

Volunteering at Esperanza Verde in the Amazon of Peru

Help construct the first wildlife rescue centre in Ucayali, Peru and conserve the rainforest.

www.esperanzaverdeperu.com

If you are interested in volunteering at Esperanza Verde, here you will find information on what is expected of you as a volunteer and what you can expect at Esperanza Verde.

What kind of work will I have to do?

The work at Esperanza Verde is varied, consisting mainly of animal-caretaking and construction.

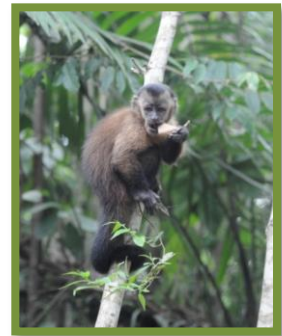
We constructed several small cages and some big enclosures as an aviary, a reptile enclosure and an enclosure for big mammals.

There is always some project going on, small or large, at Esperanza Verde.

Other work as in construction, involves reforestation, planting seeds and seedlings at the tree nursery, planting fruit trees for the future animals in the rescue centre, maintenance of the paths.

Caring for the animals is one of the most important tasks of the day. Caretaking involves feeding the animals as well as making sure that all the enclosures are kept clean and secure.

During the day you would either participate in animal care-taking or helping at the construction site.



As well there is also the possibility of helping out at the local primary or secondary school, teaching English, environmental classes, sports, or assisting generally. Both involve a longer stay (min. 3 months) and you need to have some experience. As a trainee or for a PhD, or masters, there will be possibilities as well at Esperanza Verde. For specific topics contact us.

What are the living conditions like?

Once you are here, you will stay in one of the rooms of the volunteer house. The rooms have two or three beds each. You will be living together with other volunteers, whilst the manager-family (Douwe, Olivia and their children Kayla and Marlon) share a separate building.

We provide sheets, a pillow, and a blanket. Mosquito nets are mostly available.

There is a bathroom in the house with a toilet, shower and cement table for washing clothes.

There is a separate building with the kitchen, a living room, toilet and shower.

There is a water system, which provides water for the house, kitchen and some cages. Water is freely available, with filtered drinking water in the house and kitchen.

Only cold running water is available for showering. The house is near a stream where you also can bath and wash. There is a nice small waterfall with a water basin on the land, and if you like swimming you can go swim in the river Aguaytia.

While walking through the forest you might encounter some mosquitoes, but there are hardly any near the house (only from February to mid-March there are more). During day there are some sand flies.

There is no electricity at Esperanza Verde. Evening light is by candle light and some small solar powered lights.

The shopping for our food will mostly be done once or twice a week in the town of Curimana (1 hour away). The food is very basic and includes items as pasta, rice, eggs, flour, powdered milk

and fresh vegetables and fruit (depending on what is available). As spices (other than garlic, salt, pepper and oregano) are difficult to obtain, you may want to bring a few of your own favourite spices (e.g. curry, thyme, dill etc.). From Monday to Friday lunch is prepared, for the rest we prepare all our meals ourselves (taking turns).

You will generally be working 5 days a week, with 2 days off. The day generally starts at 07:30 and ends at five with a lunch break from 12:00 to 13:00.



Do I have to pay for anything?

You must arrange your own transportation. You will have to pay for your flight to Peru as well as transportation to Esperanza Verde. For your stay at Esperanza Verde we ask 210 Nuevo Peruvian Soles (also payable in US Dollars) per week, which covers food and lodging and includes a contribution for materials for the continued development of the centre. If you want to do a special project here as part of your study or for your internship as a student, you would pay 280 Nuevo Peruvian Soles (or in US\$) a week. Most of the time during the week will then be reserved for you to work on your project.

Items of a personal nature (i.e. stamps, film, post cards, batteries, flashlight, and candy or chocolate) are all at your own expense.

If you want to go to Bello Horizonte (the nearby local village) or Curimana you will need to arrange and pay for your own transportation. A canoe to the other side of the river to Bello Horizonte costs 1 Nuevo Sol (5 minutes). From there you have to take a (motor) taxi for 8 Nuevo Soles (about 1 hour) to the riverbank where again it costs 1 Nuevo Sol to cross the river to arrive in Curimana.

If you want to go to Pucallpa you can take a collective taxi from Curimana for 16-18 Nuevo Soles and it takes about 2 hours.

There is no ATM in Curimana. There are banks with ATM in Pucallpa (3 hours away). The easiest way to get Peruvian Soles is in Peru upon arrival, e.g. at the airport there are ATM's or you can change dollars or euros there as well. It is mostly very expensive to get Peruvian Soles in your own country, so best is to take dollars or euros with you and change them in Peru.

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Having an intermediate knowledge of Spanish always comes in handy, as it will make it easier to communicate with local people and therefore make your stay here more enjoyable. However, it is not a requirement.

How do I get there?

Esperanza Verde is located in the Northern Amazon region of Peru, in the Ucayali region. From Lima you can either go first to Pucallpa, by bus or plane. The information below gives you all the details, which might seem more complicated than it really is. Many have taken the different routes and have not found any trouble taking them.

BY PLANE

Lima→Pucallpa

Pucallpa's airport is 5 km northwest of town. 'Lan Peru' and 'Star Peru' both have daily flights to and from Lima. When you arrive by plane in Pucallpa you have to travel further by taxi (see below further travelling details 'by bus: Pucallpa→Esperanza Verde'). For schedules and departures and prices, it is best to check on their website or at the airport. If you arrive in the morning in Pucallpa around 9am you can still make it to Esperanza Verde on the same day. Otherwise it is best to spend the night in Pucallpa.

BY BUS

Lima→Esperanza Verde :

You can travel more or less directly from Lima to Esperanza Verde.

You take a bus from Lima which travels to Pucallpa. We recommend traveling with either Turismo Central (Avenida Juna Pizarro 442, La Victoria in Lima) or Transmar (office on Av. 28 de Julio, La Victoria, Lima). Both offices can be reached within walking distance of each other. They leave at around 13:30, and it takes about 20-30 min from Miraflores in Lima. Best is to be half an hour in advance to buy the ticket. They have 2 floors, top floor for 80-100 Nuevo Soles, and lower floor for 90-120 Nuevo Soles (more comfortable chairs). Tell them when you buy the ticket you want to get off at Neshuya. This way you don't have to go first to Pucallpa and then take partly the same route back. Also tell this again to the person taking your backpack in the bus, so he won't put it all the way in the back. You would arrive in Neshuya around 6-7 am the next day and from there get a collective taxi at the street corner to Curimana (should be 10 soles, you might have to wait a bit as they will only leave if there are enough passengers). Let them drop you at the port (el Puerto (a Bello Horizonte)-Bigote (name of the guy who has one of the canoes to cross you)) where you can cross the river to the other side to get a collective taxi to Bello Horizonte.

Ask to be dropped off at the port at the river (el Puerto) in Bello Horizonte. If we know when to expect you, we will have a look at a certain time, and latest will check again at 5 pm. If we are not there, ask any canoe passing by or ask for the guy named Caña (pronunciation: Canja) if he can cross you (cost 1 Nuevo Sol to cross). From there you go up following the path to the left, there is only one way to get to the volunteerhouse, after about 5-10 minutes.

Lima→Pucallpa

Another option is to travel first to Pucallpa. When you arrive by bus in Pucallpa it might be best to spend the night there as the trip by bus is very long and you might not make it to Esperanza Verde the same day.

A direct bus to and from Lima (about 80-120 Nuevo Soles) takes about 18 hours in the dry season, in the wet season it can take 20 hours. We recommend traveling either with Turismo Central Turismo Central (Avenida Juna Pizarro 442, La Victoria in Lima) or Transmar (office on Av. 28 de Julio, La Victoria, Lima). Both offices can be reached within walking distance of each other.

Pucallpa →Esperanza Verde

First you have to travel to Curimana. Take a motortaxi to the office of Turismo Curimana (Avenida Centenario) or Nuevo Curimana (Av. 7 de Junio) in Pucallpa. They have collective taxis going to Curimana. Both offices are near each other - just tell the motortaxi driver where you want to go, he will drop you at one of them. The car will leave as soon as there are 4 passengers. If there is no car ready to go at one office you can try at the other one. Sometimes you have to wait for an hour, in worst case two. The taxi will take you for 18 Nuevo Soles to Curimana.

When you arrive in Curimana (after about 2 hours) let them drop you at the port (el puerto-Bigote) where you can cross the river (1 Nuevo Sol pp) to the other side to get a collective taxi (8 Nuevo Soles pp) to Bello Horizonte.

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If you start early in the morning (around 7 am there are often cars) you can make it to Esperanza Verde around lunch time. The latest to go from Pucallpa is 1 pm, if you want to make it to us in the same day. It might work a bit later, but you might not be able to find a car from Curimana to Bello Horizonte. But you could take the risk, and if not, you can spend the night in Curimana (hotel Moreno is ok, they have internet as well).

Staying in Lima

In case you stay overnight in Lima, Pay Purix Hotel is a good hotel which is near the airport for 18 US\$ a night. You can book a room over internet (info@paypurix.com).

If you want to stay further away from the Airport, a nice hotel you can find in Miraflores, Friends House in Jose Gonzales 427 (20-35 soles per person, incl. breakfast).

Staying in Pucallpa:

If you want a more homey feeling, stay with Maria, who was our neighbor in Pucallpa. She rents rooms for 5 Nuevo soles. She also runs an internet shop, so you can email home that you arrived safe. She has very basic rooms, and cold showers (it will be hard to find hot ones anywhere in Pucallpa). She can even pick you up from the airport if you want to if she knows in time of your arrival date. She also can help you out with any information you need about getting around in Pucallpa. You can find her on the corner of the 8th block of Jr. Arenal ('locutorio'), nr. 803. On the other side there is a little shop called 'bodega Martita'. It is not in the centre, but by motor taxi you can be there in 5 minutes. In Pucallpa it is important to keep your belongings close to your body - don't leave them anywhere, and always be careful at night. As a foreigner you are an easy target for pickpockets, just like in any big city.

You can also stay at Hotel Arequipo, in the street El Progreso. It is more luxurious (TV and wireless) and therefore a bit expensive (105 Nuevo Soles for a double room), but it is in the centre, it is clean and the people are friendly.

A more budget but clean hotel in the centre is Hospedaje Peru en the street Raimondi 639. It does not have wireless and costs are around 25 soles per person.

Do I need any vaccinations?

For this information, it is best to contact the travel advisory clinic in your country. You should be up to date on all your regular vaccinations (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, and hepatitis). It is always best to consult the health professionals in your country for the latest information. In this region there is no malaria, so you don't need any anti-malaria pills.

A Yellow fever vaccination is required for entering the Amazon area, they might check this upon your arrival, so always have your vaccination papers with you.

How long can I stay in Esperanza Verde?

The minimum stay is four weeks. There is no maximum stay. As long as you like to stay and work hard, and are okay with all the conditions, you are welcome to stay as long as you want. The longer you can stay the more interesting it can be for you, as you get to know the work, surroundings, and the animals and people a lot better.

In Peru you normally get a 90 days visitor's visa upon entry in the country. If you already know you want to stay longer in Peru, you can ask, upon entering the country (do this before they stamp your passport), for the maximum stay of 180 days.

It might be possible to prolong from 90 days to 180 days at the Immigration office in Lima. Otherwise and as well after a stay of 180 days, you have to travel to one of the borders, go out

for some hours, and then you can come in again. They will give you another 90 days, or, if you ask, 180. A volunteer visa does not exist in Peru.

What should I bring?

You will need loose fitting, comfortable work clothes. Do not spend a lot of money on special safari type clothing as you most likely will be throwing out all your work clothes when you are finished volunteering at Esperanza Verde (they will get stained and mouldy). It is preferable to wear long pants while working. There are some biting types of insects here (sometimes sand flies during the day and some mosquitoes at night). In addition to clothes, you need rubber boots (this is the rainforest and it does get very muddy, you can buy boots in Pucallpa for about 20 soles), as well as some type of rain poncho. When you decide you are coming, ask us if we have some boots in your size, so you don't have to buy them. Crocs are handy to have as well; you can buy them easily and cheap in Lima or Pucallpa. As we hardly use mosquito nets, they are mostly available if you want one. Since there is no electricity, a flashlight is a necessity. Entertainment is up to you. There is time for reading, playing cards, listening to music. If you wish to do anything like this, bring it with you (along with batteries, but please take them with you when you leave). Feel free to bring your own spices, and cook book. Life at Esperanza Verde is very simple.



How do I communicate with my friends and family? How do I communicate with Esperanza Verde?

You can e-mail home from Peru. There are a lot of internet cafes in Lima. In Pucallpa, there are several places with computers for e-mailing. Service is might be slow and not always working, but it is available.

In Curimana at the hotel Moreno there are several computers with internet (a very slow connection). There is a phone in the village Bello Horizonte but it is not easy, as it works with solar panel and it has a complicated system to phone elsewhere. But is possible to make an international phone call from here, it is expensive and only for a couple of minutes. If you want to call longer it is best to go to Curimana.

Friends and family can write to you (cards take about 10 days; packages can take up to 3 weeks:

Esperanza Verde
C/O Your Name
Apartado 85
Pucallpa-Peru

Or, only in case of emergency, phone to the nearby village Bello Horizonte, and leave a message for Douwe or Olivia, so we will phone back. They only speak Spanish and the connection is not always that good. As we pay for every message only use it when it really is an emergency. Telnr.: 0051 (0) 61 811 452.

For more information about the project or any questions about volunteering you can write to: info@esperanzaverdeperu.com

I hope you will consider volunteering at Esperanza Verde. The setting is beautiful and peaceful, and the work can be challenging and rewarding.