

## **WELCOME TO THE UNO-COSTA RICA PROGRAM!**

***You are embarking in the most exciting five week experience that any student could ever hope for. Costa Rica awaits you with its beautiful rainforests, its never-ending white sandy beaches, lush tropical plants, exotic animals and most of all, the most friendly, welcoming people you will ever encounter in your travels!***

***You are about to be a guest in a country which is in many ways quite different from your own. It has a unique culture which has evolved out of a rich past. Before you go, it is an excellent idea to briefly familiarize yourself with the history and culture of Costa Rica. Find out a little something about their current social and political issues. Take the time to learn the most important words of their language, "gracias" and "de nada". By having a general understanding of this land and respectfully showing an interest in their way of life, you will find that the people and places you encounter this summer open up to you as you never before imagined, and you will experience Costa Rica in a way that no mere tourist ever could!***

***Remember to pack with you the most important elements for your trip: flexibility and an open mind. With these tools you will be able to truly experience what other cultures and people can offer you.***

***This handbook is designed to guide you and help you before and during your stay in Costa Rica. Please read it carefully and don't hesitate to call upon our staff to answer any questions.***

***We at the University of New Orleans, along with the staff at the University of Costa Rica, Sede de Occidente have worked hard to prepare your program and ensure that your stay is a positive learning experience!***

***You will soon learn why the people of Costa Rica greet you with Pura Vida!***

***Marie Kaposchyn  
Program Director***

### **A GUIDE TO HOUSING WITH FAMILIES:**

As a participant on this program, you should be aware that this is a "home stay" program. That means that you will be living with a family in San Ramon, Costa Rica for the five weeks. The forms that you completed regarding housing have been sent to the University of Costa Rica. The University of Costa Rica officials have been in contact with our host families in San Ramon who will be providing this stay for you. The families are Costa Rican middle class families and the location of the homes is within easy walking distance of the university campus.



The most important aspect regarding home stay is **flexibility**. Don't expect to have private bathroom facilities that you are used to at home (sharing is the key). The electric shower-the shower head is hooked up to a heating element that you need to switch to get hot water- will be most interesting. Don't worry, you won't be electrocuted.

Flushing toilet paper is not common either (I know, I had to get used to this). The septic system is very weak and you might clog up the pipes. Most homes, and hotels, will have a waste basket with closing lid to throw away toilet paper. Not our usual choice in comfort but less embarrassing than getting the entire host family to help you bail out water from the bathroom!

Please remember, the family is hosting you and making you part of their family. You will be given a key to the house and therefore you are responsible for it. If you lose it, it is imperative that you tell the family right away! After all, someone could find it and break into the home. Use your common sense! Also, you are living with other people in the household. Be considerate of this and try to adhere to their hours by not coming in late often and not waking up the entire family when you do come in late!

Upon arrival in San Ramon you will meet with your homestay family who will immediately take you to their home. If, during the course of the summer program, you have problems with your family, please contact the Program Director (Ms. Marie Kaposchyn) or the Academic Director of the program. We will do everything we can to make your stay in Costa Rica a pleasant one. However, we ask you to be patient and understanding. Home stays require a unique cultural approach by both parties concerned. We recommend that you **bring your host family a small gift that is typically American. Even better, a typical gift representing your hometown.** (Example: a picture book of your city, a basket of soaps, something typical of your hometown). Do not bring CD's, video tapes or other electronic items since you won't know if the family has the equipment to use them. Also, do not bring bubble bath or bathtub related items. Most households only have showers.



**ARRIVING ON YOUR OWN:** If you are participating on the UNO-COSTA RICA program and **not taking the designated Group Flight** from New Orleans to San Jose, Costa Rica , you need to call us at (504) 280-7455 to discuss your arrival in San Ramon. San Ramon is about a one (1) hour taxi ride from the airport. The official airport taxis you can find as you exit the airport. They will have an orange band around the side. The cost will be about \$35.00 one way. **Negotiate the rate before you leave** and have the taxi take you to the university

administrative office in San Ramon. Since the university is closed when we arrive, we will have to meet at a designated place when you arrive. Please give me a call prior to your departure and let me know what you intend to do in the way of arrival date and time so we can give you the meeting place.

**CAMERAS AND FILM:** Nowadays, film is found everywhere in San Ramon. It costs just about the same as in the U.S. but it is a good idea that you take a few rolls with you so as not to have the extra expense. Also, if you bring a very expensive camera, you must register it with customs before leaving the U.S.

**ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES:** American appliances such as hair dryers, radios, etc. operate on 110 volts. This is the same in Costa Rica. We do suggest, however, that you leave most electrical appliances at home. Powerful hair dryers have a tendency to blow fuses in some Costa Rican homes, so be sure to bring one that is small, light, and not too powerful.

**EMERGENCIES AND/OR EVACUATION PLANS:** We do not anticipate any problems but as a safety measure, and in a case of an emergency, you need to know where to go, whom to call and how to report. When you arrive to San Ramon, you will be given a walking tour of the university and shown the different places that are assigned as official emergency meeting places. If there was an emergency, you will be able to use this plan in order to have a quick and safe group assembly. You'll also be given a local emergency phone number to call, the local American Embassy numbers, as well as a plan to leave the country if necessary. It is important that you take these measures seriously and adhere to the instructions given by the group leader. All the possible emergency scenarios will be discussed and handouts distributed. **Our office number (504) 280-7455 in New Orleans will be the official number for your family to call and get any pertinent information.**

**INSURANCE:** All students will be covered by a comprehensive study abroad medical insurance plan that is included in the cost of the program. This policy provides for accident, medical expenses, emergency medical and evacuation, repatriation of remains, and family assistance coverage. **Extended coverage at additional cost is also available.** A brochure fully detailing the insurance plan will be provided to each student well in advance of departure. This policy does not cover trip cancellation or baggage insurance. **Students will be covered for the duration of the program only.**

**LANGUAGE:** The official language of Costa Rica is Spanish. A large number of citizens do speak English, particularly in San Jose. However, you will be spending the major part of the five weeks in San Ramon. Even though San Ramon does have a university, not many people speak English. Therefore, as best you can, learn some basic Spanish before you depart. If you already speak Spanish, this will be an excellent opportunity to practice your skills.

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry in a foreign country can be a hassle. However, since you are staying with a family, the family is required by our agreement to provide for your laundry once a week. On occasion, be prepared to do some hand washing (especially to wash your undergarments). Also, there are no dryers and this is the rainy season! So be prepared to wait a few days for your clothes to dry. Don't wash all of your pants at once!

**LINENS, BLANKETS, AND PILLOWS:** All of these should be supplied by the family but you need to bring a large bath or beach towel with you.

**LUGGAGE: Travel light. Travel light. Travel light.** Refer to the listing of what to bring in the way of clothes and other personal items. Bring a day pack or small backpack for weekend trips. Always guard your luggage when traveling and don't trust a new "friend" on the beach to watch your bag while you swim. This is a common ploy to steal your valuables. Ask another program participant to hold your things.

**MEALS:** You will be taking all of your daily meals with your family. However, if you travel on your own during the weekend or on an organized class field trip over a weekend, you will be responsible for purchasing your own meals. More information and details on these trips will be given once the program is in progress. If you will not take a meal with your family on any given day, please inform the family **well in advance** not to expect you. They make such a fuss preparing meals for you, so let them know if you are not coming. The University of Costa Rica cafeteria (the Soda) has a very good snack bar for sandwiches and light lunches, and there are numerous restaurants in town.



**MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INSURANCE:** Costa Rica has a very good medical system. San Ramon does have a hospital and there is a doctor who visits the University of Costa Rica at the clinic. We do not anticipate any problems that we cannot handle during our stay. If you are feeling sick, your host family will be the first ones to inform. They will make sure that you see a doctor. However, it is important that you let the UNO staff know right away if you are not feeling well.

**MEDICAL RESPONSIBILITY:** As a student you should be aware that there are certain risks inherent in international travel and that the University of New Orleans, as a State of Louisiana educational institution, cannot assume responsibility for all or certain of your activities while traveling. You should also be aware of your personal medical needs and consult with a medical doctor before your departure regarding any personal needs while abroad. **Also, be sure that you have returned the “Report of Medical History” form to the UNO-Costa Rica office.**



**MONEY:** Oh, yes, that very important question...how much do I need? How do I bring it? You have several things to consider and carrying around a lot of cash is risky. **Credit Cards:** You can also use ATM machines in San Ramon to get cash. If you intend on using them, make sure you have the proper international PIN number with you. In case of a financial emergency, a credit card can be very helpful. Bring with you a Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card. As far as purchasing power goes, however, credit cards are not of great value for the budget traveler because many low-cost establishments in Costa Rica do not accept them. Plan your spending wisely! You can withdraw money with your ATM card in several points in San Ramon and in San Jose.

If you do not have a credit card, travelers checks, which can be purchased at face value plus a commission, provide a practical and wise alternative. (AAA members can purchase American Express Travelers Checks from a AAA office at face value with no commission charged.) American Express Travelers Checks are recommended because they provide the best service if checks are lost or stolen. You should keep your receipts and check numbers in a separate and safe location. As you cash each check, record its number so you will easily be able to report exactly which checks are missing. Keep part of your supply of checks in a separate location; if you have the misfortune of losing checks, at least you won't lose them all. Remember that most banks in Costa Rica are closed on weekends, so plan ahead to avoid problems. Not all banks cash traveler's checks but we will show you where you can get them cashed in town.

The current rate of exchange into the Costa Rican colon is approximately 500 for the Dollar. It is advisable to exchange more than one travelers check at a time. Exchange as much as you feel safe carrying around and no more. The safest way to carry your money and valuables is to wear them around your neck or waist either in a travel pouch under your shirt or in a money belt. These can usually be purchased at any good camping or travel store. Also, we know that you will get to trust your host families as your own, however you cannot control who comes in and out of the house during your absence. **Do not leave your money out in the open!** Keep valuables locked in your suitcase (combination locks are best) at all times.

**HOW MUCH MONEY TO BRING?:** All students seem to have a different idea of what Costa Rica will cost and what they intend to spend during their stay there. A suggested amount of \$100 to \$150 per week is advisable. The best rule of thumb is to take as much as you can possibly afford. You will have a much better time if you don't have to worry about every purchase. Take enough to cover your anticipated expenses and then a little extra. If you feel like you need a guide

for spending money, you should first begin by calculating what you will already have paid for before you depart and what you will have to pay for once you arrive. If you are going over early or staying later on your own then you will need to consider transportation, food and lodging during this period of time in Costa Rica. Consider the costs of meals not taken with your family during the week and the costs of souvenirs, taxis and bus fares, and hotels during your free week ends. By planning in advance you will be better prepared for your trip.

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:** If you have one, bring it (within reason). On all of our international programs, the students play a lot of good music and we look forward to hearing it every year.

**PASSPORTS:** You should apply now for a valid passport. It can be obtained at any passport agency (look under "State Department" in the U.S. Government listings in the phone book), U.S. post office, or many state or federal courts. You will need to bring proof of your U.S. citizenship (birth certificate or naturalization papers), identification (driver's license or your old passport), and \$75. It will be valid for ten years. Since the processing of your application can take up to several weeks, it is important that you take care of this right away!!

Losing your passport while in Costa Rica can be a major problem. Not only is it difficult to replace, but you will not be able to travel out of the country. In the event you do lose it, you should notify us immediately as well as the local police and the U.S. embassy in San Jose. To make the reissuing process much easier, photocopy the page showing your passport number, picture, and place of issue, and keep it separate from your passport. (You will need to send us a copy too). Leave a copy with someone at home as well.

**IMPORTANT: IF YOU ARE NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN YOU MUST CALL THE COSTA RICAN CONSULATE TO SEE WHAT TYPE OF VISA YOU NEED TO ENTER THE COUNTRY!**

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** Public transportation by bus is excellent. You can get to most any part of Costa Rica by bus, the cost is relatively inexpensive. For official day and weekend field trips, transportation will be included. Some weekend field trips will be to rain forests. Please read over the listing of clothing and other items to bring. Going into such a forest demands that you prepare well for wet weather.



**PARTIES:** Yes, there will be plenty of those. Welcome parties, farewell parties, and going out at night in San Ramon (yes, there is a night life!). Use your common sense and don't drink too much or get involved in any situation where you feel uncomfortable. Be friendly but guarded as you would in your home town. Stay in groups and "blend in". It is wiser to spend \$1 in cab fare going home late than to risk it and walk home in an unfamiliar surrounding. And remember, going out all the time is what takes up most of your spending money so be careful!

**SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:** When traveling overseas, there are a number of precautions which you should follow in order to travel safely:

- 1.) Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time.
- 2.) Do not let anyone give you something to carry when traveling.
- 3.) Never keep all your documents and money in one place and make duplicate copies of your documents (especially your passport).
- 4.) Always be alert to your surroundings and be cautious when traveling.
- 5.) Do not get involved in drugs and beware of becoming intoxicated.
- 6.) Let people know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- 7.) Have sufficient funds and/or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as transportation tickets.
- 8.) Be cautious when you meet new people and never bring them into your home.
- 9.) Report any unusual activity or suspicious persons to the program director.
- 10.) Be aware of the political situation wherever you are. Stay away from places that are experiencing political unrest.
- 11.) Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the United States or its allies.
- 12.) Be conservative in your dress and never wear expensive jewelry when traveling.
- 13.) Don't flash your money and be discreet when showing your passport.
- 14.) Keep away from political demonstrations.
- 15.) Avoid the media and don't feel like you have to comment or give an interview.

These are just a few general rules you should be aware of. Most often, common sense will tell you what to do. That is why it is imperative that you avoid a situation in which common sense does not prevail--being intoxicated and using drugs.

**STUDENT REGULATIONS:** As a participant on the program, you will be expected to comply with program regulations. These rules of conduct govern a set of citizenship standards: living together in harmony in the home, respecting your neighbors and the citizens of Costa Rica, avoidance of drunkenness, disorderly conduct, drugs, dishonesty, criminal acts, academic cheating, damaging property, etc. As a student on the program you are also governed by the University of New Orleans policy and procedures regarding students.

**Students must conduct themselves in appropriate manner and abide by all policies outlines in the UNO Judicial Code:**

**[http://www.uno.edu/%7Estlf/Policy%20Manual/judicial\\_code\\_pt2.htm](http://www.uno.edu/%7Estlf/Policy%20Manual/judicial_code_pt2.htm)**

**Cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated.**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** It is the policy of the University of New Orleans, on a flexible and individualized basis, to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are strongly urged to inform us of their disability and specific needs, and accommodations. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact their instructors to discuss their individual needs within the academic context of the class requirements.

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES OF WHAT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD DO IN ORDER TO INSURE A SAFE TRIP:** Participants should:

- 1.) Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country.
- 2.) Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in the program.
- 3.) Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- 4.) Assume responsibility for all elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- 5.) Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- 6.) Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
- 7.) Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
- 8.) Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health and safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
- 9.) Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- 10.) Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- 11.) Become familiar with procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- 12.) Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR WHAT PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES SHOULD DO IN ORDER TO INSURE A SAFE TRIP FOR THE STUDENT PARTICIPANT:**

Parents/guardians/families should:

- 1.) Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
- 2.) Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in the study abroad program.
- 3.) Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- 4.) Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- 5.) Keep in touch with the participant while he/she is overseas.
- 6.) Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

**SPORTS:** San Ramon is an ideal location for swimming, jogging, hiking, weight lifting, etc. There are many parts of Costa Rica where you can go water rafting, camping in a rain forest, etc. If you participate in any of these sports, you should bring the appropriate gear--within reason (i.e., jogging shoes, hiking boots, etc.).



**TELEPHONE CALLS, MAIL AND E-MAIL:** The phone numbers at the beginning of this handbook is meant to be used for emergency purposes only. You should use the address as your official address during your entire stay. We will set up a procedure to pick up mail from the Director's office on a daily basis for distribution to students. Do not go to this office on your own to ask for mail.

During your stay, it is best to make your calls using an international calling card. You can purchase these before departure at drug stores or use an **AT&T, MCI, SPRINT** card. Make sure you have the country code for your card in Costa Rica. You can also purchase them in San Ramon but be sure you get the **INTERNATIONAL** card (at least \$10 worth or you won't be able to call home). Prior to departure, you will also receive the name and phone number to your host family. Have your family call you in San Ramon. **You are not allowed to make outgoing long distance phone calls unless you use a telephone card.** There is an internet cafe in San Ramon and rates are very low (about \$1 hour).

**TRAVEL ADVISORY:** You should realize that anytime you travel abroad there is potential for danger due to crime, political unrest, unforeseen "Acts of God," strikes that will delay your travel plans, etc. We simply cannot list every possible scenario in this Newsletter. Therefore, we recommend that, if you have any concerns about traveling to a particular place, you contact the U.S. Government Travel Advisory. This can be found on the internet at:

**[www.state.gov/](http://www.state.gov/)**

**TRAVEL IN THE COUNTRY:** Use your time wisely. Study, travel, and have a wonderful time this summer! As mentioned above under transportation, you will have ample time to visit various regions of Costa Rica. Plan ahead and see what you can during your stay. The more traveling you do, the more money you will need. But a primary reason for going on this program is to get to know the country. There are certain areas we will discuss during orientation that we strongly discourage you from visiting. These areas are not close to our program and are known to have higher levels of crime. We will cover this in detail during our on site orientation.

Whenever you travel it is **IMPERATIVE that you carry your passport with you.** Random checks are made by the local authorities and you can be imprisoned if you do not have legal proof of citizenship.



**READING LIST:** It is a good idea to read about Costa Rica before you get there. Some of the books, such as Fodors or Lonely Planet, are general guides to the country, others are specific guides to such things as natural parks and recreation areas. In order to expand your knowledge of Costa Rica, its people, culture, politics, etc., you should take some time before you depart to look at some of these books, and perhaps buy at least one guide to Costa Rica. You can purchase such guides at the major book stores or a your university bookstore. There is also a lot of information on line and it is suggested you check out the following:

<http://www.tourism-costarica.com/index.htm>

[www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)

[www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com)

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

The San Ramon web site at <http://members.tripod.com/sanramon/index1.html>

It's in Spanish but you can navigate through it and get an idea of the place.

Other general information about Costa Rica can be found on <http://www.ticosearch.com/>

Whatever you decide, learn something about your destination before you go!

**U.S. CUSTOMS:** When returning home, keep in mind that U.S. Customs requires you to declare all purchases acquired abroad. Therefore, be sure to keep the receipts for all the major items you buy. You are allowed to bring back \$400 worth of foreign goods tax-free. After that you must pay 10% on the next \$1,000 worth. You must be 21 to bring liquor into the U.S., and you are allowed no more than two liters of wine or beer or one liter of higher proof beverage.

**VISAS:** As a citizen of the United States, you need only a valid passport for entry. **If you are not a U.S. citizen you must contact the Costa Rican Consulate office at least a month in advance of the trip regarding whether or not you need a visa.** The number in New Orleans is (504) 468-3948.



### WHAT TO BRING:

Our best advice is to **travel as lightly** as possible. If in doubt, leave it out! Too many clothes and too much equipment quickly become an unwanted burden. The important thing to keep in mind is that YOU will have to carry what you bring for the five weeks. And remember, you will bring home more than you started out with, so leave yourself some room.

Since the weather in Costa Rica during your stay is called the "rainy season" you should plan accordingly. The mornings in San Ramon will be clear and warm with evening showers, sometimes heavy, lasting from a few minutes to hours. In order to prepare for this weather, we recommend you to carefully plan according to the following packing list.

1 sweatshirt

1 light sweater (nights are cool and we have a volcano visit planned)

1 light jacket, windbreaker, or rain jacket (NOT a heavy coat)

1-2 nice outfits for going out at night

2-3 pairs of jeans/slacks

2-3 pairs of shorts (be careful, shorts are not usually worn in the city)

1-2 shirts

3-4 casual shirts and tee shirts

1 pair of dress shoes

1 pair of sturdy, but comfortable shoes for walking (hiking boots or rain boots if you have them)

1 pair of tennis shoes

1 swimsuit

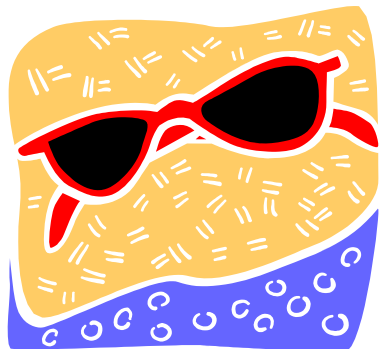
socks, belt(s), plenty of underwear

pajamas or a robe (you will be living with a family)

**NOTE: A good rule of thumb is to remember that you will be wearing casual clothes 98% of the time. Since your clothes will be laundered, pack for a week and wash. YOU DO NOT PACK AN ITEM FOR EACH DAY OF THE FIVE WEEKS.**

Another good packing tip is to take clothing that you don't want to bring back. Costa Rican students love American clothing and you can donate your unwanted clothes (in good condition, of course) to the kids in your host family, a neighbor, etc. Less stuff to bring back home!

## OTHER ITEMS TO BRING:



- \*sunglasses
- \*sun screen lotion (with a strong screening agent as the sun can get intense)
- \*1 large bath towel, washcloth
- \*a compact umbrella
- \***battery operated** alarm clock
- \***a flashlight with batteries** (This is a must for the rain forest and for blackouts that can and will happen)
- \*beach sandals
- \*poncho or other field rain gear
- \*insect repellent (in non-aerosol containers)
- \*pocket knife (Swiss Army type if you have one, pack this in your suitcase, not your carry on)
- \*binoculars (only if you have them)
- \*small water container (always bring a bottle of water on fieldtrips, you will get dehydrated)
- \*toiletries and bath items
- \* prescription medicines
- \*pens, pencils, notebooks (for class) although you can purchase those in San Ramon
- \*Small Spanish-English dictionary
- \*Combination lock for your suitcase (to lock valuables in your room)
- \***aspirin, band aids, first aid ointment, Imodium AD, Dramamine (we have very long, bumpy bus rides for excursions), and any personal hygiene items.**

There are several drugstores and supermarkets in San Ramon where you can purchase everything you need. However, you might not find your favorite brand so if you are tied to a shampoo or special soap...bring it with you!

And don't forget to pack your most important thing.....flexibility! You will be experiencing this adventure with a group of students of different backgrounds and personalities, host families of a different culture and a totally new environment. Be patient, be flexible and enjoy!

Most importantly, bring your passport, credit cards and/or travelers checks. You can survive with these three things even if you lose everything else. **Bring these with you on the plane in a piece of carry-on luggage.** Other items you might want to include in your carry-on bag are your camera, film, medications, **an extra change of clothes, and toiletries.** We don't expect to be stranded but sometimes you need to plan for lost luggage. Remember to keep the size of these toiletries down to a minimum and do not pack sharp items such as scissors or nail files. Purchase travel/sample size personal items which can be found at most drug stores.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:**

Your host family, their name and address and phone number will be issued to you prior to departure. If your family in the US wants to reach you in Costa Rica, they can call your family home directly. If that doesn't work, have them contact our New Orleans number **(504-280-7455)** and our staff will get in touch with us immediately

Calling the U.S. from Costa Rica is easy with an international calling card. You can dial direct to most of the world for a reasonable cost. The direct dialing facility is known as "MIDA", and instructions for its use are found in the telephone directory. For additional instructions you can dial 116 and/or 124.

## ARENAL WEEK END EXCURSION

**This is our first group week-end excursion. We need to make sure that everyone is on time for all departures, we don't want to miss a minute of the fun! Professors might set up separate fieldtrips during the week end, please check with them.**

- ❖ Please pack light (a backpack or a carry on). You will need sturdy shoes for hiking, a sweater or a sweatshirt, a towel, insect repellent, rain gear and a bathing suit. Bring an extra pair of shoes and pants because chances are you will get wet! If you plan to go horseback riding, bring long jeans.
- ❖ This hotel will include breakfast. You are on your own for lunch and dinner so bring enough Colones. You might want to bring some snacks with you. Your family will provide you with a bag lunch, please don't forget it.
- ❖ Our hotel is very relaxing, has bungalows and a private hiking trail (can be steep in certain areas). There is also a private hot spring, a full service spa, horses, and canopy jump. The pool has a bar in it.
- ❖ About a mile from our hotel, there is a resort called Tabacon . The entrance fee (about \$ 18) gets you in all day. You can also eat there but expect higher prices.
- ❖ Our hotel offers different activities if you are interested in the following:
  - White water rafting: (Class III) about \$60 per person)
  - Horseback riding: (highly recommended by last year's participants) about \$35 per person for 3 hours.
  - Canopy jump: everyone's favorite adventure about \$35 per person. Please do not schedule this on Sunday because you won't be back for our departure on time.
- ❖ All these prices are tentative and depend on how many people will sign up. The more people go, the cheaper it gets. These activities are organized by the hotel and not by UNO. You will have to pay your share directly to the hotel in Colones, dollars or traveler checks.
- ❖ There is a big disco not far from the hotel so bring appropriate clothes. When you return to the Hotel from a night out, keep in mind there are other hotel guests not with our group and we need to keep the quiet and serene atmosphere that people come to Arenal to enjoy.
- ❖ On Sunday, make sure that whatever activity you do, you give yourself enough time to eat before we leave for San Ramon. Sometimes we stop along the way back to see special sights or admire a special place. You might starve if you don't prepare ahead. Have a safe and fun stay in Arenal.

**DEPARTURE ON SUNDAY FROM THE HOTEL AT \_\_\_(TBA)\_\_\_ SHARP!**



## MANUEL ANTONIO-QUEPOS WEEKEND EXCURSION

This is a fun and popular excursion. Again please pack light and don't forget to bring sturdy shoes, sandals, bathing suit, insect repellent, and SUNSCREEN!

The hotel has kitchenettes and refrigerators in each room. Breakfast is not included in this trip so be prepared to either cook breakfast or purchase it. We are located on top of the cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It is 20 minutes walk to the beach. Be very careful because the cliff is slippery and cars zoom by, as always. The most expensive restaurants are located on the cliff so as you get closer to the beach, the food is much cheaper. There are many "sodas" by the beach where you can buy an inexpensive meal

The hotel does have several restaurants on the premises; they have good food but are expensive. The Cantina restaurant has very good grilled food, The Anaconda has a variety of dishes and The Avion is mostly a snack bar-disco.

We will make several stops along our way to Manuel Antonio and we will stop at Jaco Beach one hour before our destination where you can go to the supermarket and purchase food for your weekend. Prices are the same as in San Ramon. Don't forget to get your money for the weekend ahead of time. The town of Quepos is a bus or taxi ride away from our hotel and has banks open on Saturday mornings if you need cash.

Be careful on the beach with your things. Always have someone from our group around cameras, bags etc. Do not trust any new "friends" you have just met. They will gladly watch your valuables while you swim and most likely will not be there when you come back.

These are all kinds of activities available for you, canopy, horseback riding, etc, and the hotel lobby will gladly set up this for you. Closer to the beach, you can rent surfboards. Be watchful of the water and the rocks, there have been accidents with strong waves and tides.

On Saturday morning, we will be going to Manuel Antonio National Park on the beach, (time TBA). We will meet in front of the trolley where we check in. You are responsible to get yourself there on time, remember, there are no alarm clocks in the room so bring your own. If you don't show up, I will assume you choose not to participate in this activity. We will go in as a group and I will pay the entrances fees. If you come later on your own, you will pay the entrance fee yourself (\$10 per person).

Wear your bathing suit, shirts and sandals. We will be going through water and sand. Bring your camera, snacks and water. Plan to bring food if you want to stay for lunch, no food is sold on premises. Please do not try to touch or feed the animals we will encounter. If you want to make the hike to Punta Cathedral, bring walking/hiking shoes.

There are many places to go at night, many will go and dance by the beach. Watch your things there and stay in groups! Remember that all Costa Rican laws apply here and we must abide by them.

On Sunday, all bags will be placed in one room (TBA) because check out is at 12. We will give you time to get something to eat or spend more time by the pool before we leave. Have fun and stay safe!

