

Venezuela Team Leap

Jungle, Caribbean Beaches and Waterfalls

Overview

Calling all adventurous spirits! This amazing and varied placement gives you the chance to experience three wildly different environments and four incredible volunteer projects in Eastern Venezuela, making a real difference to the lives of its indigenous communities. You will travel with the team from the white sands and warm Caribbean waters of Playa Colorada, onto the lush pineapple plantations of Caripe learning Spanish along the way before heading up to the Gran Sabana, high in the Andes for the ultimate Latin American experience.

Starting at the coast, you will spend your first 5 weeks working on two volunteer projects - renovating a famous palm-fringed beach called 'Playa Melisa' located on the beautiful island of Arapito, and running an after-school fun club for local kids. You then move upland into Caripe, where you'll help to restore mountain trails and breathtaking bat caves whilst working on a reforestation project to protect indigenous tree species.

Finally, you'll be treated to a 2 week expedition to La Gran Sabana, located in the South-eastern corner of Venezuela at the border with Brazil and Guyana. These mystical highlands are one of the oldest rock formations in the world and the remains of when the South American continent was still attached to Africa. Scale spectacular table-top mountains and waterfalls, trek through pristine jungle and encounter the primitive and spiritual Pemon Indians and perhaps even an extra-terrestrial experience!

To brush up your language skills and help you on the projects, 10 hours per week intensive group Spanish lessons will kick off as soon as you arrive.

How you Help

Helping Who

Mochima National Park and Guacharo National Park, local communities

Helping How

Playa Colorada, Conservation Project 1 Assist with educating the general public and promoting environmental issues. Restoring existing beach shelters. Clearing and tidying up the beach including near-by reefs. Building and controlling the use of rubbish bins. Creating a public footpath from the beach up the hill to a view point. Playa Colorada, Community Project 2 Work with the Jakara Club to create a two-week, after school, timetable of activities for the children of the community. Help teach kids English and sports, health and hygiene. Organise games for the younger children focusing on team-play and inter-personal skills. Run classes on marine conservation awareness. Teach English evening classes for adults in the community. Caripe, Conservation Project 3 Plant trees and clear walk-ways in marked land areas. Promote reforestation in local schools and community centres urging the locals to take care of their environment, and understand the dangers of bad practice. Caripe, Ecotourism Project 4 Working within the National Park Guacharo we will front a massive clean-up operation focusing on the capital area of the park, including the main cave 'Cueva del Guacharo' and its surrounding areas. Clean footpaths inside the cave. Clear garbage in and around the area. Reclaim an overgrown existing footpath from the cave to a near-by

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waterfall. During all four of the above projects intensive group Spanish tuition will be available - at least 10 hours/week, 2 hours each day Monday to Friday.

Your Base

Your Team

Maximum of 25 volunteers per team and a minimum of 2 per team. Anyone aged 18-27 can participate. During the day you'll be split up into project groups of about 8-10.

Accommodation and Meals

At the coast you will be staying in a gorgeous beach-side lodge with a variety of private sleeping quarters and shared shower and bathroom facilities - but the hub of the lodge is the dining and recreational area which includes a popular bar, great for relaxing at the end of the day!

Accommodation in Caripe will be in a basic Hacienda and in the Gran Sabana we will be making our own camp as well as staying in local hostels.

You will eat locally produced food which will generally be rice or pasta based with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Meat will usually be either chicken or fish. Although menus will be local they will be tempered to western tastes wherever possible. Vegetarians and other special dietary requirements are easily accommodated. Volunteers will be expected to help and take responsibility for some domestic duties. You can buy snacks, crisps etc. in the local shops. They have limited electricity otherwise light is by gas lamps.

Weather

It is always hot and humid with temperatures constantly in early 30-s with high humidity although it cools down at night. It is generally dry in the mornings with afternoon heavy rain developing for several days every few weeks. July - November: Rainy season - tends to rain briefly most afternoons. August - October: Dry season, hotter and dryer than usual.

Wildlife

At the coast you will see pelicans, terns, boobies, frigates, dolphins and large iguanas. Fish such as swordfish, various tuna, striped mullet and sea bass abound, and in the lower depths you can observe red snappers, groupers, grunt and reef sharks. Up country there is an abundance of birdlife and you might be lucky enough to see giant anteater, jaguar, giant otter, foxes, and a huge variety of monkeys and sloth.

Time Out

Time In

Those choosing a 6 week placement will fly out with those who have chosen the 10 week option. You will all be met at Barcelona International airport and transferred by jeep to a Caribbean Lodge on Playa Colorada in the heart of Mochima National Park where you also get the initial induction briefing. You will be escorted to each location by the project leaders and inductions will be held at each. You start in Playa Colorada, then move to Caripe followed by the Gran Sabana (for those doing 10 weeks).

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Activities take place 5 days per week for 6 - 8 hours each day with weekends free. Project hours are normally 8am to 3pm.

6 week programme: First five weeks carrying out projects 1 and 2 above, in week six carrying out project 3.

10 week programme: As above for the 6 week placement plus project 4 in weeks 7-8 and the expedition at Gran Sabana in weeks 9-10.

Adventure Expedition, The Gran Sabana, Roraima, & The Lost World- (in the 9-10 weeks) You will embark on a 1000 km jeep cross-country journey, through the major Eastern states of Venezuela. Travelling South from Playa Colorada to La Gran Sabana (an area of raised land which has evolved significantly differently to the rest of the country and indeed the world - offering prolific endemic bird, animal and plant life). Once in this mystical land we will spend the first few days travelling, by jeep and by foot, around the communities visiting indigenous families, spectacular waterfalls and enjoying day hikes. All this before eventually reaching the community of Paritapue, where we will begin our 6-day challenge of climbing Roraima. This is the focus of the trip and a real challenge for any adventurous spirit. After this we will continue south for a final night before eventually crossing the Brazilian border for a Brazilian lunch and turning around for the long but rewarding return jeep journey home to Playa Colorada.

Time Out

You will get weekends free to travel.

Top Trips

Get your adrenaline kicks from learning to scuba dive and kitesurf or take a kayak into the bay to snorkel and paddle alongside the dolphins (and occasionally whales) that skip around the Caribbean. Visit the incredible scenery of the Angel Falls and Orinoco Delta. Go climbing at the professional wall at Playa Colorada for expert tuition and a test your newly acquired abseiling skills at a nearby waterfall.

Cost

Dates 2010 for 10 or 6 weeks

January 4, March 31st, July 5 (6 weeks only), September 2 2011 for 10 or 6 weeks

January 4, March 31, July 4 (6 weeks only), September 1

Costs

Up until 31st August 2010 Up until 31st August 2011

6 weeks	£1890	6 weeks	£1890
10 Weeks	£2750	10 Weeks	£2750

Includes:

Selection and briefing on all aspects of the scheme

24-hour emergency back-up, management and support by UK team and in-country Placement Manager, with reliable communications and infrastructure.

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Safety and induction course on arrival

Barcelona Airport pick up and transfer to and from the placements. Transport between project phases.

Donation to the project communities - currently £80, will go directly towards materials for the projects you are working on.

Park fees whilst carrying out project work.

Spanish lessons

Not included:

International flights, internal flights (not applicable), travel insurance, visas (not required for 90 days), medical expenses (reclaimable through travel insurance), soft drinks/beer etc. Volunteers will be responsible for any independent/weekend travel expenses e.g. food and accommodation whilst away from the placement location and any excursions not listed above. We are happy to arrange flights through STA Travel who are well known for offering good value.

Donation To The Community

Included in the cost of the scheme is a donation set at the level indicated above. The donation is sent directly to the communities who will decide in conjunction with your host what it is to be spent on. It helps, alongside other funding, to pay for the materials they need to continue project work. This will be done in a transparent way ensuring you leave a lasting legacy. Given the average monthly wage is approximately £80 per month the donations do actually go far and in the past Leapers have paid for second hand computers, first aid supplies, children-s clothing, developing health care etc.