

MENLO ABROAD



Costa Rica



May 22-June 11, 2023



Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica

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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 22-June 11 2023

(Note that participants will be out of the country and unable to return for Commencement or related activities. June 11 is a required day of reflection and celebration on the Menlo campus.)

Enrollment Limits: 16 students

Enrollment Eligibility: Menlo students in grades 9-11. To ensure the safety of all travelers and visited communities, all participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. For medical questions or exemption requests contact the Menlo's school nurse.²

Trip Leaders: There will be four trip leaders: Upper School Spanish teacher Justin Carunchia, Menlo Abroad alum Ella Marks '21, Spanish teacher living in Costa Rica Lucia Brown, and one or two leaders from World Leadership School.

All-Inclusive Fee³: \$5000. Financial aid may be available. Current financial aid recipients should contact Rose Garza (rose.garza@menloschool.org) for information.

Menlo Abroad service participation earns students 15 community engagement credits.

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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 June 2, Menlo Abroad courses complete on the evening of June 11, 2023. 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), 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 all of these characteristics of an unfamiliar country through the lens of a particular area of Costa Rica.

After 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, then, 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, 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 Manuel Antonio National Park. 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 22 **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 23 **Chilamaté, Costa Rica**

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

Wednesday, May 24 **Chilamaté and El Paraíso**

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

Thursday, May 25 **Chilamaté and San Ramon**

Community Partner visit with Women's Cooperative
Lunch at La Loma, rainforest hike, all meals and lodging at CRER

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

Community Partner visit with Chilamaté Elementary School
Lunch at CRER followed by afternoon preparation for homestays
Transfer to Linda Vista
Welcome dinner and lodging with homestay families

Saturday, May 27 **Linda Vista**

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

Sunday, May 28 **Linda Vista and Chilamaté**

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

Monday, May 29 **Linda Vista, El Paraíso, or San Ramon**

Check-in and student selected community partner work—day 1
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Tuesday, May 30 **Linda Vista, El Paraíso, or San Ramon**

Morning check-in and student selected community partner work—day 2
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family

Wednesday, May 31 **Linda Vista, El Paraíso, or San Ramon**

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

Thursday, June 1 **Visit to hot springs**

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

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



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ITINERARY (cont.)

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

- Friday, June 2** **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 3** **Linda Vista (all day)**
Morning check-in and soccer clinic with local community
All meals and overnight stay with homestay family
- Sunday, June 4** **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 5** **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 6** **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 7** **Transfer to Manuel Antonio National Park**
Morning check-in
Transfer to Manuel Antonio National Park (5 hour drive)
Eat and stay at Hotel Manuel Antonio
- Thursday, June 8** **Manuel Antonio National Park**
Hike to beach followed by transference activities
Eat and stay at Hotel Manuel Antonio
- Friday, June 9** **Manuel Antonio National Park**
Morning check-in and extended debrief
Transference activities and reflection exercises
- Saturday, June 10** **Transit to SFO**
- Sunday, June 11** **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 6	Announcement of Menlo Abroad and Borderlands programs at upper school assembly
January 24	Applications due
February 3	Participants notified
February 10	Forms and Payment due by 3:00 pm
April 25, 6:00 pm	Pre-departure information night (Martin Family Hall) for enrolled students and their parents (meeting is mandatory for student and at least one parent)
May 22	Menlo Abroad: Costa Rica begins on Menlo campus
May 22-June 10	Costa Rica trip
June 11	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.





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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

READ THIS DESCRIPTION CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING FORMS.

This 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 10 To secure a place in the program, each of the following must be submitted.

1. A check payment payable to Menlo School for **\$5000**. Financial aid recipients will be contacted by the financial aid office 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 Foreign Program*
4. Completed and signed *Menlo School Trip Contract*
5. Copy of the participating student's current passport with visa stamp, if possible. The passport must have one blank pages] and expire after June 10, 2023. If participant does not have a current passport or visa, these need to be obtained and copies submitted by April 18
6. A signed and notarized *Parent Authorization Letter for Minor Traveller*. If necessary, this can be submitted on April 18.

By April 18: Any remaining and required forms

Our intention is to address the goals and program 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 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 the purchase of a travel insurance or trip cancellation insurance policy for Menlo Abroad / Borderlands trips. Check your primary medical insurance provider to assure 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 insure that your needs are met.

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 Executive Director of the World Leadership School (erin@worldleadershipschool.com) in an email communication of intent to withdraw from the program. If communication is received two months or more prior to departure, Menlo will refund half the program fee plus all recoupable fees for air travel minus a \$1,000 non-refundable application-processing charge. If notice of cancellation is received less than two months prior to departure, the participant will forfeit the entire program fee. Any participant who returns home early will not receive a refund.

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 the immersive experience Menlo Abroad requires students to relinquish cell phones to trip leaders upon entry into the target country.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS: If a participant acts in a way that is injurious to himself or herself, people of the host country, 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. 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.

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.

Interested in applying? [Apply online today!](#)