

Raleigh  
International

# Raleigh Expedition: Costa Rica







# Introduction

This guide will give you a more in-depth description of what to expect on a Raleigh Expedition in Costa Rica, including the structure of your programme, the projects you will participate in and camp life. We hope it gives you a sense of life on Expedition.



“

“It was the most amazing experience of my life.”

**Amy, Raleigh Expedition alumni,  
Costa Rica**

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# Welcome to Costa Rica!



BIENVENIDO A COSTA RICA



## About Costa Rica

Indigenous people have inhabited Costa Rica since 5000 BC. The most prominent indigenous communities in Costa Rica today are the Cabecares, Bribris, Borucas, Huetatrs, Malekus and the Chorotegas. Today these communities live in rural and remote villages, often with poor access to education.

One of the most recognised events in Costa Rica's history is Independence Day; on the 15th September 1821 the whole of Central America became independent from Spain.

In the past few decades, Costa Rica has focused on committing to peace, and sustainability, reversing deforestation of its rainforests and promoting eco-tourism. Today, 95% of Costa Rica's energy is renewable and is recognised as the 5th Greenest Country by the Environmental Performance Index.



## National Language

- ✓ Official language is Spanish.
- ✓ 'Pura vida' can mean hello/thank you/I am well/things are good/see you later.
- ✓ It literally translates to "pure life" but also represents the way of life for people in Costa Rica.

## Did you know?

- ✓ Costa Rica hasn't had a standing military force since 1948!
- ✓ 25% of Costa Rica's land is protected to be used as National parks or to home refugees.
- ✓ Costa Rican's are called either Ticos (male) or Ticas (female).

### TOP TIP!

We recommend learning as much Spanish as you can, this will make communicating with members of the community and partner organisations easier. We also recommend practicing hiking in preparation for trek!



# Sample Timeline

## What will I be doing and when?

The exact order of the projects will vary. If you are taking part in a 7-week Expedition, you will take part in two of the three phases.



### Arrive at San José airport

3-4 days induction and training



### Community Project

19 days

Changeover at base – 2-3 days



### Adventure Leadership Project

19 days

Changeover at base – 2-3 days.



### Environmental Project

19 days

Changeover at base - 2-3 days.



### Departure from San José airport

Your Raleigh journey doesn't end here. Become part of the Raleigh legacy and a global community of Raleigh Alumni



## WHAT IS 'CHANGEOVER'?

At the end of each phase, everyone returns to Raleigh Fieldbase in Hoedspruit for a couple of days. During this time you will catch up with the rest of the Expedition team, debrief from your previous phase and have time to rest and relax. You will be allocated into new teams so you can start preparing for your next phase.

You will have the chance to access your phone so you can get in touch with friends and family. Once recharged and energised, you'll be ready for the next phase of your Expedition adventure!





# Arrival and Induction

## Arrival and introduction

All volunteers are met at the airport by our Costa Rica team and taken to our Fieldbase. You will be provided with recommended flights.

Before you start volunteering on projects, you will participate in a 3–4-day induction. Expect a busy few days as you get to know your fellow volunteers and get prepared for Expedition life.

You'll receive essential training and safety briefings, find out more about the project you'll be working on and how your energy and hard work will contribute to creating lasting change.

During induction you will stay at the Raleigh Fieldbase, where accommodation will involve sleeping on floors with access to basic washing facilities. There is also limited Wifi.

By the end of Induction, you will be ready for your first phase! You will give in your phones to be safely stored before setting off on Expedition.



## Your training will cover:

- ✓ Introductions to the team
- ✓ Raleigh Code of Conduct
- ✓ Health & safety
- ✓ Navigation
- ✓ How to pack for each project
- ✓ Evacuation protocol
- ✓ Cultural awareness
- ✓ Getting to know your fellow volunteers
- ✓ Project roles and schedules

The Costa Rica team will also help prepare you for your projects, and you may receive specialised training from our project partners, who will demonstrate how your energy and hard work will contribute to lasting change.

You will then be ready to depart on your first project!

## Your team

The number of volunteers can vary but you will be in group sizes of no more than 20. This will include national volunteers and Volunteer Managers. You change groups between each phase and will have the chance to work with many different people.





## PHASE 1

# Community project

Raleigh Costa Rica connects young people with indigenous communities to work together in tackling the challenges they face.

Through our infrastructure projects, we aim increase access to education, raise awareness through campaigns and workshops, and improve of access to water and sanitation.

### About one of our community projects

The Alto Chirripó Indigenous Territory is on the Caribbean slope of the Talamanca mountain range and is one of the most remote areas in Costa Rica.

About 8,000 Cabecar indigenous people maintain their own culture and identity. However, Alto Chirripó has low school attendance and literacy levels and high poverty levels. One of the key barriers to culturally appropriate development is a lack of education due to poor facilities and difficult access.

Volunteers work with local community groups and Parents Associations to tackle these challenging problems by helping to build or repair school infrastructures, and plan action days with community leaders and school staff.

### What will I be learning?

Teamwork is essential to achieve the objectives of this project. Other skills learned or put into practice are effective communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, leadership and negotiation.

Volunteers will receive presentations on the local context of the community and school, as well as take part in reflective sessions on how to become active global citizens.

### Where will I be staying during this phase?

You will be staying in a school classroom which is set up as a bedroom. You will be using all the school facilities (bathrooms, showers, kitchen).

### PROJECT PARTNERS

All our community projects support the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

- ✓ Parents' Association
- ✓ School staff
- ✓ Ministry of Education





## PHASE 2

# Adventure Leadership project

Led by specialist Raleigh staff and Volunteer Managers, you'll trek approximately 260 km through the rainforest and up volcanoes on various stunning routes that tourists don't get access to.

On this trek, every day is different, including the weather and the accommodation. Go from camping on top of a mountain and sleeping under the stars to camping in a community centre.

### Everyone starts and finishes trek together

The trek is designed to be challenging, but no matter your trekking experience, you will learn to put one foot in front of the other and keep going.

It requires courage to do something beyond your comfort zone, and there will be highs and lows. Supporting one another through these moments, not giving up and sharing your achievements will be some of the most memorable and defining moments of your Expedition.

“It forces you to step out of your comfort zone and develop as an individual, and your abilities to communicate and compromise.”

Faith, Costa Rica volunteer



### Leadership and experiential learning

With all our projects, you will all take it in turns to lead the group for a day. This is a chance to develop your leadership skills but most importantly, to learn about the power of team effort and the strength of working together to achieve your goals.

Throughout trek, volunteers will also take part in orienteering and navigations as well as develop planning and logistics skills. This is all part of your experiential learning experience and an opportunity to build your skills, confidence, and resilience outside of a classroom setting. Whether it's scrambling up hills, lighting a fire or falling asleep in your tent after a long day of trekking under a beautiful starlit sky, these are some of the memories that will stay with you forever.



### PHASE 3

# Environmental project



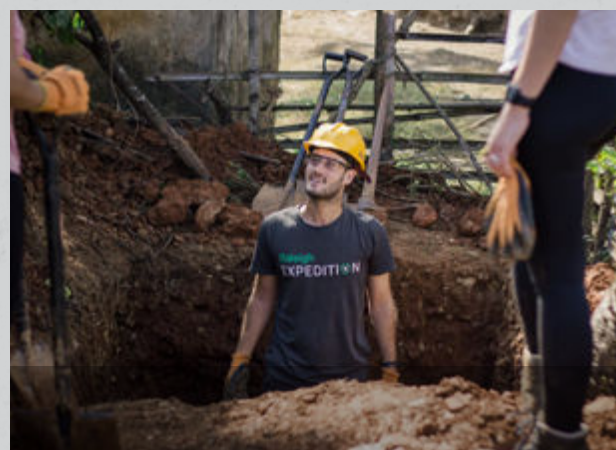
Costa Rica is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world and has conservation areas that are natural sites of global interest.

However, due to its inaccessibility and lack of infrastructure it is not considered an attraction for the typical and frequent tourists, which could generate significant income. Its environment is also vulnerable because of limited budget, shortage of staff, illegal deforestation and pollution.

Raleigh volunteers will be supporting The National System of Conservation Areas mission to protect Costa Rican biodiversity. Volunteers will support the maintenance and conservation of existing ecosystems and assist local communities to preserve such a biodiverse nature.

#### Tasks include:

- ✓ Improving trails
- ✓ Sign making
- ✓ Waste management plans
- ✓ Biodiversity inventory
- ✓ Camera Traps maintenance
- ✓ Reforestation
- ✓ Awareness raising activities on the importance in preserving these eco systems



#### PROJECT PARTNERS



National System of Conservation areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación - SINAC)



National parks and Park Rangers



Ministry of Labour

The whole programme is designed to bring the best in people and let them find out what really matters.

**Martin, Raleigh alumni**



# Camp Life

## Accommodation

Tents for 3 or 6 people, which we set up in the most incredible landscapes in the country.



## Meals

Raleigh provides you with dry and fresh food and a recipe. Volunteers rotate to cook for the group.

The staple food in Costa Rica is rice and beans, which can be accompanied by different vegetables and proteins. Tropical fruits are delicious, and very sweet, and eaten frequently.



## COMING TO A CLOSE

Three phases, 10 weeks, lots of new friends and amazing experiences. All Expeditions end with everyone coming together for a final few days back at the training centre.

This is a chance to catch up with friends and celebrate all you have achieved together.

Your journey doesn't end with Expedition.



You will be to be part of a global movement of over 55,000 alumni.



Join a Raleigh International alumni society full of venturers dedicated to taking action towards a fair, inclusive, and green world.

## Time off

Generally in the afternoon there is free time to rest and have fun with your team. Volunteers also have one day off each week and groups often organise themselves to do activities near the project site. You will also have days off between your project phases.





# Costa Rica full-time staff



## **CARLOS** | OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Carlos leads the development of Raleigh Costa Rica and is responsible for the general management of the organisation.

Carlos has extensive experience working in the NGO sector, working in several countries across Latin America before joining Raleigh in 2019. Carlos believes that Raleigh's work in social development is vital because we are creating a generation of young people that are tackling some of the most critical problems of our planet.



## **OSMAN OLIVAS** | OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

Osman oversees the day-to-day logistics and health and safety of Raleigh's Expedition programmes, as well as leading on the development and execution of community resilience and youth leadership projects. Osman studied Rural Development and, in 2017, he joined Raleigh as an Expedition volunteer. Since then, he has been part of both the Raleigh team, working as a logistics intern in Nicaragua before taking on the role of Logistics Coordinator in Raleigh Costa Rica in 2018. In his current role as Operations Coordinator, he has worked on approximately 13 expeditions and with 1,500 volunteers.



## **GENECIS MORENO** | OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

Génecis leads Raleigh's natural resource management projects, Latino volunteers' recruitment, as well as overseeing the day-to-day logistics and health and safety of Raleigh volunteers during Expedition. Génecis is a Venezuelan migrant, geographer, and social media expert. She has eight years of working experience on volunteer-based organizations and local governments such as TECHO Venezuela, TECHO Costa Rica, Costa Rica Azul, Raleigh, and other countries in Latin America. She is passionate about working with young people as she can see how, through volunteering, people can strengthen their personal and professional development.





# Costa Rica full-time staff

Continued...



## **SHARON SANTAMARIA** | GREENTALIST PROJECT COORDINATOR

Sharon is responsible for ensuring the delivery, schedule, and budget of the Greentalist project. This youth movement trains young leaders to become environmental activists and promote sustainable lifestyles through their actions. She coordinates reporting, plans meetings, organizes training sessions, and provides updates to volunteers and programmes manager. Her team has worked to create alliances and empower more than 200 young people from all over Costa Rica. She has expertise in collaborating on human rights projects, working in indigenous communities and with migrants. Sharon's experience working with young people has built her passion and energy to fight for a fair and resilient world.



## **ANDREY VILLALOBOS** | FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT


Andrey is responsible for the finances of Raleigh Costa Rica. He keeps track of all the expenses around the Expedition programmes and makes sure that all budgets are managed according to the organisation's standards. Andrey started as a Raleigh volunteer in cycle 18N. This experience motivated him to continue working towards the development of programmes for young people in environmental leadership at the national level. As well as working with Raleigh as our finance and accounting assistant, he is also currently a Bachelor of Management student culture at UCR.





[Apply online here](#)

If you still have questions, there are lots of ways you can find out more

 [info@raleighinternational.org](mailto:info@raleighinternational.org)

 Join an information event at [raleighinternational.org/information-events](https://raleighinternational.org/information-events)