

PITZER IN COSTA RICA HANDBOOK



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Visit the [Pre-Departure Information and Handbooks website](#) for additional information about the topics below and other helpful resources for study abroad.

CULTURAL IMMERSION WHILE ABROAD

The study abroad programs at Pitzer College provide ample opportunities for cultural immersion. They require adaptation. Wherever you go, we hope you will engage the local lifestyle, language, and culture as fully as possible, and begin to understand your hosts. Most programs provide experienced cross-cultural guidance as well as structured activities that facilitate interaction. Pitzer asks that you make the commitment to take those opportunities and follow that guidance when you participate in a study abroad program. Notice the word commitment. Immersion does not happen automatically. It takes a certain commitment over the course of the program— a mindfulness of why you came in the first place and faithfulness to that. Visit the website to learn more.

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY ABROAD

Your various identities will influence your study abroad experience. Depending on how you identify, you may experience study abroad differently from your peers of other identities. This doesn't necessarily mean that you'll have negative experiences, but we know students from certain identity backgrounds, particularly students of color, women, LGBTQIA+ students and those of certain religious backgrounds, are more prone to face incidents related to their identity abroad. Therefore, it is important to know what the experience is like in-country for people who share your identity and make sure it's safe. Doing this research ahead of time will help you choose a location that suites your comfortability level and will help you better navigate various experiences while abroad. We encourage you to consult the articles and resources on the website and invite students to discuss questions and concerns with the Office of Study Abroad.

PITZER COLLEGE PROGRAM MODEL

Pitzer's Study Abroad programs ask students to engage in the local lifestyle, language, and culture as fully as possible. Our programs provide ample opportunities for cultural immersion and integrated learning. Rather than thinking about the program as separate courses or classes (which is how it shows up on the transcript), we want you to begin to see the program as it really is: a connected whole where each part of the program is related to and dependent on every other part of the program, and where all these components work together to create a particular kind of interconnected intercultural learning experience. Your program may consist of a combination of language learning, family stays, study trips, community interaction, the core class, and independent learning.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM LOCATION INFORMATION

Students begin the program in San José studying at the **Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS)**. After a five-week homestay in the capital students will travel to Panama for a 10-day study trip and to renew their Costa Rican visa. Upon returning to Costa Rica, students will move to the small towns of Platanillo or Tinamastes where they will be placed with a host family for the remainder of the semester. Coursework will take place at the Pitzer-owned Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology (FCRE) a 150 -acre reserve in the tropical forest; home to pre-Columbian petroglyphs, a harvestable bamboo forest, a riparian zone with waterfalls and streams, secondary-growth forest in a former pasture, intentionally replanted hardwood forest, original rainforest, a four-pond water catchment system, an Ecology Center with laboratory and classroom facilities and a 16-bed dormitory. The FCRE property is within UNESCO's Savegre Biosphere Reserve, which has a

very rich biodiversity and is home to 20% of the country's total flora, 54% of its mammals, and 59% of its birds. FCRE is adjacent to Hacienda Barú, a wildlife refuge of 800 acres to the west; the ecologically significant Osa Peninsula to the south; and Manuel Antonio National Park to the north. This unique location gives students access to a variety of tropical ecosystems and rich biodiversity.

ACADEMICS

PITZER IN COSTA RICA COURSES AND CREDITS

	Course Credits	Semester Units
Intensive Spanish	1.0	4
Core Course: Costa Rican Studies	1.0	4
Tropical Restoration Ecology	1.0	4
Environment, People and Restoration	1.0	4
Independent Study Project	1.0	4
Semester Total	5.0	20

Grades for this program will be recorded on a Pitzer College transcript and included in the Pitzer GPA. Non-Pitzer students will be issued a Pitzer College transcript, which will be forwarded to their home schools. Students are required to participate fully in all program components.

PROGRAM DATES FOR SPRING 2024

The Pitzer in Costa Rica program spring semester dates are January 27 (arrival day) to May 19 (departure date), 2024.

Pitzer requires you to participate in the entire program. Late arrivals or early departures are unacceptable. Loss of credit or lowering of grades may result if you arrive late or depart early. Students may not withdraw from any course during their semester in Costa Rica.

INTENSIVE SPANISH

An 80-hour course in beginner, intermediate or advanced Spanish is taught in San José at the Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS), where students will stay for the first five weeks of the program. As part of an integrated approach to the teaching of language and culture, students will also participate in a homestay with a Costa Rican family, receive lectures on Costa Rican culture, and take study trips in San José. Spanish classes will continue when students transfer to the Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology (FCRE). Students will meet twice a week for 4 hours each day for classes. The format of the course at FCRE is one that incorporates activities and formal Spanish lessons to enhance the student's conversational level of Spanish.

CORE COURSE: COSTA RICAN STUDIES

During the first five weeks of the program, students will participate in the first half of the Pitzer Core Course: Costa Rican Studies with a seminar offered through ICADS entitled *Latin American Perspectives on Justice and Sustainable Development*. The course includes lectures, study trips in and around San José, discussion sessions, a variety of oral, interactive, and written assignments and a longer study trip to the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, namely Limón and Guanacaste.

The second half of the Pitzer Core Course focuses on developing oral proficiency in Spanish while deepening students' understanding of Costa Rican culture. This half of the core course facilitates students' integration into surrounding communities through ongoing interviews and ethnographic work with local host families and community organizations. Students also complete a series of field book exercises designed to help students integrate personal experience with readings and lectures, as they reflect upon important issues and critically examine aspects of their own culture learning process. Finally, this half of the core course provides support for both conducting the Independent Study project (ISP) research in Spanish as well as writing up the final project report and conducting an oral presentation to fellow students, program staff and local community. For Pitzer students, the core course will satisfy Pitzer's Social Responsibility Praxis (SRX) requirement.

TROPICAL RESTORATION ECOLOGY

This course is divided into two sections: Marine Restoration Ecology and Terrestrial Restoration Ecology.

Marine Ecology course: this section of the course takes place in Panama. Students will explore major themes in Tropical Marine Ecology, using examples from the marine environment and tropical stream systems. Students will observe a gradient of ecosystems, beginning with the input of biological productivity from island forests into streams and mangrove ecosystems.

Terrestrial Ecology: this section of the course takes place in FCRE. Students will explore major themes in terrestrial tropical ecology, using examples from the many different ecosystems within the FCRE's property. Students will observe disturbed ecosystems as well as restored ecosystems within the property.

Both sections of the course will include a combination of class discussions, daily field exercises, and an individual or group project. There is a significant fieldwork component to these courses including hiking, snorkeling trips, kayaking, along with class discussions. Students will be asked to keep a detailed field notebook and will collect data for their study project and informal presentation.

ENVIRONMENT, PEOPLE AND RESTORATION

This course is designed to explore special topics in relation to the rich cultural and ecological resources available at the Firestone Center, its neighboring communities, and local protected areas. Topics change from year to year but may include conservation policy and governance, agroecology, Costa Rican Indigenous communities, and protected areas. Each course segment is taught as an intensive seminar that combines theoretical considerations, case studies, methodologies, and fieldwork.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

Students may focus on one aspect of human or tropical restoration ecology to study in greater depth through an independent research project or internship. Students may also participate in one of the longitudinal research projects set up by scholars from the US and Costa Rica that contribute to the biological baseline assessment for the property. Some topics may have prerequisites. All projects require a final written report with a significant analytical component as well as other appropriate documentation for learning.

STUDY TRIPS

THE CARIBBEAN SIDE OF COSTA RICA

During your first five weeks with ICADS, you will visit the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, namely Limón and Guanacaste. In Limon, students will visit an indigenous Bribri community and in Guanacaste, students will visit renewable energy sites.

STUDY TRIP TO PANAMA

The overall goal of the Ecology study trip is to expose students to new habitats and diversity of species as a compliment to that experienced in the tropical forest of the Firestone Reserve.

Environment, People and Restoration course study trips include visit to the Boruca Indigenous community, Pre-Colombian museum, farmer's markets, production farm and an wildlife animal sanctuary.

COSTA RICAN FAMILY STAY

FAMILY STAYS

Costa Rican family stays provide a window into the culture as the families include students in their daily lives and introduce students to relatives from a variety of age groups and backgrounds. Through discussions with the family, students begin to give a human face to important issues and ideas covered in their courses. Often relationships developed with host family members turn into friendships that last long past the end of the program.

Students will have two family stays. The first will be for five weeks in San Jose while students study Spanish intensively. Students' second family stay for the remainder of the semester will typically be with a rural farming family close to the Firestone Center. Homes are usually small with simple amenities and less chance for privacy. Students are encouraged to see their host families as co-educators on the program along with staff and faculty and take advantage of the opportunity host families provide to deepen culture and language learning as well as explore important topics and issues covered in the course.

HYGIENE AND MANNERS

- Costa Ricans tend to be very clean, therefore the houses can be very small but tidy! Some places are more humid or dusty than others therefore sweeping, mopping, and dusting can be frequent activities in your house. Nonetheless, because of the tropical conditions of the country, there are bugs of different sorts and in different numbers mostly always everywhere. Ants, flies, small spiders, moths, and roaches, even if unwelcome or undesirable, are somewhat common.
- In general, Costa Ricans show their affection physically: they kiss and hug often. They are courteous and expect everyone to say "Buenos días" in the morning and "Buenas noches" when leaving or going to bed at night. When asking for something they always say "por favor". And "gracias" is always a must! If someone sneezes, normally everyone around says "Salud!" Before starting to eat a meal in the company of others, as well as when approaching someone who is having a meal, Costa Ricans say "Buen provecho" or just "Provecho".
- Never keep food in your room! Try to be tidy! Your host mother will have to clean/sweep/dust your room at least once a week.
- Personal hygiene is a big issue here. Everyone, local or not, is expected to take at least one daily shower. Body odors can be interpreted as disrespectful or offensive.
- Because of septic tank systems, most bathrooms will have a basket next to the toilet where you should be throwing toilet paper, sanitary napkins, tampons, etc. You're expected not to flush any of these items ever.
- Table manners can also be an issue, but it should not be much different from being a guest anywhere.
- Most families do not like anyone walking around barefoot. It is considered unhealthy!
- Do not put your feet up or sprawl all over the furniture.
- Costa Ricans, in general, like to handle everything with care. Try not to slam doors (in the house and elsewhere) or throw things around.

FOOD, MEALS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Your family will provide you with 2 daily meals: breakfast and dinner. Students are expected to try typical Costa Rican food, which always should be plenty and varied.
- If your family sits you down alone to eat, do not worry. It is because they do not want to bother you. If this happens, tell them that you would like to eat with them.
- For Costa Ricans, feeding people well is a demonstration of affection. If they try to overfeed you, tell them that you usually do not eat that much (no como tanto). If you feel that you need help to deal with issues related to your eating habits, ask the ICADS host family coordinator for help.
- If you must skip a meal, please let them know ahead of time. If you are not going to be home in time to have dinner with your family, please call them. Also let them know if you plan to be away for the weekend. Call them if you will not be returning on schedule.
- The use of alcohol is a factor in most incidents compromising students' safety. Drinking can put you and others in danger and will definitively create problems or tensions with the host family. Families expect students to be respectful of their homes avoiding the use of alcohol.
- You may, if you wish, offer to do some work around the house as a way of integrating yourself into the household more quickly (help wash dishes, etc.); however, they do not expect you to do anything. You should never feel obligated to clean the house, babysit, etc.
- Costa Ricans generally hand wash clothes with rather abrasive detergent, which takes its toll on your clothes. Bring sturdy clothes and consider leaving expensive clothes at home. Women may be expected to wash their own underwear; ask your host mother where the "pila" (sink) is.
- Costa Ricans are very patient. If they speak too fast, you need only to tell them: "más despacio, por favor." They will slow down and will be supportive.

VISITORS

- It is not permitted to invite guests to your home who are not part of the program. For safety reasons, families in Costa Rica worry about having total strangers in their homes.
- If you wish/need to study with an ICADS classmate, always ask for permission. Stay outside of your bedroom or keep the door open. However, plan to eat your meals with your own host family.
- Overnight guests are definitively not allowed: never bring friends or dates home to spend the night. It makes the family extremely uncomfortable.

PLANNING FOR TRAVEL AND FLIGHTS

PASSPORTS

All students on the program need a passport. Check the expiration date of your passport before beginning the program. If you do not have a passport valid for six months after your planned return from study abroad, expedite the application or renewal process. Processing a new passport application or renewal may take several weeks. US passport holders should visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html> if they need to renew their passport. Students with a non-US passport should work with their country's embassy.

VISAS

For entry into Costa Rica, you must present a passport valid for at least 6 months after your departure date. Your passport must be in good condition, i.e., not water damaged, torn, etc. In addition to your passport, you must also have a round trip

ticket exiting Costa Rica. Officials will allow you to stay in Costa Rica for up to 90 days without a visa. To cover the duration of the program, there is a study trip to Panama five weeks into the program. You will be allowed to stay in Costa Rica another 90 days when you reenter Costa Rica after the study trip to Panama. Some destinations require that you have several blank pages remaining in your passport. If your passport does not have blank pages remaining, please arrange to get additional pages added to your current passport or renew for a new passport with plenty of blank pages.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

You should arrive at the Juan Santamaría International Airport on the arrival date of January 27. The staff and host families cannot accommodate you before the arrival date. If you plan to arrive in Central America earlier for independent travel, we ask that you make your own arrangements to arrive in San Jose on the arrival day. Please notify the program director of your arrival plans well before the arrival date, so he can plan to meet you. Late arrivals cause significant disruption of the program, so it is important that you arrive on time. **You are free to depart San José on May 19, 2024.**

Please note: You may be required to pay a departure tax at the airport in San José if this fee is not already included in your airline ticket. Be prepared to pay between USD \$28 and \$35. Cash and credit cards are accepted at the airport.

Before you can book your flight, you are required to submit the Pitzer acceptance paperwork and complete orientation requirements by the dates listed in the Pitzer study abroad application portal. If you complete these requirements less than two weeks prior to your departure, you will be responsible for any increase in airfare due to a last-minute booking.

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

All students are required to book their flight through Pitzer's designated travel agent. When you contact the travel agent, identify yourself as a student on the Pitzer in Costa Rica program and inform her of your program dates. For additional information visit the [Travel and Communications](#) section of the website.

PITZER'S DESIGNATED TRAVEL AGENT

KIM RUDD at Corniche Travel

Email: pitzer@corniche.com or kimberly@corniche.com

Phone: 497-488-6058 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Additional agents are available from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., (Pacific time zone)

Phone: 310.854.6000 Monday through Friday, closed major holidays

Office: 8721 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 200, West Hollywood, CA 90069

www.corniche.com

Airfare Policy



Tickets not purchased through the Pitzer designated travel agent will NOT be reimbursed or credited to student accounts. Frequent flier miles may NOT be used to book flights.

The maximum airfare Pitzer College will pay is based upon the cost of a round trip ticket from the closest major international airport to the student's permanent address city in the US to the designated international airport near the program site for the exact dates of the program. For international students, the maximum airfare is based upon the cost of

a round trip ticket from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The travel agent will bill Pitzer for the approved ticket. Students will pay the travel agent directly for the additional costs of an itinerary that is more expensive than the approved flight. No refund or credit is given if the ticket costs less than the maximum.

The following items may increase the cost of a ticket. Students will only be charged for actual overages.

- Finalizing travel arrangements after the due date listed in the student's study abroad application portal
- Travel dates that vary from the dates of the program, including going early or staying after the program ends
- Special requests for routing or stopovers through specific cities or countries
- Open return tickets - these are discouraged and may not be possible due to visa requirements
- Extra luggage charges - airlines may change luggage restrictions without notice.
- Changing the ticket after it is issued. These costs include change fees and any increase in airfare.
- Replacing lost tickets



If for any reason you are unable to use an airline ticket, the **airline must be notified prior to the departure of the first flight** that you will be changing or cancelling your flight. **Unused tickets become worthless once the plane departs.** You are responsible for the replacement cost of an unused ticket.

FURTHER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19

There are currently no COVID-related entry requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to Costa Rica. Information could change, so students should consult <https://cr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/> for any updates.

WHERE TO MEET THE PROGRAM STAFF

The Office of Study Abroad & International Programs will forward your flight arrival information to our partners at ICADS who will arrange for your pick-up at the San José airport. You will be picked up by a trusted ICADS driver who will be holding an ICADS sign. Further details about where to meet the driver and who to contact if your flight is delayed will be emailed to students about a week before they leave for Costa Rica.

VISITORS AND INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

The details of your class syllabus, exam schedule, or the final schedule for your program will be given to you during your on-site orientation or the first day of classes. It is crucial that you **do not** plan visitors or independent travel until you receive the schedule during orientation and check with your program director.

BEFORE YOU GO

CLOTHING, MEDICINE, AND MISCELLANEOUS

What you bring is an individual matter. It depends upon what you may want to buy in Costa Rica, how much you want to carry (the lighter the better), and what you plan to do during your semester. Everything you might need is available in Costa Rica, but you may not have access to your favorite brands. We suggest you come **as light as possible** and buy anything else you need in Costa Rica. Traveling becomes much more enjoyable if the weight of your bag is less. Whether you bring it with you or buy it, the following items are suggested:

The San José area can be cooler, especially at night and during heavy rains. The weather at the Firestone Center can be hot, humid, and wet. The dry season in Costa Rica runs from January through May, and the rainy season lasts from May to November and December.

CLOTHING

- Long cotton **pants** or light-weight pants, 2 pairs of **lightweight field pants** (Jeans will NOT dry.), 1 pair of **dress pants**
- 1 or 2 **dresses**
- 2 or 3 **skirts/shorts**
- Shirts**, including long-sleeved and at least 3 **T-shirts** and collared **sports shirts**.
- Underwear**
 - Socks and sock liners** Bring plenty they will NOT dry (wool socks for hiking are better than cotton)
- Walking shoes** that wear well in the rain.
- You **MUST bring boots** to Costa Rica Comfortable, lightweight hiking boots with ankle coverage or rubber boots e.g., Wellingtons – See below under FCRE Field Equipment
- Rash guard** - fitted, spandex top that protects you from the sun and other elements.
- Sandals** or shoes for dancing
- Sweater or fleece**
- Jacket** (preferably with a hood)
- Raingear** -Lightweight breathable raincoat that packs small is ideal. – See below under FCRE Field Equipment
- Hat** You may want to include netting to cover your face
- Shorts** for the beach
- Bathing suit**
- Slippers** to wear around your host family's home
- Pajamas**
- Flip flops** or slippers for the shower and beach
- Bandana**
- Bug spray (with 20% DEET (not the aerosol kind, or you will have airport problems))**
- Reef-safe sunscreen (you can get more when abroad, but it is more expensive)**
- Personal toiletries**
- Small personal first-aid kit (including basics like non-drowsy nausea medication, Imodium, Benadryl, Tylenol/Advil, blister treatment, oral rehydration packets, antibiotic ointment, antihistamine cream, etc.)**

Optional but encouraged.

- Snorkel gear (mask, snorkel fins). Gear will be supplied but your own may be more comfortable.**

- Waterproof digital camera (Fujifilm sells one for about \$200)**
- Waterproof laptop sleeve with silica packets. Silicon sleeves run about \$30 on Amazon.**
- Small towel, bath towel, washcloth, and small scrub brush. Ultralight backpacking towels are useful.**
- Glasses**
- Sunglasses**
- Whistle For emergencies. Always keep it in your field pack.**
- Waterproof notebook and pencil for taking notes and data in wet conditions.**
- You will need a hard-cover notebook to transcribe your data into. Bring a couple of soft-lead, cheap mechanical pencils for the field notebook.**
- Headlight (with red and white lights) and small flashlight - See below under FCRE Field Equipment**
- Mini flashlight - headlight style preferred. Pick a flashlight that takes AA batteries.**
- Batteries for your camera, alarm clock, flashlight, etc. Consider buying rechargeable AAs and a charger.**
- Notepaper (for taking lecture notes), pens, mechanical pencils.**
- Stationary, book for a personal journal**
- One or two one-quart plastic water bottles for carrying purified water**
- Box of quart-sized resealable plastic bags The resealable plastic bag is the greatest invention for tropical life in the past 100 years. Bring plenty of multiple sizes – you will use them to keep moisture away from everything from cameras to clothes.**
- Mosquito net (optional)**
- USB memory stick - required for transferring files between computers.**
- Waterproof bags for phones and laptops**

TOILETRIES

You will need items like those you would use in the States (e.g., soap, razors, nail clippers, lip balm, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, comb and brush, shampoo, etc.). Most items are available in Costa Rica, but tend to be more expensive, and if you are attached to a particular brand of deodorant, for example, you should bring it with you. Note: you should not pack razors or any other potential weapon like accessories in carry-on luggage.

MEDICINES

- Bring **prescription medicines** in their original containers and copies of your prescriptions. You may also wish to bring a physician's note explaining the need for the medication. **We strongly recommend bringing enough medication for the entire semester.** Shipping may be unreliable. Some medications may not be available even with a local physician's prescription. Be aware that some medicines are controlled substances and may be illegal in some countries. Refer to the section on Traveling with Medication.
- Bring any special **contact lens solutions** that you may use.
- If you have **asthma or other allergies**, bring a six-week supply of meds for that also; some peoples' symptoms are especially strong in Costa Rica

We also recommend you bring the following:

- ❑ **Vitamins, cold and anti-diarrhea medicine, oral rehydration packets**
- ❑ **Sunscreen**
- ❑ **Personal first aid items** The FCRE maintains several first aid kits on site. However, it is a good idea to put a few band-aids in your pack, and you may want to bring items such as aspirin or Tylenol, Imodium (anti-diarrhea), Benadryl (anti-inflammatory), antibiotic ointment, antihistamine cream, etc. to keep at the dorm.

FCRE FIELD EQUIPMENT

Rain Gear

Expensive rain jackets are not needed, and usually too warm. A cheap poncho will suffice but you can find lightweight breathable travel rain jackets that will be more comfortable. Bear in mind that you may only have access to laundry facilities a couple of times a week, and that wet clothes generally do not dry in the near 100% humidity. So, you will need multiple changes of tee shirts and field pants. Jeans will not suffice – you will never be able to dry them, and they will get moldy in a few days. Get yourself a couple of pairs of lightweight field pants – the kind with zip-off lower legs are popular (discount stores offer these for a third of the price than the fancy ones at REI, etc.). Umbrellas are also useful when working in the rain.

Boots (Hiking boots are required - Rubber boots are optional)

You will be hiking steep, muddy trails. All students should bring hiking boots with ankle coverage. In addition, at the FCRE everyone will wear snake protection. For snakes, you have three options: Wellington (“rubber”) boots (available at the FCRE); snake boots or hiking boots only if they have ankle coverage. If you choose to wear hiking boots, get cheap, lightweight ones - you will need to wear snake gaiters with them, which will be provided by the FCRE. Regardless of what you choose, make sure they are comfortable – break them in before you arrive at the FCRE!

Hiking Boots



Snake Boot



Rubber Boot



waist bag



Packs

You are going to need a way to carry water, a notebook, and various bits of safety equipment. Cheap “butt pack” has generally found favor at the FCRE. Go for a decent capacity.

Lights

We require that you keep a light with you when working in the Reserve. A water-resistant headlight is a “must” as it keeps your hands free. Headlights vary in price enormously; get an LED light that uses AA cells (rather than AAA’s or expensive lithium cells). Some are AA and rechargeable. The program strongly recommends getting two lights; one (for serious

illumination) and one small one that stays permanently in your butt pack for emergencies. Headlamps should have both red and white lights. White lights will blind some animals at night.



BAGGAGE

- One **suitcase** for checking onto the plane (We recommend something with wheels, or a backpack for easy transport)
- Money belt** – for around the waist or neck
- Day pack** or duffle bag (may also be used as a carry on)



Check the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website for current regulations about prohibited and permitted items for carry-on luggage and checked baggage. <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items>

LAPTOPS

Students should bring a laptop to complete assignments during the program. The Firestone Center provides wireless service between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in support of students and faculty using their laptops. You should note that the wireless service may not be consistent because of power outages in the area. Its strength is also not as powerful as networks you may be used to, so you should moderate Internet usage among yourselves. An Internet café is available in Dominical for personal Internet use. Due to the high humidity in Costa Rica, bring an extra-large resealable plastic bag to keep your laptop dry. Be sure to bring an adapter plug.

GIFTS

It is always nice to bring two different gifts, one for each of your host families. Pictures of yourself, your own family and your home would be appreciated. Picture books of your state or country would also be a good idea. T-shirts and sweatshirts from home, nice stationary sets, colored pens, calendars, crayons, small toys or games for kids, perfume, mugs, scarves, earrings, kitchen towels, or a souvenir from your hometown are all possibilities. An effective strategy is to bring one gift of a food item (nuts, candies) for your entire family and then wait until you are settled in to purchase inexpensive gifts locally (cloth, notebooks, food supplies, etc.) home, according to the interests and needs of family members.

Alumni suggested Nalgene water bottles, Frisbees, headlamps, and small (travel-size) lotions/cosmetic items as gifts.

MONEY MATTERS

Costa Rica's currency is the Colón ₡ (CR₡). Refer to <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/> for current exchange rates.

Most students spend the same amount of money (or slightly less) in Costa Rica as they would during a semester in the US. How much you spend will be determined by 1) whether you bring everything from home or buy items in Costa Rica, 2) your plans for field trips and independent travel before and after the program, and 3) any gifts or souvenirs you wish to buy. **In any event, we strongly recommend that you have access to US \$1000.00 to cover personal and emergency expenses.** For additional information review the [Financial Matters](#) section of the website.

ATMs

ATM cards with the Cirrus and Star symbols are accepted in Costa Rica. Your bank will usually charge you a small fee for withdrawing funds from an international ATM, but this is a good way to transfer funds to Costa Rica.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are also accepted in Costa Rica and can be very handy in case of emergency. MasterCard and Visa are best. In parts of the world, credit cards are usually chip and pin which is different from the chip and signature cards in the US. There are locations and businesses that may only accept chip and pin cards. ICADS has informed us that "It is **IMPERATIVE** that you bring a major credit card" because normally one must present one to pay a deposit before admittance to any hospital in Costa Rica. Be sure to leave your card number and the 'Lost or Stolen' phone number at home. In the unlikely event that your credit card is lost or stolen while abroad, this information will help to cancel your card quickly.

Please be sure to notify your bank that you will be using your ATM/Credit Card abroad.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

The **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** provide up-to-date health information on their websites at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm> and <http://www.who.int/ith>. Also review the additional information in the [Health and Safety](#) section of the website.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Costa Rica does not currently require any certificate of immunizations for entry into the country, but other countries along your route may. For this reason, and for your own records, you should have an official record of all your immunizations from your doctor or health clinic. **Contact your doctor or local county health clinic** to set up a schedule for your shots. Some immunizations come in a series that may take weeks or even months to complete. All the immunizations recommended below afford partial or full protection against diseases that still occur in Costa Rica or Panama. Without up-to-date immunization, any of these diseases could have serious, potentially life-threatening consequences. **Please take these recommendations very seriously.**

Typhoid

This vaccination, in either the oral or the injectable form is **highly recommended**.

Hepatitis A

Infectious Hepatitis (Type A) is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted primarily by the fecal-oral route via water or contaminated food. The **Hepatitis A vaccine (Havrix)** is **highly recommended for all students on the Pitzer College in Costa**

Rica program. The first dose provides adequate protection beginning four weeks after it is administered and lasting six to 12 months. Another dose is recommended six to 12 months after the first to provide long-term protection that will last for at least four years and maybe (as research results come in) much longer. A simultaneous dose of immune globulin is necessary *only* if you travel to a high-risk area *less* than four weeks after your initial dose of the Hepatitis A vaccine, before it becomes completely effective. The best course of action is to get both doses of the Hepatitis A vaccine before you leave. If this is not possible, it makes sense to get your first dose exactly one month before you go abroad to assure adequate protection from the time you arrive until the end of your program, without having to take IG. For persons who are allergic to the Hepatitis vaccine or otherwise elect not to receive it, immune globulin (5cc's) is still a viable option. You should get 5cc's of immune globulin just a few days before you leave the US to assure maximum effectiveness and coverage for your entire trip (up to four months). There is some concern that taking immune globulin for Hepatitis A at the same time or too close to some of your other immunizations may reduce their effectiveness. For this reason, if you elect to get IG rather than the Hepatitis A vaccine, we suggest that you complete all your other immunizations at least one month before the beginning of your program, and then take your immune globulin just a few days before departure.

Malaria

Malaria is a serious, potentially fatal disease that occurs in parts of Costa Rica and other areas of Central America. It is spread by the bite of an Anopheles mosquito infected with the parasite. Malaria-carrying mosquitos are usually found in hot, humid lowland areas and are nocturnal – coming out at dusk and disappearing once the sun comes up. There is no vaccine for malaria so drug prophylaxis and protective measures against mosquito bites are highly recommended for all students who will be in a malarial area during the evening, night, or early morning hours.

Fortunately, the risk of malaria in San José, the city of Alajuela and other areas in the Central highlands of Costa Rica is extremely low or non-existent and prophylaxis is not considered necessary. During the final three months of the program at the Firestone Center the risk is somewhat higher (since the elevation is lower) but still considered low, and most students, staff and visitors choose not to take a Malaria prophylaxis. However, prophylaxis is recommended for the study trip to Panama since malaria transmission is known to occur in Bocas Del Toro where we conduct the marine ecology course. Pitzer strongly encourages each student to carefully consider the malaria information provided by the **Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/index.html>** and consult with their personal physician to develop a preventative plan that works for them. When staying in an area that has significant risk for malaria, students should take an appropriate malaria prophylaxis as directed by their physician, sleep in well screened rooms or under a mosquitos Rica net, and make sure to wear protective clothing (long pants and sleeves) and use a mosquitos repellent recommended by the CDC (see below).

Polio and Diphtheria-Tetanus

As a general precaution, we **highly recommend** that you update these and any other childhood immunizations for which you have not received a booster in the last five years.

Cholera

A shot is only **recommended** for those with compromised gastric conditions such as ulcers, but **optional** for others due to the very low chance of contracting this disease, and serious doubts about the effectiveness of the vaccination.

Yellow Fever

This is a viral infection, which, like malaria, is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. Symptoms range from fever, chills, headache, and vomiting to jaundice and kidney failure. There is no specific drug to treat an infection of yellow fever. Prevention, therefore, (including standard precautions for preventing exposure to mosquitos, and vaccination) is very important. According to the latest CDC information, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/costa->

[rica?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-001](#) Yellow fever is not present in Costa Rica or in the area of Panama where we take our study trip and as such, Pitzer does not recommend this vaccination. However, Yellow Fever is present in areas of Panama east of the Panama Canal. If you plan to travel to other areas of Central America that are considered at risk for Yellow Fever transmission before or after the program or visit countries that may require a vaccination certificate for any traveler who has been to Panama, you probably should get the vaccination and carry proper certification with you. To meet international vaccination requirements, yellow fever vaccines must be manufactured under approval by the World Health Organization and administered at an approved yellow fever vaccination center. Authorized US vaccination centers can be identified by contacting state or local health departments or by visiting CDC's Travelers' Health website, where there is a listing of current authorized yellow fever vaccination providers in the United States.

Hepatitis B

This type of hepatitis is transmitted through body fluids such as blood and semen and is a much more serious form of the disease than type A (above). While there are compelling cultural, health, and legal reasons for avoiding sexual contact or intravenous drug use in Costa Rica, the need for an emergency blood transfusion is possible for anyone and this vaccination **should be seriously considered** in consultation with your doctor. Three shots are necessary for full protection although partial immunity is acquired after the first two, which are administered one month apart. The third shot is given six months after the first shot. If you cannot complete the series before you leave, you may consider getting the first two shots before leaving and the third shot after your return to the US or timing the series so that you can get your third shot while you are in San José where it *should be* available.

Meningitis

Meningococcal disease (bacterial meningitis) is a bacterial infection in the lining of the brain or spinal cord, which is transmitted through respiratory droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs on you. There are occasional outbreaks of this disease among college students in the US. Pitzer continues to **highly recommend** a Meningococcal vaccine for students on a study abroad program. Good for one year. (See the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html> for additional information.)

OTHER ILLNESSES OR DISEASES

Zika The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease in adults are fever, rash, joint or muscle pain, weakness, headache, and conjunctivitis (red eye). Usually, these symptoms appear just a few days after being exposed to the virus, are mild, and last from several days to a week. Sometimes they are so mild that the person infected does not realize they may have contracted the disease. The effects of the virus on pregnant women and their fetus, however, can be much more severe and there is conclusive evidence that the virus can cause microcephaly in the fetus and other poor pregnancy outcomes. There is also strong evidence that Zika is occasionally related to a rare nervous disorder called Guillain – Barre syndrome, which can cause paralysis or death.

Chikungunya and **Dengue Fever** are two other serious diseases spread by mosquitos that occur in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. There are no vaccinations for these diseases so the best way to minimize the risk is to protect yourself from mosquito bites. The following advice is provided by the CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/prevention/index.html>.

How to reduce your risk of dengue infection:

The best way to reduce mosquitos is to eliminate the places where the mosquitos lay their eggs, like artificial containers that hold water in and around the home. Outdoors, clean water containers like pet and animal watering containers, flower planter dishes or cover water storage barrels. Look for standing water indoors such as in vases with fresh flowers and clean at least once a week.

Adult mosquitos like to bite inside as well as around homes, during the day and at night when the lights are on. To protect yourself, use repellent on your skin while indoors or out. When possible, wear long sleeves and pants for additional protection. Also, make sure window and door screens are secure and without holes. If available, use air conditioning.

You may also want to sleep under a mosquito bed net.

List of repellent products approved by the EPA: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>

Follow these steps to reduce the chances that you will be bitten by mosquitos during your trip.

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent as directed.
- Higher percentages of active ingredients provide longer protection. Use products with the following active ingredients:
 - **DEET** (Products containing DEET include Off!, Cutter, Sawyer, and Ultrathon)
 - **Picaridin** (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin products containing picaridin include Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus, and Autan [outside the US])
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD** (Products containing OLE include Repel and Off! Botanicals)
 - **IR3535** (Products containing IR3535 include Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition and SkinSmart)
- Always follow product directions and reapply as directed:
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.
- Follow package directions when applying repellent on children. Avoid applying repellent to their hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. See the product information to find out how long the protection will last.
- If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully.
- Do **not** use permethrin directly on skin.
- Use [permethrin-treated](#) clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself:
- Stay and sleep in screened or air-conditioned rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors

Rabies

If you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through work or recreation, a rabies vaccination is recommended.

PREVENTING GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS

Basic health guidelines are to be followed faithfully while abroad in Central America where the risk for water and food-borne disease can be significant. Travelers' diarrhea can occur so having Imodium on hand, or even ciprofloxacin from your doctor is recommended.

WATER

If there is any doubt about whether tap water is safe in a particular area:

- Drink only boiled or bottled water.
 - If boiled, make sure the water is poured into a clean container after boiling (not poured into a pitcher or glass that has been rinsed with tap water).

- If bottled, make sure it is from a reputable company and comes in a properly sealed bottle.
- Besides your drinking water, avoid other sources of contaminated water including ice cubes, fruit drinks mixed with water, any other food products or drinks that are mixed with water.
- Avoid wet plates, cups, glasses, and utensils. Make sure your food and drink are served on clean and dry plates, cups, etc.
- Use boiled or bottled water for brushing teeth and try not to swallow water when you shower.
- When ordering a drink at a restaurant or bar, ask that the original bottle be brought to your table and opened in front of you. Then, you can pour it into a clean, dry glass, or (in the case of soft drinks or beers) drink straight from the bottle if necessary. This minimizes the chance that your drink might be poured into a glass that has just been rinsed in tap water. This also minimizes the chance that your drink can be tampered with drugs.
- Avoid mixed alcoholic drinks (often juices, water, ice, raw herbs, or other unsafe items mixed in) in favor of beer, wine, and soft drinks.
- Avoid fruit drinks unless you are sure they come in a bottle or container from a reputable company, or have been made with well cleaned fruit and have not had water or ice mixed in.

Unless you are 100% sure, assume all tap and well water to be contaminated. (CDC Recommendations)

SALADS, VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

- Avoid salads, uncooked vegetables, and raw fruit, especially in restaurants.
- You can eat smooth-skinned raw vegetables and fruits if you wash them carefully with soap and water and dry them thoroughly and peel yourself. Items that are OK when cleaned and dried properly include thin-skinned fruits like guava, mango or papaya, and smooth vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers, etc.
- Avoid lettuce; it is difficult to clean properly.
- Thick skinned fruits like bananas and oranges need not be cleaned, but if eaten without cleansing, care must be taken when peeling to not contaminate the inside fruit with fingers or knives that have encountered the outside skin. Even with thick-skinned fruits, washing with soap and water and then drying thoroughly is probably a good idea, especially with oranges.

FLIES

- Avoid food that has been (or may have been) exposed to flies, especially in areas where you have doubts about hygiene and sanitation, or where there are lots of farm animals.

HANDS

- Wash your hands thoroughly (usually for 15-20 seconds) with soap and water and dry them completely, especially before eating and after going to the bathroom. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol) for 15 seconds, but soap and water are preferred.
- Try to eat in restaurants where food preparers and servers practice good hygiene.

FOOD

- Stick with freshly cooked food that is prepared when you order it and served hot.
- Avoid street food unless you are sure it is fresh, wholesome, and cooked properly as you wait.
- As mentioned above, avoid salads.
- Make sure milk products are pasteurized.
- Make sure the meat, fish and seafood are fresh and well cooked.

- Peel hard boiled eggs yourself. Do not eat raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK

If you get sick while in Costa Rica, please contact the program staff as soon as possible. Emergency phone numbers for program staff are listed on the last page of this handbook. Additional emergency numbers (host family, police, etc.) will be provided to students once in San José.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR STAYING HEALTHY

General health precautions for students in Costa Rica will be covered thoroughly during the on-site orientation immediately after arrival in San José. The important thing is to be in control of your own health. Here are the key points to remember for staying healthy:

1. Have a complete physical examination before you go. Be aware of and prevent possible problems. **Let the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs and your program sponsor know if you are on any medications, have any allergies, or any other medical conditions that could possibly require accommodation while you are abroad.** Plan to take adequate supplies of medications and copies of medical prescriptions with you. See the section *Traveling with Medication*.
2. Make sure that your childhood immunizations are complete and up to date. Booster shots for tetanus are required every ten years; it may be time for another.
3. Visit your dentist and have a check-up to ensure that your teeth are in good shape before you leave.
4. Eat well over the break, exercise and get plenty of sleep so that you are rested and fit as you depart, and your body can better fight off disease. Do not exhaust yourself with packing and preparations at the last minute. Plan so that you can make your departure as stress free as possible.
5. On the long flight, bring along a bottle of water and drink plenty of fluids as you travel. Avoid alcoholic beverages. They lead to dehydration. You do not want to arrive in Costa Rica dehydrated, as dehydration exacerbates altitude sickness. Do isometric exercises in your seat and get up to walk up and down the aisle periodically to stretch your muscles. We also recommend that students wear a mask on the flight even though it is no longer required.
6. Follow all guidelines provided by your program about food and drink and personal hygiene. They are making these recommendations for a good reason.
7. Remember that AIDS/HIV infection rates in other regions of the world can be significantly higher than in the US. Practice safe sex, or better yet, abstinence.
8. Beware that the use of recreational drugs is illegal in most places and is not permitted under Pitzer College policies. Additionally, the strength and content of drugs overseas are different than what you may find in the US and may be deadly.
9. **Follow and adhere to all COVID-19 protocols set by your host institution and host country.**

A NOTE ON COVID AND COVID PROTOCOLS

Pitzer College has attempted to set up a **vaccine-to-vaccine study abroad model** in all our sites, including Costa Rica. This model calls for all students to be fully vaccinated (including getting a booster at least two weeks before departure), and for

our key people at each site (program staff, faculty, language schoolteachers, guest speakers, homestays) to be vaccinated. The idea is that we will mitigate the risk of catching a break-through infection and/or spreading the virus by structuring our program as much as possible to have students interacting primarily in environments where most people are vaccinated. Of course, this is not going to be 100% possible in Costa Rica, just as it isn't possible in our surrounding communities here in Claremont and SoCal, or anywhere in the US for that matter, but we believe we can organize the program in Costa Rica to minimize student exposure to unvaccinated people and, of course, have strong protocols in place for social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing etc.

Vaccinations:

A large percentage of the population in Costa Rica are fully vaccinated.

Testing:

There are many places in Costa Rica where students can get the PCR tests and rapid antigen tests. The program will facilitate testing for students as needed.

Quarantine:

During the program, if a student tests positive, the student will quarantine at their host family's home, with all the protocols. All the host families have internet so a student in quarantine will be able to keep up with their classwork. If a host family member tests positive, we will follow guidelines for quarantine and testing to assure the student is not positive or capable of spreading the virus outside the host family.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP SAFE - GENERAL GUIDELINES

You can have a major impact on your own health and safety through the decisions you make before and during your semester abroad. The most important assurance of your safety is the consistent application of informed judgment in your day-to-day choices and behaviors. Program staff will provide excellent guidance and accurate information.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COSTA RICA

- Reduce the risk of robbery or assault by integrating into the local culture as much as possible: spend significant time with your host family; dress, behave, and interact in ways that respect local cultural values.
- Do not carry valuables (passport, credit cards, laptops, large sums of money, etc.) with you when you walk around town. If you must carry valuables around with you for certain purposes, be discreet, travel with a group of friends, wear a money belt, take an authorized taxi, etc.
- When you exchange at an ATM, use discretion. Do not, for instance, exchange money and walk away into a mall or street. That will make you a likely target. Try to go with friends and leave in a taxi.
- Do not travel alone, especially after dark, in isolated areas of the city, or when leaving clubs or bars.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Bicycle riding in Costa Rica is not permitted.
- If it is getting late at night, and the streets are becoming deserted, take a taxi home, even if you are with friends. If taking a taxi is a financial burden, collect the receipt and Pitzer will reimburse you.

- If you are involved in a robbery, do not risk injury by trying to resist or fight off the perpetrator.
- Always carry a list of emergency phone numbers with you so that you can contact the program staff at the office or at home in case of an emergency.
- Avoid areas of the country or your host community not considered safe. Your host family will provide valuable advice in this regard. Program staff will also provide guidelines on this.
- Avoid large crowds, demonstrations, or political rallies. These gatherings can easily turn violent.
- If you do go to a club or bar, do so with a group of fellow students or friends from the host community. Keep an eye on each other. Never, ever accept a ride home with a stranger or someone you just met that evening, and never allow one of your friends to leave with a stranger.
- When ordering drinks, ask for the bottle to be brought to your table. Do not leave drinks unattended.
- Refrain from impairing your judgment, and risking assault, robbery, or arrest, with the use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Stay in regular contact with program staff when you travel. You must receive permission from the program director for independent (overnight) travel away from your host family. When traveling on an overnight trip or even outside the local area on a long day trip, provide your itinerary and contact information for your destination. Let your host families know of any plans for overnight travel and make a courtesy phone call to your host family once you safely arrive at your destination.
- If you go to the beach, be aware of dangerous currents and riptides. Follow water safety guidelines – refrain from going into heavy surf unless you are an extremely experienced ocean swimmer or surfer. Always enter the water with a buddy and only swim or surf on beaches that have a lifeguard on duty.
- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Use the program addresses:

ICADS:

Curridabat, del Indoor Club 50 m oeste, 100 m norte, casa #7 color ladrillo, COSTA RICA, América Central

The Firestone Center:

Del Super Baru 600 metros al oeste, sobre la carretera que va a Dominical, segundo portón de bambú a mano derecha, Barú de Savegre, COSTA RICA, América Central

The program director/ICADS will provide additional safety guidelines for you during the on-site orientation. Understand and faithfully follow the program guidelines for health and safety, including guidelines for extreme sports and prohibited activities.

INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Each student is responsible for obtaining a policy that will provide comprehensive health coverage and emergency medical and accident coverage both in the US and abroad for the duration of their program. Students may need to return to the US unexpectedly.

Regardless of what type of insurance you have, you will usually have to pay cash upfront at clinics and hospitals abroad, collect the receipts for all expenses and submit them to your insurance company for reimbursement.

The insurance policy available to you through your school may provide adequate coverage abroad, but it is your responsibility to call the company to discuss the specifics of your study abroad program to ensure that you will indeed be covered.

TRAVEL INSURANCE PROVIDED BY PITZER COLLEGE

Pitzer students and visiting students in Pitzer programs are covered by supplemental travel insurance available through a plan with Zurich. This plan is offered by the Claremont Colleges and coverage is automatic. Students do not need to enroll themselves. This travel insurance is for accident and emergency care overseas and should not be confused with SHIP (Student Health Insurance Program). While this insurance will cover a variety of medical emergencies abroad, it does not cover routine or ongoing medical care/treatment a student may need during their program. For this reason, we strongly advise students to maintain their comprehensive medical insurance in the event they would need to return to the US (or another home country) or need ongoing care/treatment while abroad.

A copy of the insurance letter, plan brochure, ID document, and medical claim reimbursement form will be uploaded to your study abroad application portal. Please familiarize yourself with the benefits outlined in the brochure.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT YOUR PROGRAM SITE

Contact the program staff as soon as possible. You will be given a list of emergency contact numbers during your on-site orientation or prior to your departure for Costa Rica. While you are certainly free to contact your parents and families in any emergency, and indeed you should, please **inform the program staff first** since they can address your concerns immediately. Calling home only delays the process of intervention and may put undue stress on families who feel as though they are unable to help their child abroad.

Pitzer provides supplemental travel insurance, which includes insurance to cover emergency evacuations. In the event of a political crisis or a natural disaster that would necessitate evacuation, the program staff will work closely with the US Embassy and other embassies (if you are not a US citizen) to facilitate your return home.

Provide your personal contact information abroad to your family and friends. Your family should also be advised to contact the Pitzer College staff members listed in the information our office will provide you before you leave for Costa Rica.

True emergencies are quite rare. While losing luggage, tickets or even a passport is inconvenient and upsetting, it is not an emergency. Emergencies are situations in which there is an immediate threat to a student's health or safety.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT HOME - FAMILY AND FRIENDS

In case of emergency, parents or friends should contact the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs at the number(s) listed below. The Study Abroad staff in Claremont can usually contact students and staff quickly, even when they are away from the program base on study trips. If they call the office number and we are closed, they will be directed to Campus Safety, which has additional contact information on file. Please have them continue down the list until they can speak directly with a member of our staff.

CONTACT INFORMATION IN CLAREMONT

Pitzer College

Phone 909.621.8104

Office of Study Abroad & International Programs

Email studyabroad@pitzer.edu

Mailing address

West Hall, Suite Q100
1050 North Mills Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711

Office hours

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Hours will vary during holiday periods

Campus Safety for after-hours emergencies

909.621.8170

COMMUNICATIONS

WAYS TO MAKE CONTACT WHILE ABROAD

WhatsApp is commonly used in-country as well as to reach family and friends at home. We recommend that you download the app if you don't already have this on your phone. Students may also communicate in other ways – Email, Skype, FaceTime or calling.

MOBILE PHONES

You may bring your own mobile phone and purchase a local SIM card once in the country. If you do this, you must have your phone **unlocked** in the US or your home country. If your own phone does not work once in Costa Rica (sometimes the case), the program will provide you with a mobile phone. The program mobile phones allow students to send and receive text messages and to make and receive calls. If you want to have internet access to use instant messaging, you will have to use your own phone in which case you may want to increase your data plan. Whether you use a program mobile phone or your own, you will be responsible for keeping a working mobile phone (charged, paid up, and ready to use in an emergency) on your person throughout the program.

Pitzer expects all students to use mobile phones in ways that are appropriate and responsible. In particular, mobile phones should be turned off (including texting) during classes, program discussion sessions, and study trips when interacting with program staff, faculty, or guest speakers. In addition, students need to learn and practice appropriate mobile phone use in their homestays. For some families it may be considered rude, for instance, to make or receive calls or text messages during a family meal or while engaged in conversation after dinner.

MAILING TO COSTA RICA

Given the nature of the program and the movement from San José to the Firestone Center, we do not recommend that students have anything mailed to them while they are abroad. If, however, you must have something shipped to you, please email studyabroad@pitzer.edu and we will provide you with an appropriate address and contact number.