

Costa Rica July 2016
University of Colorado School of Medicine
Pre-Med Wilderness & Emergency Medicine Class
Program Information

Overview

The University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine, is proud to offer the Summer 2016 Costa Rica Pre-Med Wilderness & Emergency Medicine Class, July 21-30. The class focuses on wilderness and emergency medicine and is aimed at pre-med undergrads or recent graduates. It is taught by School of Medicine faculty and/or fellows, along with local guides at times. The class starts and ends at the Juan Santamaría International Airport, San Jose, Costa Rica (actually in Alajuela), and it will be headquartered and overnight at a small eco-lodge, Hacienda Baru (www.haciendabaru.com), located on the Pacifica Coast near Dominical. The wilderness medicine curriculum will be highlighted by integrated jungle and night hikes, canopy tours, whitewater rafting, and natural history tours. Those successfully completing the class will be awarded a Wilderness First Responder certificate. All transportation will be by chartered bus.

Costs

The class tuition is inclusive, covering in-country transportation, shared lodging, tips, all meals, group and safety gear, and program activities described above. It does not include personal clothing/gear, airfare to Costa Rica, departure tax (\$29 at time of writing), medical/evacuation insurance (see below), any alcohol, or incidentals/activity expenditures accrued during limited free time.

Travel to Costa Rica

We will meet students at the Juan Santamaría International Airport, Costa Rica's main airport just outside the capital, San Jose, between 11 am and 1 pm on July 21st. Students can book tickets departing San Jose any time after 2 pm on the 30th. Flight costs and departure tax are the responsibility of the student.

Our chartered bus will be leaving the airport at 1 pm sharp. If your flight is delayed and you miss the bus we will need to charter you a car, the cost of which will be your responsibility (\$200 in 2015). For that reason **we recommend you arrive in Costa Rica the night** before, on the 20th. We will be happy to help make hotel and airport pick-up arrangements, the costs of which are the responsibility of the student.

While it is not recommended, students can arrive late and/or depart early with special permission. A shuttle to/from Hacienda Baru and any overnight accommodations near the airport can be arranged, but costs would be the responsibility of the student.

Daily Schedule

The Costa Rica Pre-Med program is an intense learning experience. This is not a vacation! Classes will typically run from 8 or 9 am to 4 or 5 pm and will include some early morning hikes, evening lectures, and optional night hikes. Three meals a day will be served at the lodge restaurant (see below for more information). While there will be

lots of fun and adventures, students must be prepared for strenuous and challenging learning throughout the program. A draft schedule is attached.

Wilderness First Responder Certification

For students demonstrating proficiency in the hands-on scenarios, and passing the final, a Wilderness First Responder certification will be awarded. The final and certification is optional. While no academic credit is awarded by the University of Colorado for participation, students are encouraged to apply for independent study with their home institution. In these cases, assistance in providing curriculum documentation will be provided.

Accommodations and Food

Accommodations, as well as meal service, will be at Hacienda Baru (www.haciendabaru.com), a lovely if simple eco-lodge situated on 800 acres between jungle highlands and its own Pacific beach. Students will be in two to three bedroom cabins; each cabin has its own bathroom with shower, a kitchenette, a fan, and small common area. Students will randomly be assigned to single gender, shared rooms. We will do our best to provide single gender cabins, but cannot promise that will be possible.

Three hot meals are provided daily from the 22nd through the 29th, with snacks and dinner provided on the 21st and breakfast on the 30th. At Hacienda Baru there is a healthy, very hearty, but somewhat limited menu to choose from for meals. Vegetarian options are always available, and while no promises can be made, we will attempt to accommodate special dietary needs.

Experiential Learning Experiences

This is not a typical (i.e., boring!) lecture-style college class. If so, why go all the way to Costa Rica just to sit in a lecture hall? No, this emergency and wilderness medicine class is ACTIVE! If a student is looking to be a passive learner, sitting back and just taking notes, s/he would best look elsewhere.

While there will be some didactic lectures, a common and integral part of this class are experiential learning experiences. These will include demonstrations, case studies, scenarios, and wilderness activities. Particularly these latter learning experiences will involve students being active, ranging from acting as a patient on the ground, to lifting/carrying “patients” (or acting as one), to participating in adventure activities including tree top canopy tours (<http://www.haciendabaru.com/flight-of-the-toucan/>), jungle hikes, and whitewater rafting (<http://www.dominicalsurfadventures.com/rafting-trips.html>, Savage River).

Students need to be able to bend to the ground, help carry a patient, climb short ladders, hike uneven/slippery terrain, and get in and out of river rafts.

For all the experiential learning experiences we will practice “challenge by choice,” meaning that students can participate to the degree they are comfortable and/or able. This does not mean students won’t be pushing their comfort zones—we will actively promote that!—but that no one is going to be forced to do something for which they are unprepared or feel pressured into doing. In these cases will do our best to adapt activities so that the student can participate in some modified manner.

Free Time

Limited free time will be made available most days to allow for siestas, informal student discussion, swimming at the lodge pool or beach, hiking, or just hanging out. During free time students will be on their own safety-wise, thus a buddy system will be encouraged (required for swimming).

One afternoon will be set aside for a longer block of time. Arrangements will be made for optional surfing lessons or beach bike riding (costs responsibility of students).

Potential Hazards

There are a number of inherent hazards involved in travel, visiting a tropical country, and participating in emergency and wilderness medicine training. These include, but are not limited to, in-country transportation, swimming, experiential learning activities, illnesses related to travel and the tropics, bites and stings, hiking, and crime.

Thankfully, Costa Rica, particularly the area we will be visiting, enjoys very little crime and a healthy environment. See below for more health information.

We will take active and robust measures to protect against hazards including careful site and activity selection, conservative decision-making and program rules, protective equipment, and especially student education. We will be carrying both cell phones (very good but inconsistent general coverage across the country) and a satellite phone for emergencies.

Program leaders are well experienced. Dr. Miner has led over a half dozen trips to Costa Rica and over a dozen in total to Central and South America.

Students are required to purchase mandatory health and evacuation insurance (cost less than \$55 at time of writing). For more information please see http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/InternationalPrograms/oia/globaleducation/safety/Documents/brochure_2013-14.pdf.

Health and Costa Rica

As mentioned, Costa Rica, particularly where we will be visiting is very healthy. The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends routine vaccines before every trip including measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and a yearly flu shot. Malaria and yellow fever are not present in Costa Rica. Zika is present in Costa Rica, but it is only a serious issue for those who are pregnant. For more and current information, please check out <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/costa-rica>. The water is generally safe to drink in and around San Jose and at Hacienda Baru. Students are strongly encouraged to get a dental check up before traveling and to bring extra prescription and/or over the counter medicines.

Emergencies

Co-instructor Vaughn Browne, MD, will be with the students during class activities and on site during the entire program. Dr. Browne is an emergency physician with extensive wilderness, travel, and tropical medicine experience.

Drs. Browne and Miner will both be carrying cell phones. We will also be carrying an extensive group first aid kit. A clinic and hospital are within a half hour to

hour from Hacienda Baru. We will register with the US Embassy and will have the support of the Student Abroad office of the University of Colorado Denver.

Student Clothing and Gear

Light is right. For this class students need very little in the way of clothing or gear. In terms of clothing: a few pairs of shorts, a few short sleeve shirts, optional long pants and shirt for bug/sun protection, tennis shoes, a pair of sandals, socks, and underwear. In terms of gear/supplies: a day pack, sun protection (hat, sun glasses, sun block), writing instrument and notebook, watch, toiletries, bug repellent, personal first aid kit (band-aids, pain relief, etc.), a travel towel, and some optional items. A full clothing and gear list, including recommended optional items, will be sent upon registration.

Required Paperwork

US citizens, coming from the US, need a current passport; no visa is required. For citizens of other countries, or for US citizens traveling directly to Costa Rica from some South American, African, or Asian countries, please check with the US State Department (<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/costa-rica.html>).

Student Code of Conduct

Students will be required to read, sign, and follow a Code of Conduct that includes both rights and responsibilities. The code will describe learning and especially behavioral expectations, which will be similar to codes expected at most higher education institutions. The code will also describe consequences if there is failure to abide by the rules, which could include immediate suspension from the program, in which case the student will be responsible for leaving the class and property, with no refund provided.

Further Questions

For questions please contact Dr. Todd Miner at todd.miner@ucdenver.edu or 607-592-5224.