

MENLO ABROAD

A graphic featuring a stylized globe with green continents and blue oceans, set within a yellow circle. A blue location pin is positioned above the globe, and a blue paper airplane is positioned to the right of the globe. A dotted blue line curves from the bottom of the globe towards the paper airplane.

Costa Rica



May 20-June 9, 2024



Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica

May 20-June 9, 2024



IN BRIEF

Menlo Abroad offers transformative experiences through guided immersive travel in the global South. Emphasizing relationship-building through homestay and community engagement, students develop knowledge, skills, and a greater understanding of themselves and their world. They emerge with a renewed sense of purpose and a desire to serve.¹



Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica is developed and offered in coordination with World Leadership School.

Dates: May 20-June 9, 2024

(Note that participants will be out of the country and unable to return for Commencement or related activities. June 9 is a required day of reflection and celebration on the Menlo campus.)

Enrollment Limits: 16 students

Enrollment Eligibility: Menlo students in grades 9-11. We are not requiring pre-testing but reserve the right to change that to requiring pre testing if Covid numbers are higher at departure time. For medical questions or exemption requests contact the Menlo's school nurse.²

Trip Leaders: There will be two Menlo-affiliated trip leaders: Upper School Spanish teacher Justin Carunchia and Upper School Spanish teacher Jilynnette Centeno and one or two leaders from World Leadership School.

All-Inclusive Fee³: \$6000. Financial aid may be available. Current financial aid recipients should contact Rose Garza (rose.garza@menloschool.org) for information.

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¹ Menlo Abroad is an elective option for MTerm and is considered and assessed as an M Term course. But while other MTerm courses will end May 31, Menlo Abroad courses complete on the evening of June 9, 2024. Menlo Abroad service participation earns students 15 community engagement credits.

² Neither fluency in Spanish language nor enrollment in Spanish language is required.

³ Fee includes all flights • hotel accommodation • all meals • all surface transportation • museum, park, and temple entrance fees • course preparation manual and reading materials • donations to charitable causes in the host country • instructor and extra guide fees • on-site equipment rental where needed • comprehensive risk management systems and administrative support 24/7. The fee does not include trip cancellation insurance or expenses for petty cash expenditures (est. at \$100), baggage fees, travel medicine or immunization or obtaining passports and visas.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Costa Rica is a land of stunning beauty, rainforests in the clouds, weird and wonderful plants and animals, and spectacular diversity. It is a country known for progressive environmentalism and rich history, culture, and traditions. Yet Costa Rica is also a developing country that shares many of the same challenges and blessings of the Global South. Menlo Abroad Costa Rica is an encounter with these contrasts through the lens of a particular area of Costa Rica.

After beginning orientation on the Menlo campus and an overnight flight to the capital city of San Jose, we travel north to the beautiful rural area and community of Chilamaté, where we orient at a local lodge. Over the next three days, we visit nearby community organizations and partners, including an organic farm, a local elementary school, and a nearby collective in the town of San Ramon, which is adjusting to the economic and cultural impacts of a newly opened national park entrance that has brought many new visitors to this formerly isolated town. These three organizations will become the basis for our community engagement for the majority of our trip. After our initial orientation, we move into the main chapter of Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica, namely, an extended homestay in the village of nearby Linda Vista. Here a routine begins: Arranged in pairs, students are hosted by families, depart most mornings for work with community partners, and return each evening for dinner and lodging with the homestay family. On weeknights and weekends, students and homestay families spend extended time together doing various activities such as soccer clinics, a tour of a cacao farm, and a trip to the mountain town of La Fortuna.

For the final chapter, the group departs for a time of reflection and transference activities in a different part of Costa Rica, the beautiful Caribbean Coastal town of Cahuita. They return home for a final re-entry day and celebration on the Menlo campus.



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ITINERARY

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

Monday, May 20 **Menlo Campus (morning) and SFO (night)**

Morning: on Menlo campus for orientation
Afternoon: at home for final preparations for departure
Evening: departure for San Jose, Costa Rica

Tuesday, May 21 **Chilamaté, Costa Rica**

Arrival at SJO, San Jose, Costa Rica
Transit to Chilamaté
Community orientation, welcome dinner, and overnight at Chilamaté Rainforest Eco Retreat (CRER)

Wednesday, May 22 **Chilamaté and El Paraíso**

Rainforest walk
Community Partner with Organic Farm Association, lunch with tortilla-making and traditional dancing, and dinner and lodging at CRER

Thursday, May 23 **Chilamaté and San Ramon**

Morning Community Engagement Rotation:
Organic Farm Association in El Paraíso
Local Elementary School Community Partner
Afternoon waterfall hike at Poza Azul
Stay overnight and eat all meals at CRER

Friday, May 24 **Chilamaté and Linda Vista**

Morning Community Engagement Rotation:
Local Elementary School
Women's Cooperative in San Ramon
Lunch at CRER followed by afternoon preparation for homestays
Transfer to Linda Vista
Welcome dinner and lodging with homestay families

Saturday, May 25 **Linda Vista**

Morning soccer clinic with local community
Lunch and extended check-in at CRER
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Sunday, May 26 **Linda Vista and Chilamaté**

Morning spent at CRER and afternoon chocolate tour in Chilamaté
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Monday, May 27 **Linda Vista, El Paraíso, or San Ramon**

Morning check in and community engagement work—day 1
Women's Cooperative in San Ramon
Organic Farm Association in El Paraíso
Elementary School in Linda Vista
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Tuesday, May 28 **Linda Vista, El Paraíso, or San Ramon**

Morning check in and community engagement work—day 2
Women's Cooperative in San Ramon
Organic Farm Association in El Paraíso
Elementary School in Linda Vista
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family



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ITINERARY (cont.)

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

Wednesday, May 29 Linda Vista, El Paraiso, or San Ramon

Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 3
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Thursday, May 30 Visit to hot springs

Extended debrief and check-in
Day-long retreat to La Fortuna, waterfall hike, and hot springs
Dinner and stay overnight at CRER

Friday, May 31 Chilamaé, Linda Vista, El Paraiso or San Ramon

Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 4
Dinner and overnight with homestay families

Saturday, June 1 Linda Vista (all day)

Morning check-in and soccer clinic with local community
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Sunday, June 2 Linda Vista and La Fortuna

Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 5
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Monday, June 3 Linda Vista, El Paraiso, or San Ramon

Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 6
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Tuesday, June 4 Linda Vista, El Paraiso, or San Ramon

Community Partner visit with Chilamaté Elementary School
Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 7
Community Celebration
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Wednesday, June 5 Transfer to Cahuita

Final farewell to homestay families
Transfer to Cahuita (3 hour drive) with lunch en route
Transference activities
Dining and lodging in Cahuita

Thursday, June 6 Cahuita

Full day walk through Cahuita National Park
Dining and lodging in Cahuita

Friday, June 7 Cahuita

Morning check-in
Transference activities and reflection exercises
Transfer to Adventure Inn in San Jose

Saturday, June 8 Transit to SFO

Sunday, June 9 Menlo Campus

Post-trip activities, project and reflection
Celebratory dinner with parents and guardians.³

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³ Students must attend the final day to receive full credit for the course..



TIMELINE OF APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

January 9	Announcement of Menlo Abroad and Borderlands programs at upper school assembly
January 23	Applications due
February 2	Participants notified
February 9	Forms and Payment due by 3:00 pm
April 23, 6:00 pm	Pre-departure information night (Spieker Theater) for enrolled students and their parents (meeting is mandatory for student and at least one parent)
May 20, 9:00 am	Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica orientation on Menlo campus; evening departure for Costa Rica
May 20-June 8	Costa Rica trip
June 9	Re-entry day on Menlo Campus and completion of final projects, reflections, celebration. ⁴

⁴ Students must attend the final day to receive full credit for the course. The time and nature of the celebration is to be determined.



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PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica is built around interrelated academic and experiential program components intended to create a holistic, immersive experience. Below is a list of these components as they relate to this program.

- 1. Survey of Development Issues:** Our program explores a range of development issues, from resource management and environmental impact to education to market- and community-oriented development. Students learn through their direct experiences, meetings with community members and leaders, and related activities.
- 2. Independent or Small-Group Study:** Menlo students will have the opportunity to investigate—individually or in small groups—a topic of particular interest, availing themselves of local knowledge and resources.
- 3. Language Study:** We do not expect participants to come with language skills, nor to master them. We do expect that students will want to interact with locals as closely as they can. Few things do more to empower participants and to facilitate ease of cultural understanding than frequent use of language and supportive instructors. Each of the instructors is either fluent or comfortable in the Spanish language and will encourage the acquisition of language skills and act as a translator where needed.
- 4. Immersive Travel:** Traveling to traditional communities in developing countries requires students to get out of their comfort zones. In Menlo Abroad, students are travelers rather than tourists. They travel in a style that enables them to genuinely know the people of the countries they visit. For adaptable participants, it offers the most authentic experience and profound learning adventure. Students should expect to cope with cold water showers, basic infrastructure, and pit toilets in the rural areas.
- 5. Homestay:** Often the most challenging and fulfilling component, homestays take students to the core of their experience. Homestays are carefully set up with each student's individual personality in mind in order to provide the best experience in cultural and language immersion possible. In Linda Vista, homestays are coordinated through community leaders. Each student will be placed in a homestay, most likely together with another Menlo student. The cohort will gather most mornings to check in and to engage in group activities.
- 6. Community Engagement:** Students will learn about themselves and each other through their experiences working on community engagement projects of mutual interest and benefit.
- 7. Guided Reflection:** Students will regularly meet with Menlo and WLS leaders to investigate, monitor, problem solve, and reflect on events or issues particular to the individual students. Students will journal and blog frequently to communicate their experience with friends and family back home.

MENLO ABROAD ASPIRATIONS

1. **Knowledge and Global Competency** ⁵: Menlo Abroad programs advance students' self-knowledge and global competencies, including intercultural capabilities, historical perspectives, and attentiveness to diversity. Through direct experience, students develop awareness of global systems and issues impacting their host communities.
2. **Dispositions of Global Engagement** ⁶: Menlo Abroad programs cultivate internationally minded students who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet and strive to create a better and more peaceful world. Among the many positive dispositions they develop are agency, leadership, confidence, empathy, compassion, humility, feelings of interconnection, and respect.
3. **Relationships**: Menlo Abroad programs build sustaining relationships between students and diverse, underserved foreign communities and individuals through shared common experiences of everyday life.
4. **Community Engagement**: Menlo Abroad programs contribute to solutions based on mutually beneficial work, apprenticeship, or study, in activities that at the same time support students' knowledge of, and appreciation for, local cultures and issues at hand.
5. **Transference**: Menlo Abroad programs generate sustaining interest and connections with Menlo curricula and programs.

⁵ *Global competency* includes the ability to investigate the world beyond the immediate environment, the recognition of one's own and other perspectives, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences.

⁶ By *Global engagement*, we mean the dispositions necessary to be connected and of service to others, including those beyond national borders.





Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica



Please contact Peter Brown with any questions at 650.330.2001 ext. 2238 or email pbrown@menloschool.org.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The program is being offered by Menlo School in conjunction with World Leadership School. In cases of programs offered in conjunction with other organizations, participants are expected to complete registration, waivers, and medical forms provided by both Menlo School and the third-party organization.

By February 9: To secure a place in the program each of the following must be submitted.

1. A check payment payable to Menlo School for \$6000. Financial aid recipients will be contacted by the financial aid with a revised program fee.
2. Completed and signed *Parent Permission and Waiver, Medical Release, Emergency and Medical Information Form - Overnight*
3. Completed and signed *Waiver and Release for Program within the United States*
4. Completed and signed Menlo School *Trip Contract*
5. Third party organization forms, waiver and release.

By April 16: Any remaining and required forms.

Equipment lists, air travel instructions, and further information about the program will be provided subsequently.

Our intention is to address the goals and curricular elements listed in the program description, but all participants are advised that course itineraries will likely change to incorporate participant goals and interests, to adjust to the health of members of the group, or in response to weather conditions, problems with transportation, political or social unrest or other unforeseen problems. Regardless of such changes, we will always work to structure and implement the course so that it stays true to the original intent.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Given the uncertainty of conditions at the current time, Menlo encourages participants to consider purchasing travel insurance or trip cancellation insurance policy for the Borderlands trip. Check your primary medical insurance provider to ensure your child will have medical coverage while traveling. If that is in question, travel insurance including medical coverage should be purchased.

If the participant is on financial aid, travel insurance purchases for this trip will be reimbursed at the rate of financial aid.

[Here](#) are some insurance options you might consider. [Academic Explorer Adventure](#) is another option designed especially for school travel and especially this trip. (If you use the Academic Explorer option call the 877 number and ask for Kathy.) But Menlo makes no recommendation regarding these options: please read all policies carefully to ensure that your needs are met.

CANCELED TRIPS: A full refund will be made for canceled trips that arise out of insufficient registration, though Menlo is not responsible for other costs incurred by the student or family preparing for the trip. For trips canceled due to any other circumstance that is beyond Menlo's control, Menlo will refund all recoupable tuition. If Menlo decides to cancel the trip at its own discretion, Menlo will fully refund participants' payments.

REFUND POLICY: If Menlo does not cancel the trip but a participant chooses to withdraw, the participant must inform the Global Programs Director (pbrown@menloschool.org) and the Program Director of (erin@worldleadershipschool.com) in an email communication. Menlo will refund recoupable fees according to the following schedule: By 3/23, 75% refund. No refunds will be given for withdrawal after 3/24 or for participants departing the trip early.

MEDICAL AND EVACUATION EXPENSES: It is the responsibility of the student and the student's family to understand the limits of any medical and evacuation policy, and to provide up-front payment of emergency services when required.

CELL PHONES: In order to maintain the integrity of Borderlands' immersive experience, students will relinquish their cell phones to trip leaders upon entry into the target area. Cell phones will be returned to students when they are in the airport awaiting the return flight home.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS: If a participant acts in a way that is injurious to himself or herself, people of the host community, or other participants on the trip, or generally conducts himself or herself in a way that is disruptive to the trip, we reserve the right to send the participant home without refund or to require parental pickup at the travel site. Underage use of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs are cause for dismissal. Participants sent home early or who choose to return for any reason, including sickness, personal emergencies or injury, will be responsible for all medical costs and will absorb travel and related costs associated with an unscheduled departure.

*Recoupable fees do not include airline fees and deposits Menlo pays to travel organization on the student's behalf.

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READ THIS DESCRIPTION CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING FORMS.