

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION TRIP TO COSTA RICA, JUNE 2012



WHO All Presbyterian Church members and their families are welcome to participate

WHAT Oak Hills Presbyterian Mission Trip to Costa Rica (Open to all Presbyterian churches)

WHEN Trip Dates: June 16th – 27th, 2012 (**Sign-up Due Date: March 15th, 2012**)

WHERE Rural town of *Tres Equis* & the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica

WHY Help Costa Rican families in need, explore a new culture & visit the rainforest!

On this year's mission trip, travelers will have the opportunity to help several local families, build meaningful new friendships, learn about fascinating tropical flora and fauna with a naturalist guide, explore the rainforest and immerse oneself in the warm and welcoming Costa Rican culture.

For the first phase of the trip we will be staying in the small mountain community of Tres Equis (in the foothills of the towering Talamanca mountain range) and help to paint and refurbish several local families' houses, which have fallen into disrepair. We'll also be conducting art and cultural activities with the local children at the elementary school and donating school supplies.

For the second phase of the trip, we'll travel to the beautiful Caribbean Coast and complete several cultural exchange activities while exploring the area. Our guide, T.J. Boeschen, has over 16 years of experience living and guiding mission trips in Costa Rica & Nicaragua and will help make all travelers feel welcome in their new environment. Needless to say, we'll be in good hands while we're there and also be able to lend a helping hand to a very special community in need. We welcome all participants; no Spanish or construction skills are necessary.

CONTACT INFO: For more information, or if you'd like a digital version of the itinerary & registration form, call T.J. Boeschen (Cell: 503-679-3727) or email him at: infiniteforests@yahoo.com
Secondary contact: Oak Hills Presbyterian Pastor, Greg Lund: glund@oakhillspres.org



infinite forest

- COSTARICA MISSION TRIP ITINERARY

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(Open to all Presbyterian churches & their members)

Dates: June 16TH - 27TH, 2012

Mission Trip Coordinator & Guide: T.J. "Timoteo" Boeschen

USA Cell: 503-679-3727

Costa Rica Cell: 011-506-8354-7196

Email: infiniteforests@yahoo.com

Day 1: June 16th

Welcome to Costa Rica! We arrive in San Jose and meet our guide who will escort us to our private bus, which will take us to a comfortable yet simple hotel located in a pleasant suburb outside of the capital. We'll have dinner at the hotel, get to know our guide and discuss the details of how we want to best utilize our time in Costa Rica to help out the local community.

Overnight: [Rosa de America Hotel \(San Jose\)](#)

Day 2: June 17th

Today we wake up in a whole new world. After an early breakfast, we'll hit the road and drive towards the charming village of Tres Equis, which is located on the Caribbean slope of the *Cordillera Central* mountain range with a stunning view of the active Turrialba Volcano in the distance. We'll get settled in at Hotel Turrialtico, which we'll be using as our "base of operations" for our community service project. It is a comfortable, yet quaint hotel to stay in while we are working and is conveniently located only 25 minutes from Tres Equis. In the afternoon we may take a short tour of town to become familiar with our new surroundings and meet some of the local people. If time permits, we will begin our community service project(s).

Overnight: [Turrialtico Hotel \(Near Tres Equis\)](#)

Day 3-7: June 18th - 22nd

COMMUNITY SERVICE/MISSION PROJECTS

After an early breakfast we'll drive in to Tres Equis and if we are in town on a Sunday, we'll hopefully have the opportunity to attend a local church service in the morning for all those who are interested. This will provide for a unique opportunity of cross-cultural sharing and will be an invaluable look into

the spiritual aspect of the local *Ticos*' lives. Your guide will introduce you to Rafael Montenegro "*Rafa*", who is a wonderful man and an outstanding community leader. He'll be our main community service coordinator and "right-hand man" during our time in Tres Equis. Infinite Forest always strives to be flexible with our community service projects in order to cater to the specific needs of the community as they arise and evolve throughout the year. We have found that being as sensitive as possible to what the *local community* wants and needs (not simply carrying out what *we* want to do for them) creates the best chances for success while facilitating a social climate which encourages strong cultural bridges and lasting friendships. **Often times our service projects consist of painting, light construction, tree planting, beautification projects, park building, general town improvement projects, recycling programs, school supply donations (clothing, educational materials, books, hygiene products)... or any combination of all of the above.** For many months previous to your departure, your guide will be working closely with Rafa to determine the highest priority activities for the time when we'll be "in country". Mission trip participants may be asked to bring down paintbrushes, tools or other necessary items for our activities. More concrete details will become available several months before our date of departure wherein your guide will inform all participants of how they can best fulfill their individual roll as a productive mission team member.

"HELPFUL NEIGHBORS" PROJECT:

Rafa has recently informed Infinite Forest that there are several local families that have fallen upon hard times and are in desperate need of home repair and/or painting. Due to the fact that Costa Rica is a tropical environment with high humidity and a varied insect population, without proper treatment (painting/staining) the wood used to build houses often deteriorates extremely quickly. Many homes are also built with cinder block and rebar. These building materials hold up better against rust and sun/rain exposure if they are freshly painted as well. This particular situation may prove to be the perfect project for the members of Oak Hills Presbyterian Church to lend a helping hand and make a huge contribution towards bettering the quality of life for these impoverished families. Costa Ricans are also very neat and orderly people who take pride in their homes, however humble, and always strive to live in a clean and pleasant environment whenever possible. Our contribution will help these families feel good about their homes and help to provide them with a nice living space which has many practical as well as emotional and social benefits. Rafa's family has also been instrumental in raising funds to build a new church for their town. Depending on how far along the construction is (come June or July) we may also be able to help with the finishing touches as well as add a fresh coat of paint to their new place of worship.

COMMUNITY SERVICE DAILY SCHEDULE:

We'll work in the mornings for about 4 hours, then have lunch at Rafa's house with the local children (or adults) who Rafa will be recruiting to help us and add suggestions during our project. These lunches will be a wonderful opportunity to enter into the lives of the locals and experience the famous hospitality of the Costa Rican people. For those who can cook, a helping hand is always appreciated in the kitchen. It'll also be a great chance to practice your Spanish or just learn a few new phrases for those who are new to the language. After lunch we shall work for another 2-3 hours and then be free to walk about the town and get to know the locals. Tres Equis is an extremely safe environment and perfectly exemplifies a "typical Costa Rican" rural town. There are often spontaneous soccer games that occur in the evenings and everyone always enjoys rooting for their favorite players. For those who can play a bit of "*futbol*", guests are always welcome to hop in and join in the fun. The cheering section is always in need of more participants for those who prefer just to watch. In the evenings we'll be returning to have dinner at our hotel where we can reflect on our experiences and plan our strategy for the upcoming week of service. Travelers will have time to read and relax in the evening or play cards and enjoy each other's company.

Day 3-7 in Tres Equis will look roughly like this:

7am: Breakfast

8am: On the road to Tres Equis

8:30am – 12:00pm: Community Service Projects

12:30pm – 1:30pm: Lunch at Rafa's house

2pm – 5:30pm: Continue working

5:30 -- ??: Enjoy town and eventually return to the Turrialtico Hotel for dinner and relaxation time

Day 8: June 23rd

Today we begin a new phase of our trip and head off to the Caribbean to experience the unique Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous Bri-Bri communities of this culturally distinct area of Costa Rica. For those who wish, rafting down one of the world's top 5 rivers can be arranged for the first half of the day and then you'll meet up with the rest of the group in the evening. We work with *Exploradores Outdoors*, which is a locally owned rafting/kayaking company that offers top notch professional guides and absolutely stunning scenery as you paddle your way through virgin rainforest adorned with stunning waterfalls, which practically pour right into your raft! For those who choose to pass on this activity, the rest of us will travel directly to a simple yet relaxing hotel right on the edge of the Caribbean. A spectacular black sand beach with turquoise blue, 82-degree water awaits your arrival. We'll take a dip in the sea and then enjoy a delicious meal in town.

Overnight: Perla Negra (Puerto Viejo, Caribbean Coast)

Day 9: June 24th

Today we will drive to the little town of Manzanillo which is at the "end of the line" and is as far as the coast road goes before running into raw jungle. Once there we'll meet our local Afro-Caribbean guide, Tino, who will take us on a 2-3 hour nature walk through the rainforest, explaining the wonders of this incredible ecosystem all the while. Tino has a wonderful sense of humor and is incredibly knowledgeable about the region's flora and fauna. After our hike, we will hop on our bus and drive 15 minutes to one of the most beautiful areas in all of Costa Rica and swim, relax, or rent kayaks at beautiful Punta Uva Beach. The jungle literally drips down into the water and it's possible to try and climb the vines that hang into the sea near a picture perfect "Pirates of the Caribbean" isthmus, which as local legend has it, still has buried treasure *somewhere!* Howler monkeys are often spotted near the point eating sea grapes and swinging through the canopy overhead. There is a short 10-minute hike out to a rocky point where we can sit, contemplate life, watch the sunset and look for bottlenose dolphins. Tonight we feast at a delicious restaurant in town (Loco Natural) and let the delectable flavors of a Guyanese/Canadian cook named "Stash" tempt our palate. His Chilean Sea Bass smothered in citrus infused Thai peanut sauce is outrageous! In the evening we can go out on the town to listen to live Calypso, Reggae or Jazz ... or just enjoy some hammock time and a good book by the edge of the sea.

Overnight: Perla Negra (Puerto Viejo, Caribbean Coast)

Day 10: June 25th

Today is another day to give back to the local community. We will visit a small Waldorf school to lend a helping hand with varied service projects and participate in a fun and friendship-building art project. We will learn about the lives of the local students and share details about our families and our interests as well. This will also be another perfect opportunity to utilize any new Spanish vocabulary learned during the mission trip. Cultural involvement and participation is always a high priority during any

Infinite Forest trip and we do all we can to facilitate interaction with the local population. Many mission team members in the past have built lasting friendships with local Costa Ricans and have even returned on later trips to visit them.

For a portion of the day, we may also be able to host a group of very special orphans who live in the somewhat rugged city of Limon about an hour away. Infinite Forest has been working with these amazing kids for the past two years and they very rarely have the opportunity to leave the chaos of the city where they live to come to a beautiful, peaceful and ecologically fascinating environment like Puerto Viejo. We usually have each mission team member partner up with an orphan for the day. We can play games, use the pool at the hotel (they are very accommodating), play soccer on the beach, learn about our new friends' lives and show them that we've taken an interest in who they are and what their hopes and dreams are. For this unique group of children, there is no other greater gift. We'll treat our new friends to lunch and enjoy the day together at the hotel and along the beach. Our new friends will return to Limon in the late afternoon. In the evening, we'll turn everyone loose to explore Puerto Viejo on their own and dine wherever they wish. Your guide is always full of many great culinary suggestions and if everyone wants to eat together, then that is fine as well.

Overnight: Perla Negra (Puerto Viejo, Caribbean Coast)

Day 11: June 26th

Today we'll take one last dip in the Caribbean Sea and have a bit of free time in the morning. After another tasty lunch at a hotel right on the water we'll head back to San Jose. Along the way we'll pass through the spectacular Braulio Carillo National Park, which offers breathtaking views of deep gorges covered with raw primary rainforest and a misty cloud forest region near the Meseta Central. We'll learn about the history, and the environmental/socio-economic effects of the legacy of the United Fruit Company as we pass by several banana and pineapple plantations. We'll eat dinner at our hotel where we'll enjoy our final team meeting and reflect upon all that we have learned and all that we have accomplished on our mission trip.

Overnight: Rosa de America (San Jose)

Day 12: June 27th

After one last breakfast together, we'll bid Costa Rica a fond farewell and head to the airport to catch our plane. We shall return home with many new friendships and memories to last a lifetime! *Infinite Forest* strives to provide participants with an all-encompassing experience which seamlessly couples cultural immersion with community service and mission work. It is our goal to inspire travelers to return home as "goodwill ambassadors" of the rainforest with a broader understanding of how we can all make daily choices that will ensure the preservation of one of the world's most precious natural treasures. After helping to improve the local communities we encounter, we hope that everyone who experiences the magic of Costa Rica will continue to educate others about how we can create a more positive and sustainable global community.

Overnight: Your own home

TRIP PRICE & DETAILS ON NEXT PAGE



- MISSION TRIP PRICE & DETAILS -

TRIP PRICE: \$1400 per traveler (*Includes community service costs as well*)

TRIP DATES: June 16th – June 27th, 2012

INFINITE FOREST TRIP LEADER: T.J. “Timoteo” Boeschen

CONTACT INFO: T.J. Boeschen, Phone: 503-679-3727 Email: infiniteforests@yahoo.com
Infinite Forest Website: www.infiniteforest.com

TRIP INCLUDES:

- * Full-time, 24 hour a day accompaniment of a fully bilingual naturalist guide/community service director & translator. (T.J. “Timoteo” Boeschen)
- * All accommodations (Jungle Lodges, *Cabinas*, Hotels, etc...)
- * All meals, bottled water, and snacks (excludes 1 dinner)
- * All ground transportation in Costa Rica (private bus with A.C.)
- * Private Driver
- * Transfers to and from airport
- * All activities, equipment and entrance fees (Rafting is optional & “pay as you go” - \$99)
- * All community service supply costs & activities stated in itinerary

TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- * \$26 airport departure tax from Costa Rica
- * International Flight
- * Tips for guide & bus driver

DEPOSIT AMOUNT: \$300.00 (Deposit is transferable to another traveler if necessary)

DEPOSIT DUE DATE: March 1st, 2012 (Contact T.J. if you need to turn it in late)

FINAL PAYMENT DUE DATE: March 15th, 2012

Feel free to contact T.J. Boeschen for further details. (contact info. above)
Thanks and we'll see you in Costa Rica!

Group: _____



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Registration & Getting To Know You...

We'd like to get to know you a bit before we meet down in Costa Rica. Please fill in this form and return it to your trip organizer.

Name of Participant ** _____ Nickname _____ Male/Female (circle)

***Please write your name exactly how it appears on your passport** Middle names are not necessary.*

Age _____ Birthdate _____ Passport Number _____ *Expiration _____

***All USA and Canadian passports cannot be within 90 days of expiring to travel in Costa Rica. For other nationalities, please check with embassy at: <http://costarica-embassy.org/visa.htm>**

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Client Email _____

Please check here if we can subscribe you to our quarterly e-newsletter, filled with great info about Costa Rica and Nicaragua!

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Any specific medical problems (include any allergies)?

Please tell us about any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

Do you know how to swim?

~ PLEASE ALSO READ AND SIGN WAIVER ON REVERSE SIDE ~

Group: _____



Waiver of liability

All activities offered by Infinite Forest and its agents, employees, independent contractors or affiliates (each “IF” or “us”) are offered on an “as available” basis under the terms and conditions set forth herein and in the IF Cost and Payment Information Form, as updated by IF from time to time. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this waiver and the Cost and Payment Information Form, this waiver shall apply. By signing below, both Participant and guardian(s) (each “you” or “your”) are agreeing to be bound to the terms and conditions of this waiver. You recognize that your complete agreement with such terms is a material basis and part of the consideration for Participant’s participation in any IF activity.

Maintaining a Positive and Healthy Environment:

Both participant and guardian(s) understand that all rules established by IF must be followed to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of everyone involved in the experience. Infinite Forest reserves the right to send home any participant that the staff feels could be injurious or harmful to him/herself or others or conducts him/herself in a manner that is detrimental to the program. The group atmosphere is a priority to Infinite Forest and its staff and requires treating everyone involved in the experience with respect. Although we may not impose strict rules of conduct, actions that prevent the group from participating in a fun, safe, and healthy experience (“Misbehavior”) may result in the participant being sent home with no refund and at your own expense. Use of illegal drugs, theft, sexual activity, and disregard of rules or instructions are all considered activities that are grounds for early dismissal.

Your Representations:

You represent to us that Participant has the physical ability to travel and to participate in all of the activities Participant chooses to engage in. You acknowledge that outdoor recreational activities pose inherent risks, dangers, and hazards, both foreseen and unforeseen. You agree that you are voluntarily participating in all activities solely at your own risk. You, and all of your agents and representatives, covenant not to sue, and hereby release, waive, and discharge any and all claims you have or may have against IF now and in the future, except to the extent that such claims arise directly from the willful misconduct or gross negligence of Infinite Forest. You agree to fully indemnify IF for any claims arising from Participant’s willful misconduct, Misbehavior, or gross negligence.

Limitations of Liability:

Infinite Forest assumes no responsibility for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service resulting directly or indirectly from: acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, thefts, pilferage, force majeure, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, discrepancies or change in transit or hotel services, or anything else that is not reasonably within the sole control of Infinite Forest. Reasonable changes in the itinerary may be made by IF in its sole discretion, without any liability or a duty to account for such changes, if it believes such changes are in alignment with the comfort and well-being of the participants. Notwithstanding anything else in this waiver, IF is not liable with respect to any activity or any other subject matter related to this waiver under any contract, negligence, strict liability or any other legal or equitable theory for any amount in excess, in the aggregate, of the fees actually received by Infinite Forest, for Participant’s participation in the IF services related to such subject matter. In the event that any of the provisions of this waiver shall be held by a court or other tribunal of competent jurisdiction to be illegal, invalid, or unenforceable, such provisions shall be limited or eliminated to the minimum extent necessary so that this waiver shall otherwise remain in full force and effect.

Signed (by Participant):

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signed (by parent or guardian if Participant is under 18): _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____



Frequently Asked Questions

Where do we stay?

You will stay in local eco-lodges, hotels & *cabinas*. That means that all of the places you stay are small, low impact lodges that allow easy access to the beautiful natural surroundings. All of the hotels have comfortable rooms with private bathrooms, *almost* all have hot water, and all will have fans when necessary. For those itineraries that include "homestays", you will be hosted at a local Costa Rican family's home. Please refer to our homestay document for more details.

What do we eat?

We view food as an obvious (and delicious) connection to both the Earth and to the people who live in the region. We recommend that you try the many tropical fruits and vegetables that are not readily available in North America. There are many great local restaurants where regional specialties are served. Be prepared for a lot of rice and beans (*gallo pinto*) cooked with a special Costa Rican flavor. This is the staple of all Costa Ricans' diets. Remember that you are going to a different country. Please don't expect to find American food! In the more heavily visited areas of Costa Rica, there are often a variety of restaurants with non-local specialties and international cuisine. We usually eat very well on our adventure and meal times are often highly anticipated!

How do we get around?

When you are not hiking, snorkeling, or white water rafting, you travel from activity to activity in a private van or bus with your own personal driver. The buses have air conditioning and some models even come with their own fridge. Sit back and enjoy the scenery!

What are the hikes like?

What better way to get to know the rainforest than through your feet! Walking slowly through the forest affords you the opportunity to witness its natural wonders including all kinds of wildlife. None of the hikes are too difficult for anyone in reasonably good health and moderate physical shape. You and your guide will stop often to check out the amazing plant and animal life along the way. Rather than hiking simply to get from Point A to Point B, we encourage you to experience the beauty and wonder of the places we visit. One thing to keep in mind is that in order to keep its name, there must be lots of rain in the rainforest. And lots of rain leads to lots of mud! Mud can add to the fun (and the mess) of all of the hikes!

Who will be your guides?

When you arrive you will be met by one (or more) of our Infinite Forest guides who will share their unique perspectives on the places you visit. They will escort you throughout your trip and guide you through many of the hikes and activities you will do. For some specialized activities, you will also have other local guides (ex: river rafting).

Do we need to tip the guides?

Throughout your tour you will be traveling with the same lead guide(s) from the beginning to the end of your trip. When traveling abroad, it is often customary to tip your guide(s) based on the service you feel you received. On average, each traveler usually tips around \$4-5 dollars per day. Someone in the group often collects this money at the end of the trip and presents it to your

guide(s) on the last evening together, or during the day of departure. Of course, if you feel you've received exceptional service throughout your trip, any and all tips are always appreciated. As always, tips are voluntary and not obligatory, but we've found many travelers often appreciate a rough guideline when it comes to tipping. Additional activities with other guides such as river rafting, ziplining and the hikes in Monteverde are at your discretion.

Do we tip the driver?

Your driver often becomes an integral part of the group dynamic and becomes a secondary guide of sorts. Many travelers form strong friendships with their driver and Infinite Forest holds them in high regard as a valuable asset to the "team". They will be keeping you safe on the road, getting you from point A to point B, and navigating the labyrinth of roads throughout your Costa Rican adventure. It is often customary to tip the driver \$1-2 dollars per day per traveler. Someone in the group often collects this money at the end of the trip and presents it to your driver on the last evening together, or during the day of departure. As always, tips are voluntary and not obligatory. These guidelines are only to help the traveler understand the customs and social norms within Costa Rica.

Can we drink the water?

While it is O.K. for North Americans to drink the tap water in many parts of Costa Rica (not including the Southern Caribbean Coast), we don't like to take any chances. You will need at least one 1½ liter bottle every day. These can be purchased at your hotel or any store (pulperia). Many travelers like to bring their own water bottle (Nalgene, Kleen Canteen, etc..) or hydration pack (camel bak) that they can refill throughout the trip. This cuts down on unnecessary waste and helps to promote a cleaner planet. We always have a large 5 gallon water jug available to all guests on both the bus trips and at the hotels. This is provided by Infinite Forest as a complementary service, as we always make sure that everyone gets plenty of clean bottled water and stays hydrated throughout their adventure.

Do we need any shots?

The Health Department of Costa Rica does not require any immunizations to enter the country. However, we view health as a very personal issue and encourage people to consult with trusted physicians, health service organizations or other medical professionals before making any decisions about vaccinations. The Center for Disease Control takes a conservative stand and recommends several vaccinations. You can consult their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/camerica.htm>

Do I need a passport?

American citizens must have a passport to enter Costa Rica. Please allow six to eight weeks to receive your passport if you are applying for one for the first time. If you are not a US or Canadian citizen, please consult with the Costa Rican consulate nearest you to determine if you require a visa to enter the country. We would be happy to help you with this procedure. MAKE SURE THERE ARE SIX MONTHS OF VALIDITY ON YOUR PASSPORT FROM THE DATE OF ENTRY INTO COSTA RICA. It is also VERY IMPORTANT to make sure that your passport does not have any folded edges or peeling plastic on the photo I.D. page. Airport security has become very strict regarding this issue, and we want everyone to have a smooth & easy travel experience.

What about travel insurance?

Whenever you plan a trip there is always a chance something in your life can come up to make travel impossible. Cancellation insurance covers pre-departure cancellations, post-departure interruption, trip delay (12 hours or more), medical expense/emergency assistance, accidental death and baggage/ travel documents. The fee for this coverage ranges on the price of your trip. The fee is generally \$50-80 per traveler. We recommend contacting *Access America* at (www.accessamerica.com) or *Travel Safe* at (www.travelsafe.com), where you can easily purchase travel insurance online. This is often a wise and very inexpensive investment that gives you both peace of mind and security when traveling abroad.

Do we need to know Spanish?

Though it can only add to your experience and help you to get to know the people better, it is not essential that you speak any Spanish. Our guides are all fully bilingual and will help you with any communication issues. Feel free to ask questions along the way as we are happy to help you improve your Spanish skills and learn useful phrases. We love to facilitate communication!

How should I bring my spending money?

US Dollars are widely accepted throughout the country but should be in denominations of \$50 or smaller (\$20's are preferable for ease of exchange at small businesses). U.S. dollars in cash can be exchanged for Costa Rican *Colones* throughout the country directly with vendors as well as at banks for a low commission. Travelers' Checks are a bit more difficult to exchange outside of the larger towns. While some people always like to have their "safety stash" of money in Travelers' Checks, we find that just utilizing your ATM card (almost all ATM's in Costa Rica accept any card with a VISA logo) is the safest and most convenient way to access money while you are traveling. You will have multiple opportunities to access an ATM while traveling in Costa Rica as this part of their infrastructure has made many advances in the last few years. Your bank at home usually charges a small (\$1-3 dollar) fee for the transaction (much better than losing a % every time on travelers' checks). The exchange rate as of early 2012 is approximately 510 colones = \$1. Major credit cards are accepted in most restaurants and larger souvenir shops. You will also need **\$26** for the exit tax at the airport upon your departure (they accept credit cards). We recommend that travelers have at least \$200-250 cash in their money belt upon arrival in case they arrive on a weekend and the banks are closed.

How should we pack?

As lightly as possible! While you will never have to carry your bags very far, you should be able to carry everything that you bring with you since many hotels do not have bellhops. You may want to bring a piece of luggage with wheels, though bigger hiking/camping backpacks work well when crossing gravel or dirt paths to get to your hotel. Don't forget to bring a small backpack as your carry-on/daypack. Please see the "List of Things to Bring" for more information on packing.

What about bugs?

The rainforest does have bugs... lots of them. And we wouldn't want to kick them out of their homes just because we're coming to visit! Most of them do not have any interest in you. It is the mosquitoes that may "bug" you the most. Please remember to bring insect repellent and/or dress in lightweight, breathable pants and long sleeved shirts as extra protection against the bugs. This is usually only necessary near dusk or on jungle hikes. Many travelers are surprised to discover that bugs are hardly ever an issue.

What is the weather like?

Very hard to predict! Costa Rica generally has a clear 'rainy season' and 'dry season'. However, this distinction has been less and less reliable over the past several years. Going to the rainforest, there must be rain. Luckily, this usually happens mostly at night or for shorter periods in the mornings or afternoons. We rarely have had to cancel activities due to rainy weather. Please be prepared for hiking, walking, and playing in the rain (actually it is an incredibly fun thing to do when you realize that the beauty of the forest around us is totally dependent on the rain!). The temperature is usually quite warm but not unbearable. Be prepared for 80's and 90's. If you will be traveling in the cloud forest the temperatures get down to the low 60's (or colder if you're doing any mountain climbing on Mt. Chirripo). It is always good to have a light fleece jacket or sweatshirt for cooler nights and time spent in San Jose. Remember to bring a light rain jacket as well. Many travelers like to use the kind that folds into a pouch or pocket for easy packing and to save room, though any rain jacket will do.

For any other /less frequently asked questions, contact us at **503-679-3727** or email T.J. Boeschen at infiniteforests@yahoo.com or Brian Benson at brian@infiniteforest.com. Infinite Forest's official website is www.infiniteforest.com.

Happy travels & we'll see you in the jungle!!!