



PROJECT INFORMATION PACK

SRUC Barony



Costa Rica Group Expedition



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**SOUTH
AMERICA**

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**SOUTH
AMERICA**

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Our conservation work
in more detail



ABOUT COSTA RICA

SOUTH AMERICA

Location

With the greatest concentration of biodiversity in the world, Costa Rica is a must for any conservationist. Over 25% of the country is protected in national parks, this is due to the country's progressive policies on environmental protection and sustainable ecotourism. The rainforests, tropical forests, marine areas and wetlands of Costa Rica are the subject of many university and scientific organisation studies.

This "biological crossroads" of the world offers a visitor an unforgettable glimpse of a tropical paradise with over 500,000 species of animal including endangered sea turtles, monkeys and jungle cats plus over 800 species of bird. Seen as an example of political stability in the area, Costa Rica has enjoyed democracy for almost 60 years and is an oasis of calm among its turbulent neighbours.



YOUR PROJECT



Pacuare Turtle Conservation Project

The first part of your project will be at the Pacuare Turtle Project which is located in a quiet, remote area accessible only by boat. Your time at the project will be spent patrolling for sea turtles laying their eggs, rebuilding defences to protect from the ocean or perhaps establishing a hatchery. This is hands on work and often includes maintenance and improvements to the accommodation, clearing paths and beach cleaning.

Patrols are lead by an experienced patrol leader walking a sector of the beach searching for nesting females. Once a turtle is encountered the leader, with the aid of the volunteers, will collect information; the length and width of the turtle, nest location and its dimensions and the number of eggs laid. The eggs will be carefully removed by the group leader and relocated to the hatchery. Turtles are sensitive to light, if any light is to be used on the beach only red light is permitted.

Turtle conservation is one of the most incredible experiences, your time and contribution to the project is very valuable. It can be hard work; patrols take place whatever the weather and you may not encounter any nesting turtles. Hatchery shifts can be long and sometime tedious but the overall experience is second to none in a place of extreme natural beauty.



Pacuare Turtle Conservation Project

During a hatchery shift you will need to check for baby turtles that have left the nest and need to be placed on the beach so they return to the water, monitor the hatchery for any potential threats to the nest e.g. crabs. Assist with the relocation of eggs found on patrol, recording data on the number of eggs, their original location and where they are relocated to.

There are normally two nightly patrols at 11pm or 3am depending on the tides, you will spend around 4 hours patrolling depending on the number of turtles found with a short break at each end of the beach.

Be prepared to go with the flow! Whilst some of the work may be hard it is incredibly rewarding and in the most amazing setting. It may take you a while to acclimatise to the conditions, we recommend that you remember to drink plenty of water, you may find it useful to bring rehydration sachets, stay in the shade during your breaks, wear plenty of sunscreen and don't overdo it.



YOUR PROJECT



Your conservation programme

- Night beach patrols
- Collecting biometric data from nesting turtles
- Relocating of nests
- Nest Monitoring
- Day/night hatchery duties
- Beach cleaning
- Hatchling liberation
- Basic construction work, building hatcheries for example
- General maintenance
- Maintenance of volunteer accommodation
- Reforestation work – collecting/sorting of seeds, planting saplings



YOUR PROJECT



Esparza

You will be based at the Hotel Las Palmas in Esparza, North Puntarenas, a small agricultural town near the Pacific Ocean, for the second part of your project. Esparza is located 80kms from the capital city of San Jose in the countryside offering rolling hills, breath taking mountain views and deep river valleys.

From your base you will experience some of the beautiful scenery and exotic wildlife that Costa Rica has to offer; it is part of the Neo-tropic eco zone which includes more tropical rainforest than any other eco zone and is one of the most important reserves of biodiversity on earth.

The country is host to many environmental treaties and is noted for its national park system which oversees over 160 protected areas which comprise over a quarter of Costa Rican territory, you will have the opportunity to visit a number of these areas whilst you are staying at Esparza.



YOUR PROJECT



Your Conservation Programme

- Braulio Carrillo National Park, experience the aerial tram above the jungle and a guided nature tour
- Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve offers views of both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans
- Playa Uvita Marino Ballena National Park to see whales and visit the coral reef
- Experience crocodiles, birds and monkeys up close on the River Tarcoles. Enjoy horse riding on the beach
- Toucan Rescue Ranch offers an opportunity to understand sloths and conservation
- Introduction to the world leading approach to maritime conservation at the Maritime Park Puntarenas
- Visit to the macaw and wild bird sanctuary, also includes jaguars
- Hiking with a guide in the cloud forest
- Guided tour of Manuel Antonio National Park and conservation talk

YOUR PROJECT



Sample itinerary

- ❖ Day 1 – Arrive at San Jose (SJO) airport. Your group guide will meet you and transfer you to the Hotel Las Palmas in Esparza. Welcome dinner
- ❖ Day 2 – After breakfast an early start with all your belongings to travel by coach to Goshen de Bataan, approximately 4 hours duration, then transfer to the boat for 45 minutes to the project, dinner at the project
- ❖ Days 3-7 – You will work as a volunteer in the conservation effort to protect 3 species of endangered sea turtles. See conservation programme for details of activities. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided each day.
- ❖ Day 7 – After breakfast depart Pacuare by boat then drive through Braulio Carrillo National Park. Experience the aerial tram above the jungle and a guided nature tour of the butterfly garden, orchard garden, terrarium; a day of amazing views and adrenaline with rainforest adventures. Full shoes must be worn no sandals/flip flops. Dinner and overnight at the Hotel Las Palmas in Esparza
- ❖ Day 8 – After breakfast visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve which offers views of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, followed by a lecture and natural history tour. O/N Esparza
- ❖ Day 9 – After breakfast to Playa Uvita Marino Ballena National Park to search for humpback whales and 2 species of resident dolphins, visit the coral and rock reefs and snorkel to observe the wonderful marine wildlife and view the caverns of Ventanas Beach. O/N Esparza



YOUR PROJECT



Sample itinerary

- ❖ Day 10– After breakfast visit the Manuel Antonio National Park with a talk on conservation and a guided tour.
- ❖ Day 11 – Breakfast then at the Toucan Rescue Ranch there will be an introductory talk about sloths and conservation followed by a tour of the ranch where you will meet sloths, toucans and other birds and mammals. Dinner at Esparza
- ❖ Day 12 – Breakfast then a visit to the Maritime Park Puntarenas which offers an insight into their world leading approach to maritime conservation; after a tour of the park you will visit the macaw and wild bird sanctuary, which also offers the opportunity to see jaguars, for an interactive workshop and tour. Dinner at Esparza
- ❖ Day 13 – After breakfast visit Las Hornillas, Miravalles Volcano with a waterfall tour and primary forest to spot birds and reptiles; after lunch experience the hot springs, mud baths and sauna at the live crater. Dinner at Esparza
- ❖ Day 14 – Breakfast before a crocodile boat tour on the River Tarcoles and the mangroves, the opportunity to see crocodiles, birds and monkeys up close. After lunch you will be horse riding along the beach; an opportunity for souvenir shopping. Dinner at Esparza
- ❖ Day 15 – After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight home to the UK.

Whilst you will cover all the activities on the itinerary certain days may swap around during your time at Esparza.





**SOUTH
AMERICA**

LIFESTYLE & ACCOMMODATION

Life in Costa Rica



ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE



Pacuare Turtle Project & Esparza

Accommodation at the turtle project is in shared beach huts, these are basic, clean and comfortable. There are small lockers available for personal valuables such as passports - you will need to bring a padlock. Electricity is generated via solar and has to be rationed, so can be sporadic.

The Hotel Las Palmas in Esparza has shared rooms, with a large garden with swimming pool and sports activities. WiFi coverage in the rooms and hydroelectricity are both excellent.



ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE



Food

Whilst at Pacuare Turtle Project you will have three meals a day provided. Generally this will be local food – rice and beans! When at Esparza breakfasts and dinners will be provided at the hotel; for those meals that are not included at Esparza there are a variety of restaurants in the vicinity that offer different choices.

Jamie Oliver referred to Costa Rican food as 'honest, simple and delicious'.

It is important that you advise us of any dietary requirements be they preference, allergies or intolerances so we can advise the project to enable us to ensure that you are adequately catered for.





**SOUTH
AMERICA**

USEFUL INFORMATION

Inclusions/Exclusions &
Recommended Kit List



WHAT'S INCLUDED



Included

- Flights
- Transfers to/from project
- Accommodation
- Three meals per day at Pacuare
- Meals as specified on itinerary days 7 - 15
- All activities as part of the project
- ATOL protection
- Airport meet/greet
- 24/7 in country support



Not included

- Personal travel insurance *
- Any activities not specified as part of the project
- Visas/travel documents
- Any meals not specified in the itinerary

* We recommend that you take out personal travel insurance as soon as your booking is confirmed.

Suggested kit list

A large backpack is recommended as your main luggage, not a suitcase; you will be travelling by basic means of transport in Costa Rica so a suitcase would not be practical

- Short sleeve shirts
- Long work trousers and shorts (Or work trousers with zip-off longs)
- T shirts
- Dark clothing for night work (turtle project)
- Hiking Boots/comfortable walking shoes
- Rain jacket (dark colour)
- Fleece/jumper (for cool evenings)
- Warmer clothing for winter
- Daypack rucksack
- Socks
- Hat
- Sandals/flip flops
- Changes of casual clothes for evenings
- Underwear

- Beach towel
- Swimwear
- Toiletries
- Mosquito / insect repellent
- Personal medication / First Aid Kit
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre)
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen

Other useful items:

- Good torch (red light filter)
- Camera
- Spare batteries
- Sunglasses
- Binoculars
- Cards/books/music
- Mammal/bird book
- Notebook/diary and pen
- Spanish dictionary



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