SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

JESSICA KANTER

Program: UW Tropical Horticulture in Costa Rica, Winter

Jessica’s Majors: Biology; Certificates in Environmental Studies and Global Health

Academic Life: Because this program was a field study, we were always on the move visiting different sites. The learning was very experiential and hands-on. Our guides taught us a lot as we went along to different sites, and we learned a lot about horticulture production at various farms, co-ops, plantations, and markets. Each night before dinner we would have group discussions to reflect on what we learned that day.

Memorable Moments: We had the opportunity to visit a cacao plantation and participate in the production of chocolate from the time the cacao fruit was picked all the way to its edible form - and we were able to eat A LOT of chocolate. I also really enjoyed our hike through the rain forest. It was amazing to see all of biodiversity, and I had never been in such thick vegetation before.

New Perspectives: I feel that my ideas of food production were challenged and have expanded. I now have a much greater appreciation for where my food comes from. I have a better sense of what it means to be a conscious consumer, and I value the food I eat a lot more now. I have always been interested in sustainable food systems, and this program affirmed that for me. It allowed me to see diverse perspectives and change the way I think about what I value.

Benefits of Study Abroad: Getting to experience a different culture of any kind is a great way to learn about what exists outside of our UW-Madison bubble. Experiential learning is the best way to generate ideas and gain long-lasting knowledge on a topic. Meeting so many amazing people with amazing stories is a great way to learn and grow as an individual.

“Experiencing the sustainable initiatives in Costa Rica stimulated ideas for me that could carry over into future careers.”

Jessica, a big fan of the Rainbow Eucalyptus trees in Arenal Volcano National Park.