

Volunteering in the Amazon Rainforest of Peru

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

Here at Esperanza Verde, we are dedicated to conserving the rainforest and its wildlife. By volunteering with us, you'll be a key part of our mission to protect and rehabilitate the animals of the Amazon.

This guide will give you an overview of what it's like to live and work at Esperanza Verde. It's filled with essential tips, including what to bring, how to get here, and what's expected of you during your stay.

Key Information

- What kind of work will I do?
- What are the living conditions like?
- How much does it cost?
- Do I need to speak Spanish?
- How do I get to Esperanza Verde?
- Where can I stay in Lima and Pucallpa?
- Do I need any vaccinations?
- How long can I stay at Esperanza Verde?
- What should I bring?
- How do I communicate with my friends, family and Esperanza Verde?



What Kind of Work Will I Do?

At Esperanza Verde, your main responsibility is the care of the animals. Daily tasks include:

- Preparing food
- Feeding the animals
- Cleaning their enclosures

Extra tasks can be:

- **Leaf walks:** Searching for edible leaves for leaf-eating animals like howlers and woolly monkeys.
- **Enrichment:** Creating stimulation for the animals in their enclosures.
- **General Maintenance:** Clearing paths, repairing enclosures, etc.
- **Cooking:** Volunteers take turns cooking meals in the evenings and weekends.
- **Construction:** If there are enough volunteers, helping with repairments, building new enclosures, working at the plantation, helping in forest work.



Work can be physically demanding and unpredictable, as animals may need attention at any time (e.g., feeding a baby monkey in the middle of the night). However, it's an incredibly rewarding experience that immerses you in the Amazonian jungle.

For interns or those working towards a degree (Master's/PhD), contact us directly at info@esperanzaverdeperu.com for specific arrangements.





What are the living conditions like?

Work Schedule:

- **5 days a week:** 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM (with lunch break from 12:00 to 1:00 PM)
- **2 days off** (non-consecutive)

Sometimes we have animals who need to be fed at unusual hours, e.g. night animals or a baby monkey might need milk in the middle of the night!

Volunteer House:

- Shared rooms (2-3 beds per room)
- Capacity for 12 volunteers
- Shower, 2 toilets
- Living room
- Simple, community-style living with limited privacy
- Sheets, pillow, and blanket are provided (you'll need to wash them yourself)



Kitchen:

- Stove-oven
- Toilet and shower
- Living room and game-area

Facilities:

- **Water:** Running water available (filtered drinking water at kitchen and volunteer house).
- **Showers:** Cold. You can also use the nearby waterfall or stream during the dry season (especially during July to October when we need to use water sparingly)
- **Washing:** Washing table at the house for hand wash. Clothes don't always dry quickly so do this regularly if you want your bedsheets dry in the evening, wash early morning on a sunny day. Or, for a small amount per kg, one of our workers provides a laundry service at home.
- **Electricity: No 220V.** Limited. Solar-powered lights in common areas, candles in the evening. A head torch comes in handy! There is a solar USB charging port (12V) at the house and the kitchen, but it is limited (heavy power banks should not be charge at EV (this should be done in the village at a small charge). Don't bring too many devices.
- **Internet:** Limited access. Wi-Fi is available on days off in nearby towns, and a satellite connection is offered for a short period (use more for short messages and quick calls home) twice a week at the Veterinary clinic at EV, during lunch breaks.



Food:

- Basic but nutritious meals: pasta, rice, oats, beans, eggs, and fresh seasonal vegetables and fruit.
- Volunteers take turns cooking in the evenings and weekends, with a local cook providing lunch from Monday–Friday.

Spices that are readily available here are: salt, pepper, curry, oregano, cumin. We are always happy if you bring some other special spices, like Italian, Asian, Indian, Mexican or dried herbs like Italian mixes, dill, thyme, rosemary or others you like.





Insects:

There are of course several insects in the jungle like sandflies and mosquitos. While working with the animals (food preparation, cleaning and care) you cannot wear insect repellent of any kind, as the ingredients might be very toxic for the animals.

- Sandflies are mostly to be found at the big river or in the village, not too many around the houses. Normal repellent will generally not work, but often after some time (resisting the urge to scratch) your body will get used to them.
- Mosquitos are not found so much in the living areas at EV (there is no malaria in this area), except for during the wet season (mid-January to March) or when you go for a walk in the jungle. All windows of the living areas are fitted with mosquito mesh. We also have several mosquito-nets for the beds available, so if you wish use one you can set one up over your bed.



Please have the following in mind:

All our staff and volunteers coexist with about 50 animals (currently: spider, woolly, capuchin and squirrel monkeys, two coatis and a trumpet bird) who live in free outside at Esperanza Verde. A lot of them have been pets before they came here and are used to seeking a lot of attention from humans. It is our task to rehabilitate them. 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 too to help them understand that independence is the key so they can be free and coexist with us. You will get instructions on how to act and behave, however every situation can be different and might need a different approach, also depending on your own reactions. There are many different species and individuals (humans and animals), so it is very important to learn from others and get to know the different animals at EV so you can get a better understanding of the dynamics in their group.



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. If there is an issue with an animal always mention it to the manager or directors, to help us evaluate and improve our handling with them, as it is always their future we have in mind as well as our own safety.

How much does it cost?

To volunteer, you must be at least 18 years old, and we ask you to be able to stay for **at least 6 weeks**, so it makes it worthwhile for both you and us.

For your stay at Esperanza Verde we ask a weekly contribution*:

- **First 6 weeks:** 440 PEN per week
- **Week 7-12:** 370 PEN per week
- **After Week 12:** 320 PEN per additional week

* Covers your food and lodging and includes a contribution for food or other needs for the animals.

Payment is due upon arrival in cash (either in Peruvian soles or US dollars).

If cash isn't possible, an additional 5% is added to the total for transfer and conversion costs. We are in a very remote location and have limited access to banking facilities, so please do prioritize bringing cash (at least a part) as this saves both you and us money!





Internships or Research Projects:

If you're pursuing an internship or working on a research project, additional arrangements can be made for dedicated project time (after the first 3 weeks of general volunteer work). The minimum stay is 12 weeks, but more can be needed depending on the project. The weekly contribution is 440 Peruvian soles a week (minimum stay is 12 weeks).



Note:

- **You cover your travel to Esperanza Verde, travel insurance, and personal items** (e.g., toiletries, books, snacks, drinks etc.).
- **You cover any personal local transport and expenses costs** to the nearby village, towns and cities (Bello Horizonte, Curimana, Pucallpa).
- **There are no ATMs close to Esperanza Verde**; the nearest one is in Pucallpa (3 hours away). Make sure you **bring sufficient cash your stay** and any money for personal items or trips (card is not accepted in Bello Horizonte or Curimana).
- It is wise to take cash in either USD or EUR from 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.

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 16-20 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 or other expenses).

(Prices updated: July 2025)

Do I need to speak Spanish?

While **basic Spanish** is very helpful, **English** is the primary language spoken among volunteers. As our volunteers come from all corners of the world, if you speak English, you'll be able to communicate easily. Having some Spanish will enhance your experience and interactions, especially as with have several people from the nearby village working with us daily.

How do I get there?

Esperanza Verde is in the Northern Amazon rainforest of Peru, in the Ucayali region. There are several options for getting here, with the journey offering unique opportunities to experience Peru.

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





Option 1: Fly to Pucallpa

- **Flight:** From Lima to Pucallpa (1-hour flight). We recommend using LATAM. If you arrive before 12:00 you can still make it to EV on the same day, otherwise plan an overnight stay in Pucallpa.
- **Transport:** Take a motor taxi to Terminal Terrestre (6-8 soles), ask for the “Neuvo Curimana” Office, then continue by car or minivan to Curimana (16-20 soles/2 hours).
- From Curimana, take a car to the main port at Bello Horizonte (10-12 soles/1 hour), extra cost for the ferry of 1 sol, and from there a canoa to Esperanza Verde (2 soles/5 minutes).

Option 2: Bus to Pucallpa (18 hours) or till Neshuya (17 hours)

- Take a bus from Lima to Pucallpa (or get off an hour earlier at Neshuya, don't forget to warn the driver and assistant). We recommend Turismo Central or Transmar in Lima, leaving time best around 13:00 to arrive early morning the next day in Pucallpa or Neshuya.
- Take a taxi to Curimana (See Option 1, in Neshuya ask for a taxi to Curimana), followed by the same boat journey.



Once you are on the other side, coming up from the river, you will see a wooden sign “Esperanza Verde”. Follow the path (there is only one) and often the first to greet you will be Yara (the volunteer dog), **shout ‘hello!’** and someone will come and meet you – welcome to Esperanza Verde! Esperanza Verde is in the Northern Amazon rainforest of Peru, in the Ucayali region.

During rainy season (December-April) we recommend *option one*.

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
- See for updated prices and/or book online via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/HostelFriendsHouseMiraflores/>)



Pucallpa

Hospedaje Barbtur

- Clean, simple, affordable and reliable hostel (used by Douwe and Olivia for years).
- You can always ask Juana, the owner for any help need, getting a taxi, or asking directions.
- 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, but with a translator easily solved)
- Tasty restaurant across the street called ‘Lucerito’



Manish Hotel Ecologico (5 minutes from the airport)

- Luxurious hostel in a beautiful garden setting with restaurant, swimming pool, breakfast included
- Single room with private bathroom from 200 soles
- Double room with private bathroom from 250 soles
- Discount available, so let us know upfront if you want to stay there.
- 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?

It is advised to be up to date on all your regular vaccinations such as tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis. 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. Although not mandatory a yellow fever vaccination is recommended, and some volunteers decide to get a rabies vaccination, but it is not required.

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 **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 automatically a 90-day visitor visa when entering Peru. If you know you are staying longer than 90 days, make sure to ask for more before they stamp, you never know if you get it. It is allowed to stay on a tourist visa for a total of 180 days per year, however you will have to leave Peru after before the first 90 days are over and then you can come back in again for another 90 days. When you overstay after your first 90 days you will have to pay a fine of around 5 soles for each day that you overstay at the airport when you leave (there is a special counter at the airport for payment).

What should I bring?

Essential Clothing:

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.

- Lightweight, quick-drying clothes
- Rubber boots, buy a pair in Pucallpa or use one of ours, remember your size might not be available)
- Long trousers and a simple rain poncho
- Croc-style shoes and a few warm clothes for cooler nights





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).

- 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)
- Thermometer
- Any prescribed medications

Other Essentials:

- Headtorch (a must)
- Zip-lock bags, silica bags, Tupperware to protect your electronics from the humidity
- Water-resistant bag for your phone

Helpful Items:

- Spices (besides salt, pepper, and oregano)
- Water-resistant wristwatch
- Pillowcases, bed sheets
- Books, games, or drawing materials or other hobby materials 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)
- Permanent and/or white-board markers, pens, pencils
- Pet toys for enrichment
- Spices (you can only buy salt, pepper and oregano around here)
- Pillowcases (preferable a dark colour), bed sheets (maybe you have some old ones)
- Frying pans
- Sweets from back home (EVERYONE loves sweets)

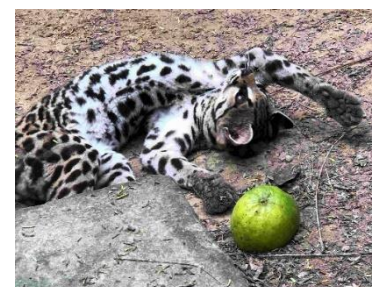


P.S. If you bring batteries, please bring them back home with you. There is no recycling here and please do not throw them in our bins!

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

There is **no phone reception** at Esperanza Verde. However:

- **Wi-Fi** is available in nearby towns with pretty good connection
- **Twice a week** Wi-Fi (slow connection) is available for a short time at the EV veterinary clinic, for a quick call or message.
- For emergencies, family or friends can contact **Fabiola's shop** in Bello Horizonte (+51 or send messages via WhatsApp to **Olivia** at +51 963 036 378.



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.

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 **14 days** to arrive; packages take mostly around **4-5 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, spices, sweets, other food we keep and give to the volunteers as it would be very expensive to post them.

Final Tip:

Join the **Facebook group 'Volunteers of Esperanza Verde'** to connect with past, present, and future volunteers, share experiences, and ask questions.



We look forward to welcoming you to Esperanza Verde!
¡Hasta pronto!