

WELCOME TO

Volunteers Without Borders



Dear Potential Volunteer,

Thank you for taking the time to locate our organization and we would like to personally send you a warm welcome. We are pleased to hear you will be volunteering with Volunteers Without Borders. Although there are numerous avenues for volunteering, we can assure that we offer **life changing volunteering opportunities** at the **LOWEST possible cost** to you, the volunteer. Now that you've filled out the online application and that you're on board, our goal is to take care of you every step of the way. We will ensure that you are fully prepared before you leave to the country of your choice and begin working on your first volunteer program with us. This information package was designed to serve two purposes. The first purpose is to give you more detailed information about the country you have chosen to volunteer in as well as providing some additional insight into the various types of programs we offer. The second purpose is to provide you with specific items that you will be expected to bring along with you, what types of vaccinations you will be needing before you leave, and what we recommend for your emergency/medical travel insurance. Not only do our volunteering programs benefit the organization and community you will be working with, but they also provide volunteers with an appreciation and gratitude for others, sense of fulfillment, as well as new perspectives. Our goal is to inspire volunteers to raise awareness, share their stories and continue to support or contribute to our programs in any way possible in the future. Although our programs can be quite demanding at times, we ensure that you will be given adequate time and days off to tour around the area you are working in and get the opportunity to participate in any outdoor activities or adventures you would be interested in.

It is your job to explore this information package and then reply back to us at: info@vwbinternational.org to let us know that you are ready for the next step of the enrollment process. If you have specific questions please our frequently asked questions page as this covers most questions that the volunteers may have. To locate this page, visit our website and click the 'About VWB' tab.

Like most developing countries in the world; political instability could arise at any given time, so we encourage you to check with your local government travel advisory just to be sure that nothing is expected to occur in the location while your over there. With that being said, we can ensure you that every country that we offer has been checked out by our team to ensure the security and safety for our volunteers.

While volunteering on any of our available programs, you will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of health, educational, community development, or wildlife and marine conservation programs. This will give you a chance to make an important contribution to the local community and while doing so, gain an in depth understanding of the country and its culture. We assure you that this experience will leave a lasting impression and stay with you for the rest of your life.

Information to help you prepare for your trip

If it's your first time volunteering or going abroad, there are several things you will need to make sure you bring on your trip before you leave. Here is a list of the following items that we have deemed necessary to bring to make sure you can enjoy your time on the program. The list below is a general suggestion; each volunteer may prefer more specific items that we have not included in this list. Please make sure that you remember to bring any special items that you are used to having back home, that may only be purchased in your own country.

What to Bring:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable shoes and sandals | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera and/or iPod |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts and pants | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone - You can buy simcard) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain Coat/Jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> Rechargeable batteries w/charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping Bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses and Sunscreen | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/head torch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Lock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito net & insect repellent | <input type="checkbox"/> String |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Sanitizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Eyeglasses/Contacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication (Anti Malarial Tablets) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duct Tape and/or superglue | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture Book / Journal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Binder or notepad | <input type="checkbox"/> Country Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear Plugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small water heater or kettle | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes or Electronics for donation |

Vaccinations:

The World Health Organization recommends that all travelers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. The consequences of these diseases can be severe and outbreaks do occur. [Click here](#) to learn more.

“As the President and Founder of Volunteers Without Borders Association, I’d like to offer you a warm welcome! I have done a lot of volunteering myself and believe it is the most fulfilling and gratifying way to give back to countries around the world that need all the help they can get. Whether you’re an adventurous traveler or looking to help make a difference, we are happy to have you join us. By volunteering, you will make a difference to the local people that you come in contact with overseas. Our volunteering opportunities expose you to the often-harsh everyday realities of life for many people around the world in underdeveloped areas. We thank you for your time and consideration.”

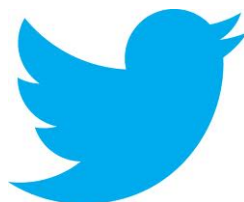
~ Kevin Francis

President & Founder of VWB



Website:
Email:

www.vwbinternational.org
info@vwbinternational.org





COSTA RICA



Situated within Central American territory, Costa Rica boasts an abundance of pristine coastlines along both the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean. Costa Rica is best known for its beaches, volcanoes, rainforests, and immense biodiversity. Roughly a quarter of this country is made up of protected jungle, rich with wildlife including howler and spider monkeys, keel-billed toucans and a variety of other exotic birds. If that isn't enough to attract you to this incredible country, there are endless amounts of rainforest hikes and brisk high-altitude trails, rushing white-water rapids and world-class surfing. It's safe to say that Costa Rica is full of outdoor adventures just waiting to be had. National parks allow visitors to glimpse the seething life of the tropical rainforest, simmering volcanoes and cloud forests, which offer otherworldly vistas. Along the coast, there are endless areas that offer reliable surf for beginners all the way up to experts. Blue morpho butterflies flit amid orchid-festooned trees, while colorful tropical fish, sharks, rays, dolphins and whales thrive offshore.

Currency Advice

The currency accepted in Costa Rica is Costa Rican colon (CRC) or USD. In most places, credit cards are also accepted. The best currency to bring is USD in a mixture of large and small denominations, plus some travelers' checks as an emergency standby if needed that can be cashed in most major banks within the country.

Travel Documents

If you're a Canadian citizen then you do not need a visa to enter Costa Rica. However, to enter the country you will have to present the following upon arrival: a valid passport, prove economic solvency of at least \$130 CAD per month of legal permanence in the country, a ticket to exit Costa Rica and do not have an impediment of entry into the country. Not all people who wish to travel to Costa Rica need a tourist visa, this will depend on the nationality, purpose of visit, country of residence and duration of stay. The visa does not guarantee entry to Costa Rica as it depends on the immigration officer upon arrival. Please check with the embassy from which country you reside in to determine if you need a visa.

Dangers and Annoyances

Costa Rica is in general a safe, hassle-free country. With that being said, you do still need to take the usual precautions. Avoid isolated areas; especially stretches of beach on your own, and in cities and tourist areas take a taxi at night. Try to schedule your travel so that you will arrive at a new location during daylight. When using public transport, don't accept drinks or food from someone you don't know and ensure your bag or belongings are secure. Be skeptical of anyone who comes up to you on the street asking whether you remember them from the

airport, your hotel or wherever. In the majority of cases, they are just trying to get money from you. Avoid showing large amounts of money in public, be discreet. In tourist areas like San Jose, Liberia, Tamarindo or Jaco beach, it's always a good idea to play it safe and keep a close watch on your belongings. Especially around bus stations and budget tourist hotels.

Always keep your passport, important documents and money on you at all times. Do not leave your luggage unattended even in buses, restaurants or taxis. You must store it under the bus, make sure that it is actually placed in the storage area, do not trust someone else to place it there. If you lose any belongings during your stay, please make a police report at the nearest station. With that being said, Costa Rica as a whole is not any more dangerous than other places in the world, but it is always better to be informed. Enjoy your stay and remember that your contribution is very helpful and appreciated!

Water

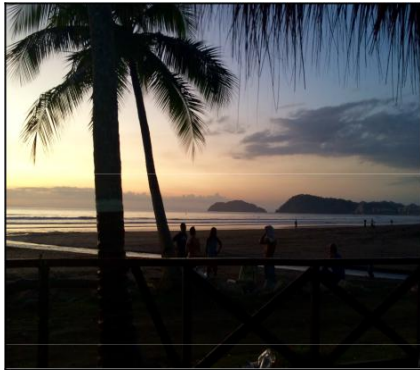
Costa Rica has some of the cleanest and least contaminated water in Central America. It is okay to drink water from most areas but always ask first before doing so, especially if you are planning to drink from the tap. If you prefer to keep it safe and drink bottled water there are plenty of places you can purchase that from. Avoid drinking from streams, rivers and lakes unless you've purified the water first. The same goes for drinking from pumps and wells – some do bring pure water to the surface, but the presence of animals can still contaminate supplies.

Cultural Awareness

Costa is a very interesting, exciting, beautiful and scenic country, but the majority of the population does not speak the English language. We encourage volunteers, planning to stay for 2 to 3 months or more, to consider learning essential words and phrases in the local language and there may be an opportunity for us to arrange language lessons for those that are interested. Female volunteers should be aware that in the towns and villages, it is normally respectful to have your knees and midriff covered (and in some cases, your shoulders). So practices in Costa Rica are very different to what volunteers may be used to in their home country. Visitors to Costa Rica do not have to agree with all customs around them, but should respect them and be open to understanding the complex cultural history that shaped them.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy in place for alcohol consumption, during volunteer work hours, while on the program. The consumption of alcohol is looked negatively upon and even forbidden in certain countries and it is essential that you abide by this rule. We need to ensure that you are giving the program the right impression of Volunteers Without Borders during your stay. **If volunteers choose not to follow this policy, they will be removed from the program immediately, and no refund will be issued.**

SEA TURTLE MARINE CONSERVATION PROGRAM



Location: Northeastern region along coastline (approximately 50 km North of Limon)

For this particular program, this community development based program was established in 2001 and was designed to protect Sea Turtles and provide them with a safe area to lay their eggs and not be harmed or killed by poachers. Another vision of this program was to find ways to initiate sustainable development and provide a viable alternative economy in the surrounding area and village. Prior to the initiation of this program, it was estimated that 98% of the Green Turtles were being killed for their meat and almost every single nest of all three different species of turtles were poached on the beaches in this region. Since this program has been initiated, poaching has been drastically reduced to approximately 38%. In addition to saving an estimated 10,000 neonates annually, the program also helps to economically support about one third of the local villages population. This program is a true grassroots project and the dedicated team have been successful not only at redefining the cultural importance of turtle conservation but have also been able to provide education of the importance of marine conservation to those locals living in the area. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the contribution that volunteers make and the organization is extremely grateful for the large scale impact that can be accomplished by those who want to help make a difference. This program welcomes individuals as well as groups of volunteers from all over the world that have a need, want, and desire to be able to help protect sea turtles, and give back and provide support to a local community. Volunteers are essential to the success of the program. As a volunteer, you will be provided with a wonderful opportunity to help protect these endangered species. It is an exciting opportunity to help a local village that is rallying around its sea turtle population and to be able to contribute to the growth and success of this grassroots conservation program and share your stories with others.

If you volunteer on this program during the months of March through to September / October, this will provide you with the best chance to be on the beaches during the busy sea turtle nesting season. As a volunteer, you may get opportunities to observe giant female sea turtles nesting on our beaches as well as witnessing the incredible sight of seeing baby turtles crawling out of their nests in the sand and making their long first

journey out into the open ocean. During your time on this program, you will be working alongside our local turtle guides.

VOLUNTEER DAILY DUTIES:

General maintenance work (raking, cleaning, painting), guarding turtle nesting sites, identifying turtle tracks, counting the number of eggs, recording tag numbers and assisting with egg relocation, monitoring and guarding the hatchery, cleaning the beaches of debris, releasing and safeguarding the hatchlings on their first journey to the ocean, participating in nest exhumations, searching for nesting females to collect and relocate the eggs to our guarded hatchery if deemed necessary, making nest baskets, keeping pests (crabs, dogs) out of the hatchery, working in our recycling center, participating in a turtle training program, teaching English, arts and crafts with the village children, or designing community improvement projects based on personal skills and interests and various temporary programs in the village.

Our national and international volunteers accompany local guides on 4 hour night patrols, searching for nesting turtles and camouflaging nests or collecting and relocating the eggs and can also participate in the morning census, beach cleaning and hatchery duty. Since there is an on---going scientific investigation, turtles are measured, checked for diseases and tagged. The presence of more people on the beach means less opportunity for the poachers, who will steal the turtle eggs and also some species of turtles to sell the meat illegally. For patrols we recommend dark, lightweight clothes, closed comfortable shoes, and dark rain gear. During your time in Costa Rica, be prepared that some days can be extremely hot and humid, insects abound, and night patrols are with limited light and physically demanding. We are close to the equator and solar rays are intense, so please bring sun block and remember to drink plenty of water. Other times it can rain for several days, so bringing rain gear with you is also recommended. We can provide special treatment for children and families in homestays and on night patrols. Malaria treatment is not necessary, but you should bring and use insect repellent.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS:

During your program, Volunteers are encouraged to provide education to the locals as much as possible. Previous experience is not required because you will receive a training program in which your role will be explained along with turtle biology and conservation information. Comprehension of the Spanish language is not required but does help. During free time, there are a variety of fun activities such as going on a rainforest--river tour, fishing, enjoying the beach, hiking to the local lagoon, riding horses, learning how to dance salsa and merengue, playing soccer or volleyball with locals, or just hanging out in a hammock on the beach and reading a book. Since this is a truly community based

conservation program, a portion of the program fees you pay as a volunteer goes to the villagers and local projects within the community you will become part of.

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS:

Homestays are a wonderful opportunity to be immersed in a new culture, become part of the community, and to develop Spanish language skills. All homestay packages include your room, three meals a day (vegetarian available), and laundry service. Each house has safe drinking water, locks on doors, electricity, fans and mosquito nets in the rooms. Hotels and cabins are also available within the village area – some with meals included. There is also a camping facility that has a communal kitchen. You will find cafes and restaurants for meals and stores to buy groceries.

We also offer an opportunity for long-term commitments. Your position would be a **Research assistant/co-coordinator**. To obtain this volunteer position, this program would require a minimum two-month stay, and you must be able to speak some Spanish and English, and be open and willing to do extra tasks for the program. Accommodations are available in our field station, which has a full kitchen. Please inquire if interested. We also have special packages for groups.

There is a Medical clinic in the village that is open four days a week: Monday through Wednesday, and Friday. There are no banks or ATM's in the village where your program is located. A day trip can be arranged for you to visit stores, banks, etc

HERE ARE THE STEPS TO COMPLETE OUR ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Step 1) - Review this information package and decide which country you want to volunteer in and what program you are most interested to volunteer on. Once you have done that, please fill out the online application form available on our website and click submit. Please make sure to include the necessary required information.

Step 2) Once we receive the application form, we will send you a temporary confirmation for your desired program. If you need to make any changes, please feel free to email us and let us know. If we do not receive any further correspondence from you, we will send you the program fee payment request via Paypal within 3 business days.

Please note:

A \$225 CAD one-time registration/enrollment fee will also be added to your program fee.

Step 3) - When we receive confirmation that your program fee has been paid, you will receive a confirmation email from us. In this email, there will be a waiver/release form that

will be required to fill out and send back to us at your earliest convenience. You are also encouraged to book your flights at this time. Once you have done so, please send us a copy of your flight itinerary so that airport pickup/transfer (if available) can be arranged for you upon arrival.

Step 4) - After we receive your waiver/release form, we will confirm your placement on the program and detailed program specific information will be provided to you at this point.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Our enrolment and registration process begins by applying online. Once you have filled out and submitted the online application form, you will receive a confirmation email. To continue on in our enrolment process, all volunteers will be required to pay a Registration Fee of \$225 CAD, which will be added to the Program Fee. This fee helps to cover the administration and processing costs. Once we receive your payment, we will send you a confirmation email with the program details and encourage you to book your flight at that time. Our team will be readily available to correspond with you and answer any questions you might have from the time you apply until you reach the program. If you have any further questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us at:

info@vwbinternational.org

OUR PROGRAM FEES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- **Registration Fee** (refundable if you choose not to go), ongoing support from VWB staff, program marketing costs, information pack, administration costs, travel costs to develop and ongoing costs to sustain programs and communication costs with volunteers.
- **Program Fee** – orientation, training, program supervision, accommodation with homestay/meals is provided depending on the amount of program fee paid, in country 24/7 volunteer support and in-country administration costs.

WHAT ADDITIONAL COSTS WILL I HAVE?

- Visa, flights, travel insurance (mandatory), immunizations / vaccinations, in country trips or tours, transfer to other areas of the country, and spending money. Private rooms are cheaper per person if 2 friends or a couple share the room.



During this entire process, we will always be available to correspond with you to answer any other questions you might have from now until you reach the program. Thank you for choosing **Volunteers Without Borders**.

We can assure you that you've come to the right place!