



ESPERANZA VERDE
nature conservation - Peru



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Volunteering in the Amazon Rainforest of Peru

**The first wildlife rescue centre in Ucayali,
where we help conserve the rainforest and its wildlife**

This guide will give you an idea of what it is like to work, live and experience Esperanza Verde. It is packed with tips and tricks on what you need to bring, how to get here and what is expected of you during your time volunteering. Join us on our mission to protect and rehabilitate wildlife!

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What kind of work will I have to do?

The work at Esperanza Verde is very varied. The most important day-to-day task is **caring for the animals**: preparing food, feeding and cleaning their enclosures. They are our number one priority. The assistant manager or head volunteer makes a weekly schedule where you will be assigned your responsibilities.

There are also extra jobs: creating enrichments for the animals, general maintenance (raking, restoring, repairs etc.), cooking and construction – these are our most common additional jobs.

If there are a lot of volunteers staying at the same time, extra jobs like construction might become a full day's job. You would help with reparations, restorations and any new projects. We have a lot of enclosures but there is almost always one under construction in need of repair. We never know what kind of animal will arrive next, so we try to stay prepared for anything!



If you are looking to join us for an internship or work towards your **PhD** or a **master's**, please get in touch with us directly so we can make the right arrangements (info@esperanzaverdeperu.com).

You will be working closely with other volunteers and animals while surrounded by the Amazonian jungle. The work is physical and at times challenging, but most importantly it is rewarding, unique and an experience for life.



What are the living conditions like?

Generally, you work **five days a week**, with two non-consecutive days off. We start at 7:30 and end at 17:00 with a lunch break from 12:00 to 13:00. The schedule is not set in stone and you need to be flexible as working with animals can be unpredictable. Sometimes we have animals who need to be fed at unusual hours i.e. a baby monkey might need milk in the middle of the night!

All volunteers live together in the volunteer house (capacity 12). Each bedroom has two to three beds



and you will most likely be sharing your room with someone. We provide sheets, a pillow and a blanket. There is not any reported malaria, so mosquito nets are not essential but we do have a couple you can borrow, depending on availability.

The volunteer house has a living room, two bathrooms, a shower and a cement table to handwash your clothes on. The kitchen is in a separate nearby building which has another living room, a bathroom and a shower too.

During the week everyone including the family and permanent staff eats lunch together in the kitchen.

We have a piped water system that provides running water for the kitchen, volunteer house and several enclosures. There is filtered drinking water in both the kitchen and volunteer house. Showers are cold, but it feels great after a full day's work in the hot and humid jungle. You can also shower in the nearby waterfall or the big river, Aguatiya. During dry season (July-October) water can run out, so we always try to use it sparingly. When it does happen, we go back to basics and shower and wash our clothes in the river.



There is no 220V-electricity at Esperanza Verde. In the common areas, there are small solar-powered lights, but we rely on candles for most of our light in the evening, so **don't forget your head torch!**

There is a solar USB charging port (12 V), but its power is limited and there is often a queue of devices waiting to be charged, **don't bring too many devices** as you won't be able to use it regularly.



From Monday to Friday lunch is prepared by our cook. The volunteers prepare the rest of the meals on their own or together. The food we have is basic: pasta, rice, oats, bread, lentils, beans, eggs, flour, powdered milk and fresh seasonal vegetables and fruit, but you will be surprised by the creativity that goes into the meals. Spice wise we have access to salt, pepper and oregano, so if you have extra space, please bring spices like curry, thyme, dill, rosemary, cinnamon etc.

There are, of course, a lot of insects in the jungle but **while working with the animals** it is strictly **prohibited to wear insect repellent of any kind** as it is toxic for the animals and it will kill them. Most insects stay away from the houses, there are some mosquitos, more during wet season (February-April), but all the houses are fitted with mosquito nets.



Please have the following in mind:

All our staff and volunteers coexist with about 40 animals (mainly monkeys) who live in semi captivity at Esperanza Verde. A lot of them have been pets, so they end up seeking attention from humans more than others. We follow a strict no-touch policy, but due to the animals' history, they sometimes try to interact with people. As a volunteer, it's your job to help them understand that independence is the key so they can be free and coexist with us. You do this by standing your ground and showing them that you are not to be messed with, giving them some tough love. It is extremely important that everyone at the centre works together to have a safety-first mindset and that we're all constantly conscious of our surroundings, so we can continue to let the animals live freely around us.

How much does it cost?

We ask for a monetary contribution PEN (soles) per week, for the first 6 weeks to cover your accommodation and food and includes a contribution for food or other needs for the animals. We appreciate it when volunteers can stay more time. The longer you stay the more both you and Esperanza Verde will get out of it, as you will be able to interact on more experienced levels.

For week 7 through to week 12 the contribution is 370 soles per week. After 12 weeks the contribution is 320 soles per additional week.



It is possible to do a project as a part of your studies, an internship, master's or PhD, with prior consultation about the subject. The weekly contribution is 400 Peruvian soles a week (minimum stay 12 weeks). This means you get two days a week to spend on your project, on your remaining days you will be expected also to help with other volunteer duties.

We ask that the payment for your stay is made in cash upon arrival. This payment can either be made in PEN (Peruvian Sol) or in US Dollars. In the event cash is not possible, we have to ask volunteers to pay an additional 5% on the prices quoted above as we incur additional expenditure. We are in a very remote location and have limited access to banking facilities, so please do prioritize bringing cash as this saves both you and us money!



You have to cover the costs of your journey to Esperanza Verde, your travel insurance and personal items like toiletries (excluding toilet paper, of course), candy, books, sodas etc.

During your days off you can go to the nearby village Bello Horizonte or the small town Curimana. A round-trip to Curimana costs you about 24-28 soles, which includes a boat from Esperanza Verde to Bello Horizonte (2 soles, 5 minutes), a car from Bello Horizonte to Curimana (10-12 soles, 1 hour) and the car ferry that takes you across to Curimana (1 minute, 1 sol).

If you need to go to Pucallpa during your stay, you will have to arrange two days off in a row as it takes about 3 hours to get there and you will have to stay the night. A collective taxi from Curimana costs about 18-25 soles (depending on how many passengers the car can have). A round trip to Pucallpa (including the costs from Esperanza Verde to Curimana) costs about 80-90 soles (not including hotel).

There are no ATMs close to Esperanza Verde, the nearest one is in Pucallpa (3 hours away). Make sure you **bring all the cash you need for your stay** and any money for personal items or trips (card is not accepted in Bello Horizonte or Curimana). It is wise to withdraw the full amount you need in either USD or EUR in your home country and **exchange** it for Peruvian soles once you are **in Peru** (it is a lot cheaper



and easier to get soles here in Peru). You can find exchange offices in Lima airport and on Raimondi Street in Pucallpa. If you decide to take out all the money when you get to Peru, please note there is often a daily withdrawal limit of 400 to 700 soles per card.

(Prices updated: October 2023)

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Speaking a bit of basic Spanish helps you get around more easily and makes for a richer experience, but it is not a requirement for volunteering at Esperanza Verde. However, as our volunteers come from all corners of the world, English is most commonly the language spoken amongst us. This means you have to be able to speak and communicate sufficiently in English (you are reading this right now, so that shouldn't be a problem).

How do I get there?

Esperanza Verde is located in the Northern Amazon jungle of Peru, in the Ucayali region. There are a few options for how to get here. The main stops are Lima, Neshuya or Pucallpa, Curimana and Bello Horizonte. During rainy season (December-April) we recommend *option one* (taking a plane from Lima to Pucallpa). The trip may seem daunting, but it is an adventure in itself and an opportunity to see more of Peru!

Lima to Curimana

Option 1

- Fly* from Lima to Pucallpa, we recommend using LATAM or StarPeru. If you arrive in Pucallpa before 11 am you are fine to continue your journey the same day, if not, it is best to stay the night in Pucallpa and continue early the next morning.
- Take a motor taxi to **Terminal Terrestre** (should cost 6-8 soles from the airport) and ask for the 'Nuevo Curimana' office.
- Let the people in the office know you want to go to **Curimana**. You may have to wait until there are enough people to fill the car (4 persons) or minivan (6-12 persons) before heading off (should cost 18-25 soles). Arrive in Curimana after about 2 hours.

**You can take a bus to Pucallpa from Lima instead of flying, just follow option 2, but get off in Pucallpa instead of Neshuya.*



Plaza de Armas,

Option 2

- Take a bus from **Lima to Neshuya** (17 hours). We recommend travelling with **Turismo Central** (Avenida Juna Pizarro 442, La Victoria in Lima) or **Transmar** (office on Av. 28 de Julio, La Victoria, Lima). The bus that sets you up for the best journey usually leaves Lima around 13:00, but it is best to check with their office for an up-to-date schedule.
- **Tell the driver you want to get off at Neshuya** and mention it to the person loading your luggage onto the bus and once more to the person serving food and drinks on the bus. If you catch the 13:00 bus, you should arrive in Neshuya around 6-7:00 in the morning the next day.
- In Neshuya, **take a collective taxi from the corner of the main street to Curimana** (you can always ask people 'A Curimana?' and they'll show you where to go). It should cost about 10 soles and take 1 hour. Again, the car won't leave until it is full, so you might have to wait.



Curimana to Bello Horizonte

When you arrive in Curimana you will be dropped off at the local taxi office, no matter where you are arriving from. Most of the time, the people already know where you are heading before you have a chance to say anything!

- Tell the driver you are heading to Esperanza Verde (just in case).
- Your car has to cross a river using a car ferry as you leave Curimana. Once you are on the ferry you have to pay 1 sol to the boatman (this is not included in the taxi price).
- It takes about **1 hour to Bello Horizonte** and costs 10-12 soles. Ask to be dropped off at 'el Puerto' (the port).
- Cross the river by boat – either wave down a passing one or ask at the drop-off for a boat to Esperanza Verde. It should cost 2 soles and take about 5 minutes to cross the river.
- Once you are on the other side, follow the path (there is only one) and you will hear Yara (the volunteer dog) barking, **shout 'hello!'** and someone will come and meet you – welcome to Esperanza Verde!



It is a well-travelled route and people along the way are always friendly and helpful!

Where can I stay in Lima and Pucallpa?

Always check for latest info and prices on the websites.

Lima

Friend's House Hostel

- Near central Lima in Miraflores
- Single room with private bathroom 60 soles
- Single room with shared bathroom 50 soles
- Breakfast included
- See for updated prices and/or book online via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/HostelFriendsHouseMiraflores/>) or via email (friendshouse_peru@yahoo.com.mx) or WhatsApp (+51 995 786 551)

Pucallpa

Hospedaje Barbtur

- Clean, simple, affordable and reliable hostel (used by Douwe and Olivia for years)
- Single room with private bathroom 40 soles
- Double room with private bathroom 55 soles
- Address: Raimondi 639 and 7 de Junio (next to the shop Oro Verde)
- Book online (<https://www.facebook.com/JuanaBardalesBartra/>) or by Whatsapp (+51 960 087 612, only Spanish speaking)
- Tasty restaurant across the street called 'Lucerito'

Manish Hotel Ecologico (5 minutes from the airport)

- Luxurious hostel
- Single room with private bathroom 200 soles



- Double room with private bathroom 250 soles
- Near a big super mall (Open Plaza)
- Book online (<http://www.manishhotel.com.pe/en/>)

As in any big city make sure to keep an eye on all your belongings, don't leave your things unattended and be careful at night. As a foreigner, you are an easy target if you don't pay attention!

Do I need any vaccinations?

You need to be up to date on all your regular vaccinations: tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis B. Please check for the latest vaccination advice with your local vaccination clinic or on your country's official travel advisory homepage.

There is no reported Malaria. At times a yellow fever vaccination is recommended and some volunteers decide to get a rabies vaccination.

When it comes to covid you are responsible to make sure you have the right tests and documents for your travel to Peru as restrictions constantly change (make sure you check the rules for any country you are transiting through as well). Depending on the restrictions at the time you are reading this, you might need a PCR test for flying out of Pucallpa, if you are not or not fully vaccinated. **Please note:** you can **not** get a PCR test in Pucallpa, only antigen tests are available.

How long can I stay at Esperanza Verde?

The minimum stay is **six weeks for volunteers** and **12 weeks for interns**, but the longer you stay the better the experience. The work becomes second nature, the animals become familiar faces and the jungle becomes a home. Provided we have space, you work hard and like the lifestyle and working conditions you are welcome at Esperanza Verde for however long you'd like. It takes at least **two to three weeks to become a fully trained volunteer**.

A volunteer visa does not exist in Peru, if you are asked about the purpose of your travel state '**tourism**'. You normally get a 90-day visitor visa when entering Peru. If you know you are staying longer than 90 days, make sure to ask for the maximum stay of 180 days **before** they stamp your passport. You can also extend your 90-day visa at the Immigration Office in Pucallpa or Lima or get a new 90-day visa by leaving the country and re-entering after a day. Officially you can only receive 180 days per calendar year.

What should I bring?

Clothes

Don't bring anything precious or too expensive, the clothes you work in will get stained and torn. Comfort is key, lightweight, quick-drying and loose fitting is the way to go. A couple of essentials:

- Croc-style shoes
- Warm change of clothes (even the jungle gets chilly at times)
- Rubber boots (either bring your own, buy a pair in Pucallpa or borrow a pair from us, but remember your size might not be available)
- Long trousers to work in (especially in wet season)
- Rain poncho or jacket (nothing too expensive)



Sunrise at "El Mirador"



Toiletries

Bring your own essentials and make sure to bring a supply of things you use daily. You can find pretty much everything you need in Lima or Pucallpa, but your selection in Curimana and Bello is limited. For instance, you can't find contact solution or tampons there. (Make sure staff is aware of any allergies to medications e.g. penicillin). We recommend you bring:

- First aid kit (band-aids, paracetamol, ibuprofen, antihistamine, Bepanthen cream (or other wound healing cream), anti-septic cream like iodine, antibiotic cream, anti-fungal cream, alcohol, MEBO cream, gauze and tweezers)
- A supply of any prescribed medication you need

Good To Haves

- A good head-torch is essential (when it gets dark, it gets real dark)
- Zip-lock bags, silica bags and Tupperware to protect your electronics from the humidity
- Water-resistant wristwatch (it is not essential but good to have as your phone can easily get damaged, by water or a monkey if you carry it with you while you work)
- Books, games, drawing supplies (things to do in your spare time)

If You Have Space

We always appreciate and need the following things:

- Polyester cleaning cloths
- Tea towels (for the kitchen)
- Stationary
- Pet toys for enrichment
- Spices (you can only buy salt, pepper and oregano around here)
- Pillowcases (preferable a dark colour)
- Frying pans
- Sweets from back home (EVERYONE loves sweets)

P.S. If you bring batteries, you have to take them home with you. Please do not throw them in our bins!

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

There is **no** phone reception at Esperanza Verde aka. sweet relief. But of course, there are ways to get in touch with your loved ones while you are here. **On your off days you can go to Wi-Fi shops** in Bello Horizonte (10 minutes away) or Curimana (1 hour away). Twice a week we turn on our solar powered internet by satellite at our veterinary clinic for volunteer use for an hour. The connection can be slow and if there is a lot of rain there might not be any at all. Please let your family and friends know not to worry if they don't hear from you very often! Rest assured if there is an emergency, we always have a way to get in touch with them quickly.

If you want a Peruvian SIM card you can buy one in Lima or Pucallpa, but it won't get signal here, only in Curimana.



If someone needs to get in touch with you immediately, they can call the shop 'Fabiola' in the nearby village Bello Horizonte and ask them to get a message urgently to Douwe or Olivia.

They only speak Spanish and the connection is poor, so please **only call this number in an emergency**: 0051 941329 915. Another way to get in touch, but again only in an emergency, is to send a WhatsApp message to Olivia at 0051 963 036 378 or email: info@esperanzaverdeperu.com

During your stay people can write and send you packages via our post box in Pucallpa at:

Esperanza Verde
C/O [Your name] Apartado 85 Pucallpa-Peru

Cards take about **10 days** to arrive, packages take **3-5 weeks**. If personal items like cards or letters arrive after you have left, we'll let you know and when possible, send them to you by post, with a volunteer or digitally. Non-personal items like books and food we keep and give to the volunteers as it is expensive to post them.

Our final tip is to join the Facebook group 'Volunteers of Esperanza Verde' – it is a group for old, returning and future volunteers to discuss, ask and share stories and information about Esperanza Verde.

We look forward to having you – hasta pronto!

