# CFCA AWARENESS TRIPS

trip information

*The following information is for **2014** trips. The dates and trips to specific countries change from year to year depending on interest, the political situation within the countries and the ability of CFCA projects to host an awareness trip. A detailed schedule and additional information will be sent one to two weeks prior to departure in the pre-departure packet.*

## COSTA RICA

**Trip Dates: April 5-12, 2014**
**July 12-19, 2014**

**Trip Size: 12-30 participants**

Please register by 90 days in advance to reserve your spot. If you still wish to register after this date, contact a CFCA trip coordinator regarding availability.

**Trip Fee: $500**

Includes food, lodging and in-country transportation. Airfare is **not** included.

### On your trip to Costa Rica you may do some or all of the following activities:

- Be welcomed by the local CFCA staff who will be your hosts for the week, ensuring that your visit is enjoyable
- Spend time with your sponsored friend and possibly the family
- Visit the homes and communities of CFCA sponsored friends and their families, where you will learn about their joys and challenges
- Learn about the diverse experiences and unique perspectives of sponsored friends and their families
- Observe the beauty of volcanoes, drive through the rain forest and visit a nature reserve

### Entry and Exit Requirements

**A passport valid for at least three months beyond the end of your intended stay is required to enter Costa Rica.** A visa is not required for U.S. citizens, but tourists must provide proof of return or onward travel, such as a return plane ticket. All visitors to Costa Rica must pay a **departure tax of $28** before leaving the country. This fee may be included in the price of your airline ticket. *All fees are subject to change*. While in Costa Rica, travelers should carry their passport or a photocopy of it at all times. Participants who will be traveling with a minor should contact a CFCA trip coordinator for additional information.

### Airport and Travel Arrangements

**Make your airline arrangements only after your registration is confirmed and you receive the CFCA trip coordinator's written instructions for scheduling your flight.** In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to research airfares with a travel agent, an airline or via the Internet. The Florida-based agency, Vista Travel, is familiar with our programs and schedules and may be contacted regarding airfare at (800) 537-5066.

All trip participants should arrive at the **Juan Santamaría International Airport (SJO)** in San José on the first scheduled day of the trip and depart from the same airport on the last scheduled day. **The CFCA staff will meet all travelers at the airport who arrive on the scheduled arrival day. Do not accept offers of transportation from anyone other than the CFCA team.**

*(over)*

## Accommodations and Food

All trip participants will stay in simple accommodations near the CFCA projects, usually in a retreat center or hotel. Married couples and families will have private rooms. Other participants will be assigned a roommate. Running water for showers is readily available, but it may not be heated. **Although the water in San Jose is considered potable, the group will visit other regions of the country where tap water may be unsafe for drinking. CFCA asks trip participants to refrain from drinking the tap water in Costa Rica.** Instead, the project will provide bottled water. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the trip fee.

Participants will eat simple meals that reflect the local cuisine. All food is prepared with purified water. All meals will be eaten with the group. Do not purchase food from street vendors. Meals are often served at a later hour than most Americans are accustomed to eating. We recommend bringing snacks such as dried fruit and nut mixes, raisins, granola bars, etc., as you may want something to eat between scheduled meals.

No adapter or converter is necessary. The **electrical current** in Costa Rica is in the same range as the U.S. and the shape of the plugs is the same. Diagrams of the outlets are available at www.electricaloutlet.org.

## Climate

The temperatures remain fairly constant year-round, averaging between 65 and 85 degrees. However, mornings and evenings can be quite cool, so it is advisable to bring a sweater or jacket on the trip. For a majority of the year, rain showers are a daily occurrence; a rain jacket is recommended. Participants should be aware that minor tremors may occur. The group travels along winding, mountainous roads, which can cause motion sickness.

## Health/Medical Preparations

**Contact your medical doctor or local health department for immunization recommendations based on your health history.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/travel has country specific recommendations regarding immunizations. You may also contact them by phone at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). According to the CDC, the regions of Costa Rica with malaria include areas that may be visited by our trips. CFCA staff members are not qualified to offer advice on immunizations.

You should also consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling to confirm whether your policy applies in a foreign country. **If your policy does not cover emergency expenses such as medical evacuation, we urge you to consider the purchase of temporary travel insurance.** Many insurance plans, including Medicare, do not cover treatment outside of the U.S. You may find further information on travel insurance through a travel agent or through research on the Internet.

## Currency Exchange and Handling

The local currency is the Costa Rican **colón** (CRC)**,** but the U.S. dollar is widely accepted. Your lodging, food and in-country transportation are included in the trip fee. You should bring additional money for the purchase of snacks and souvenirs, and to cover entry/exit fees. You should not carry bills in denominations greater than $20 because they may be difficult for local banks or vendors to exchange. Do not bring torn or severely worn currency. You can bring U.S. dollars into the country. You will be provided with an opportunity to exchange money upon arrival either at the airport, at the lodging, or another method. Traveler's checks are not recommended, and ATMs are not readily available.