Program: UW Tropical Horticulture in Costa Rica, Winter

Michelle’s Major: Biology

Academic Life: The class I took in Costa Rica focused on observing tropical horticulture through small sustainable farms, organic coffee farms, and big plantations. We had student-led discussions at dinner to touch on everything we observed and how it related to the class we took on campus (Tropical Horticulture 374) in the fall. I went to Costa Rica with seven other students from my class and we all embarked on these tours led by Costa Ricans, along with three professors from the Tropical Horticulture department at UW-Madison.

Housing: My program was super cool because we never stayed in one location for too long. We started in San Jose, stayed a couple nights at a beautiful hotel which looked much like a bed and breakfast, and from there we continued to stay at different hotels/cabinas for a couple nights at a time in different cities. One of the cabinas we stayed at was in La Selva. La Selva was located in the middle of the rainforest and our cabinas looked like cabins you stayed at during camp. Our toilet was outside, which took a little adjusting, and the bugs were crazy there, but in all it was an extremely beautiful and unique experience. Before every rainfall you could hear (and sometimes see) the howler monkeys in the trees.

Study Abroad and Future Career Aspirations: I hope that in my future career I will be able to travel to other countries for my job. I’ve begun to look at jobs such as a traveling nurse and teaching English in other countries because I’ve fallen in love with exploring new places and meeting new people, and this is simply because of my study abroad program and the curiosity it has created in me.

Michelle’s Advice for Someone Considering this Program: This program is a great choice! You can’t go wrong with picking this program for study abroad. The two weeks are packed with exploring and learning but also just the right amount of free time for you to come back to the United States with some of the best memories you’ll ever have.

“Study abroad has opened my eyes to what else is out there in this big, beautiful world.”

Michelle (closest to camera) soaking in the mountain views with friends.