



# GAP AFRICA PROJECTS



**COSTA RICA - GROUP  
EXPEDITION**

**PRE DEPARTURE INFO**

# COST RICA - EXPEDITION



## ARRIVAL

### Arrival by AIR to Juan Santamaría International Airport

Upon exiting the aircraft on arrival follow signs to immigration, please ensure you have your arrivals form properly completed which will be handed to you by airline staff on the flight.

After immigration please collect your baggage from the baggage reclaim. After collecting bags proceed to Customs to hand in your customs declaration.

You will be met at the arrivals hall and transferred to your accommodation in Esparza. Should you not be able to locate Gap Africa Project representative, please call on Andy Hoyle on +506 8459 6981



## ARRIVAL

### CONTACT DETAILS

### USEFUL INFORMATION

### ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

### RECOMMENDED KIT LIST




### ANY QUESTIONS?


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## CONTACT DETAILS

### Accommodation Address

50N y 60E del Centro de salud,  
Lote esquinero con palmeras de pipa,  
Nances,  
Esparza,  
Puntarenas.

### Contact Numbers

Telephone Number:  
+506 8459 6981 - Andy Hoyle

Emergency Telephone Number:  
+506 8351 1540 - Adriana Ledezma

### Gap Africa Projects

During Office hours (Weekdays 9am-5pm UK Local Time):  
+44 (0) 207 193 7819

### After hours emergency number:

+44 (0) 797 657 5949

### Group Leader

You will have an experienced tour leader with you 24/7. Your tour leader is the best person to speak to, if you have any issues you would like to discuss. Please make sure that you disclose all dietary requirements and any medical issues prior to departure, to avoid any incidents during the tour. You must speak to your leader if you are feeling unwell, or have any questions - if we don't know, we can't help you!! If you take medication, please make sure that you bring all necessary medication with you when you travel.

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## USEFUL INFORMATION - CLIMATE

Costa Rica's northernmost regions tend to be more flat and arid and have dry tropical forest, while increased humidity and precipitation creates lush jungles in the south. The country's rainiest months, termed the "green season," start in May and run until early December. The dry season typically lasts from December through April.

Be prepared for rain and lower temperatures during the winter season (June-November), especially in Costa Rica's central valley.

In Costa Rica the average annual temperature is around 21 to 27 degrees Celsius or 70 to 81 degrees Fahrenheit and the coolest months of the year are November, December and January. The months March through May are the hottest months of the year, so make sure you protect yourself from the sun.

## CREDIT CARDS & CURRENCY

Credit cards are widely accepted at hotels and restaurants. Most credit cards include a transaction fee for international purchases so please check with your card issuer before travel.

US dollars are widely accepted in Costa Rica, especially at hotels and restaurants—some places even list their prices in US dollars to make it easier for international travellers. For smaller services (including local meals or public transportation), be prepared to pay with colones. Colones come in 500, 1000, 5000, and 10,000 bills. Coins come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 and 100. All banks will exchange US dollars and many will exchange British pounds or euros. It may be advisable to take a small amount of local currency for more rural locations.

Travellers checks can be cashed at banks or exchange bureaus for a commission of 1% to 3%.

ATMs (known as cajeros automáticos) are available in Costa Rica, access may be limited in some rural locations. Some banks charge a fee for using an ATM abroad, so check with your bank before traveling to Costa Rica.

## SPENDING MONEY

Allow **USD190-280** for spending money/meals not included. Every traveller is different and therefore additional spending money requirements will vary, please bear this in mind when planning for your trip.

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
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## HEALTH RISKS

Contact your GP around 8 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures.

Since 2013, there has been a sharp increase in cases of dengue. Cases of Chikungunya virus have been confirmed in Costa Rica. You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Medical care in Costa Rica is of a high standard. Only emergency medical treatment is available without charge for visitors. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 911 and ask for an ambulance. You should contact your insurance/medical assistance company promptly if you are referred to a medical facility for treatment.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica/health>

### Sun:

We have a warm sunny climate and you should wear sunscreen and a hat whenever you are out of doors during the day, particularly between 10am and 4pm - regardless of whether there is cloud cover or not. Even if you have a dark complexion, you can still get sunburned if you are from a cooler climate and have not had much exposure to the sun. Sunglasses are also recommended, as the glare of the sun can be very strong.

### Drinking Water & Food:

Tap water in Costa Rica is drinkable and, in many areas of the country, quite good. However, if you have a sensitive stomach, it's recommended to refrain from drinking the tap water in most beach destinations. To play it safe, visit any supermarket and buy bottled water.

Casados and gallo pinto are the staple foods at most restaurants in Costa Rica. The only main regional difference is in the Caribbean, where the most common dish is rice, red beans, and chicken or fish, all slow cooked in coconut milk.

It is common to find pizza, hamburgers and even sushi in different parts of Costa Rica, although every town is culinary different.

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
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# COST RICA - EXPEDITION



## INSURANCE

Personal travel insurance is compulsory. Travel insurance does not need to be expensive and there are many good deals available for backpackers etc. Always be sure to check the insurance plan details and ensure that you are covered for theft, loss, illness and injury. Check to see if your medical benefits are paid out as they incur or on your return home - long-term medical treatment out of your own pocket could be devastating. Also, automatic coverage received when booking your flight by credit card will not be sufficient. Please follow this link to our preferred insurer <https://www.endsleigh.co.uk/personal/gap-africa-projects/>

## PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS

It can take up to 6 weeks to obtain a passport - remember to start this process timorously. Important: Your passport needs to be valid for 30 days after your return to your home country and have one fully blank pages side by side.

## VISA REQUIREMENTS

British nationals don't need a visa to enter Costa Rica. You can stay as a visitor for up to 3 months, although the exact period is at the discretion of the immigration officer on arrival. If you plan to stay for a longer period or work, check entry requirements with the Costa Rican Embassy.

### Transit via USA

#### Visa Waiver Programme

The VWP allows most British Citizen passport holders to visit the US for up to 90 days. The types of journey permissible under the VWP include tourism, certain types of business visit and transit to another country.

Those travelling under the VWP arriving by air or sea should provide details online at least 72 hours before travel. This is known as an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation or ESTA. If you do not have an ESTA you'll be refused travel to the USA.

Please follow the link below to apply for your ESTA:

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

## DEPARTURE TAX

Costa Rica airport exit tax: \$29USD

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
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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Can I Expect to See Wildlife in Costa Rica?

No matter where you go - even in the mountains surrounding the capital city of San José - you will encounter wildlife. Naturally, different regions contain different species of plants and animals. You'll find nesting sea turtles along the beaches of Tortuguero and monkeys in the trees of Manuel Antonio. To get a better idea of where you may encounter different birds, sea animals, mammals, reptiles, amphibians or invertebrates in Costa Rica, please visit our biodiversity page and select the wildlife family you are interested in.

### Do I Need an Adapter for My Electronics?

During your expedition there may be times where electricity is not readily available. At hotels and hostels you will need a US adaptor plug to utilise the electricity supply.

### Are There Many Mosquitoes in Costa Rica?

Because Costa Rica is near the equator, some destinations do have mosquitoes throughout much of the year. Mosquitoes are, however, rare in other areas due to low overnight temperatures. In Monteverde and other places in Costa Rica's Central Highlands, you won't have to worry about swarms of mosquitos. Parts of the Central Valley, including San José, also lack mosquitoes.

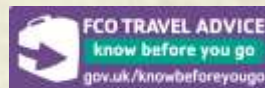
Mosquitoes are more common in the Caribbean because of the warm and humid climate. While traveling in this region, it's a good idea to wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors, especially when hiking in the rainforest. Also, pack insect repellent with 30%-50% DEET. Most mosquitos are active at dawn and dusk, so staying indoors at these times of the day can also help to prevent exposure.

## STAY SAFE OVERSEAS - KBYG

The better prepared you are when you travel abroad, the safer you will be. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office offers 'Know before you go' travel advice, including simple precautions you can take before and during your trip.

To find out more, check out their website:

[www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel)



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
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## ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

### Accommodation

Accommodation On the turtle project you will stay in shared beach huts, which are basic, clean and comfortable. The project is located in a quiet remote area, bordered by the sea on the front and a canal on the back, accessible only by boat. Everybody has small lockers available for personal valuables like passport; you will only need to bring a padlock. Electricity is solar and has to be used rationally.

The rest of the time you will sleep in our family run volunteer centre, in Esparza, a small agricultural town near the Pacific Ocean. The centre is two linked houses with a large central living, dining and games area, a large garden, TV, free WiFi, tea and coffee, table tennis, badminton & BBQ. Electricity is hydroelectric, and very reliable, and the WiFi is excellent. All rooms are lockable.

### Food

Food Whilst in Costa Rica we will provide you with 3 meals a day. This will be local food (Rice and beans!!) You may be eating in the volunteer accommodation (our cook is excellent!), on site during activities, or in selected restaurants while travelling. You will grow to love Costa Rican food, recently referred to by Jamie Oliver as "honest simple and delicious". It is important that you let us know in advance of any dietary requirements – whether allergies, intolerances or just plain taste! We need to be able to advise the projects of this in advance – so if we do not know, then you will not be catered for adequately.



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# COST RICA - EXPEDITION



## KIT LIST

### What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and is only a guide, you may not need all of the items listed so please bear this in mind when preparing for your expedition:

### Personal Admin

- ✓ Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- ✓ Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- ✓ Airline tickets
- ✓ Spending money
- ✓ Cash for airport departure tax
- ✓ Credit card in case of an emergency
- ✓ Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- ✓ Guidebook on country - recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints

### General

- ✓ Backpack – Not Suitcase
- ✓ Camera / Film / Batteries
- ✓ Alarm clock
- ✓ Notebook and pen / diary
- ✓ Torch / Plenty of extra Batteries (ideally with a red-light filter)
- ✓ Watch
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Sun Tan Lotion
- ✓ Pocket-knife (comes in handy for general use)
- ✓ Water bottle - at least one litre
- ✓ Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- ✓ Personal enjoyment - books, cards, music, to enjoy with your fellow volunteers etc.
- ✓ Personal toiletries (deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrush etc)
- ✓ Spanish dictionary, verb book etc
- ✓ Travel Pillow

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
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## KIT LIST

### Clothing

- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
- ✓ A pair of thick socks for walking
- ✓ Dark clothing for turtle work-including trousers and long sleeve shirts
- ✓ Sandals – flip flops
- ✓ Waterproof Jacket in a dark colour
- ✓ Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)
- ✓ Beach wear
- ✓ Warmer clothing for winter
- ✓ Swimwear
- ✓ Towel

### Medical Kit

- ✓ Personal Medication
- ✓ First Aid Kit (ex. Antihistamines, Anti- diarrhoea tablets, headache tablets)
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Mosquito and insect repellent

As you will be sharing your accommodation with other volunteers and there are no lockers available it is a good idea to use a lockable luggage.

Please do not bring a suitcase with you as you will be travelling by basic forms of transport and trekking through national parks, so a suitcase will not be practical. We would recommend that you use a large backpack for your main luggage.

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
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