Intern Booklet – Winter 2014 Program

There are so many things about being an RDS intern that are life-changing experiences it would be hard to attempt to list them! But with these indelible memories come the challenges of living something different in a new environment. We don't want to compromise on the value of the experience for anyone who lives here – either long term or as an intern. We thrive to “keep it real” and raw. At the same time we want to do everything possible to accommodate everyone's personal needs. Most of all, we want to keep the communication open and flowing both ways.

To provide interns with all the relevant information for getting ready for the program we send out this booklet – which is made as short and to the point as possible. Please read it carefully.

We're very excited to meet you!

The crew at RDS

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Preparing your trip

Travel

How do I get to RDS?
RDS is just a 2.5 hour drive from Costa Rica's international airport in San Jose (SJO). There are countless airlines and attractive flight options to get here – make sure to book early! From the airport, there are many good options depending on your particular preference. More info: http://raicesdelsol.org/visit-farm-costa-rica/practical-info/#how-to-get-here

Do I need a visa?
You don't need a visa to enter Costa Rica and participate in the internship program. Upon arriving at the airport in San Jose you'll be automatically given a 90 day tourist visa. You just need to make sure you have a return ticket in hand which is scheduled within 90 days of your arrival.

Of course just like traveling anywhere in the world, you'll need a passport valid at least a few months passed your return date.

What dates should I book?
Ideally you'll need to make sure to be at RDS on January 30 - so either land in San Jose on that day in the morning and take the day to slowly make your way to RDS, or land on the 29th and spend the night in San Jose (there are countless options for all price range and preferences). **Your return ticket should be within 90 days of your arrival date in Costa Rica**. The internship goes until April 25 and the last week is optional so you could travel in Costa Rica and stay in the country a little longer. Again just make sure your entire trip is 90 days or less.

Do I need any special vaccines?
No you don't. There are no requirements in order to enter Costa Rica and there are no special recommendations for our specific area.

Packing

What's the weather like?
You should expect a lot of sun! It's the mist of the dry season so typically you'll get sunny hot days, day after day, with the occasional rain shower once a month or so.

Even if it rains it never gets very cold. Nights can be chilly but that's about it. A couple of pairs of leggings/light pants and long sleeve shirts may be useful.

What should I bring?
- Clothing:
    - Lots of change of clothes. You should make sure to bring enough clothes to be able to change often. Working outdoors can get dirty!
    - Light weight long sleeved shirts and pants come handy for working outdoors. If you wear shorts, knee-high socks are very useful.

    - Warmer clothing for the evenings and nights.
    - A sun hat!
- Essentials:
    - A good flashlight is an absolute must! A headlamp with a red light option is great for reading at night without attracting bugs. Bring an extra set of batteries with you.
    - Alarm clock.
    - Water bottle
- Misc:
    - Notepads and pencils.
    - Camera.
    - Books you've been meaning to read for a while and that are relevant to the work we do.
- Important:
    - Gardening gloves
    - Measuring tape
    - 1" or 2" timber framing chisel (available on amazon)

What shouldn't I bring?
Remember that many come to RDS in search of “something else” and that we strive to establish an environment that’s in line with the values we want to foster. Along these lines, here’s a short list of some of the things you won’t be needing here:

- Commercial shampoos, toothpastes, or other beauty-care products. We have baking soda and other natural shampoos and a vinegar rinse available here for everyone (it works wonders). We also make various natural toothpastes you are welcome to try and use. Natural toothpastes such as “Tom's of Maine” are also fine.
- Perfumes. We want to keep the scents on the farm limited to the beautiful flowers, delicious fruits, and amazing animals.
- Conventional sunscreen. If you plan on bringing sunscreen please use the more natural (zinc based) and chemical free brands with no scent.
- Conventional laundry detergent. “Dr Bronner's” and soap nuts are fine.
- Conventional bug repellent. Most people at RDS don't use any repellent but it's always possible to make one with some combo of lavender, citronella, cinnamon, rosemary, and eucalyptus with olive oil or witch hazel.

What is your aim?

Beyond the practical stuff you're going through as you're getting ready to make your way here and become an intern at RDS it would be useful to define your aim in simple words. What is your aim in joining the internship program? What do you expect to get out of it?

Arriving at RDS

Our contact info

Our phone number is (+506) 8646-9154 – don't hesitate to call at anytime! Especially if you're not sure of something or other on your way here.

Date/time of arrival

If you're not coming on the bus on the 30th (which arrives here around 5:30pm) and have a different estimated estimated time/day of arrival please **let us know as soon as possible**!

Payment

Remember that RDS is a non-profit organization and your payment goes directly towards covering some of the costs of the program. Except for the satisfaction we get from our work and its positive impact we don't make any profit whatsoever from the program. To keep the cash flow of the non-profit afloat, and to avoid last minute cancellations (which deny other applicants the opportunity to come) the following payment schedule is required:

1st deposit: $500 at the time of registration

2nd deposit: $500 at the latest 1 month before the start of the internship (i.e. by December 30, 2014).

Remaining balance: The remaining balance is then $1610 which you can pay before arriving by forwarding your payment via Paypal to contact@raicesdelsol.org, or pay upon arrival in which case make sure to bring enough cash with you! We don't accept checks on credit card payments on the premises and there are no ATMs nearby.

Winter 2014 program

Curriculum

The curriculum of the winter 2014 program is particularly exciting. It is covered in enough details on the website at http://raicesdelsol.org/farm-internships-in-costa-rica/integrative-farming-natural-building-internship-curriculum/

Daily Schedule

- 6:30am – Wake up. Grab a banana and a drink and head to your morning farm work.
- 8am – Breakfast! Usually some delicious combination of fruit, kefir, yogurt, coffee/tea, oatmeal…
- 8:30am – Natural building. Mornings are dedicated to the natural building project of the program. Most of the time is spent in actual hands-on building with some days including classes and talks.
- Noon – Lunch! Delicious communal meal with plenty of options – all made in the farm's beautiful kitchen with local ingredients.
- 1pm – Integrative farming. Work in the fields, gardens, orchards, or care for the animals. Depending on the current ongoing projects.
- 3:00pm – Break. Take a shower, hang out with your fellow interns, read in a hammock, or just relax.
- 4:00pm – Evening chore. Whether it's daily care for the animals or communal meal making, these experiences leave life-long memories.
- 5:30pm – Dinner! We make and serve nutritious, delicious, and local food. Plenty of it!
- 7pm – Two nights a week there are organized lectures, classes, talks and discussions.

This is just a sample schedule! Life at RDS is full of unpredictability. We may decide to switch things around depending on what we're working on exactly at a given time or if a project demands special attention.

Weekly schedule

- Monday through Friday – as outlined above.
- Saturday – personal project day (morning). Wake up later (at 8am) to work on a personal project that's related in some way to life at RDS. Could be a personal garden, a research project or an experiment. The afternoon is free.
- Sunday – day off. Explore the nature around and swim in the waterfalls at RDS while watching monkeys, toucans, scarlet macaws, and countless other wild animals. Walk 20 minutes to the town of Mastatal. Or just hang in a hammock all day.

- On Mondays we patronage the local businesses and eat at a family-run restaurant right here in Mastatal where you can eat a Tico meal for $5 and connect with the local community.

3-month schedule

- January 30 – February 2: Orientations, tours, and getting introduced to RDS.
- February 3 – March 7: First session.
- March 8 – March 16: Mid-program break. You can use it to plan a multiple-day trip to the nearby beaches or to any other destination you want to explore in amazing Costa Rica.
- March 17 – April 16: Second session.
- April 17 – April 19: Concluding the program.
- April 20 – April 25: Flexible closing fun!

Extra-curricular stuff

At RDS there are established practices of martial arts (currently focusing on Aikido and Brazilian Jiujitsu) and Yoga (mainly Vinyasa). If these interest you make sure to let us know and to join the classes!

Friday nights are usually music nights so if you play an instrument or have partition/song books bring them along.

If you have a special talent or interest you'd like to teach or share with others please let us know as well so that it can be included.

Communal living

Meal making

Breakfast and lunch is made and served by the family who runs RDS with the help of local Costa Ricans who participate in the life and work of RDS. Dinners are organized by interns who rotate in cooking throughout the program.

Alcohol

The question of alcohol is a delicate one when it comes to community living. Commercial alcoholic beverages have a well earned reputation in the history of mankind for making or breaking communities. We've decided to keep all commercial beverages outside of the premises of RDS. Luckily (for some) we make our own ginger beer, honey wine, and Kombucha so you'll get the opportunity to savor and learn about these fascinating and incredibly healthy fermentation processes. We do occasionally buy wine, or cashew wine and chicha made by our neighbors, to share with everyone at special dinners (often on Fridays) but outside of these we ask that interns do not bring to RDS any commercial beverage.

Smoking

There is no smoking possible at all.

Electronics and gadgets

Many consider RDS to be a very special place and come here to look for a different way of living. We ask visitors to be considerate of that and keep electronics out of common areas – in particular computers, phones, ipods and other similar portable devices. Use your own judgment or ask us if you have any questions.

Internet access

There are several ways to get online:

- Walk down 15 minutes and get internet at the local bar, the deli/restaurant, the library, or the internet place.
- If you bring your own laptop you may be able to purchase a pre-paid internet key in San Jose, Puriscal, or Parrita (about $30 or so).
- Some say you can bring an unlocked 3G capable device and access internet that way.

Work on oneself

Everyone at RDS is here to work on themselves – and only on themselves. Thus thank everyone who gives you the opportunity for inner struggle.