



Rainforest Conservation Project in Costa Rica



GENERAL INFORMATION

Volunteers and students help with the protection of the rainforest and learn from the forest to create sustainable living.

It all started with two Dutch guys who love nature and had a life- changing experience several years ago, while doing volunteer work themselves. They decided to start a foundation and purchase land, where they started a project that would protect the whole eco-system by conserving nature and helping local people.

The conservation project and foundation, now owns and protects 140 hectares of wildlife reserve and growing. It is located in Costa Rica's Caribbean lowlands between the Barbilla National Park, an Indian reservation, the village of San Miguel and banana plantations, and has hardly been mapped out.

Even Barbilla National Park, which is located near the actual research area, still leaves a lot to discover. The objective of the project therefore is, together with students and volunteers, to get to know exactly what it is that they are protecting, what the threats are and which measures need to be taken to have the biggest possible sustainable impact for both nature and human beings alike. So far, the foundation has been able to purchase more land each year.

The goal is to get to 2000 hectares of rainforest to protect and preserve. As well as to connect with the local population, helping them with alternatives, to prevent logging and illegal activities like hunting. Therefore, the ultimate goal is to create a place where humans and nature can live hand in hand; to create a better place.

Conditions:

- Caribbean rainforest
- Minimum 2 week
- 1°time volunteer
- No spanish needed
- +18 years old

What is included?

- Administration fee
- Orientation meeting
- English speaking volunteer coordinator at the project.
- 24/7 local emergency contact
- Project donation
- Accommodation in dorms at the project with towels and bed linen.
- Meals, tea and coffee
- Bus tickets to and from the project.

What is NOT included?

- Flights
- Medical and Travel Insurance (mandatory to confirm the reservation).
- Personal expenses

What to consider...

- Project starts on Mondays
- Located within a beautiful, tropical rainforest area with only a very small town nearby that provides the basics of a mini-supermarket, local school, church, soccer field and a local bar.
- Available year round (except for the two weeks around Xmas and NYE).
- Available for longer stays, please send us your request.
- Pre & Post-stay in San Jose upon request.
- No alcohol nor drugs allowed at the project.
- Internet connection using a local SIM card (Movistar) on an unlocked cell phone (signal is not stable and can be poor).
- Remember to pack bug spray, sun protection lotion, flashlight and power converter to be able to use the sockets (110v).
- Work can be physically demanding. You must be physically and mentally fit, and able to walk at least 4 hrs. per day in a hot and tropical climate.
- Be respectful of the rules of the project, live and work in a team, and agree to the codes of conduct.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteers can help with the realization of the projects' objectives of living in and with nature without damaging it. To reach these objectives, the project has a strong focus on three main subjects: biodiversity, reforestation and sustainable living.

As a volunteer, you will be involved with doing scientific research to map out the biodiversity in the project area by collecting data on sturdy rainforest hikes, help the researchers with analyzing data and review data from camera traps, create pathways through the reserve and put-up information signs for visitors, help the reforestation program by monitoring the germinated sprouts and tracking the development of planted trees, work in the permaculture organic garden and other activities to help the project be self-sufficient, helping with the English lessons at the school in town, support with the sustainability activity to collect garbage from the river that runs through the reserve, among others. You will do all this with the guidance of on-site biologists, a local nature guide and volunteer coordinator.

And there is also room for your own contribution. For example: you are a videographer and you want to document the reserve and its activities. Or, you have experience working in a hotel and you see possibilities to improve the project.

In addition, you will be involved with the day-to-day operational duties of running the project, which includes cleaning of the accommodation as well.

The activities are diverse. You will learn a lot, and you will help protect and maintain the rainforest. And the project will learn from you. As a volunteer, you will be part of a team. Everybody will contribute, to create a durable project in an amazing environment.

A NORMAL DAY AS A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers work around 8 hours daily, 5 days per week. (Weekends off).

Breakfast is served at 7am and will be a typical Costa Rican dish. At 8am your day starts with a hike into the tropical rainforest reserve of about 3 hours to start accumulating data, conducting research and other agreed projects (for example planting or measuring trees in the reforestation area).

There are also days that you will stay on the research project area to work in the organic vegetable garden, build a tree nursery, investigate collected bugs, make an inventory of the butterflies or for example make chocolate from the cacao you collected.

Lunch is served at 12.30 after which the afternoon is usually spent by processing data, analyzing the trap cam video's, studying the collected dung- beetles or frog pictures, writing up research or working in the garden.

At 5 pm a lovely dinner is served. After dinner you can chat with the other volunteers and students in the community house, play games, read or chill in a hammock. It gets dark in Costa Rica by 6pm and by 9pm the project expects you to be quiet and make up for a new and wonderful day to come.

There are daily operational duties too. Work at the project can be physically demanding, but no 2 days are the same!!

WHAT TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME



After volunteering volunteers can read a book in a hammock, play board/card games, watch a documentary, play soccer at the local soccer field, pick fruits from the organic garden, interact with locals of the nearby town of San Miguel, make friends with students and co-volunteers from all over the world.

The project also organizes from time-to-time night tours to observe the jungle by night, that you can participate in as well as yoga sessions and running activities in the morning.

During the weekends you can plan a trip to the Caribbean beaches of Cahuita and Puerto Viejo, head out to the waterfalls, go out on a white-water rafting excursion, make a trip to the highlands of Turrialba, a boat tour through the canals of Tortuguero or head to the capital of San Jose.

ACCOMMODATION

You will stay at a 9-hectare property next to the village of San Miguel, where the project has its research centre with: a volunteer house, the public house/common area, the guards house and two other houses where both project managers and their families live.

You will lodge in a shared dormitory style room that sleeps up to 4 people per room and there is a maximum of 12 volunteers/students sleep in the house. The volunteer house is well-ventilated and completely closed-in by flyscreen to keep the bugs away. There are also 2 showers and 2 toilets.

Besides the volunteer house, there is a public house/common area at the research center, with a dining room and hang-out space with hammocks where you can eat, chill and meet with fellow volunteers and students. You'll find a kitchen here as well, where the cook prepares 3 delicious meals a day.

The accommodation is surrounded by a beautiful tropical garden and rainforest, with a great diversity of plants and animals. From the porch you will be able to see many animals, including colibri's, toucans and butterflies. In the garden you will find a big variety of fruit trees and depending on the season, you can find lots of different kind of fruits to eat like: mango's, bananas, oranges, pineapples, starfruit and many more.



Experience is not something that happens to you. It is what you do with what happened to you.