

# SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

## MANDY THOR

**Program:** UW Tropical Horticulture in Costa Rica, Winter

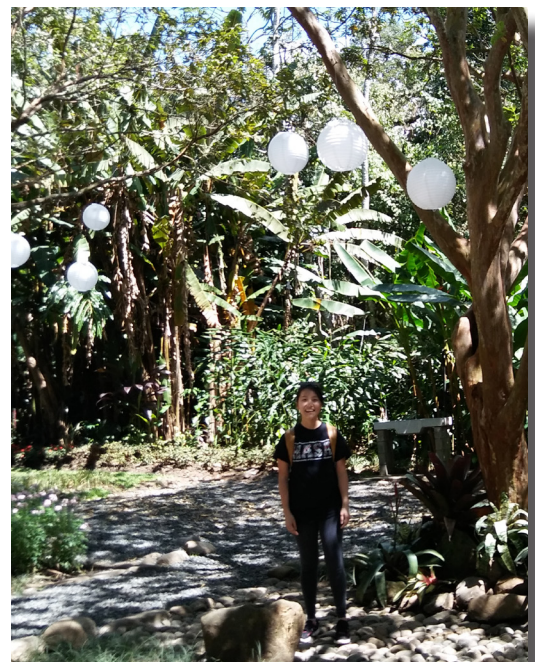
**Mandy's Major:** Sociology

**Academic Life:** The class was always having hands-on experiences that were used as applied learning opportunities. Learning was done on plantations, seeing where and how things were grown, being able to touch things, and learning about how locals also interact with the plants and topics we were talking about. Our specific program meant a lot of traveling, but even these times were used for learning because everything we could see from our windows was something new to be talked about. Our guide and professor did a great job constantly throwing us bits and pieces of information to keep us asking questions about everything.

**Memorable Moment:** Two of the most poignant tours were for bananas and pineapples because they offered such different ideas about how we think about common foods. We don't often think about what goes into the mass production of those fruits, who is doing the work, how pests are being controlled, or what is considered organic, etc. Witnessing how the workers harvested the fruits makes you think more about what you're eating and where your food actually comes from.

**Tips for Future Students:** This program in particular is very fast paced and intensive considering there was so much information that needed to be fit into just two weeks. Even though there was so much to learn, it was done in a way where it didn't seem like learning, it was experiencing. There is a lot to take in and many things to try so be open and do as much as you are given the opportunity to do.

**Benefits of Study Abroad:** Study abroad will be an advantage for me because I have gained new perspectives on how to view different problems, as well as an appreciation for other cultures. I am now more open to potentially working abroad in the future.



Mandy exploring a greenhouse conservation and observatory site.

**“Be open to new things and try as much as you can!”**



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