

# SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA SERVICE LEARNING TRIP

— INFO + ITINERARY —





# SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA



San Jose, the capital city of Costa Rica, is a vibrant and bustling urban center situated in the heart of the country's Central Valley. Known for its rich cultural heritage, the city offers a blend of historical landmarks, museums, and contemporary attractions. With a backdrop of lush mountains, San Jose serves as a gateway to Costa Rica's diverse landscapes and is a hub for exploring the country's natural beauty.

## **This destination is recommended for:**

San Jose, Costa Rica is an excellent choice for MEDLIFE volunteers seeking a transformative service learning experience. As the country's capital, San Jose offers a unique intersection of urban life and social development initiatives. Volunteers can engage in impactful healthcare, education, and community projects while immersing themselves in Costa Rica's rich cultural heritage. This destination not only enables volunteers to make a tangible difference but also allows them to explore the vibrant city and use it as a base to access various regions of the country for a comprehensive and enlightening trip.

Details of Destination	
Student Handbook	<a href="#">San Jose student handbook</a> (Mobile Clinic station details, phrases in local language and local emergency contacts)
Country	Costa Rica
Country Population	Approximately 5 million
Languages	Spanish
Currency	Costa Rican Colón (CRC) \$1 USD = ₡ 534 CRC *Susceptible to fluctuation
Weather	<b>Weather:</b> All year round: 60°F to 80°F (15°C to 27°C)

	<b>Precipitation:</b> (Dry Season) - December to April (Rainy Season) - May to November
<b>Location</b>	Capital of Costa Rica
<b>Population</b>	5 Million (Approx)
<b>Time from the hotel to the communities</b>	30 minutes up to 1:30 hour
<b>Community Development Project</b>	School Renovations Classroom building Eco-bathroom Safe Homes projects
<b>Extra Activities (Not Included)</b>	-Visit Tarcoles River to see the Crocodiles - Visit to Manuel Antonio National Park - Walking tour

## ISSUES COMMUNITIES FACE

Tourists rarely consider poverty when thinking about Costa Rica. Many find it difficult to comprehend that great poverty exists within what seems like paradise when surrounded by the country's abundant beauty. Despite being full of beautiful natural attractions unfortunately, Costa Rica has a poverty rate of one in every four people with 1.1 million individuals currently living in poverty in the country. Around 20 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line, earning less than \$155 per month. Poverty and income inequality are persistent issues in Tamarindo, particularly among local residents who may not benefit from the tourism industry. Some factors that contribute to poverty in Tamarindo include limited access to education and job opportunities, a high cost of living, and income disparities between urban and rural areas. The tropical weather and lush scenery attract many tourists. However, that same equatorial climate also brings still water and multiple mosquito-borne illnesses, which significantly impact the health of the local residents.

## TRIP LOGISTICS

### PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

For most SLT volunteers the only requirement to enter countries where we have Mobile Clinics is a current passport that will be valid at least six months after your trip. Requirements could change frequently and are communicated to volunteers during the registration process.

If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you may need a visa to enter certain countries. It is your responsibility to determine if you need a visa and make appropriate arrangements.

## **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Volunteers are responsible for buying their own airfare. However, our team can help you in this process by providing a flight quote for your group. You can request a flight quote by emailing [info@medlifemovement.org](mailto:info@medlifemovement.org). Once your flight is booked, please make sure to add your arrival and departure information to your booking.

**AIRPORT:** Juan Santamaria Airport (SJO)

Recommended time frames for arrivals and departures is as follows:

**San Jose, Costa Rica**

**Arrival:** Saturday 9am to 2pm

**Departure:** Sunday noon to 6pm

**If students arrive outside of the set time frames, they will be responsible for covering the cost of transportation to their site.** If your flight arrives outside the timeframes listed please email [info@medlifemovement.org](mailto:info@medlifemovement.org). Remember that any additional nights and transfers that are added before/after your trip because of early or late arrival are not included in the Service Learning Trip donation goal, and will be at the cost of the volunteer.

We highly recommend purchasing trip cancellation insurance, which will allow you to cancel for any reason. You can contact [info@medlifemovement.org](mailto:info@medlifemovement.org) for more information about our insurance options.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

**SOCIALTEL SAN JOSÉ (FORMERLY SELINA)**

Address: Barrio Otoya, Ave 9 – Calle 13-15, San Jose, 10101, Costa Rica

Phone: +506 4020 5510

## **HEALTH**

### **TRAVEL HEALTH INSURANCE**

Emergency medical insurance is included in the cost of your trip but trip cancellation insurance is not included.



## VACCINATION

MEDLIFE follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations and requirements. Immunization recommendations for all of our trip locations may be found on this page: [www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list). We recommend consulting the CDC page and/or visiting a local travel clinic for more information.

**Visit your doctor:** MEDLIFE does not require any vaccinations however, you should follow all CDC requirements and any advice from your medical professional.

## HEALTH PROTOCOLS

- **Face Masks:** Volunteers must wear surgical face masks during the Mobile Clinic and comply with all local face mask requirements.
- **Wash and Sanitize Your Hands:** Hand-washing stations and hand sanitizer will be available on clinic days. Don't forget to always wash your hands before eating and at the end of every clinic day to prevent stomach issues.
- **Illness During Trip:** If you are demonstrating symptoms of any illness or feeling unwell, please advise your Trip Leader immediately to get medical care.

## OTHER

### MONEY

We recommend that you have access to at least \$200 to \$300 during your Service Learning Trip week to cover two days of meals, tourism activities, and any additional food, drinks, or souvenirs you wish to purchase.

Volunteers can easily exchange money in the locations they will visit. They can access their bank accounts via ATM or debit card and can also easily exchange cash with money-exchange officials on the streets or in nearby exchange houses.

### WHAT TO PACK

You should plan to look professional but dress comfortably. Jeans, shorts, polos, athletic wear, and t-shirts are all acceptable. In all locations, a MEDLIFE t-shirt will be provided, but you are not required to use it.

Check suggested items and checklist for your destination here: [SLT Packing Lists](#)

### DONATIONS

Many volunteers organize themselves to bring essential supplies such as medical equipment, educational materials, and hygiene items to the communities they serve. These donated products enhance the effectiveness of healthcare and education initiatives,

fostering a direct and immediate positive impact on the lives of those in need. This is not mandatory but if you wish to bring medical or any other kind of donations you can find a recommended list here: [Costa Rica Recommended donation list](#)

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the unlikely event you have a travel or health emergency and there are no MEDLIFE staff to assist you, you can contact us via the following numbers.

When in-destination or in transit to destination	<b>COSTA RICA EMERGENCY PHONE</b>	+506 71630109 (WhatsApp, call, or SMS)
When calling from within North America	<b>MEDLIFE HQ PHONE</b>	1-844-633-5433

## **Emergency or Medical Assistance Procedure**

Before Your Trip: Contact your local emergency authorities

For non-urgent matters, contact your Chapter, MEDLIFE HQ Phone, or email [info@medlifemovement.org](mailto:info@medlifemovement.org)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

If you still have doubts and/or question about trip details we suggest you consult our FAQ section of the MEDLIFE movement website to search for the answer. the link is here: <https://www.medlifemovement.org/service-learning-trips/faqs/>

# Itinerary Day By Day

DAY

1

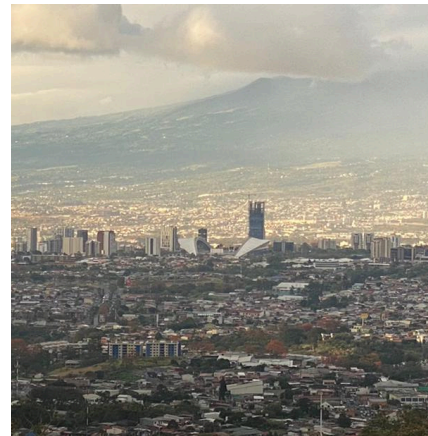
**Saturday**

## **Arrival to San Jose**

Arrive at San Jose airport (SJO) between 9:00am and 12:00pm. A MEDLIFE representative will meet you at the airport and escort you to your accommodation. You will have time to relax, settle in, and then head out to explore. Meals aren't included today, but you can enjoy a tasty dinner at one of the nearby restaurants.



Overnight  
San Jose MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

2

**Sunday**

## **Welcome Meeting & Leisure Day**

At 9:00 a.m. we will host a welcome meeting where everyone can gather together and we will cover what to expect for the week and review safety precautions. After that, you have the rest of the day at your leisure!



Overnight  
San Jose MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY  
3

## Monday

### Reality Tour

On a MEDLIFE Reality Tour, volunteers join MEDLIFE staff in the field to learn about our partner communities and the challenges they face daily. It is often our volunteers' first exposure to extreme poverty, making it one of the most impactful experiences of their trip. The Reality Tour's main goal is to introduce volunteers to the area's culture and history. This lays the groundwork for cultural awareness and sensitivity, which are incredibly important when you're serving communities in another country.



Overnight  
San Jose MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY  
4-6

## Tuesday to Thursday

### Mobile Clinics

Tuesday through Thursday, you will support Mobile Clinics in the various communities around San Jose. Each day, the Mobile Clinic will be held in a different community. You will wake up at 6 am for breakfast and leave the hotel by 7 am to travel to the community by bus. Bus rides may be anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours.

Upon arriving in the community, you will unpack all medical supplies from the bus and meet the health professionals you will be assisting that day. After unloading supplies, volunteers will report to the Mobile Clinic station that you have been assigned to that morning. A brief training session will be provided by the health professionals at each station, and the clinic will begin accepting patients between 8-9 am. Patients will first visit the Triage Station, where you will assist in taking each patient's vital signs. From there, patients will listen to educational talks provided by MEDLIFE nurses in the Education Station, while volunteers hand out educational pamphlets.





Patients will then move to either the General Medicine, Dental, or OBGYN stations to receive medical consultation. Within all medical consultation stations, volunteers will have the opportunity to shadow the physician and learn how the physician works with the patient to evaluate the patient's symptoms, provide a diagnosis, and devise a treatment plan. Finally, patients will be directed to the Pharmacy Station where you will assist nurses to fill the prescriptions that patients have been given during their medical consultations.

Participants stay at their assigned station until they are relieved for lunch by their Trip Leader at around 11:30 am. Take a break and eat lunch on the bus before you report to your second station assignment for the afternoon. The Mobile Clinic will close anywhere from 1-3 pm, depending on the number of patients that day. As many as 100+ patients may pass through the medical clinic throughout the day!

In the evening, volunteers will meet in the hotel conference room at 5 pm for interactive post-clinic activities before eating dinner at 6 pm. On the days when no post-clinic activity is scheduled, volunteers will be free to explore the city before and after dinner.



Overnight  
San Jose MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

7

## Friday

### Development Project

On this day you'll work hand-in-hand with locals on a community development project such as a home renovation, well construction, or bathroom complex. Development projects can vary, depending on community needs. We'll leave the hostel at 7:30 am to head to the project site. Remember to wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty as you might be involved in messy activities, like mixing cement, painting walls, and other manual labor activities. After the project has been completed, take part in an inauguration with the community to celebrate all that you've achieved!

We'll return to the hostel around 2:30 pm-4:00 pm for a short reflection and debrief with the MEDLIFE team to wrap up the week.



Overnight  
San Jose Hostel

DAY

8

## Saturday

### Optional Day Trip

On the Optional Day Trip you will have the opportunity to explore more of what Costa Rica has to offer. The first stop will be the Tarcoles River, inhabited by the highest population of crocodiles in the world. You will get to walk along the bridge and see the crocodiles in person! Next, we will visit Manuel Antonio National Park, located on the Central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica. Here you will get to explore the park for its wide variety of animal life and breathtaking nature. The park also contains three gorgeous light sand beaches perfect for swimming, snorkeling, and lounging. Don't forget to pack a swimsuit and towel! Around 1:30 p.m. we will sit down for lunch at a local restaurant. Then, from 2-3 p.m., you are free to explore the area. We are expected to arrive back at the hotel around 6:00 p.m.



DAY

9

**Sunday**

### **Departure**

Depart San Jose anytime between 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

## **INCLUDED**

- ✓ 7 nights dorm room accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, and dinner from Monday to Friday
- ✓ Transportation to and from the airport (within the established schedule), and to SLT activities
- ✓ English-speaking Trip Leader
- ✓ Safety equipment (including face masks)

## **NOT INCLUDED**

- ✓ Flights
- ✓ Tips
- ✓ Pre or post-trip accommodation
- ✓ Optional excursions
- ✓ Weekend meals