



**ESPERANZA VERDE**  
nature conservation - Peru



## Volunteering in the Amazon Rainforest of Peru

**Volunteer at the first wildlife rescue centre in Ucayali and help conserve the rainforest and its wildlife.**

[www.esperanzaverdeperu.com](http://www.esperanzaverdeperu.com)

If you are interested in volunteering at Esperanza Verde, we hope this guide will give you an idea of what to expect when you arrive and help prepare you for your trip here. It will outline what is expected of you as a volunteer and what the main roles and responsibilities are. The rescue centre is set in a beautiful and peaceful location. The work here can be challenging but also and most importantly rewarding.

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Mica (Capuchin) with Louie and Leo (Squirrel Monkeys)

### **What kind of work will I have to do?**

The work at Esperanza Verde can be very varied. The most important day-to-day task is **caring for the animals**: feeding, cleaning cages, and giving milk to baby animals, for example. After all animals have been taken care of, there is often time for assisting with one of our **construction** projects, helping with **cooking**, undertaking some general **maintenance** (e.g. raking and restoring paths), or **creating enrichment** for the animals in enclosures to keep them occupied. Depending on how many volunteers we have at one time and also the interests of the volunteer, you might not be needed for animal care and you could help at the construction project all day, or find yourself assisting with other on-site projects.



We already have numerous enclosures for animals but there is nearly always a cage **under construction** or in need of **repair**. As we never exactly know what kind of animal will arrive, we try to be ready for anything! If you look at the weekly updates on the website or the Facebook page you will get an idea of what projects are currently in progress.



Volunteer Painting

Along with the animal-care and construction there are also other jobs you can get involved with. You can help our local cook with **preparing lunch**, or help at the **plantation**, harvesting bananas and papayas. You can always assist with some general maintenance of the paths and walkways, for example raking the leaves and helping to restore steps that have worn away. Another of our on-going projects you could get involved in is **reforestation**. This involves planting seeds and seedlings in different parts of the forest during rainy season, as well as noting the GPS locations of the planted trees.

There is also the possibility of helping out at the local primary or secondary school, with **teaching** English, environmental classes, sports, or just assisting generally. Both involve a longer stay (min. 3 months) and you need to have some experience and knowledge of Spanish.

If you are working towards a **PhD, or masters**, there are also several possibilities here at Esperanza Verde. Please contact us for more details.

### **What are the living conditions like?**

The **accommodation** at Esperanza Verde consists mostly of shared rooms within our volunteer house. The rooms have two or three beds each. You will be living together with other volunteers in one house (max. of 12 persons). The manager-family (Douwe, Olivia and their children Kayla and Marlon) have their own house a bit deeper into the forest, within walking distance.

You will be provided with **sheets, a pillow, and a blanket**. Although not a necessity as there is no malaria, some **mosquito nets** are also available.

The volunteer house has a **living room** and a **bathroom** with a toilet, shower and cement table for washing clothes. The general **kitchen** is in a separate building and also has an additional living room, toilet and shower. This is where we all (including the manager-family and permanent staff) have lunch during weekdays.



Bathroom

There is a piped water system, which provides water



for the house, kitchen and several animal enclosures. In the volunteer house and the kitchen **filtered drinking water** is also available. Only cold running water is available for showering. Nearby there is a small **waterfall** to bathe in, and if you like **swimming** you can also go swim in the bigger river, Aguaytia. During dry-season (July-October) we do sometimes run out of water, so we always try to use it sparingly. However when this does occur we always have the stream and the waterfall to bathe and wash.



Volunteer House Living Room

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 the day there are sand flies which also bite, but these again are found mostly by the main river, away from the house.

There is no electricity at Esperanza Verde. Evening light is by candlelight and some small solar powered lights are available in the common areas. You can charge some items with a USB charge point, but the

power is limited and often there is a queue of items. So try to bring not too many devices, as you won't be able to charge them regularly. If it is cloudy for few days, charging can take some time, as it requires strong sunlight to work efficiently.

We go **shopping** once or twice a week for food in the town of Curimana (1 hour away). The **food** is very basic and includes items such as **pasta, rice, lentils, beans, eggs, flour, powdered milk and fresh vegetables and fruit** (depending on what is in season). Spices (other than garlic, salt, pepper and oregano) are difficult to obtain, so you may want to bring a few of your own favourite spices from home (e.g. curry, thyme, dill, rosemary etc.). From Monday to Friday lunch is prepared by our cook, the volunteers prepare the rest of the meals communally.

You will generally be working **5 days a week**, with 2 days off. The day generally starts at 07:30 and ends at 17:00 with a lunch break from 12:00 to 13:00.

Please keep in mind that these hours may vary and you need to be flexible. It might be necessary to work more unusual hours depending on the needs of the animals at that time, i.e. a baby monkey might need milk in the middle of the night.

### **Do I have to pay for anything?**

You must arrange your own **transportation** and **travel-health insurance**. You will have to pay for your flight to Peru as well as



Vegetable Cupboard



Macaws in the Aviary

transportation to Esperanza Verde. For your stay at Esperanza Verde we ask 350 Peruvian Soles per week (preferably paid in cash at the beginning of your stay). This covers food and lodging and a small contribution towards the running of the project.

To guarantee and reserve your place here we ask for a non-refundable deposit of your first week's payment (350 soles). This can be paid via bank transfer or Paypal. Please email for more details.

If you want to undertake a **personal project** during your stay here, either as part of your study or internship, you would pay 400 Nuevo Peruvian Soles a week. This would enable you to spend 2-3 days a week on your project. You would be expected to help with the other volunteer work duties on the remaining days.

Items of a personal nature (i.e. stamps, film, post cards, shower gel, shampoo, 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 Bello Horizonte (across the river) costs 1 Nuevo Sol (5 minutes). From there you can take a (motor) taxi for 8 Nuevo Soles (about 1 hour) to Curimana. During the journey you cross the river again, so you need an additional 1 sol per person for the boat. The total journey from Esperanza Verde to Curimana should cost around 10 Nuevo Soles, though may cost a little more if you have a lot of luggage.

If you want to go to Pucallpa you can take a collective taxi from Curimana for 16-18 Nuevo Soles. It takes about 2 hours from Curimana. If you want to visit Pucallpa during your stay, you have to arrange 2 days off in a row, as you will need to stay the night in Pucallpa.

Please note there is no ATM near Esperanza Verde, so please bring enough money for your whole stay at Esperanza Verde, including additional money for personal items or trips. The only banks (with ATMs) are in Pucallpa (3 hours away). It is best to obtain Peruvian Soles in Peru upon arrival, e.g. at the airport using the **ATM's** or the **money exchange**. It often is very expensive to get Peruvian Soles in your home country, so either use the ATM when you arrive or bring Dollars or Euros to exchange.

### **Do I need to speak Spanish?**

Having an **intermediate knowledge** of Spanish always comes in handy, but it is not a requirement. If you speak some Spanish it will make it easier to communicate with local people and can make your stay here more enjoyable. The volunteers and managers more commonly speak English.



## **How do I get there?**

Esperanza Verde is located in the Northern Amazon of Peru, in the Ucayali region. From Lima you can travel either by bus or plane. The information below gives you all the transportation options. The descriptions seem a bit complicated however most volunteers have found it an easy journey and have not experienced any major problems.



Pucallpa Main Square

### **BY PLANE**

*\*\*Recommended when travelling during rainy season, December to April \*\**

### **Lima→Pucallpa**

Pucallpa's airport is 5 km northwest of town. "LAN Peru", "Star Peru" and Peruvian airlines have several daily flights to and from Lima. When you arrive by plane in Pucallpa you have to travel further by taxi. See below for onward travel details from Pucallpa to Esperanza Verde. If your flight arrives early in Pucallpa it is possible to reach Esperanza Verde on the same day. However if arriving after 12pm we recommend staying in Pucallpa for the night and starting your journey again early the next day.

### **BY BUS**

When travelling by bus there are two options. You can either travel from **Lima to Neshuya** (17 hours) or **Lima to Pucallpa** (18 hours), then onwards via **Curimana**. Either way you board the bus for Pucallpa but with Neshuya you just leave the bus earlier. See below for more details.

### **Lima→Curimana, via Neshuya:**

Take a bus from Lima to Pucallpa (final destination) and get off early at Neshuya.

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 are within walking distance of each other. They usually leave at around 13:30, and it takes about 30 min to travel from **Miraflores** in Lima to the departure office. However please check with the office for the up to date schedule. It is best to be there at least half an hour in advance to buy the ticket. The buses have 2 floors: the top floor costs about 80-100 Nuevo Soles, and lower floor costs about 90-120 Nuevo Soles (as it has more comfortable chairs).

When you buy the ticket tell them that you want to get off at **Neshuya** (which is about an hour before the final stop in Pucallpa). The price will be the same as a ticket to Pucallpa, but this saves you time as you don't have to go to Pucallpa then travel back along the same road on the way to



Curimana. Also mention Neshuya again to the person putting your backpack on the bus, so he can make sure it is near the front of the luggage hold. And mention it again to the lady serving food and drinks.

If you caught the 13.30 bus, you would arrive in Neshuya around 6-7 am the next day. From there take a **collective taxi** from the corner to Curimana (it should be about 10 soles). You may have to wait a while, as the taxi will only leave when they have enough passengers. The journey usually takes 1 hour.

### **Lima→Curimana, via Pucallpa:**

If travelling via Pucallpa you use the same route as above but just stay on the bus until it reaches the final destination. If you decide to opt for this route you can still make it to Esperanza Verde on the same day providing you leave Pucallpa no later than 12pm. Otherwise spend the night in Pucallpa and continue your journey the next day.

In Pucallpa take a **motortaxi** to the office of Nuevo Curimana. The motor taxi from the airport should cost between 5-8 soles, 5 soles if you are outside the airport gates. Nuevo Curimana is the office for collective taxis to Curimana (again you may have to wait until there are enough passengers to fill the minibus). The office is located at Terminal Terrestre, KM6, next to the Terminal Mercado Majorista. The onwards cost to Curimana is about 16-18 Nuevo Soles and the journey takes about **2 hours**.

### **Curimana→Esperanza Verde, via Bello Horizonte:**

When you arrive in Curimana, the taxi will drop you at the office for **Nuevo Curimana**. Here you pick up another car to **Bello Horizonte**. Usually the office knows where you are heading to before you even ask! Again the car will only leave when it has enough passengers. It will first cross the river, where you must pay 1 sol per person to the **boatman**. After that you drive for about **1 hour** to Bello and the journey costs about 8 soles. When you arrive in Bello ask to be dropped at the port or "el Puerto", or mention Olivia and Douwe and they will know where you are heading. Once at the port you can ask any passing **canoe** to cross you to the other side, or ask for **Caña** (pronounced Canya). You can see our side of the river from the riverbank in Bello so it is not a long boat ride and costs 1 sol per person. Once on the other side follow the path (there is only one) and after about **10 minutes** you will reach the house. Well you'll probably hear Yara, the dog, barking first! Shout hello and someone will come and meet you.



Yara

It might all seem like a long and complicated journey, but it is a well-travelled route. Even in the office of Nuevo Curimana in Pucallpa they know our name so will know exactly where you are going! People here are very friendly and usually very helpful.



## Where can I stay in Lima and Pucallpa?



Rainforest

### Staying in Lima:

If you need to stay overnight in Lima, **Pay Purix Hotel** is a good hotel and near the airport. It is about 18 US\$ a night. You can book a room over internet or email (info@paypurix.com).

If you want to stay further away from the Airport, and more in the centre of town there is a nice hostel in Miraflores, called **Friends House**, Jose Gonzales 427. The cost is around 35 soles per person, incl. breakfast.

### Staying in Pucallpa:

If you want a more homely feel, stay with **Maria**, a good friend of ours. She rents rooms for 10 Nuevo soles and only speaks Spanish. She also runs an internet shop, so you can email home to say that you arrived safely. The rooms are basic with cold showers (although it is hard to find hot ones anywhere in Pucallpa). Don't expect too much as it is very simple.

Maria can also 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. When taking a taxi ask for Arenal, cuadra 8, at El billiard de mono. Maria's is not in the centre, but with a motor taxi you can be there in 5 minutes, 10 minutes from the airport.

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

A cheaper option in the centre is **Hostal Barbtur** on the corner of Raimondi and 7 de Junio. It is next to the shop Oro Verde. It costs around 40 soles per night.

In Lima and Pucallpa (as in any big city) 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.

## Do I need any vaccinations?

For up to date advice it is best to contact the travel advisory clinic in your home country. You should however be up to date on all your regular vaccinations (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, and hepatitis). In this region there is no malaria, so you shouldn't need



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any anti-malaria pills. A yellow fever vaccination is sometimes advised when travelling to the area, but please check with your travel clinic for the latest recommendations.

### **How long can I stay in Esperanza Verde?**

The minimum stay is **eight weeks**. There is no maximum stay. Providing that we have space and that you **work hard**, like the lifestyle and working conditions, you are welcome to stay as long as you want. The longer you stay the more enjoyable your experience will be. You will get to know the work, the surroundings, the animals and people a lot better. It takes a minimum of 2-3 weeks to be fully trained as a volunteer so a longer stay will always be more rewarding both for the volunteer and for us.

When entering Peru you normally get a **90 day visitor visa**. If you already know you want to stay longer in Peru, you can ask at passport control (before they stamp your passport), for the maximum stay of 180 days. It is sometimes possible to extend your visa from 90 days to 180 days at the Immigration office in Lima. Otherwise you have to travel to one of the borders, exit the country and re-enter after a few hours. Upon re-entering they will give you another 90 days, or, if you ask, 180. A volunteer visa does not exist in Peru, so if asked the purpose of your travel please state **“tourism”**.

### **What should I bring?**

You will need loose fitting (not heavy fabric), comfortable **work clothes**. Do not spend a lot of money on special safari type clothing, as you will most likely throw out all your work clothes when you are finished volunteering at Esperanza Verde (they will get stained and torn). It is preferable to wear **long trousers** while working, to protect against insect bites. In addition you need **rubber boots** as it gets very muddy. You can bring your own boots from home or buy boots in Pucallpa for about 20 soles. There are some boots left here by old volunteers, however popular sizes, especially large sizes often run low. You will also need some type of **rain poncho**, but again we

don't recommend you bring anything expensive. **Croc style shoes** are also useful; you can buy them in Lima, Pucallpa or Curimana. We don't often need **mosquito nets**, but there are some available. However to be guaranteed one, we suggest you bring your own. You can bring **insect repellent** however you cannot use it when working with or feeding the animals, as it is highly toxic. You can use it when walking in the jungle, on your days off etc.



Esperanza Verde Sign

Since there is no electricity, a **flashlight** is an absolute necessity, ideally a **head torch**. There is time for reading, playing cards,



and listening to music in your free time so bring something with you, along with any necessary batteries (but please take the batteries with you when you leave, do not put them in our bins!)

Feel free to bring your own **spices**, and **cook book**.

Other things that are useful in the humidity are: **Ziploc bags**, **Tupperware boxes** to fit your telephone and camera, and **silica-gel** bags to keep your electronics dry.

Also if you have some spare room in your suitcase we always need the following: **Polyester cleaning cloths**, **drying towels** (tea-towels) for the kitchen, **stationary** or **nailbrushes**. And of course everyone is thrilled if you bring some **sweets** from back home to share!

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

**Email** is probably the best way to communicate here in Peru. There are a lot of Internet cafes in Lima and Pucallpa. In Pucallpa the connection can be very slow or sometimes drops out altogether.

In Curimana at the **Hotel Moreno** there are several computers with internet (again often a very slow connection).

There is a **phone** in the village of Bello Horizonte (5 mins away) but it is solar powered, complicated and not always a good connection. It is possible to make a short international phone call from there, however it is expensive and will only be for a few minutes. If you want to call longer it is best to go to Curimana (1 hour away).

Please note there is **no telephone reception or internet connection at Esperanza Verde.**

During your stay friends and family can write to you via our Postbox in Pucallpa:

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

Cards take about **10 days** to arrive and packages can take up to **3 weeks**, so please bear this in mind. If a package arrives here after your departure, we will open it and look for personal items like cards or letters. We will send these back to you, but other items we will retain, as it will be too expensive to return them.

**In an emergency** you can phone the nearby village Bello Horizonte, and leave a message for Douwe or Olivia for us to phone back. In the village they only speak Spanish and the connection is not good, so please only use this in an emergency! Tel: 0051 (0) 61 811 452.

You can also, again in an emergency, email Olivia: [olivia@esperanzaverdeperu.com](mailto:olivia@esperanzaverdeperu.com). She will check her email usually twice a week.

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