



Volunteer Program

Description

It is the third-most visited Park in Costa Rica, despite the fact that it can only be reached by airplane or boat. The exceptionally high rainfall and rich environment where the freshwater meets the sea makes the beaches, canals, lagoons and wetlands of Tortuguero areas of exceptional biodiversity.

The park protects the nesting beach sea turtle (such as Hawksbill, Loggerheads, Green and Leatherbacks). The Green Sea and Hawksbill turtle's nesting season runs from July to October with the peak in August, and the Leatherback turtles nest from February to April. It is possible to see individual turtles at any time of the year.



Tortuguero also protects the offshore waters to a distance of 30 km, and the wetland forests extending inland for about 15 kilometers. Tortuguero shelters a fabulous array of

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wildlife, including more than 300 bird species, 57 species of amphibians and 111 of reptiles, including three species of marine turtles; 60 mammal species and 13 of Costa Rica's 16 endangered species.

The park, one of the most varied within the park system, has 11 ecological habitats, from high rainforest to herbaceous marsh communities. Fronting the sea is the seemingly endless expanse of beach. Behind that is a narrow lagoon, connected to the sea at one end and fed by a river at the other, which parallels the beach for its full 35-km length. Back of the lagoon is a coastal rainforest threaded by an infinite maze of serpentine channels and streams fed by rivers flowing from the central mountain ranges and by the torrential rains that fall in the area. On the periphery of the forest lies a complex of swamps.



The western half of the Park is under great stress from logging and hunting, which have increased in recent years as roads are cut into the core of the rainforest from the west, north, and south.

The number of tourists visiting Tortuguero annually grew from 226 in 1980, to over 47,000 in 1993. That number has tripled since 2009. We work with national and international volunteer to preserve this important area. Join us!

Location

The Park is located on the Caribbean coast 52 miles (87 km) northwest of Limon. By air it is 50 miles (83 km) NW of San José, but the road and canal traveling distance between the two is 160 miles (267 km).

How to get there

Public transportation in Costa Rica is quite inexpensive and you can get almost everywhere by bus. You need to take a bus from San José to Limón and, as there are no roads to Tortuguero, the access is by boat. When you are sure where you are going we will give you the bus schedule and the final tips to get to your host Park



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General tasks

The most important requirements for this volunteer program are:

Hard working skills, ecologically sensitive, willing to learn about new cultures and the most important one: enthusiasm.



In most of the projects there will be a volunteer coordinator in charge to assign the jobs but you are welcome to help anytime you consider is needed. We appreciate creativity.

Maintenance and reconstruction of the Trails

General infrastructure maintenance

Tourist attention

Control Walks

Accommodation

The volunteers will be placed at our Environmental Station Robles-Kaufman localized at 400 meters from the National Park and the Tortuguero village. There are two shares room, electricity, running water and a cell phone for emergencies.

Food

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided at the National Park. The food is Costa Rican typical food so you will be eating a lot of rice and beans and they are mainly served with some type of meat and sometimes you can enjoy tropical fruits. If you are vegetarian or have any special dietary restrictions let us know. In most of the cases there is a cook in charge of the meal preparation but if not you may have the chance to learn how to prepare Costa Rican food.

Free time

You can choose your free day; you can leave early morning and be back before dusk.

What to bring

- High quality Rain gear (it can really rain in the tropics)
- Good quality shoes for walking (in turtle projects walks can be very long) and sandals
- Flashlight and batteries (headlamps are a very good idea as well as rechargeable batteries)



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- Alarm clock (battery powered) and a wristwatch.
- Swimsuit
- First-aid kit (if you have special medication let us know, anti-itch lotion is a good idea tropical, mosquitoes can be vicious)
- Insect repellent
- Towel (fast drying ones are ideal)
- Waterproof Sunscreen (bring a lot, sun rays are very strong)
- Sunglasses.
- Camera and film (water proof can be a good idea for baby turtles in the water)
- Journal (it will be an unforgettable experience)
- Light clothing (it dries fast)
- Bring a jacket it can get a little chilly
- Rubber boots (is not compulsory)
- Mosquito net and bed linen (sleeping bag is an option as well)
- Personal hygiene items
- Snacks (you will be provided with 3 meals per day)
- Entertainment things like: books, music, guitar, paints, cards, etc
- Pocket Spanish dictionary (may be useful)

Recommendations

Please keep your belongings in order, maintain your personal hygiene (due to tropical weather conditions it is highly recommended to shower everyday), do not seat at the table without a shirt and keep good manners. Every National Park has specific behavior rules so please follow them. It is prohibited to drink alcohol and to use illegal drugs.





FAQ

Are male volunteers preferred over female volunteers? No

What level of Spanish is needed? Basic

Is there a minimum age requirement? Yes, 18 years old

Is experience necessary? No prior experience is necessary, however you must have the ability to adapt to a tropical environment, be in excellent health, and willing to help in the conservation area.

Contact us

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