All of the gorgeous flora, the mountains, and all of the animals around me. The ways of Costa Ricans are very different than Americans and it was nice to experience that for a change. We also got to see the Poás Volcano and take a chocolate tour. These were amazing experiences that allowed me to see more of Costa Rica and sloths too! For our last weekend we also went to San Manuel Antonio; a beautiful beach and the most traveled national park in Costa Rica. This was a great close to a trip

I will never forget. I am so grateful for all of the ISU students I met on the trip and also all of the UNA students I met who I hope to keep in contact with! As Costa Ricans say as a farewell and for a good life, "Pura Vida"!

-Monica Williams

Middle Level Education, Spanish Minor