

Based on the readings from this course so far, being a mindful traveler to me means to travel with as much consideration as possible for the place you are traveling to as a home for the people that live there and a place of historical significance and environmental significance. Particularly, I think the most important thing to remember is that this place is more complicated than what is presented to us and what we expect to see as tourists. This means fully confronting the colonial history of the place we are visiting in relation to the country we are visiting from, as well as the environmental impact of our travel there not just in this individual instance, but as a part of the prolific tourism industry that is prioritized by the Costa Rican government.

I am especially excited to learn about the lives and perspectives of the Bribri as indigenous people living in a country that was owned and controlled by Spain for so long. I'm curious about what has changed, how much autonomy and political and economic influence they have in modern day Costa Rica, though I expect that their situation may be very similar to the situations of Native American nations in the modern United States. Their situation is different from the way Kincaid describes the people of Antigua, primarily in that their language and culture, while no doubt influenced by Spanish colonization and American imperialism, is more distinct from European languages and cultures since they were not forcibly brought to their current home by European slavers.

Another aspect of Costa Rica that I am curious about is the importance placed on environmental preservation both in Costa Rican culture and by their government. This is at least partially financially motivated as the well cared for nature preserves in Costa Rica are one of its biggest selling points for tourists to visit there. I want to learn more about how tourism and ecological concerns interact in regards to their economy, especially since Costa Rica's biggest industries, tourism and agricultural export, are so intrinsically connected to the environment and are likely being threatened by the increasingly drastic effects of climate change. It's interesting to me how the dual effects of increased carbon emissions caused by the travel required to get to Costa Rica as a tourist, and the funding allotted by the government to preserve the natural beauty and promote tourism could both help and hinder the cause of environmentalism there.

While I am visiting Costa Rica I will focus on making an effort to consider that what I see and experience likely has a deeper and more complicated significance from a local perspective. I will be on the lookout for aspects of everyday life in the cities we visit that are influenced by Spanish colonialism and American imperialism, and consider what these represent on the global scale, and how this functions in very globally connected places like San Jose or Limon compared to more culturally insular places like the Bribri community that we will be visiting. I will also be careful to observe any guidelines for the protection of the environment in Costa Rica. From what we've discussed in class, and what I've read independently, the regulations for environmental protection in Costa Rica are more strict than in the U.S. due to the aforementioned cultural and financial value of Costa Rica's ecosystems. While I am there I want to respect and consider the environmental wellbeing as much as a local Costa Rican would, even if I don't have the context and experience in this culture to fully understand the importance placed on preserving nature that they have.