
2015-16 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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Hola from Costa Rica!

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Hola from Costa Rica!



Linfield students in Costa Rica

These last few weeks have been filled to the brim with activities that have left us very tired but also very excited to explore more of this beautiful country. Two weekends ago, we traveled to the northern region of Costa Rica on our first group field trip of many this semester! We left early Friday morning from San Ramón and drove north to Guanacaste to visit several clean energy plants, namely wind, geothermal and solar. Although we were really sleepy on the long car ride, it was hard to stay asleep for long with the amazing views all around us. At the plants themselves, we learned about the efficiency of each method as well as each energy type's actual use in homes throughout Costa Rica. This country is very unique in that it uses 95-99% renewable energy and the government here plans to go completely carbon neutral by 2021. It's absolutely fantastic how much green energy is in use here, but also tragic how many species have gone extinct here and how much wildlife has been destroyed as a result of human impact and climate change. But nonetheless, Costa Rica's progress in renewable energy use is encouraging and inspiring!

The next day, we again woke up early and drove a long way on a very rocky, uneven and pothole-ridden road to visit an indigenous village in the territory of Los Malekus in northern Alajuela. The gorgeous scenery as well as hand-carved figures holding the words "Capy Capy" or "Welcome" greeted us as we approached the village. There, we met our Maleku guide named Alex, who was extremely friendly and

hilarious throughout the day. He first took our group into a traditional Maleku home constructed of a special type of palm leaf and proceeded to inform us of the traditional as well as current Maleku culture.

Later, we got to see a Maleku performance that our host translated for us into Spanish. It was so crazy to hear their language; it's so different than anything we'd ever heard before, and even after our guide taught us some vocabulary words, it was still difficult to pronounce and remember. That being said, one thing we do remember is that butterflies (fu fus) represent love, peace and good luck, and toucans (pilis) represent internal as well as eternal female beauty in Maleku culture.

Throughout the day, our guide took us through a nearby forest where we learned about medicinal plants in the area. While there, we also got soaked by the random rainstorms that frequently come and go in Costa Rica. Though we started out trying to stay dry under trees and umbrellas, we eventually realized that it was hopeless and chose to run back in the pouring rain. It ended up being a fun adventure that left us covered in mud, soaked to the skin and laughing the hardest we've laughed in a while! Afterwards, we had a traditional Maleku lunch of rice, beans and local tilapia cooked in a leaf called anillo. We were a little skeptical at the thought of eating a leaf...but it ended up being delicious--a flavor we can never recreate but will never forget! Later, we got the opportunity to do a little painting, Maleku style! We were each assigned a different animal and were given 15 minutes to do our best work. Though the finished products definitely didn't look like the beautiful work of the Malekus, we still had fun trying!

All in all, we spent the majority of the day with the Malekus and by the end we wished we had more time. Not many people are able to do what our group did, so we felt extra lucky that we got to experience and learn about the Maleku people.

Hasta luego,

Mackenzie