

THE SCHOOL FOR FIELD STUDIES



COSTA RICA

A GUIDE TO PREPARE FOR YOUR
SFS PROGRAM

ADMISSIONS
DEPARTMENT

AGENDA

- INFORMATION ABOUT COSTA RICA
- LIFE ON PROGRAM
- PACKING
- HEALTH & SAFETY
- TRAVEL & NEXT STEPS
- CONTACT US





COSTA RICA

LOCAL CULTURE

LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

Spanish is the official language. 5 indigenous languages and English-based creole called Patua.

Catholic (62%) Protestant (21%)

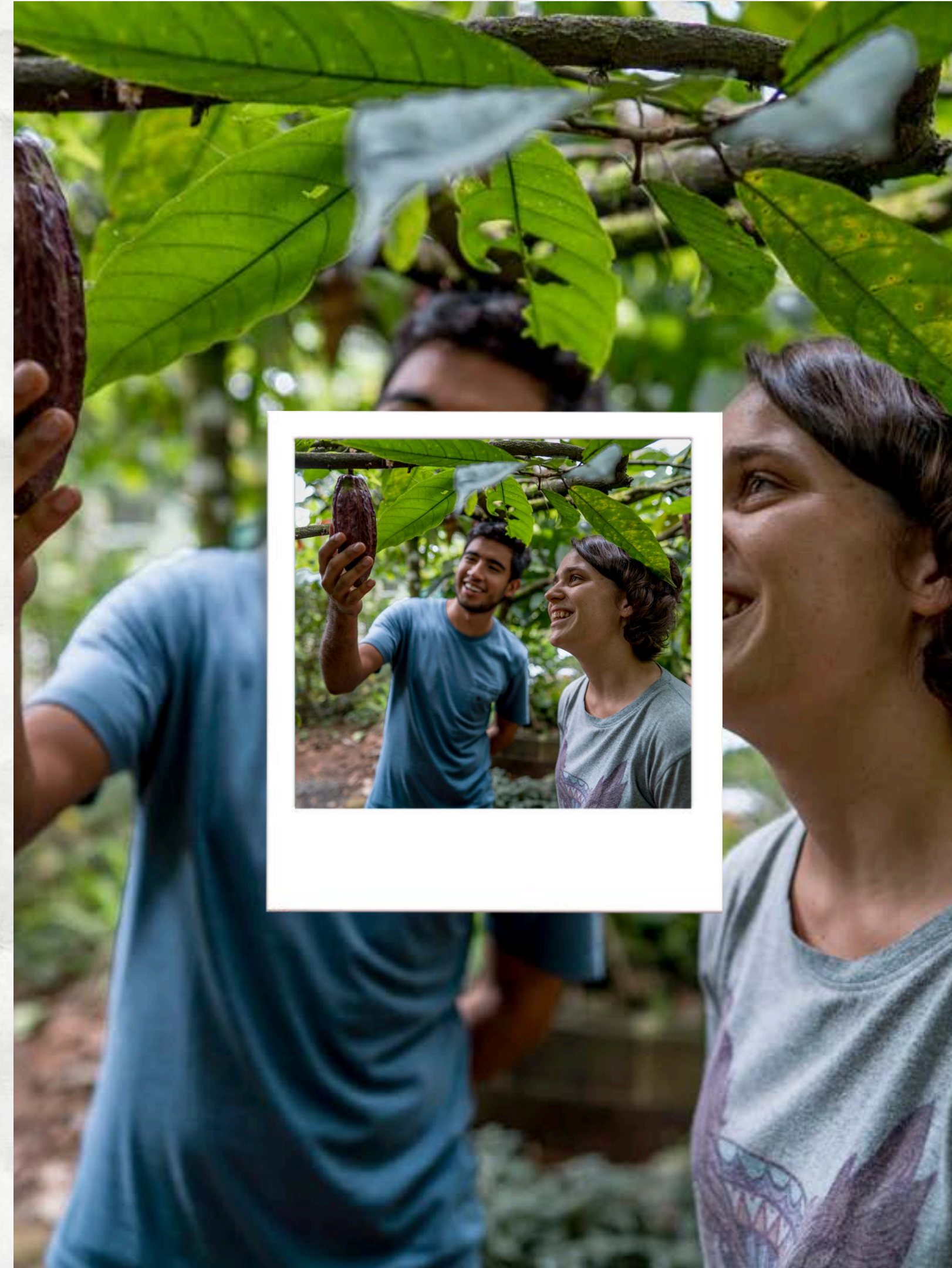
LGBTQIA+

Homosexuality is legal. San Jose is progressive, but countryside less so. Cat calling and staring is common.

LOCAL LAWS AND CLOTHING

Drugs taken very seriously.

Clothing is mildly conservative. No short-shorts or crops tops.



AN OPEN MIND IS KEY

- You chose to study abroad and embrace a new culture, both for its positives and negatives.
- You may feel frustration, but it is important to keep a positive mindset.
- You are not here to judge or change, but rather to learn and experience.





LIFE ON PROGRAM

HOUSING, SCHEDULE & FOOD

FIELD STATION

CAMPUS

- Located in central valley of San Jose in neighborhood of La Presa (pop ~200 people). Atenas is the closest town (pop ~27,000) about 3 miles from the center.

HOUSING

- 10 rooms, each sleeps up to 4-6 students in twin-sized bunk beds. Shared bathrooms for all students in the dorm with cold water showers only.
- Laundry machine and dryer.

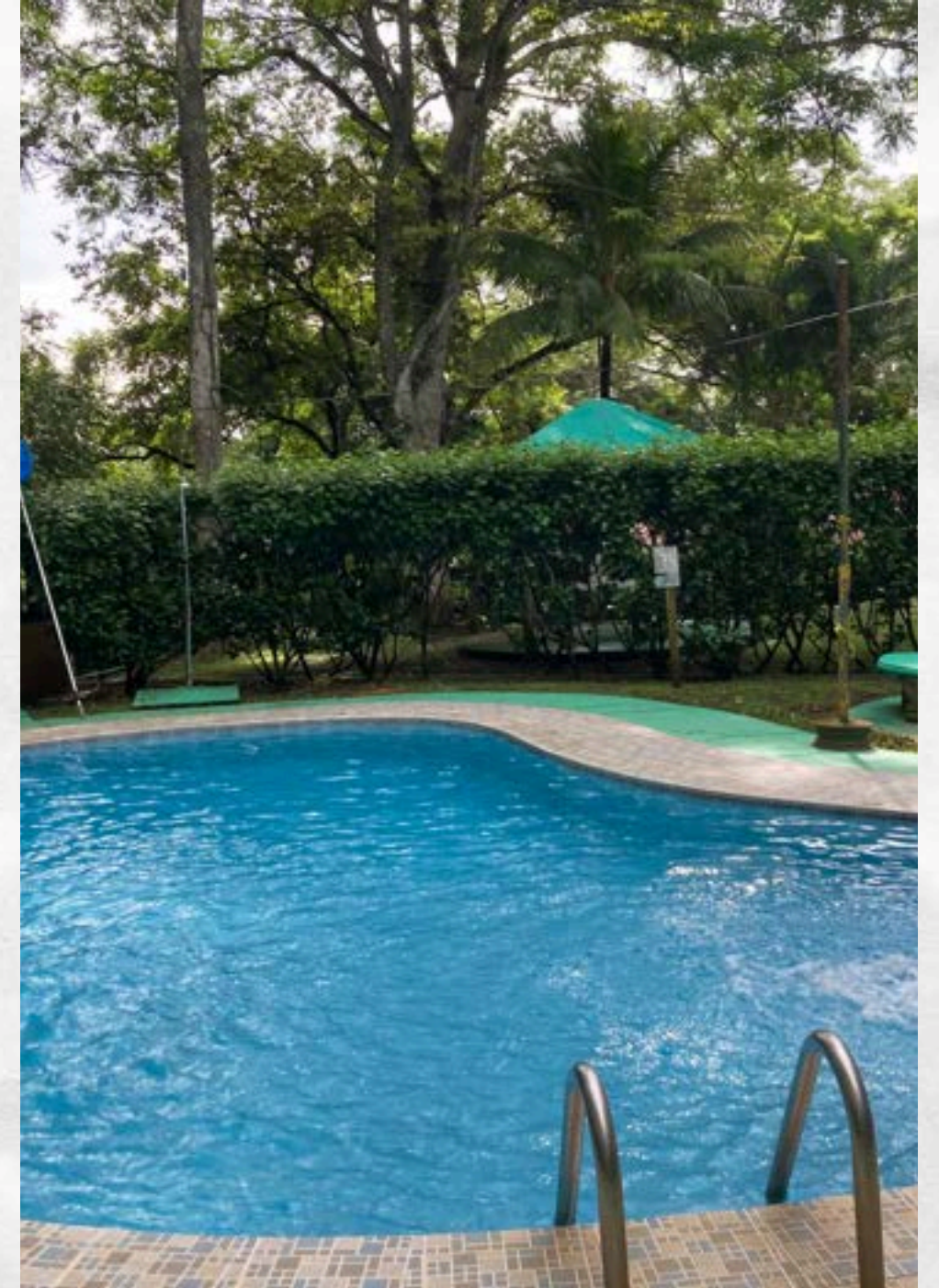
AMENITIES + MORE

- Basketball court, soccer field, small pool, and pizza oven. No gym facilities, but few yoga mats available.

COMMUNITY LIVING

- Community living requires compromise and teamwork. You will work, eat, and relax together; personal time is extremely limited. Chore rotations will be assigned once on program.

THE CENTER FOR ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE STUDIES



CLASSROOM STANDARD

- Not an "easy A"
- Our coursework and research impact the community
- Grades must be earned

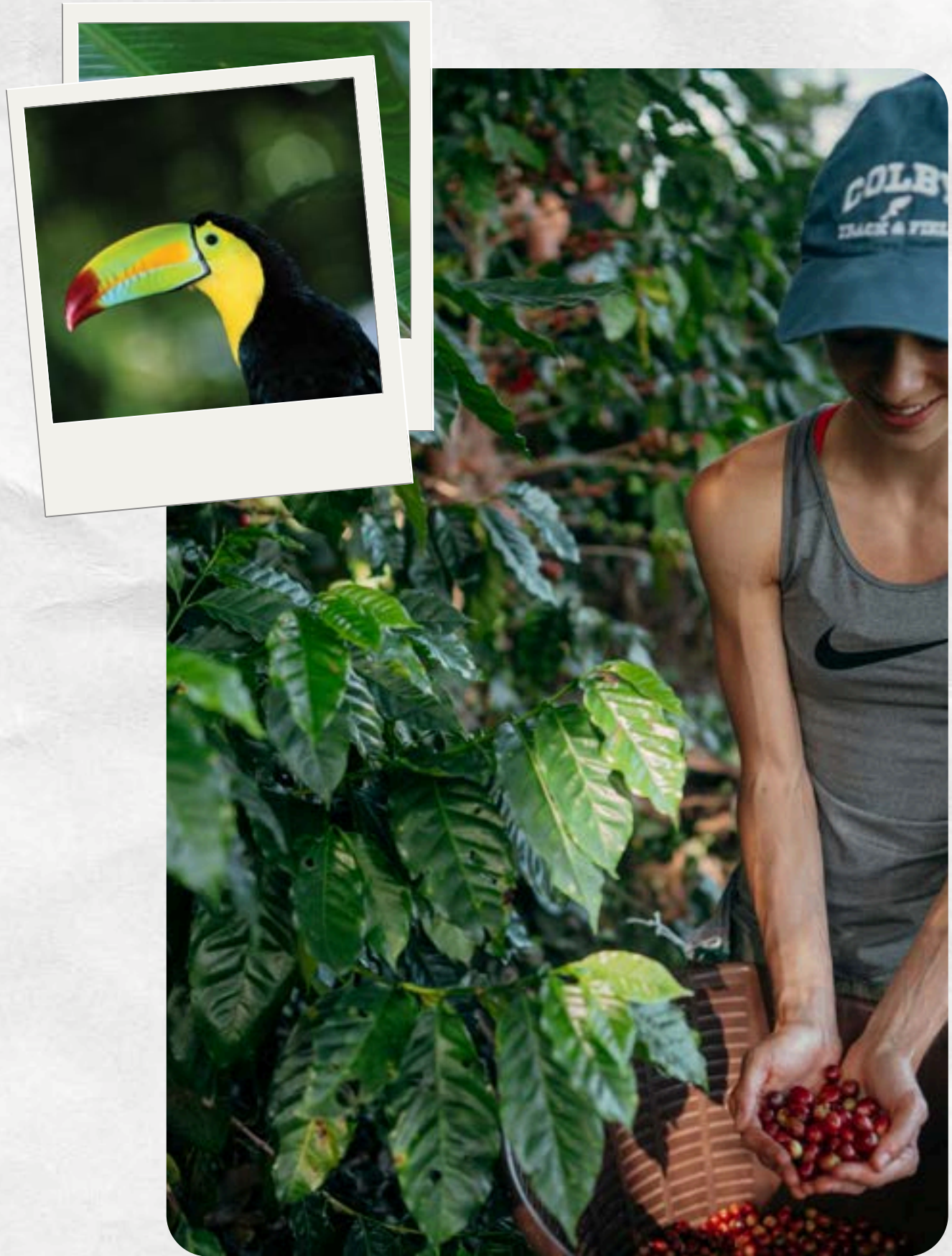
Schedule is high-intensity. Manage your time efficiently and use your days off to recharge. Use the utmost level of respect in your interactions with staff.



DAY IN THE LIFE



- Days are highly structured
- Typically, 7am - 8pm
- Some days are 100% in the field, while others are 100% classroom time
- Expect over half of your program time to be spent covering classroom-based theory
- All activities are mandatory- including group meals!
- We work around our partners, weather, and other circumstances, so you should expect the schedule to always be changing. It's important to have flexibility and a positive mindset!



PROGRAM POLICIES

- ✓ Curfew and dry campus enforced
- ✓ No smoking on campus (no e-cig)
- ✓ No non-SFS guests without staff approval
- ✓ Sign out and buddy system
- ✓ No cannabis products (*)

(*) This includes medical marijuana and some types of CBD oil - contact Student Life before bringing any CBD product

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

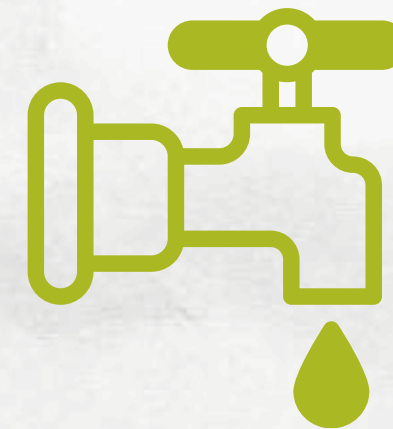


MEALS

Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner Example: Rice, beans, meat, vegetables, plantains and fruit. Meals can be repetitive.

Traditional Costa Rican meals are oil and carb heavy.

SFS can support most dietary needs, but food variety may be limited based on local availability and cost. SFS cannot guarantee that strict Halal or Kosher diets or severe cross-contamination allergies can be accommodated.



FRESH WATER

A close-up photograph of a hummingbird with iridescent green feathers and a long, thin beak, hovering and feeding from a small, tubular orange flower. The bird is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. Several other similar flowers are visible on thin, brown stems that crisscross the image. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. Overlaid on the center of the image is the word "PACKING" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, a dark green rectangular box contains the text "WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

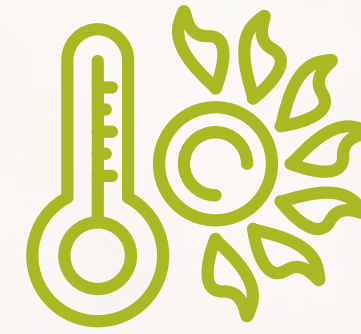
PACKING

WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING



CURRENCY

- Costa Rican Colones (CRC)
- Cash based economy in rural areas
- ATM access
- Notify your bank



CLIMATE

- Rainy season: May–November
- Average temp: 65–85°F | High humidity

WHAT YOU SHOULD **BRING**

Please do read your **field guide** for an itemized look!



CLOTHING

TOILETRIES + MEDICATION



FIELD GEAR



ROOM NECESSITIES

FOR CLASSROOM



PACKING CONSIDERATIONS

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

Long pants, long sleeves & rubber boots required for trail work.

Rubber boots can be bought in town unless you have a very large or very small shoe size.

TECHNOLOGY

Laptop with USB port
MS Office (or equivalent).

Electronics Protection
US Outlets and Voltage

Unreliable Internet
Download podcasts, music, movies, + more.

LUGGAGE

SFS has no luggage limitations, although your airline(s) might!

You will be responsible for transporting your own luggage.



HEALTH & SAFETY

MEDICAL CARE & MEDICAL REVIEW



ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS



Sunburn, dehydration, etc.



Snakes, monkeys, bullet ants, spiders.



Scorpions, crocodiles, etc.



Infections and insect borne illnesses



Stray dogs

MEDICAL CARE IN COUNTRY

BASIC MEDICAL

Center is 10 minutes away from clinics in Atenas.

ADVANCED MEDICAL

Center is up to 1.5 hour away by car from hospital in San Jose.

ROUTINE VISITS

Routine medical visits are not feasible while on program.

MENTAL HEALTH

Scheduled telehealth appointments with mental health providers may not be feasible.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES & OUTBREAKS

SFS follows CDC and host-country health guidelines. Entry and pre-departure health requirements vary by country and may change based on current outbreaks. Students should review current travel and health guidance before departure, and SFS will notify students of any major updates.

Students who test positive for, or develop symptoms of, communicable illnesses may need to isolate. Close contacts may be asked to test or monitor for symptoms. Because supplies may be limited locally, students are encouraged to bring rapid tests and high-quality masks.

Students are responsible for any medical or isolation-related costs incurred abroad and should confirm, before traveling, that their international health insurance covers communicable diseases.



MEDICAL REVIEW



Complete your medical paperwork within 6 months of departure & before the due date



Schedule medical appointments in advance. SFS recommends consulting with a travel clinic in addition to your primary care physician



No student is permitted to participate on an SFS program until medical review has been completed



Obtain prescription medication prior to your departure



If travelling from outside the US, yellow fever vaccine may be required



A hand is holding a magnifying glass over a small globe. The globe shows a map of the world with green landmasses and blue oceans. Above the globe, a large, vibrant red flower is in focus. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage. The text 'NEXT STEPS' is overlaid in large white letters, and 'VISAS, FLIGHTS, & PAPERWORK' is in a smaller white font inside a green rounded rectangle.

NEXT STEPS

VISAS, FLIGHTS, & PAPERWORK

VISAS AND FLIGHTS

Travel Instructions sent at least 2 months prior to departure on buying your flights.

For US Citizens, visas **are granted upon arrival**, no pre-departure work needed.

Airport Letter sent 1-2 weeks prior to departure with arrival instructions, what you need to enter/carry with you, current entry requirements, and emergency contacts.

AT THE AIRPORT



CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION

Have your passport ready!

LUGGAGE

Afterwards, collect your luggage and leave the security area.

FINDING SFS

Find the designated meeting spot and look for SFS signs!

WAITING FOR OTHERS

You will need to wait for the rest of your cohort to arrive before heading to the center.

NEXT STEPS



TRAVEL

- Apply for or renew your passport-must be valid for length of stay in Costa Rica
- Book your flight

SET EXPECTATIONS

- Review the SFS field guide, financial planner, syllabus, and policies
- Talk with your family and friends about a realistic communication plan while you're in the field

MEDICAL

- Schedule all medical appointments
- Make a plan with specialists and/or mental health providers (if needed)
- Obtain prescription medication for the entirety of your program (if needed)
- See travel clinic (if desired)
- Schedule vaccinations (if needed)

FINANCES

- Pay for your program
- Apply for financial aid (if desired)

FOLLOW US ON SOCIALS



@THESFS
@SFS_COSTARICA

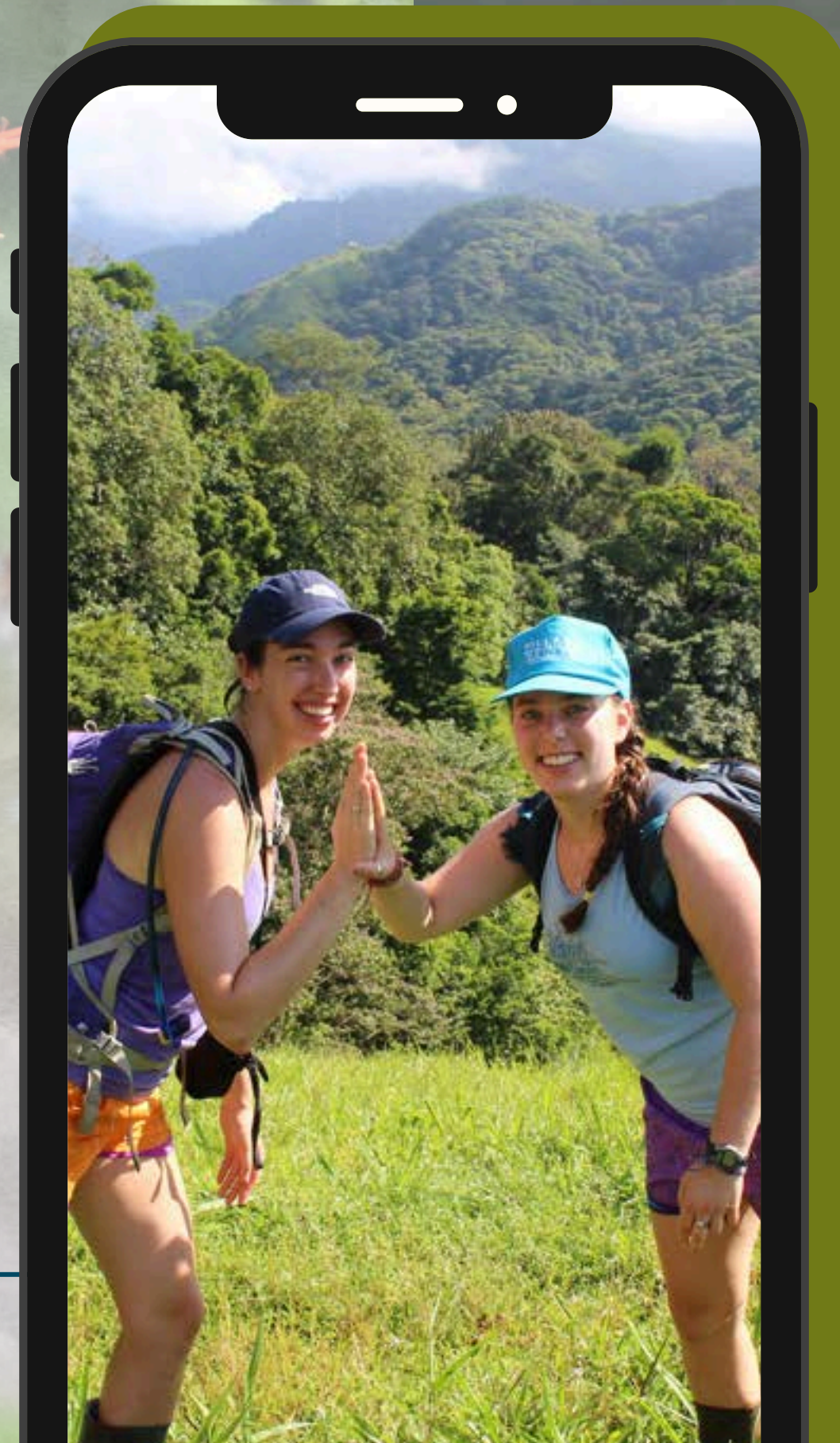


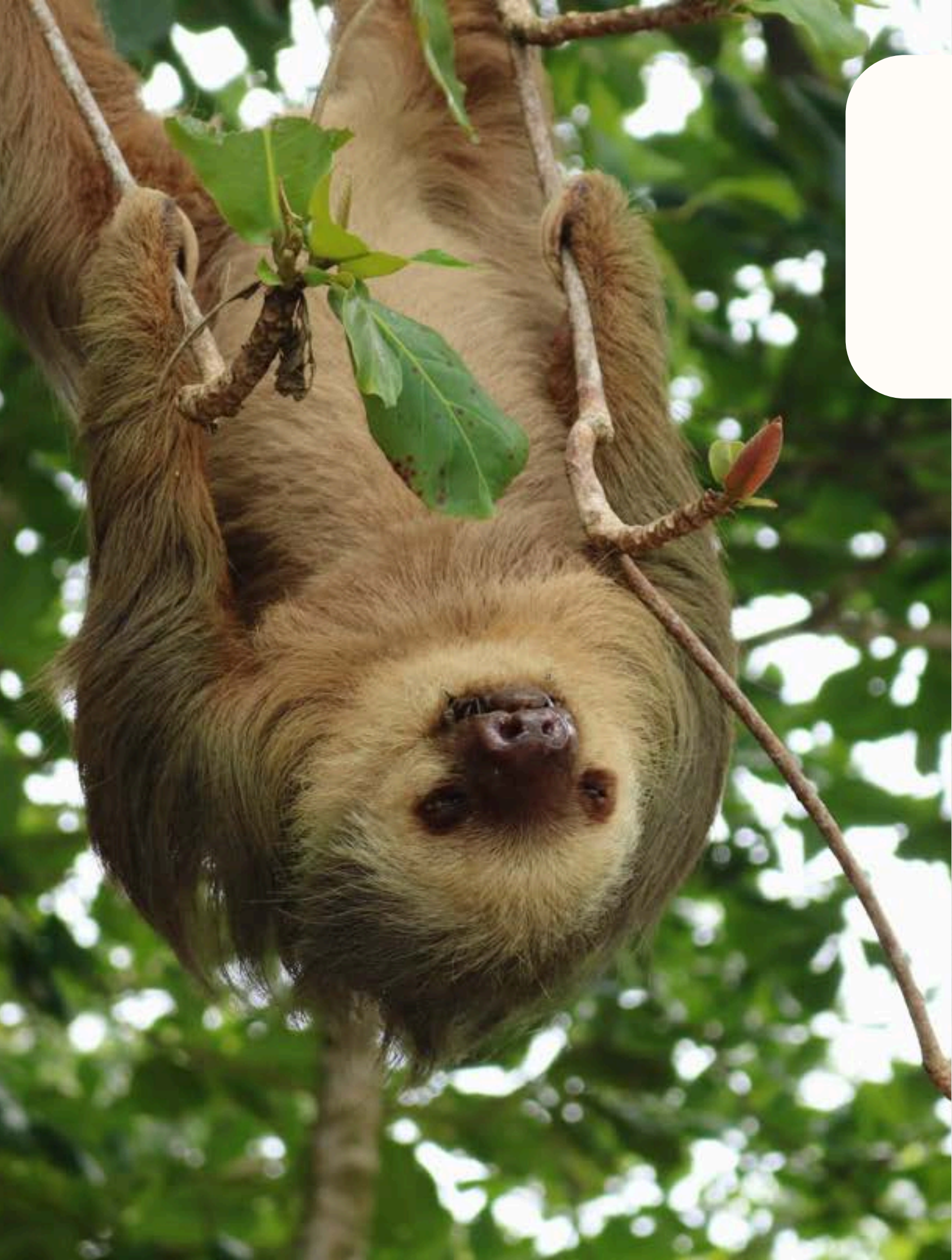
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*Tag us in your
posts @thesfs!*





QUESTIONS?

Here is how you can get in touch:

MEDICAL + SAFETY

studentlife@fieldstudies.org

BILLING + FINANCIAL AID

billing@fieldstudies.org

ACADEMICS

academics@fieldstudies.org

GENERAL QUESTIONS

admissions@fieldstudies.org