

BC students serving in Costa Rica

Three Brevard students participating in a semester abroad write back to BC about their experiences

by Cole Altizer, Lucy Matthews, and Lindsay Shaeffer
Contributors

PURA VIDA YA'LL! This phrase has become one of our favorite expressions- a perfect blend of the Costa Rican culture and our southern roots. Costa Rica is a tropical country steeped in a rich history of coffee plantations and banana exportation, as well as a tremendous tourism industry that drives the economy. The weather is warm and rainy- perfect for the luscious green terrain that envelops this place and the abundance of wildlife that it's famous for.

We arrived here in August with the concept of the Spanish language, and will leave with it as a part of who we are. Studying Spanish abroad is more than just speaking and writing- it's submersing

ourselves into an entirely different culture that has captivated our minds, and our hearts. After more than two months in this beautiful place, we have grown exponentially and have developed a strong foundation in the language- the academic goal of our semester here. Living with host families, eating new food, learning new traditions and adapting to a new way of life have challenged and changed us. It is safe to say that coming home at the end of this journey won't be easy!

The ultimate Costa Rican experience is culminated in the hours we spend with our Tico families, forming unbreakable relationships and growing our knowledge of the Spanish language through loving the people we live with everyday. This is an incredible and unique time, because we as we grow our speaking skills in our classes, we are also experiencing the culture and the country though learning traditional dance, latino cooking, volunteer work

and weekly adventures. We each have a weekly volunteer project- Cole works in the Canopy, Lindsay at the elementary school, and Lucy at a home for the elderly. This opportunity abroad is deepened by the work we are able to do in the community of Barrio Jesus. Serving others creates a bridge where languages and cultural differences interfere, and will leave a lasting bond here for the generations of students that travel to Costa Rica after us.

And as for our adventures... to date we have Bungee jumped, watched a man almost get eaten by a crocodile, visited beautiful beaches, seen ancient ruins, and zip lined through the rain forest. There is no shortage of fun to be had!

Thank you all for your support and for sharing this experience with us! We look forward to the future students that will be a part of this awesome opportunity and to sharing our love for Costa Rica with all of you!

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Lucy Matthews (left), Cole Altizer (center), and Lindsay Shaeffer (right) during their semester in Costa Rica. This semester is part of a program in which the students will immerse themselves in the culture, lifestyle and language of Costa Rica. It will also help to earn them a minor in Spanish Language and Culture.

photo courtesy L.