

Studying abroad is one of the best opportunities we are given in college. I've always been more of an introvert so the idea of going to another country with people I didn't know was not intriguing to me. After talking to my cousin who had gone on a similar trip, and going to a study abroad panel, I made up my mind. By taking this leap, I experienced more than I ever could have imagined.

I was able to use this time in Costa Rica to visit five different elementary schools, comparing and taking notes on the teaching styles that are used. I also was able to see the difference between the private and public schools. The young students were always excited to see new faces. Unfortunately, I do not speak Spanish. With no hesitation students would still come up to me, hug me, and talk to me even knowing that I did not understand. It is so heartwarming seeing children smile and out of excitement wave as you walk past their classroom.

My peers and I also did some tourist traveling. We went to the well-known beaches and forest in Manuel Antonio where I stayed in a hostel for the first time. This was a great opportunity to connect with other future teachers and talk about our experiences. My favorite trip was to the Irazu Volcano, it was the most beautiful, unique view!

One of the best parts about my trip was staying with a host family. Being able to connect with a Costa Rican family made the whole experience unique. My host mother and father welcomed my roommate and me with so much love and care. In the morning, there was always a special breakfast waiting for us with open arms and a smile. My favorite experience was celebrating my host brother's birthday. I was able to be a part of a common holiday in a completely different culture as we sang "feliz cumpleaños".

I will always be grateful for this experience and I hope that many other students are able to go on a similar adventure. Being surrounded by a new culture and soaking in everything they pass.

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GETTING TO KNOW SOME STUDENTS AT ESCUELA GUARARI SCHOOL



IRAZU VOLCANO





CELEBRATING TONY'S BIRTHDAY WITH MY HOST FAMILY!