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Welcome to...the welcome guide!

Because you’ve signed up to play hooky with us in Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica, and in case you haven’t heard? This was probably the best decision you’ve made since 1968.

Because all work and no play doesn’t just mean your tombstone is painfully boring; it also means you have no good stories to tell. And it really is about the stories, isn’t it?

We’re honored to say that Life Hooky is about to become a part of yours.

Within the pages of this welcome guide, you’ll find everything you could ever want to know about our upcoming trip, including information on the country, the people, the itinerary, what to pack, what to remember, next steps, and even some other fun details like a mini guide to Costa Rican slang (so you can start practicing rolling your R’s!)

So without further ado, welcome to your first Life Hooky retreat.

We’re glad you dared.
We can hear your voice now, (which has an Australian accent in our heads, in case you were wondering), and you’re saying—

*But what else can you tell me about where we’re going? I want to know more!*

So as you know by now, we’re going to COSTA RICA! Please picture us standing on a cliff screaming into a megaphone and also wearing some sort of sweet gold lamé bodysuit reminiscent of J. Lo. (Editor’s note: Don’t be fooled by the rocks that we got. And by “rocks” we mean donuts.)
But back to the details. Located in the heart of Central America, tucked neatly in between Nicaragua & Panama, the country of Costa Rica is one that’s known for its eco-tourism, sunshine, outdoor adventures, empanada carts on the beach, lush, thick rainforests, and, of course, dimly-lit cantinas where hips sway to the rhythm of Salsa and the sugar-cane alcohol flows like...delicious, sugar-cane alcohol.

Here are some fun facts you should know in case when everyone you’ve ever met starts quizzing you about Costa Rica the moment you tell them you’re going:

> **Costa Rica is known as the friendliest country on earth.**

Don’t believe us? It even says, “Welcome to the friendliest country on earth” on the airport wall when you’re exiting, and you just have to believe airport walls.

> It’s the size of West Virginia. (The more you know, right?)

> The primary language is Spanish, (but no, you don’t have to speak it.)

> There is no military. None. There hasn’t been since it was abolished in 1948, in order to avoid a civil war and simultaneously invest those monies into education & medicine, which drastically improved the standard of living in less than 10 years.

> The President of Costa Rica is named Laura Chinchilla. And yup—she’s a woman. Costa Rica is a democracy, with elections every 4 years.

> It’s bordered by both the Pacific & Caribbean oceans. (We’ll be headed to the Pacific since it’s the safest, and has the quirkiest, most outstanding beauty.) We promise you’ll be blown away—*metaphorically*, you guys. The winds don’t even get that strong in Costa Rica.

> We’re headed to the Quepos/Manuel Antonio area, famous for many things, including the national park, monkeys, sportfishing, and some of the nicest beaches around. See also: Wheelbarrows of coconuts.
You can drink the water.

Lemons are actually really difficult to find in Costa Rica. Instead, they use limes. For everything. But confusingly, the Spanish word for limes is “limones.” Have fun!

Numbered street addresses are non-existent in Costa Rica; instead, addresses are designated by where they are located to the closest landmark. And, yup, it’s official. If you send an envelope to Costa Rica that says, “House of Jane Doe, located in the neighborhood of Boca Vieja, 100 meters west of the corner store, Quepos, Costa Rica,” it will arrive. Have the faith.

The currency of Costa Rica is colones. You can easily approximate the dollar amount by doubling it. For example:

1,000 colones = approximately $2
2,000 colones = approximately $4
3,000 colones = approximately $6

MATH.

You’ll see a lot of stray dogs in Costa Rica. A lot.

Broken yellow hearts painted on the road mean that someone lost their life there. You may see these along the way.

There are 801 miles of coastline in Costa Rica. Loose translation: Costa Rica has an above average concentration of Speedos.

Names are sometimes confusing in Costa Rica. When a woman & man marry, the woman does not take her husband’s last name—she keeps her maiden name. However, their child will take the father’s name, followed by the mother’s last name. If hypothetically you were to marry a Costa Rican, and wanted to take his last name, you’d confuse the entire country, because everyone would think you were his sister. And that’s probably not good for your reputation.

The sun rises & sets around the same time 365 days a year. They don’t have daylight savings time, and sunset will almost always be at 5:30 p.m. every single day.
Costa Rica is known as the friendliest country on earth because, well, the people are some of the friendliest on earth. They’re hard-working, love their families, and by and large, are a gentle, polite group of folks. (So much so that they can get us to say the word folks.)
Most of them descended from Spanish immigrants, but many families originated in other parts of Europe. The farther out you go, the more you find mestizos, or those who are a mix of European and indigenous blood, and on the Caribbean coast, you’ll also find a lot of African lineage. Here’s a story we think you’ll find interesting:

“With an increase in coffee production towards the end of the 19th century (coffee had been introduced in 1797) a more direct way out for shipments of the product was needed. In 1871 the Costa Rican government contracted an American company to build a railroad from San Jose to the coastal town of Puerto Limon. Much of the coastal area was uninhabited at this time. The railroad contractors brought in Jamaican laborers to build the railroad. It took nine years to lay the first 70 miles of track, but by 1890 the line had been built up the valley of the Rio Reventazon to Turrialba, and the next year the line was completed. Many of the Jamaicans stayed on in the country and settled in Puerto Limon and in small towns that were located along the rail line. Towns such as Guapiles developed large Afro-Antillean populations as well as smaller villages such as Canada, London, Bristol, and Stratford that show the influence of the Creole English speaking Jamaicans who settled primarily along the rail line between Puerto Limon and Siquirres. Some went directly from railroad jobs to work on American owned banana plantations, while others returned to Jamaica after the completion of the railroad.

One of the Americans in charge of the railroad project was Minor C. Keith. He imported rootstalks of banana plants from Panama and had them planted along the route of the new rail line. By 1878 the first bananas were exported from Costa Rica to New Orleans. In 1899 Keith consolidated his banana holdings in Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia with Boston Fruit Company to form the United Fruit Company. By 1909, Costa Rica had become the world’s leading banana producer. United Fruit hired thousands of black Jamaicans to work on its plantations.

During the building of the railroad and establishment United Fruit, Afro-Antilleans were favored by their American employers over Spanish speaking Costa Ricans. The English language helped give blacks an advantage in employment opportunities and for many years the black community lived isolated from their Hispanic neighbors.
All in all, Costa Ricans may vary quite a bit when it comes to their appearance, but one thing unites them more than anything else: 

*Le soccer.* (You saw that one coming, didn’t you?)

Just like most countries south of the border, soccer isn’t just a beloved sport—it’s a religion. Entire empires are built around the soccer field, which is always accompanied by a church facing west. Soccer field + church facing west = center of town. (Those clever city planners.)

The nice thing about their soccer addiction is that it’s easy to make friends. Wherever there’s a soccer game on, you can rest assured there will be people banding together in watering holes nationwide—and if you’re there for the game, it doesn’t matter who you are: *you’re welcome.*

By the way, you should probably know that in the hierarchy of Costa Rican soccer, there’s the national Costa Rican soccer team, and then a handful of regional teams, two of which are the most popular (and *serious* rivals): Saprissa & La Liga. In Costa Rica, you’re either one or the other: A Saprissista, or a Ligista, so a word to the wise: *Pick a side.*

When there’s not a soccer game going on, you can find most Costa Ricans with the people they love most: Their family.

Family is at the heart of everything they do, and taking over an entire city block between your house and those of your extended family isn’t the exception—it’s the norm. Unlike many Western cultures, where young people leave at age 18 and seek their independence, young Costa Ricans are likely to live with their parents until they marry—and they’re perfectly fine with it. In fact, it’s preferred. Mothers love taking care of their children, and will do so at great length, making food for the whole family, doing everyone’s laundry, and keeping it all together...sort of like a 1950’s United States, but less hair rollers.

Yet here, even when young people eventually do move out and start a family of their own, they’ll often still hang at their parents’ house as family members come in and out throughout the day unannounced. There’s no calling ahead of time, no plans, no grand announcements; if you’re family, there’s an open door policy, and you’re expected to hang around. Stop by, take a nap in whichever bed happens to be available, eat some lunch (still prepared by grandma), or have a cold beer on the front patio with the boys and watch the world go by.

Here, there is no rush. And there’s certainly no rush hour.

...at least not where we’re headed, anyway. Once you put in a day’s work, the rest of your time is yours—when you’re encouraged to rest, relax, and spend time with those you love. *Guilt-free.*
In terms of social class, Costa Rica has more of a middle class than most countries in Central America, in large part thanks to the tourism industry. A large percentage of the population works in tourism, and this is particularly true in Manuel Antonio, our destination, where the majority of jobs are found within hotels or adventure excursion companies. You can always tell when someone works in hospitality; they’ll inevitably be dressed in khaki shorts and a white polo shirt, with white socks that they pull up to about mid-calf. The mid-calf sock look is very Costa Rican, and the people really dig it—even women. That said, there’s also a good number of non-tourism related jobs available at places like the bank, the supermarket, restaurants, and local variety shops.

**On average, a typical Costa Rican salary is approximately $600/month.**

If you’re fortunate to work in the hospitality industry, you might also receive commissions, so perhaps bringing your monthly salary closer to $800–$1,000 if you’re lucky.

For them that’s plenty—living together with their families is an instant money-saver, and eating home-cooked meals from grandma’s kitchen helps, too. When someone does strike it out on their own, however, they can expect to pay between $200–$300/month in rent, depending on the location and the apartment, of course. Then you’ve got your other bills, such as “luz,” which translates to “light,” and is slang for electricity, the water, cable, internet, and your cell phone, which are all customary to pay at the pharmacy downtown. Yup—the pharmacy—hub of utility payments. It’s been that way for ages, and the tradition remains—though you can pay many things online these days, if you dare. Most Costa Ricans, however, will still choose to wait in line, probably out of habit. Sometimes, just waiting in line to make a deposit at the bank might take up to three hours.

Costa Rican homes are quite different from what you’re probably used to, as well. They tend to be fairly colorful—think tangerine oranges and bright greens—and are usually made from cinder block and cement, with painted metal roofs, and black gates that surround the home, which sounds a lot less cozy than it actually is. (We swear.)
You’ll never find a carpet in a Costa Rican’s home; mostly because of the humidity, but also because it’s simply much easier to sweep things outside. And that’s precisely what you’ll find Costa Rican women doing each and every day—painstakingly sweeping their home. Usually the floor is some variation of ceramic tile, sometimes with fancy patterns, and to the outsider, it often seems like a Costa Rican woman’s pride is found in those tiles—how clean & shiny they are at a moment’s notice. Probably because so many people drop by at a moment’s notice! Usually the same tiles extend from right inside the home to outside, on the front patio if there is one, where the family will sit on rocking chairs and play with their grandkids, nieces, and nephews, chatting up neighbors who stroll by with their families, and enjoy being outside—even during the rainy season when there’s torrential downpours at least once per day, like clockwork from around 3–6pm. (Don’t worry—we aren’t going during rainy season!)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Costa Rican eating habits are also interesting, of course—as one might expect when traveling to those things called foreign countries. Spreading butter on saltine crackers and eating that as a snack, for example, or religiously eating rice & beans for breakfast in the morning, known as the infamous *gallo pinto* dish.

Salads don’t exist in the way we’re used to them Costa Rica; their version is a small pile of shredded lettuce *(always shredded—bane of every expat’s existence)* that often comes as a side accompaniment to your main meal, no dressing. Because salad dressing isn’t really a thing, either. Or, at least, it isn’t as popular—because salads aren’t popular. Sure, you can get them at any American style restaurant, but to find them on a Costa Rican’s dinner table? Probably not. Speaking of tables, ketchup and mustard aren’t standard condiments here; ketchup and mayonnaise are, and the ketchup is a much sweeter variety than you’re probably used to.

For another fun fact that’s sure never to prove useful in this lifetime, crack open a Costa Rican egg and you’re bound to find a vivid dark orange yolk inside—much more orange than the eggs in the United States, at least, which are more a soft yellow color.
Other Costa Rican favorite foods include empanadas, which are a Latin American staple akin to giant, oversized pizza pockets stuffed with meat or cheese instead of pizza.

And, of course, who could forget ceviche? It’s a country-wide favorite, made with either fish, shellfish, or a combination of both, by cubing up pieces and letting them marinate in a mixture of lime juice, cilantro, onion, red bell peppers, and sometimes even a splash of ginger ale. The citric acid from the lime “cooks” the fish by breaking down the proteins, and in just a couple of hours you’ve got ceviche. And it’s actually amazing. You can buy fresh ceviche for $3 bucks, spooned into a plastic cup and covered with a piece of aluminum foil and a rubber band, or go high end and order it at your favorite restaurant. (Bonus: Find the local Peruvian joint and try their ceviche to taste the difference between the cultures; Peruvian ceviche is less tart, and with a flavor of its own. If you want to stay up past your bedtime reading about ceviche and its wonders, do yourself a favor and click here.)

**NICKNAMES**

Last but not least, perhaps the most important thing for you to know about Costa Ricans is that they’re colloquially known as “ticos,” which is a friendly term that anyone can use, including you. (And they will also call you gringo, which they use affectionately...not as an insult.) If you’re talking to a male, he’s a tico, and if you’re talking to a female, she’s a tica. The nickname originated because Costa Ricans have their own special way of changing their words to the diminutive form; for example, you’ve probably heard of “poco,” which means a little, and “poquito,” which means “less than a little.” In general, you can change words in Spanish to mean “little” anything, just by adding an “ito” at the end. For example, chico for boy becomes chiquito for little boy, or pato for duck becomes patito for little duck. However, in Costa Rica, to express the same point, the Costa Ricans, instead of adding an “ito,” prefer to add a “tico.” So chico doesn’t become chiquito—it becomes chiquitico. And pato doesn’t become patito—it becomes patico.

Hence, the nickname tico.

That said, ticos really are some of the friendliest people in the world, and even if you can’t communicate in Spanish with them, you’ll find them quite accommodating. That said, your effort to speak the language will always be appreciated—which is why we’ve gone ahead to include the next section on some key Costa Rican slang. Because slang.
I Costa Rican Spanish is one of the easiest dialects to understand. *(Phew.)*

II In the tourist areas, English is also widely spoken. At least some.

III Here’s a list of our favorite must-know Costa Rican phrases—most of which are native to Costa Rica, meaning you won’t find them in the pocket guidebook you’re inevitably going to lose after you go charging into the ocean with all your clothes on.
PURA VIDA! This is the country’s national slogan, and they don’t even say it in any other Spanish–speaking country. It means pure life, and it’s used to say hello, goodbye, thank you, or to let someone know that there’s no hard feelings.

Example: You’ll say, “Thanks for making me this delicious smoothie!” And they’ll say, “Pura Vida!” It’s chanted on buses, said on the street, and whispered in the wee hours of the morning. Pura vida.

Mae: Classic Costa Rican slang for “dude.” Pronounced “my,” you’ll probably find yourself saying things like, “Mae, this guaro is delicious.” Or, “I think I’ll go without underwear today, mae.”

Que mae!: Costa Rican slang for, “What’s up, dude?” For example, someone might say, “Que mae!” And you’ll say, “My blood-alcohol content, mae.” Perfection.

Tuanis: Surfer slang (that’s still widely used) for “cool”.

Cerveza/Chela: Beer, of course!

Guaro: The liquor of Costa Rica, made from sugar cane, (and is extra delicious).

Adios: Not actually the one you’re thinking. People in Costa Rica use this a lot as a street greeting when you’re passing by someone you know and want to acknowledge them – it’s this long drawn out, Adddioooooosssss.

Upe: (Pronounced ooo–pay). It’s said when entering someone’s home to get their attention and be polite.

Salado: Too bad for you! (This is most effective when said with a saucy wink.)

Con mucho gusto: Literally, “with much pleasure,” but you use it as “you’re welcome.” Note: Most Spanish textbooks will tell you that “you’re welcome” is actually “de nada.” This is not heard almost ever in Costa Rica; rather, the appropriate response is always, “Con mucho gusto.” Practice makes perfect.

Como amenació?: Literally, “How did you wake up?” and asked in the morning by virtually anyone you see before 10am.

Example: Someone will say, “Como amenació?” And you’ll say, “Next to a gorgeous Costa Rican man.” KIDDING. You’ll actually say, “Muy bien! And you?”
> **Que dicha!** How great! Thank goodness! Good news!  
(Note: This is what we’ll say if you actually tell us that you’ve woken up next to a gorgeous Costa Rican man. Or woman. Wink.)

> **Que Dios le acompañe:** Costa Ricans say this a lot to one another when saying goodbye, or when someone’s leaving for any amount of time. It translates into, “May God accompany you,” and they really mean it. (Does that warm your heart, or what?)

> **Fíjate que:** Would you believe that…?  
Example: “**Fíjate que** pineapples don’t grow on trees? They actually grow out of the ground. Crazy, right?!”

> **Vieras!** You should have seen it!  
Example: “**Vieras!** This morning I totally fit 50 papayas down my pants!” (Disclaimer: Papaya pants smuggling not recommended.)

> **Diay:** Well, what can you expect? (Pro tip: Great for when you make a fool of yourself and there’s an awkward silence.)

> **Estar de goma:** Hungover. (We’ll let you insert your own joke.)

> **Pulperia:** A small corner store in the neighborhood where you can get the very best…quart of unrefrigerated milk this side of the equator. It’s a thing.

> **Qué mala nota:** Bad news.  
Example: If someone says, “Costa Rica is out of guacamole,” you will say, “**Qué mala nota,**” and then weep openly in public.

> **Que pereza:** What a drag. Not to be confused with drag queen.

> **Al chile?:** Really?  
Example: They say, “I’ve had seven beers and it’s only noon!” And then you say, “**Al chile, mae?**” And then you guys high five.

> **Bañazo:** Fool, ridiculous. (See also: Our favorite sort of people.)

> **Compa:** Buddy or friend. (Any bañazo is a compa of ours.)

> **Regalame ______:** Literally translates to “gift me ______”. (Jess has memorized this one so she can just politely instruct everyone to, “**Regalame ALL THE TACOS.””)
WEDNESDAY MARCH 12, 2014
ARRIVAL DAY!

1:30 p.m.
Meet in the San Jose airport. (Further details to be announced.)
What you need: YOURSELF! (And your luggage. Luggage is important.)

2:00 p.m.
Our private bus departs! This means everyone should plan on arriving to San Jose no later than 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, to allow yourself enough time to go through customs & immigration. (Need to arrive in San Jose a night early to make it in time from your city? We’ll happily arrange that for you so you don’t have to lift a finger. Simply email our on-staff travel coordinator, Carlos, at Carlos@LifeHooky.com.)
The excitement starts from the second we leave the airport, and you don’t want to miss out. If you can’t make the bus, you’ll be responsible for getting from the San Jose airport to the La Mariposa Hotel, located in Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica—ideally in time for our open bar cocktail hour, kicking off at 5:30pm – 7:30pm, with our welcome dinner to follow.
2:00 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.  
Bus bonding time! (<— It’s a scientific thing.) We’ll be stopping mid-way for a bathroom break, ice cold beer and to take a peek at more alligators than you’ve ever seen. (Actually not hyperbole.)

What you need: Zip. Zilch. Nada. (We’ll have water and motion-sickness pills on hand, just in case.)

5:00 p.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Arrive to La Mariposa Hotel. Take some time to settle in. Freshen up, put down your luggage, and maybe faceplant for juuuuust a second on your bed. (After all, you’ve made it to a whole new country in one day.)

5:30 — 7:30 p.m.  
Happy Happiest hour, where we’ll be hosting an open bar outside on the veranda, overlooking the area’s most breathtaking panoramic view of the ocean (voted by tourists and locals alike). This is where you’ll awkwardly ask everyone’s name at least 4 times.

7:30 — 9:00 p.m.  
Group welcome dinner served! We’ll be hosting an open air dining experience with aforementioned panoramic view of the ocean. Our welcome dinner menu at The Mariposa allows you to select from:

An appetizer of:
• Mixed salad
• Seafood bisque

An entree of:
• Grilled chicken filet
• Fresh caught fish of the day
• Beef tenderloin
• Pasta, prepared to your taste

...All accompanied by vegetables & rice

And a dessert of:
• Flan de coco
• Ice cream
• Coffee or tea

9:00 p.m.  
MEETING ADJOURNED! (Just kidding. We’re not judges—yet.)
8:00 a.m. — 9:00 a.m.
Breakfast at La Mariposa Hotel. It’s a full breakfast, and they have delicious things like *gallo pinto* (a Costa Rican favorite), eggs, bacon, exotic fresh fruits (there WILL be papaya), and the world’s best cup of coffee. (Want to come early or stay late and tour an actual coffee plantation? Let us know and we’ll arrange it for you!)

What you need: An appetite and the first *NSYNC* album.

9:15 a.m. — 10:00 a.m.
Shuttle ride + professionally guided tour of the town of Quepos, where we’ll learn about the different neighborhoods, visit the marina (which used to be the primary Pacific port for banana exportation in the days of The United Fruit Company), check out an actual pineapple plantation, explore the various local businesses, discuss traditions, and point out interesting things like the old women who sell hand-written lottery tickets on the corner in secret.

Quepos is actually named for the Quepoa Indians that inhabited the area in the colonial era. In 1563, Spanish Catholic conquistadores, led by Juan Vázquez de Coronado, (remember that guy?) settled there and founded the settlement of San Bernardino de Quepo. Fast forward (many) years and Quepos later became one of the world’s premier banana exporting ports. Later, African palm oil replaced the banana industry as the local major crop—and this still remains true today.

Translation: On our way into town, you’ll gawk at pristine row upon row of African palm trees, lined perfectly behind one another for miles. The town itself consists of a 4 block wide grid-like section of streets lined with an array of local businesses. Think: Shops. Boutiques. Actual butchers. Mini convenience stores out of the side of the neighbor’s home. Friendly faces walking up and down the street, greeting everyone they’ve known their entire lives. Red taxis. Big old-school Mercedes buses. Families that pile onto a single bike and ride together to their mother’s house. (That’s what the handlebars are for.)

Then, of course, there’s the happy gaggle of pre-teens who gather in groups with their light blue school uniforms, giggling and passing their days away the old fashioned way: Together. Outside. Flirting. And being young. Without things like iPhones. Imagine?

10:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.
We cruise back into Manuel Antonio to arrive at the world renowned Manuel Antonio National Park—which is much less like a national park, and much more like a rainforest backing up to four separate beach coves—so we can all get our yearly dose of monkeys and sloths frolicking about and soak up a little sun! Written up by Forbes as one of the most beautiful national parks in the world, you won’t be disappointed. We’ll begin by taking a leisurely guided walk down the trail, taking time outs to learn about the local flora and—yes—spotting monkeys and sloths and all sorts of exotic birds. There are 3 different types of monkeys you might see, that all live in the park together: The White Faced Capuchin, The Howler Monkey, and The Squirrel Monkey. Beyond monkeys, there are actually 109 different species of mammals and 184 species of birds that live here, (and we don’t know about you, but that blew our damn minds.)

Soon, the trail will give way to the
first beach contained in the park: A gorgeous turquoise green ocean lagoon cove, where the waves don’t reach and the water is calm. The sand looks untouched, and you’ll finally understand the real meaning of the word “peace.” And also: Holy shit.

What you need: Your camera, a bathing suit & comfortable shoes for walking since we’ll be wandering around. If you’re wearing shorts, you might also want to bring some anti-chafing cream, too. Ladies, we’re lookin’ at you.

12:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m.
Unstructured time to explore! Take the opportunity to continue through the park & uncover other lagoons, or head back to the main beach to have lunch, peruse local arts & crafts, buy a coconut from the man with the wheelbarrow & machete, pierce an inappropriate part of your body, or spend the day on the beach, catching some rays.

What you need: Some cashola (for lunch and shopping).

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Suggested: Head back to the hotel, relax & get showered for dinner!

7:00 p.m. — 8:00 p.m.
Group dinner at our favorite Argentinian restaurant—yes, Argentinian—where the live mariachi band plays upbeat salsa & merengue as you leisurely enjoy the exquisite preparations of Argentine-born Fabricio Mengarelli, one of Ash’s favorite chefs in town. (And not because he always gives guests complimentary Limoncello. Not because of that at all.) Our menu at The Cantina at Costa Verde will consist of:

**Two complimentary cocktails of your choice.**

Like we said, no stone unturned.

**An appetizer selection of:**
- Crispy Tossed Salad: Mixed lettuce, croutons, bacon, avocado, tomato & honey mustard dressing
- Calamari Salteado: Chives, mushrooms, tomatoes, basil & garlic

**An entree selection of:**
- Tenderloin Porcini: 10 oz. imported beef tenderloin, porcini mushroom sauce, corn on the cob, baked potato & grilled vegetables
- Mahi Mahi Filet Topped With Seafood Medley: Fresh caught mahi mahi fish filet, topped with fresh local shell fish, tomatoes & onion, and your choice of either cream or tomato sauce. Served
FRIDAY, MARCH 14TH, 2014

8:00 a.m. — 9:00 a.m.
Breakfast at La Mariposa Hotel.

9 a.m. — 12 p.m.
Cultural exchange activity! We’ll be taking a short boat ride across the mangrove estuary to visit an economically disadvantaged elementary school, donate as many new soccer balls as we can carry, kick around with the kids & learn how to make Costa Rican empanadas together!

12:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m.
Adventure time! Want to zipline high over the rainforest, or kick up some dust down below on an ATV? It’s your choice! Leaving directly from the school we’ll be heading out on an adventure to some of Costa Rica’s most beautiful scenery to do some ziplining or ATVing—guaranteed to be an unforgettable time. We’ll also visit a rainforest waterfall, and be treated to an authentically prepared Costa Rican lunch on the property.

4:00 p.m.
Return to hotel, where you’ll have the evening to yourself. We bet you’ll be tired! Relax and kick back, or take our recommendations for dinner and entertainment, head out with a group, or explore town. (The choice, as always, is entirely yours.)

8:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.
Cultural exchange activity! Tonight we’ve got a professional group salsa dancing lesson. (Optional, of course, but definitely recommended.) Our philosophy is simple: Everyone should learn to salsa at least once in their life. You’ll learn the basics, laugh a lot, and feel all sorts of exotic. Note: Beforehand there will be an optional shuttle back to La Mariposa, for those who prefer to indulge in some relaxation & recharge for the night or settle in for the evening.

9:00 p.m.
Optional dancing to follow at Byblos Latin Night for anyone interested in seeing how the locals do it—and to practice your new moves, of course. Byblos is a hotel in the area that hosts a weekly Latin Night out on their open-air deck patio overlooking the pool, where the music is lively and the people flock—both tourists & locals alike.

What you need: Your sweet dance moves. Or not so sweet dance moves. No need to be shy here.

Note: Byblos hotel is conveniently located next to our hotel, La Mariposa, so you’re at liberty to return to your room at any time.

with rice & grilled vegetables.
• Half Chicken La Cantina: BBQ sauce, corn on the cob, baked potato & grilled vegetables
• Mar & Tierra Brochette: 5 ounces of Jumbo Shrimp and 5 ounces of imported beef tenderloin, cubed and grilled over an open flame, served on skewers alongside onions, bell pepper, grilled vegetables, and accompanied with a baked potato & corn on the cob
• Vegetarian Quesadilla: Served on an authentic, handmade tortilla, you’ll enjoy this veggie-packed quesadilla, served with fresh Costa Rican style pico de gallo & guacamole.

And a dessert selection of:
• Tres leches
• Fresh fruit medley
SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2014

8:00 a.m. — 9:00 a.m. Breakfast at La Mariposa Hotel.

9 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.
Option 1: Visit the area’s largest Blue Morpho butterfly garden! (It sounds uneventful but it’s far more amazing than you can even imagine.) Option 2: Steal some time to yourself to wander down to the secret beach, visit a local cafe, write in your journal, cat nap, or something else you’ve been wanting to do.

12:30 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.
Afternoon at sea! We’ll be boarding the finest luxury catamaran in the area—an oversized dual deck open-air catamaran complete with sunshine, the open ocean, lively music, jacuzzi tubs, water slides, optional snorkeling, a fantastic lunch buffet, cocktails on the house, and dolphin watching.

5:00 p.m.
Shuttle back to La Mariposa Hotel. Relax, shower, prepare for departure & change for dinner.

8:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.
Saturday night farewell dress-up dinner at the world-famous Gran Escape restaurant, located in a brand new building right on the marina, where we all look fantastic and yell, “Pura Vida” one last time before we see you off in the morning. Dinner menu is a surprise.

9:00 p.m. Shuttle back to La Mariposa Hotel.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2014
DEPARTURE DAY!

6:00 a.m.
Optional private bus back to the San Jose airport. It’s early because we know you might have an early flight, which will require you to get to San Jose pretty early. If you don’t wish to depart at that time, you’ll be responsible for getting yourself to the airport. Again, we’re more than happy to help you make other travel arrangements, and can do so on your behalf following registration!

Note: For those of you staying longer, hotel check out is at 12 o’clock noon.
La Mariposa Hotel, Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica:

Rated Trip Advisor Traveller’s Choice, 2013, and listed in the book 1,000 Places to See Before You Die

You didn’t know the definition of *panoramic* until now. Or magnificent. Or wow-factor, for that matter. With unrivaled views of the ocean, La Mariposa hotel of Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica is recognized worldwide for its legendary location, and is, by far, one of the area’s top hotels.

Boasting one of the world’s most unique open-air restaurants (aptly called Le Papillon, because isn’t that just fancy?), and known as the “best sunset spot,” the property is a one-of-a-kind experience, where nature and luxury flawlessly combine tropical gardens with a stunning cliff-top infinity pools, and white linen table cloths perfectly contrast bright red orchids. The Mariposa manages to nail just the right balance of extravagance and coziness, from your ocean view room (because while the garden view rooms are nice, this is Life Hooky, and it’s go big or go home) to the tiki bar, the jacuzzis to the garden paths—

**this is one place you won’t ever forget.**
A part-time resident of Manuel Antonio for over 10 years, Life Hooky founder Ash Ambirge selected this particular location with great care. Because Costa Rican law prevents hotels from building directly on the beach, all of the hotels are off-set from the ocean. La Mariposa, however, still remains one of the area’s most excellent locations; not only do you get the best views, but you’re also in the heart of Manuel Antonio, where you can mosey next door to the popular American-owned coffee shop, Cafe Milagro (whose owner, Adrienne, is an absolute GEM), or head in the other direction and pick up one of the area’s finest pastries from Emilio’s Cafe, owned by the Venezuelan-born Emilio, who might just be the nicest, kindest man you’ll ever meet. (It’s true. The man beams pleasantness, and his employees—the lovely Ligia and the always-smiling Luis—are no different.)

The Mariposa also offers an advantage that most tourists will never know about: If you take a short walk down the road, there’s a path you can take that will shortly lead you to a secret beach—perfect for stealing away with a dirty romance novel. Or something. The beach is surrounded on 3 sides by the green of the rainforest, and you will never again come across such pristine serenity in your life. Furthermore, La Mariposa is also right down the road from the supermarket (just in case,) and the soccer field, where teenage boys and men alike are always spotted kicking a ball around. (Or seven!) In short, we aren’t going to a secluded resort where you’ll be hidden from everything and never leave the property; you’ll be coming to a world-class hotel in the heart of it all, where you’ll be afforded not just the luxury of a pretty view, but the luxury of the local culture, too. Because isn’t that what travel is really about?

If you’ve selected the double room option:

Have no fear! We’ll use your roommate questionnaire, Facebook group chemistry, (#science), and our gut instincts, (because they’ve never been wrong before) to match you up with your Life Hooky (same sex) soulmate. The roommate questionnaire should have accompanied this welcome guide, but in the event it didn’t make the journey, please email Jess@lifehooky.com and we’ll be happy to send the form along. Once we get everyone matched up, we’ll be passing along roommate contact information, with participant permission, so you can say hello ahead of time if you wish. You also have the option to request a roommate and we’ll be happy to honor your request.
If you’ve selected the single room option:

You’re set! Throw a shrimp on the barbie.

In both cases, upon arrival to the hotel, we’ll direct you to the appropriate location where you can get your things organized and check out the digs. All Life Hooky rooms have an ocean view, regardless of room type. Amenities include: Wifi, balcony, hair dryer, cable, plasma TV, beach towels, iron & board, money exchange, wake up calls, luggage storage service, electronic safe box, laundry service, air conditioning and 24 hour security.

Note: Life Hooky is not responsible for lost or stolen items, so please guard your valuables, like that autographed poster of David Hasselhoff we just know you’re bringing.
What TO PACK

Pack every single giant banana costume you own. (Kidding. Mostly.)

The low-down on what you need to know is that it doesn’t get chilly much in Costa Rica. The exception is San Jose (where the airport is), or if you plan on scaling any volcanoes. So if you’re arriving a night early or staying after and touring the country, you’ll probably want a light jacket on hand.

Otherwise, you can feel fairly safe leaving most outerwear at home, and just bringing along a sweatshirt. At the beach it’s going to be very hot (and relatively humid, too); you wouldn’t imagine that the temperature could change so much from the capital to the ocean, but we would not tell a lie. Jeans are, for the most part, going to be way too hot. Long-sleeved shirts are too hot. Cute boots? Too hot.
And for those of you in the back, let us say it one more time—with *feeeeeeeling*. Cute boots are too hot. (To the girl who really just wants to wear cowboy boots, please spare yourself. You won’t even be able to stand putting them on. We promise we have your best interest at heart.)

That being said, sandals or flip-flops will keep you super comfortable with the added bonus of being pretty standard Costa Rica wear, (because when in Rome, and all that.)

Here are some quick lists to help you pack! (Because we’re all going to save it until the very last minute, right?)

**WOMEN’S ESSENTIALS**
- Sundresses
- Shorts
- Skirts
- T-shirts
- Sandals/Flip Flops
- 1 pair of closed-toed shoes if you plan to zipline or ATV
- Bathing suit
- 1 Fancypants outfit for our Saturday night farewell dinner (but easy on the high heels—you might feel out of place)
- Jacket or sweatshirt if planning to stay in San Jose or tour any of the country thereafter

**WOMEN’S NON-ESSENTIALS, BUT RECOMMENDED:**
- Head scarf (because as it seems, the way to look ultra chic while sweating your face off is by wrapping one of these around it)
- The biggest sunglasses you can find. But really. Don’t forget your sunglasses.
- Anti-chafing cream for in between your legs. It’s hot, and walking around can be a nightmare if you’ve selected just the right combination of shorts—that-don’t-exactly-cover-up-your-inner-thigh—all-the-way and insist on rubbing you right there.

**MEN’S ESSENTIALS**
- Sundresses
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Short-sleeved button downs (or whatever you like)
- Swim trunks
- Sandals/Flip Flops
- 1 pair of closed-toed shoes if you plan to zipline or ATV
- 1 Fancypants outfit (you don’t really need to bring a bow-tie; a nice shirt is fine over shorts. Or... go ahead and get wild.)
- Jacket or sweatshirt if you plan to stay in San Jose or tour the country further

**THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD BRING:**
- Your passport, (with photocopies)
- Another form of ID
- Copy of your plane ticket out of Costa Rica (they may ask you for this at the airport)
- Travel insurance information
- Earplugs, (if you have a roommate)
- Toiletries, (toothbrushes/makeup/etc.)
- Sunscreen (or, buy it there, but it’s on the expensive side)
- Bug spray (ditto sunscreen)
- Breathe Right Strips, (if you’re a snorer—kidding, *mostly*)
- Camera
What TO REMEMBER

- You DO need a passport to enter Costa Rica. If you don’t have one yet, start that process ASAP because it can take 8-12 weeks, and we don’t want you stranded in an airport crying into your scarf and snotting on your suitcase. Get the info here.

- When booking your airline ticket, make absolutely certain that the name on your ticket matches the one in your passport. Due to increased travel security around the world, this is important.
When booking your airline ticket, keep in mind that you should try to book an afternoon or evening return flight for Sunday, taking into account that the ride back to San Jose is approximately 3 hours long, and then once you make it there you’re still required to be at the airport 2–3 hours in advance of your international flight. Our Life Hooky shuttle departs from La Mariposa at 6am, with an estimated arrival time to San Jose by 9am; therefore, we recommend aiming for a 12 noon flight or later.

You’re flying into Juan Santamaria, NOT Liberia. Make sure to double-check the arrival airport when you book your flight! (The airport code you want is SJO.)

You DO NOT need a visa to enter Costa Rica, so no sweat. You’ll be issued an automatic 90 day tourist VISA upon entry, so technically, you can stick around for a while if you like. The more the merrier.

There is a mandatory exit fee of $29 when leaving Costa Rica, that you’ll have to pay before going to check-in with your airline. There’s no getting around it. So be sure to budget. (<—Worst word ever.)

We’ll be providing free round-trip transportation, (that’s going to be a hoot and a half) from the airport to the hotel, leaving San Jose at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12th, 2014, and leaving Manuel Antonio at 6 a.m. on Sunday, March 16th. Don’t worry—we’ll give you more specific details about this via email & the Facebook group as we get closer to your departure date!

Costa Rica is pretty darn safe, with the most common crime being petty theft. So in that vein? Please make copies of your passport. Keep one at home, stash one in your hotel room, have one in your luggage, etc., just in case.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica

WHAT LANGUAGE DO THEY SPEAK IN COSTA RICA?
Spanish. Brush it up!
IF FOR ANY REASON I CAN’T COME, CAN I TRANSFER MY TICKET TO SOMEONE ELSE?
Sure—as long as the change is approved by us first. You can transfer a Life Hooky ticket at any point in time, given that the recipient has enough time to obtain traveler’s insurance, and send us a copy of proof along with a copy of their passport & airline ticket.

DO I NEED A SPECIAL VISA TO ENTER COSTA RICA?
Nope! You’ll have a 90 day tourist visa, issued upon entry. One thing you do need, however, is proof of exit out of Costa Rica, in order to enter. So make sure if you’ve purchased a round trip airline ticket, you print it out and have it with you, or have alternate travel plans out of Costa Rica (and proof to show it.) You can read more on this here.

DO I NEED ANY VACCINATIONS?
Not necessarily; you can find information about this here.

IS TRAVELER’S INSURANCE MANDATORY?
Yes. Please email proof of insurance to documents@lifehooky.com.

WHY DO I NEED TRAVELER’S INSURANCE?
In the event you get sick or injured, or need an emergency medical evacuation back to the United States, we want to make sure you’ve got your bases covered. The best way to do that is to make sure you’re covered, and proof of insurance is required to come on the retreat.

HOW DO I FIND TRAVELER’S INSURANCE?
We recommend geobluetravel-insurance.com, in cooperation with Independence Blue Cross. On the site, you’ll select “Travel Medical Plans,” and then “Single Trip.” You can enter in the dates and whether or not you have primary health care coverage (it affects which plan they can offer you.) The minimum you can purchase is for 7 days, so you’ll need to opt for that one, but you’ll be covered for the duration of our trip, and it will likely cost less than $15. For other travel insurance provider alternatives, click here to view a list.

WHERE ARE WE STAYING?
La Mariposa hotel, Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica. There isn’t a street address like you might be used to, since addresses aren’t a thing in Costa Rica. If you’re getting there on your own, tell your taxi drive to take you to La Mariposa hotel, and it’ll be a done deal.

WHICH AIRPORT SHOULD I FLY INTO?
Juan Santamaria. The airport code is SJO.

WHAT TIME DO I NEED TO MEET YOU IN THE AIRPORT?
Between 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CST on Wednesday, March 12th. More information about exactly where to meet us will be sent out prior to our trip via email & the Facebook group. If for any reason you are unable to meet us at the airport at this time, you’ll be responsible for arriving to La Mariposa Hotel, located in Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica, ideally by 5:30pm on March 12th. If you’d like to come early and stay in San Jose overnight, contact Carlos@LifeHooky.com and he can help you make arrangements!
DO I NEED TO GET MY MONEY CHANGED INTO THE COSTA RICAN CURRENCY?
Most places do accept American dollars, though it is better to operate in the local currency. The local currency is called Costa Rican colones, and we recommend changing some money before getting to the airport, as airport exchange rates aren’t always the best. However, at any point in time you can use your debit card at one of the local ATMs, where you’ll be able to withdraw colones. Just be aware that your bank will likely charge you a foreign transaction fee on top of the ATM fee, but other than that, it’s often the most convenient way of accessing your money. You can also get a cash advance at any bank in town.

CAN I USE MY DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS IN COSTA RICA?
Yes, but please let your bank/credit card provider know you’re leaving the country, otherwise they may freeze your account when they see “out of habit spending”, (AKA buying a sarong in Central America.) This is also true if you want to take cash out at an ATM on your trip. So just to be on the safe side? Let your financial provider know you’re travelling. Deal?

WILL MY CELL PHONE WORK? CAN I STILL TEXT THROUGH WIFI?
Unless you’ve made arrangements with your cell phone provider to pay for international roaming, your cell phone will not work. However, free Wifi is quite common in the area, and you should be able to connect your phone that way. If you have an iPhone, you can iMessage other iPhone users anywhere in the world. Otherwise, email and Facebook always work. ;-)

SHOULD I BRING MY COMPUTER?
If you want! You won’t need it for any activities during the retreat, but you’re welcome to bring one along, of course, and the hotel does offer free Wifi. Note: While we do make every effort to ensure the safety and security of our participants, Life Hooky is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

WHAT TYPE OF ELECTRICAL OUTLETS DOES COSTA RICA HAVE? DO I NEED AN ADAPTER?
Good news! The outlets are the same as they are in the United States, so if you’re coming from there, you’ve got it easy. They’re 120 volts at 60 Hz, just in case you wanted to memorize a fun fact.

ARE THERE HAIR DRYERS IN THE HOTEL?
Yup—got you covered.

WHAT IF I GET ILL ON THE TRIP?
We’ll assist you with a doctor’s visit or hospitalization should you require it, and be on hand to help translate & contact your travel insurance provider.

AM I OBLIGATED TO ATTEND ALL OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES?
Not one bit. Participate as much or as little as you’d like. However, please note that if you decide to opt-out of an activity, no reimbursement can be made on behalf of Life Hooky.
DO I GET ANY FREE TIME?
You bet. There’s designated free time blocked out on Thursday afternoon, Friday night & Saturday morning, however, you’re more than welcome to opt-out of any of the group activities if you’d like more time to do your own thing.

WHAT IF I’M ARRIVING LATE?
Let our staff know when to expect you, and we’ll see you when you arrive! (Note: You’ll be responsible for arranging your own transportation to La Mariposa hotel in Manuel Antonio. However, we’re happy to assist you in making those arrangements—email Carlos@lifehooky.com for help.)

WILL THERE BE HOT WATER?
Yes. (Phew!)

SHOULD I BRING EXTRA MONEY FOR SHOPPING?
Yes, probably, (assuming you’re a shopper and you want souvenirs). There are lots of incredibly unique vendors and souvenir shops, so it’s better to be safe than sorry. As for the amount? That’s totally up to you. Only you know what your budget’s like, hot stuff.

ARE YOU GOING TO BE WITH US THE WHOLE TIME?
You think we would sit out any adventure? (Except for ziplining. Jess refuses to zipline. Something about heights and being a wimp, blah blah.) ;-)

IF I DECIDE TO RENT A CAR AND COME ON MY OWN, IS THERE PARKING AT THE HOTEL?
Absolutely. It’s in a very safe location, and there’s security 24/7.

IS TIPPING CUSTOMARY?
Yes; typically a 10% gratuity is the norm for any restaurants you may visit, or more if the service was excellent. Taxi drivers are an exception, and do not usually expect tips.

WHAT IF I WANT TO COME EARLY OR LEAVE AFTER?
Sure! Our on-staff travel coordinator can coordinate everything on your behalf—hotels, extra nights, trips to other parts of the country, or even help you decide what to do—so you can keep the ball rolling. What’s that? No stones unturned? Yes. That. Read on.
Maybe you do want to stay longer. Maybe you’d like to see some other parts of the country. Or maybe you just want a little more pura vida. Whatever the case, we’ll work with you directly to help you figure out what to do, where to go, and where to stay—and even book your hotel and activities for you, on behalf of Life Hooky, so you get the best rates. Here are some other potential adventures you may want to have!
Arenal Volcano & Hot Springs:
This is, hands down, one of the most beautiful places on earth. With the Arenal Volcano as your backdrop, you’ll step out of your hotel and right into a jungle of pristine natural hot springs, where you mosey through a tangle of tropical gardens lining the various pools of natural springs, all varying in temperature and size. It’s like visiting nature’s finest spa—only better. To see what we mean, check out Costa Rica’s hot spring Pinterest board over here!

Poas Volcano & Coffee Plantation Tour:
Right outside the San Jose metropolitan area, there’s a magical stretch of road that leads up, and up, and up... until you find yourself winding through a non-stop maze of strawberry fields (forever), interrupted only by countless farm stands selling fresh picked strawberries—and often home-baked strawberry-themed everythings. Once you make it to the top, you come to one of the most well-known coffee plantations, the Doka Coffee Estate, where you can take a tour and you can learn fun things like the biology of the plant and its relevance at both a local and global scale, as well as visit the processing plant and watch as are de-pulped and fermented. The final stop is the roasting plant and cafe, where you’ll learn about and sample the estate’s eight blends of coffee. Then, once you’ve got your caffeine buzz on, from there, you can head right up the road to the Poas Volcano to see their breathtaking crater lakes, where you can either snap some photos, or if you’re in the mood, even take a hike through the park. On the way down, we recommend stopping at Al Sabor del Che, a spectacular Argentine restaurant owned by the famous Costa Rican soccer player, Pablo Gabas. (Make sure you snag a choripan!)
Tamarindo Beaches in the Guanacaste Region:
Guanacaste is on the north Pacific, and is another popular area for visitors—but with an entirely different feel than the Quepos & Manuel Antonio area.

You might wonder how different one stretch of coast could really be from the other, but there's no question about it: It's a whole other experience.

Tamarindo is a laid-back surfer's paradise, has a beach entirely covered in seashells, and is even popular among celebrities like Angelina Jolie & Brad Pitt. A great change of pace while keeping the sun on your shoulders.

Downtown San Jose City Tour:
The capital and the nation's largest city, San Jose is the hub of, well, everything. It's where the country's female president reigns, and you can get a taste of what contemporary Costa Rican life is like, visiting everything from their central market to the national theater, European-style cathedrals to some of Central America's most modern museums, jam packed with fascinating pre-Columbian artifacts and things you never knew you didn’t know.

Hop over to the Caribbean side, and get your reggae on:
The Caribbean side of Costa Rica offers yet another entirely different experience, a bit closer to a Jamaican vibe. Full of bungalows and funky bamboo bars, this is a place where the imagination really does go wild.

Stick around in Manuel Antonio and take a few Spanish classes:
We can get you connected with the same school where Life Hooky founder Ash Ambirge first went a decade ago, where she stayed for four months to improve her pronunciation of the word, “perro.” The owner, David, is an American from Wisconsin, and students range from professionals to vacationers to students and more. You'll be placed based on your current level (which may be zero, and that's completely fine), and you'll find yourself in an intimate classroom setting with just a few other students and a native instructor, learning things about the Costa Rican culture while getting a little Spanish language learning in, too. Hands down one of the most enriching things you could do—and so much fun!

Take a two hour road trip and find yourself (or lose yourself!) in Panama!
The Panama border is awfully close, so you can kill two birds with one stone—and get a bonus stamp on your passport. You'll probably want to visit world-renowned Bocas del Toro, an archipelago of islands where you can stay in a classy round private hut out on the water—complete with glass floors.

Can you say sexy?

Adventure over to Granada, Nicaragua—
one of Central America's most important (and adorable) cities, given that it was the first European city, and a settlement of the Spanish conquest. It also happens to be right on Lake Nicaragua, the world's twentieth largest lake. (Kind of a fun fact, right?) When you think quaint—little—streets—lined—with—brightly—colored—old—European—architecture—that—makes—you—want—to—take—15,000—iphone—photos, think Granada.

We're happy to work with you directly to help you figure out an itinerary that works for you—and even get you the best deals by making the bookings on behalf of Life Hooky. Simply email our on-staff travel coordinator, Carlos, at Carlos@Life-Hooky.com to make a plan!
Next STEPS

Come on over and join our private Life Hooky: Manuel Antonio March 2014 FB group! This is where you can ask us questions, meet other participants, make travel plans, share fun facts about Costa Rica, practice your Spanish, and get EXCITED. You can find our very special group specific to this trip right here: www.facebook.com/groups/lifehookycostaricamarch2014/

Go ahead and request an invite, and we’ll add you on the double!
Email us a copy/photo of your passport to documents@lifehooky.com—including your photo so we have a visual ID of you. Don’t have one? Head here and get the process started. (It can take up to 12 weeks, so hop to.)

Buy traveler’s insurance and email us a copy to documents@lifehooky.com. We recommend geobluetravelinsurance.com, in cooperation with Independence Blue Cross. On the site, you’ll select “Travel Medical Plans,” and then “Single Trip.” You can enter in the dates and whether or not you have primary health care coverage (it affects which plan they can offer you.) The minimum you can purchase is for 7 days, but you’ll be covered for the duration of the trip, and it will likely cost you less than $15. If you need other travel insurance provider alternatives, see the list here.

Buy your plane ticket and email us a copy to documents@lifehooky.com. (Are you sensing a pattern?)

Let your bank know you’re leaving the country so they don’t freak out at “unusual activity” and freeze your accounts.

You can talk to your cell phone provider about roaming if you’d like, but you’ll probably be fine connecting to Wifi (pretty common everywhere) for free, and sending them fun photos of iguanas.

Hop online and splurge on at least three new beachy items for the trip.

Post the following status to Facebook: It’s official: Playing hooky from life in Costa Rica this March with Life Hooky! If you don’t know about them, you better call somebody. #lifehooky

Naturally we’re kidding and you don’t actually have to post that status, but we, ahem, bet you’ll get a lot of likes if you do. Wink. Nudge.

That said, that wraps our welcome guide—we hope you’re excited. We couldn’t be more honored to host you in Costa Rica this March, and in the meantime, we’ll be randomly rolling our R’s, (and probably hips), over in the Facebook group, so please come join us!

Questions? Head over there, or email Jess@lifehooky.com directly.

To playing hooky from life, and doing something DIFFERENT,