

Costa Rica

Animal Rehabilitation



Introduction to Costa Rica

Costa Rica is bordered by Nicaragua to the north, Panama to the southeast, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east. Once a poor and isolated colony, since its independence in 1821 Costa Rica has become one of the most stable, prosperous, and progressive nations in Latin America. It constitutionally abolished its army in 1949, as the first and one of the few sovereign nations without a standing army.

Costa Rica is known for its progressive environmental policies, being the only country to meet all five criteria established to measure environmental sustainability. Despite its small size, Costa Rica features greater biodiversity than Europe or North America. This is due to several factors, among them the country's location between North and South America, which enables plants and animals from both continents and the Caribbean islands to establish themselves there. Also, Costa Rica's tropical climate and geographical makeup include a range of habitats, from lowland rainforests to cloud forests to tropical lakes and rivers.



During the 1970s and 1980s, Costa Rica saw rapid deforestation, with land clearing among the highest in the Americas. Rainforest destruction has serious environmental consequences because more than half of all the species on the planet are found in the rainforest. The primary reasons for deforestation include the extraction of hardwood for fuel and clear-cutting land for agriculture and cattle ranching. In response to the rapid deforestation, many environmental groups began to target their efforts toward developing commercially viable and sustainable uses for the rainforest.

Ecotourism in Costa Rica began in the mid-1980s to stop deforestation and generate needed foreign exchange for the economy. Encouraging local inhabitants to practice efficient stewardship over the remaining forests is in theory a win-win situation where the environment prospers because it is no longer being clear-cut, and the local inhabitants prosper by using the local environment to their economic advantage. However, challenges remain.

Costa Rica is considered to have the highest density of biodiversity of any country worldwide and it would like to stay that way.

The rainforests are indeed beginning to be used in more sustainable ways. Also, the costs of maintaining a rainforest are usually borne by the local inhabitants who have used the land for hundreds of years. Currently, ecotourism presents problems of its own and cannot be seen as a solution to all the problems of the past. Costa Rica has struggled with efforts to establish rules and regulations to ensure the minimal negative impact on the environment.



Costa Rica has taken many noble steps to protect its wildlife, including closing any traditional zoos. They do allow for rescue and rehabilitation centers for its many animals, and it is with one of these that you will be working. These centers are nonprofit and receive no governmental assistance. The aim of these is to protect and help endangered Costa Rican wildlife indigenous to the country by ensuring the welfare of injured animals and helping them recover from their physical and psychological wounds before releasing them to their natural homes. There are currently over 130 animals at the center where you will be working, but this number is always changing.

Spanish is the official language of Costa Rica, and the most spoken, although English is widely used in tourist areas. Ticos (Costa Ricans) are known for being welcoming, kind, and fun! Pura Vida!

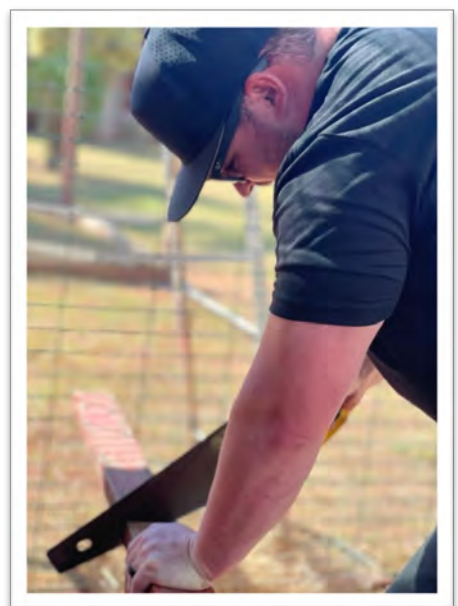
Community

The area in Alajuela where the animal rescue project is located is approximately 20 minutes from the airport, which might lead you to expect that it is in an urban area, however, it is quite the contrary. You will see that it is a rural area, made up of large tracts of land used for farming and cattle. It is often quite warm (the 80s and 90s) and a bit drier than San Jose itself. (Uber is usually available in the area for a reasonable cost) The closest retail areas are about 10 minutes away by car in a small town (hardware stores, banks, small restaurants, etc.)

Projects and Expectations

The project aims to rehabilitate many different types of tropical species like sloths, howler monkeys, spider monkeys, toucans, marmosets, and more that have been injured or illegally held captive. Here these animals receive the care they need to survive on their own in the wild.

Volunteers live on-site and help with many different essential tasks for the animal sanctuary. In the morning volunteers help prepare the fruits and vegetables for all the animals on site. They help feed and bathe the animals, especially the sick or injured ones who need special attention. Volunteers help to socialize animals staying in the sanctuary that cannot be replaced back into the wild as well by holding sloths and for monkeys a few hours per day. After these duties have been completed, the volunteers help with other tasks around the sanctuary that may include yard work, cleaning, and helping care for their garden. Our volunteers will also take the animals out to play and exercise with them. These animals are being rehabilitated to be released back into their natural habitats.





Please remember that concepts of scheduling and organization are not universal. It is best to keep an open mind and not be judgmental when visiting a foreign country. Remember that your way of doing things may not be the best way here - the locals usually have a very good reason for completing a task in a certain way, and their priorities are different than ours. Here is an example:

"But Mario, why are we building the fence so close to the river? Surely erosion will cause the fence to fall off the edge?"
Don't worry, the foundation is very thick - it won't fall. Besides, we can't move it over anymore, because the boundary of the soccer field is so close."

We understand your desire to know as much as possible about the project you will be working on. It is important to understand that projects are often not established until one or two weeks prior, as they are based on factors such as which projects were finished (or not) by the last group, what supplies are available, how many volunteers are in your group, weather conditions, the changing priorities of the community, and can even be modified throughout the week. It is best to approach the experience with an open attitude, knowing you'll be working approximately 6.5 hours a day during the weekdays, usually concentrated earlier in the day. You will also have a couple of hours of unstructured free time every day. There are typically three to four planned but optional leisure and cultural activities throughout the week. Communicate with your coordinator. If you find the work level is too much, or not enough, he or she will do as much as possible to work with you. This program is unusual because there are volunteers who join the program independent of Globe Aware. Some are long-term, several-month volunteers from Australia, for example, who may get free room and board due to their length of commitment of service, others are sent from schools, etc. Those participants are not required to pay for medical and liability insurance and often take public transport to get to and from the project site.

Because of this, participation cost varies for them. Additionally, some of these long-term volunteers are likely to step in as part-time coordinators with whom our volunteers will work.

Sample Daily Activities

Please note that this is only a sample itinerary meant to give you a better idea of what a typical day MAY look like on-site. Schedules can and will change due to a variety of factors. If at any point you feel unclear about your itinerary, please ask your coordinator for clarification.

8:30 work starts - includes animal food prep, animal enclosure cleaning, animal feeding, refilling animal water dispensers, and animal enrichment programs

11:00 am Free Time

12-1:00 pm Lunch

1:30 pm meeting with Coordinator

1:45 pm Afternoon work includes animal food prep, animal enclosure cleaning, animal feeding, refilling animal water dispensers, and animal enrichment programs

4:00 pm Nocturnal animal

feeding 6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Night group activities

(Monday Yoga, Tuesday Quiz night, Wed Night Walk in the forest, Thursday free time or optional extra Adventure Tour - your choice of either Jaco Beach, Monteverde, or Arenal; if an additional extra excursion is desired or hot springs or horseback riding, those can be arranged for an extra cost), Friday Restaurant night, Saturdays: Salsa lessons, Sundays BBQ/Bonfire Night. You will also be able to make trips to the local grocery store/ pharmacy three times during the week.

Jaco Beach Excursion:

1 person	\$150/each	4 people	\$37.5/each
2 people	\$75/each	5 people	\$30/each
3 people	\$50/each	6 + people	\$25/each

To schedule your tour please speak direct to the Volunteer Coordinator or Laura Lizano. Confirmation on all tours must be made 24 hours in advance. Transportation is paid to CRARC and includes a lunch-to-go which will be prepared the morning before you leave. The bus leaves from 7am to 8am after breakfast. You may choose any tour offered or a combination of multiple tours. On arrival you pay the tour company direct either by cash or credit card.

*Dinner will be cooked and saved for every volunteer in the kitchen for you when you arrive back at night.

Arenal Volcano Tour:

1 person	\$210/each	4 people	\$52.5 /each
2 people	\$105/each	5 people	\$42/each
3 people	\$70/each	6 people	\$35/each
		7 + people	\$25/each

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Monteverde Rainforest Tour:

1 person	\$210/each	4 people	\$52/each
2 people	\$105/each	5 people	\$52.5/each
3 people	\$70/each	6 people	\$35/each
		7 + people	\$25/each

To schedule your tour please speak direct to the Volunteer Coordinator or Laura Lizano. Confirmation on all tours must be made 24 hours in advance. Transportation is paid to CRARC and includes a lunch-to-go which will be prepared the morning before you leave. The bus leaves from 7am to 8am after breakfast. You may choose any tour offered or a combination of multiple tours. On arrival you pay the tour company direct either by cash or credit card.

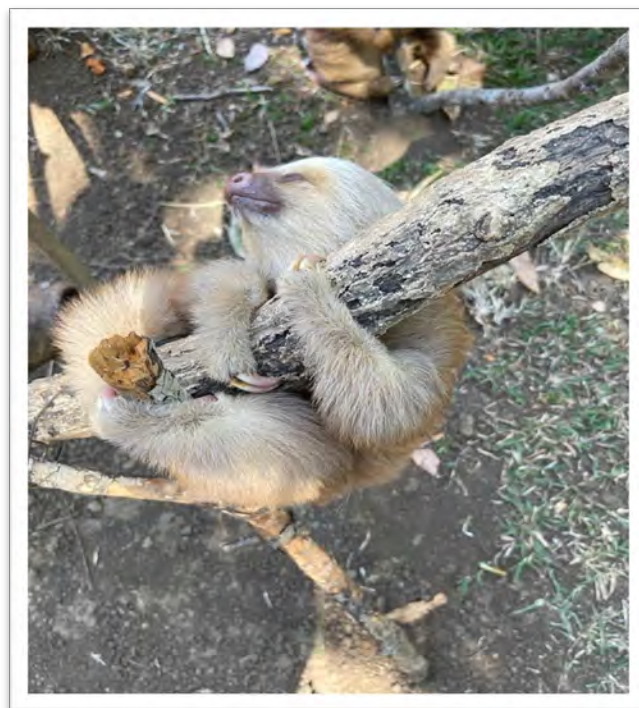
*Dinner will be cooked and saved for every volunteer in the kitchen for you when you arrive back at night.

Packing Information

While the temperatures are usually in the 70s, global warming has made conditions less predictable (and more weather extremes) and we have had a stray week or two where temperatures are in the 60s with rain, during which volunteers felt sweatshirts were a good idea, as they were cold without them.

Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. Pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!

- Work gloves
- Sunscreen
- Sun hat
- 2 - 3 Pants for working
- Towels
- Closed-toe shoes
(because couple of the animals will pick at your feet)
- Toilet paper/tissues or wipes (available locally as well)
- Toiletries and any prescription medication needed
- T-shirts/Shorts
- Umbrella or rain poncho
- Long socks, especially if you are not bringing boots
- Day Pack / Small backpack
- Camera / memory cards / chargers
- Money / Credit Cards for personal expenses
- Travel Charger
- Rain or Rubber Boots
- Pants and Long Sleeves for chilly evenings



Blankets, towels, or a sleeping bag may help you be more comfortable, as the bedding or linens may not be what you are accustomed to. Most volunteers find the sheets and blankets completely satisfactory and feel that taking up extra luggage space isn't worth the cost or effort, though this is a personal decision. Others have brought "travel blankets" or "sleep sacks" which are much easier to pack



Gifts / Donations

At the end of your stay, you might feel inclined to give something to community hosts who have been particularly helpful or courteous. In the past, volunteers have given an empty journal decorated with a child's name, written them a thank you note, singing them a song, etc. People also enjoy seeing simple tokens from homes, such as postcards of your hometown, or photos of your family.

Please be aware that bringing donations can also be awkward. In some instances, receiving donations can affect the recipient's pride negatively. This is not always the case. Do try and consider when donating used clothes, particularly those used during the program, if you felt the local community members would want them. It is best to discuss donations with the coordinator for these reasons.

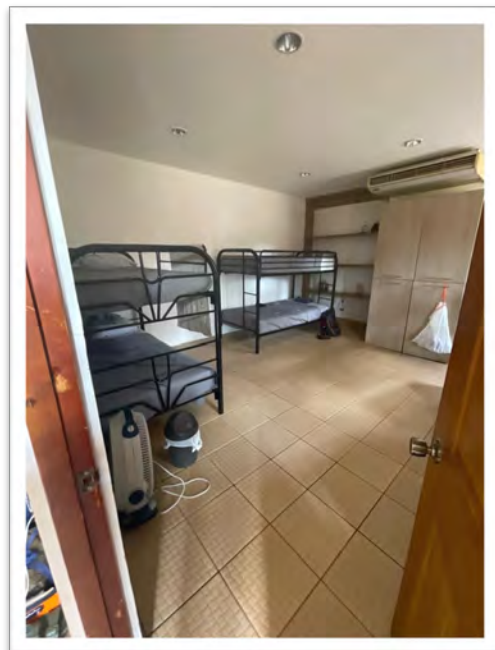
The main thing the animal need is ongoing food, medicine, and medical care, and you're welcome to set up any regular animal sponsorships you will desire upon arrival if you care to do so. There is a list of items for purchase on Amazon that the center always needs. Please do NOT feel obligated to bring these as your participation already provides some.

We discourage giving any more money than you are already giving to the program and community via your program fee. Globe Aware funds are spent on program expenses, as opposed to giving cash donations -- this helps ensure that the money is being spent in meaningful ways. We understand the good intentions of our volunteers. Giving cash out to community members contradicts the goal of promoting sustainability, promoting expectations that foreigners are 'made of money and can create an atmosphere where begging may solve a community's challenges. However, if you feel like giving a gratuity to your coordinator this will be very appreciated though not necessary.

Please see "Donations List" in the orientation materials menu.

Accommodations

Volunteers are housed in modesty on-site dormitory-style accommodations with 6 to 12 people per room in bunk beds. These include Western-style bathrooms and showers, though the water is unheated - unlikely to be missed in the tropical climate. Volunteers are fed plenty of fresh, healthy, abundant, Costa Rican dishes. Electricity is available, though on a relatively limited basis.



Electricity

There is limited electricity: enough to recharge digital batteries, but not enough to do heavy-duty hair drying. Voltage is the same as in North America, 110V. Electrical outlets take the same plug as in North America, so a prong adapter is not necessary.



Laundry

Available on the premises include twice a week service.

Food

You can expect to be well fed during your week on the program with a variety of vegetarian and vegan options in addition to traditional options. There is a set menu provided to you at orientation so that you know what to expect throughout the week.

Breakfasts will usually have an egg option with rice, beans, fruit, juice, and a side of something sweet. Lunches include fresh and cooked vegetables with a meat option and sides. Dinners are themed in that you will have a burger night, pizza night, pasta night, stew night, and BBQ. Let us know in your registration form if you have any dietary restrictions or food allergies and we will make sure to plan for your week with us.

Weather

Costa Rica is warm and humid year-round, though this area can be drier than most. There are two seasons, wet and dry. The dry season is more accurately described as the less-rainy season. During the rainy season, you are likely to get one shower a day that will last for 1 or 2 hours then it clears up. As a measure of how locals view their micro-climate on a rainy day, you might hear them refer to the day as being a winter day, and the next day if it is dry, they will call it a summer day. It is a good idea to carry your umbrella/rain poncho with you as sometimes the rain comes without much warning.



Usually, temperatures will be in the high 70s or low 80-s during the day and nights can range from mid-50s to low 70s, though the humidity may make it seem hotter or colder. Of course, weather conditions the world over can have unexpected extremes, but this can give you a general guide. The lower temps have traditionally been in November and December and the drier hotter months are traditionally in April and May.

While the temperatures are usually in the 70s, global warming has made conditions less predictable (and more weather extremes) and we have had a stray week or two where temperatures are in the 60s with rain, during which volunteers felt sweatshirts were a good idea, as they were cold without them. To be more specific, from November to February when temperatures can dip into the 50s at night, volunteers have been appreciative to have a few items of clothes to keep them warmer, and rain jackets as well. It is always a good idea to check the weather online the week before you go so you know what to expect.



Insurance

As part of your Globe Aware program, you are provided with insurance. This covers medical and even travel insurance in the event you need to cancel due to a medical-related issue.

Money

There are plenty of banks in San Jose if you need to make an ATM withdrawal. You should not need much extra money while at the program site, just enough for incidentals such as souvenirs, alcohol, or snacks from local stores. Please also keep in mind that it is much easier to use small bills, as it is often difficult to get change for a small purchase paid with a larger note. It is a good idea to call your bank and credit card companies before you depart and notify them of the country you will be traveling to and the dates of your travel so that they will allow charges and/or withdrawals internationally. You will also need cash for any excursions booked outside of the regular program itinerary.



Phone and Internet

Please do not plan to spend a lot of time on the phone or the internet during your short volunteer week. We will have a busy and short week to immerse ourselves in the work at the rehab center. There is great cell reception throughout San Jose, so making a call will not be an issue. but remember to check

with your provider before you go to purchase an international calling/data plan and make sure you know what is included or not included in it so you don't get any surprises when you come back.

Roaming charges, especially for data use, can be outrageous. You may consider renting a SIM card (for unlocked cell phones only) or a cell phone to use internationally.

Cultural Note - Greeting a Tico/Tica

The traditional greeting in Costa Rica is a kiss on the cheek. Some locals feel it's rude not to kiss or to shake hands, especially handshaking with a woman - they feel it's impersonal and signifies wanting to keep your distance. It is one kiss on the right cheek. Women greet each other and men this way, but men only greet women with a kiss on the cheek. Try it and you will make fast friends!

Health

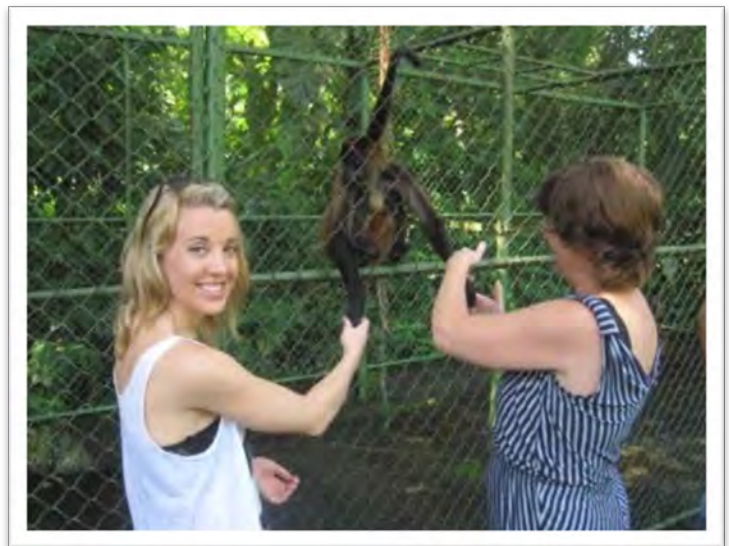
You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. No special vaccines are required to travel to Zimbabwe unless you are traveling from or through a country with a high prevalence of yellow fever. For additional information on travel health in Zimbabwe, please refer to the CDC's website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/costa-rica>

Transportation

You will be picked up at the airport and dropped back at the airport at the conclusion of your program by SUV. Make sure we have your detailed flight plans well in advance of the program.

Leisure Activities

- Nature Hikes
- Yoga
- Bonfire
- Salsa Lessons
- Choice of adventure tour
- Relaxing in a hammock
- You can also arrange beach visits, rafting, ziplining, and more at an additional cost once on site



Your Fellow Volunteers

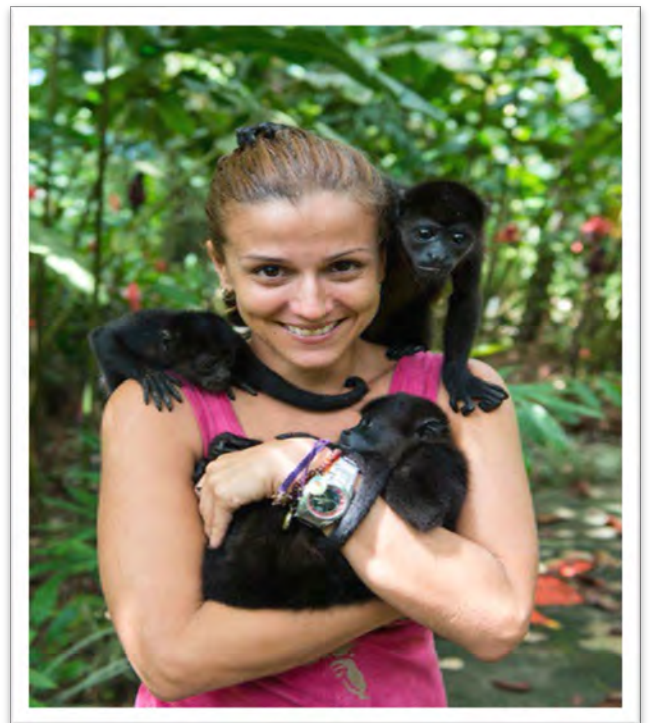
You will receive a Fellow Volunteer Report attached to our "Ready, Set, Go!" email about 3 weeks before the program starts. It will include information on your fellow travelers, as well as their emails so that you can start to get acquainted with them before you leave.

The animal rescue project is one of two projects Globe Aware offers that work with animals and hence involve local animal specialists that receive volunteers from sources other than Globe Aware. Most of these come from Europe and most are long-term. You are likely to get to know some of these volunteers. They do volunteer under a different set of circumstances and regulations, for example, they are not covered by medical, or liability insurance and the excursions aren't included for them, etc. Those that are particularly long-term often help as veterinary assistants to the surgeons, something in which shorter-term volunteers cannot participate.

We think the variety of people coming from these various sources is essential in bringing the animal rescue center the stability it needs to sustain its operations, and we are grateful to your taking part.

Your Main Coordinator: Vanessa

Born and raised in San Jose, Costa Rica, Vanessa is a passionate conservationist and animal rights activist, whether it be working with leatherback sea turtles, sloths, monkeys, or whatever she comes across that is injured, displaced, or endangered. She will tell you she is a "turtle lover, Turtle nerd, and sloth mommy." She speaks Spanish, English, and Italian fluently. She currently lives in Escazu where she has one child. Her work concentrating on wildlife rehabilitation began in earnest in 2009. Following a tragedy in 2013, she moved from the Caribbean coast where she had been working with turtles, to focus her efforts on the kinds of rescue and rehabilitation in which you will be participating.



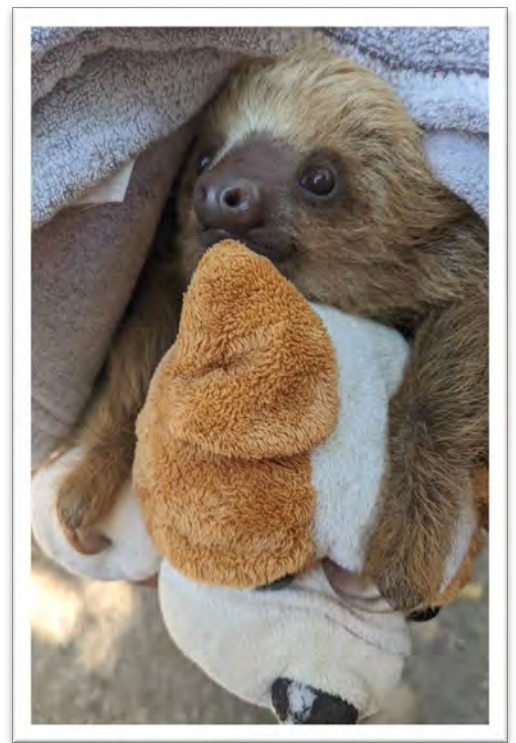
Arrival and Meetup / Entry Requirements

U.S. and Canadian citizens may visit Costa Rica for up to 90 days. You must have a valid passport. Citizens from other countries do not need a tourist visa if they have permanent residency or a valid tourist or business visa from the following countries: the United States, Canada, and any country in the European Union. If you meet neither of these requirements, please contact the closest Costa Rican embassy or consulate to verify whether you need a visa.

If you are traveling with a minor without BOTH parents traveling, it is a good idea to get a notarized letter from the non-traveling parent authorizing travel to and from Costa Rica, including dates of travel and authorized companions. While this is not 100% enforced, sometimes you may find your travel plans stopped in their tracks, as you may not be able to leave your country of origin or be refused entry into Costa Rica.

Once you land in San Jose, you must proceed to immigration, as this is your first point of entry into the country. There you will present your documentation (passport). Depending on the number of planes landing at the same time and the time of year, this can take anywhere from 10-20 minutes to over an hour. Midday arrivals usually wait longer.

You will then proceed to baggage claim where you will pick up your luggage. If any of your luggage is damaged or missing, you should report it to the airline immediately and provide the address where you will be staying or wait for the next flight as it is likely to come on that flight. If lost or missing baggage will cause a delay in meeting up, you should notify us immediately (See Emergency Section for information on how to reach Globe Aware 24 hours a day).



For delayed baggage to be delivered to the program site, use this address and phone number:
Animal Rescue Cebadilla de Turrucares
Alajuela, Costa Rica
CR 506-6048-1115
Coordinates 9.940963,-84.347214

Once you have picked up your luggage (or reported if delayed), walk to customs. The red/stop-green/go system will tell you if you are going to be inspected or questioned. Do NOT bring any drugs, firearms, or illegal substances into Costa Rica. If you go to jail in Costa Rica, your rights are minimal. The Costa Rican legal system is very different from the U.S. You can and will go to jail, and you will very likely not be able to post bond. You can be held for months with only a formal complaint while the prosecutor investigates and builds a case against you. You are not innocent until proven guilty under Costa Rica Law.

After customs, you will proceed down another corridor where you will exit the airport.

We will pick you up at the airport on the first Saturday of your program. The program ends the following Saturday after breakfast, after which you will be transferred to the airport. Alternate drop-off locations can be arranged. UBER is also widely available.

Safety and Security

Costa Rica is a very safe country and incidents of violent crime are very rare. Please be always vigilant when in San Jose as pickpockets are common, especially in crowded areas. Secure your personal belongings and do not carry your passport or credit cards in easily accessible places.

You should always be wary of where you leave your belongings, as unattended items may disappear (day packs, cameras, etc.). Our accommodations are very safe, but as a precaution in any of our locations, we recommend purchasing a baggage lock and putting all your valuables inside your largest bag and locking it when you leave for your daily activities. There are lockers available to store your personal items and valuables at this program location.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency, keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in case of an emergency. The link to STEP is <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

In Case of Emergency

United States Embassy

Location: In front of Centro Comercial del Oeste Pavas, Costa Rica

Street Address: Calle 98 Via 104, Pavas,

Costa Rica Main Line: +506 2519 2000

From the U.S. dial 011 506 2519 2000



Globe Aware's 24-hour phone line Please note our email is not attended all day every day so if you have an emergency, please use this phone number: (214) 824 4562

Stay Involved

As you leave Costa Rica you may be asking yourself, "how can I continue to help?".

Start planning your next volunteer vacation

Are you ready for your next volunteer vacation? Many of our volunteers are forever changed by the experience and can't wait for the next one, or to visit a new, exciting place. Maybe you fell so in love with the community you visited that you would like to go back. Get a group together, explore our different destinations on our website www.globeaware.org, or return to Costa Rica! All returning volunteers receive 10% off our program fees!

Other ideas to stay involved:

Join us on Facebook

Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/globeaware Don't forget to LIKE us and see photos of your program, continue to follow the progress of projects through other volunteers and their images.

Fundraising

Start a fundraising campaign to support a program or project, fundraiser towards your next volunteer trip, or even donate to other individuals fundraising so they can experience what you did!

Share your photos

Send in your photos so we can share them with other people in the same program or people interested in going to Costa Rica.



Coati



Parrots



Olingo



Monkeys



Raccoon



Porcupine



Sloths



Kinkajous



Owls

More on the Animals

Coati

The coati, also known as the coatimundi, is a member of the raccoon family in the genera *Nasua* and *Nasuella*. It is a diurnal mammal native to South America, Central America, and

southwestern North America. The name is purportedly derived from the Tupian languages of Brazil.

Adult coatis measure 33 to 69 cm (13 to 27 in) from head to the base of the tail, which can be if their bodies. Coatis are about 30 cm (12 in) tall at the shoulder and weigh between 2 and 8 kg (4.4 and 17.6 lb), about the size of a large house cat. Males can become almost twice as large as females and have large, sharp canine teeth. The above measurements are for the white-nosed and South America coatis. The two mountain coatis are smaller.

All coatis share a slender head with an elongated, flexible, slightly upward- turned nose, small ears, dark feet, and a long, non-prehensile tail used for balance and signaling.

Coatis are omnivores; their diet consists mainly of ground litter, invertebrates, such as tarantula, and fruit. They also eat small vertebrate prey, such as lizards, rodents, small birds, birds' eggs, and crocodile eggs. The snout, with an acute sense of smell, assists the paws in a hog-like manner to unearth invertebrates.



Parrots

The **yellow-naped amazon** or **yellow-naped parrot** (*Amazona auropalliata*) is an amazon parrot sometimes considered to be a subspecies of yellow-crowned amazon, *Amazona ochrocephala* (Gmelin, 1788)! Deforestation is reducing the number of these parrots in the wild together with illegal removal of young for the pet trade. This parrot readily mimics sounds, and in captivity this includes human speech, which is probably the reason it is popular in aviculture. Like all parrots, however, mimic abilities vary greatly between individuals.



Olingo

The northern olingo (*Bassaricyon gabbii*), also known as the bushy-tailed olingo or as simply the olingo (due to it being the most seen of the species), is a tree-dwelling member of the family Procyonidae, which also includes raccoons. It was the first species of olingo to be described, and while it is considered by some authors to be the only genuine

olingos species, a recent review of the *Bassaricyon* genus has shown that there is a total of four olingo species, although two of the former species should now be considered as a part of this species. Its scientific name honors William More Gabb, who collected the first specimen. It is native to Central America.



The northern olingo is a nocturnal herbivore, feeding almost entirely on fruit, especially figs. It has been observed to drink the nectar of balsa trees during the dry season, and, on rare occasions, to pursue and eat small mammals, such as mice and squirrels. During the day, it sleeps in dens located in large trees.

Monkeys

Monkey is a common name that may refer to groups or species of mammals in part, the simians of infraorder Simiiformes. The term is applied descriptively to groups of primates, such as families of new world monkeys and old-world monkeys, yet can exclude the hominoids, also referred to as apes.



Many monkey species are tree-dwelling (arboreal), although there are species that live primarily on the ground, such as baboons. Most species are also active during the day (diurnal). Monkeys are generally considered to be intelligent, especially the old-world monkeys of Catarrhine.

Raccoons

The raccoon sometimes spelled raccoon, also known as the common raccoon, North American raccoon, northern raccoon, or coon, is a medium-sized mammal native to North America. The raccoon is the largest of the procyonid family, having a body length of 40 to 70 cm (16 to 28 in) and body weight of 5 to 26 kg (11 to 57 lb.).

Its grayish coat mostly consists of dense underfur which insulates it against cold weather. Three of the raccoon's most distinctive features are its extremely dexterous front paws, its facial mask, and its ringed tail, which are themes in the mythologies of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Raccoons are noted for their intelligence, with studies showing that they can remember the solution

to tasks for at least three years. They are usually nocturnal and omnivorous, eating a 40% invertebrates, 33% plants, and 27% vertebrates.



Porcupines

Porcupines are rodents with a coat of sharp spines, or quills, that protect against predators. The term covers two families of animals, the Old-World porcupines of family Hystricidae, and the New World porcupines of family

Erethizontid. Both families belong to the infraorder Hystriography within

profoundly diverse order Rodentia and display superficially similar coats of quills: despite this, the two groups are distinct from each other and are not closely related to each other within the historiography.

The Old-World porcupines live in southern Europe, Asia (western and southern), and most of Africa. They are large, terrestrial, and strictly nocturnal. In taxonomic terms, they form the family Hystricidae.

The New World porcupines are indigenous to North America and northern South America. They live in wooded areas and can climb trees, where some species spend their entire lives. They are less strictly nocturnal than their Old-World relatives and generally smaller. In taxonomic terms, they form the family Erethizontidae.

Most porcupines are about 60–90 cm (25–36 in) long, with a 20–25 cm (8–10 in) long tail. Weighing 5–16 kg (12–35 lb), they are rounded, large, and slow, and use the aposematic strategy of defense. Porcupines occur in various shades of brown, gray, and white. Porcupines' spiny protection resembles that of the unrelated erinaceomorph hedgehogs and Australian monotreme echidnas.



The North American porcupine is an herbivore; it eats leaves, herbs, twigs, and green plants such as clover. In the winter, it may eat bark. It often climbs trees to find food. The African porcupine is not a climber and forages on the ground. It is mostly nocturnal, but will sometimes forage for food in the day, eating bark, roots, fruits, and berries, as well as farm crops. Porcupines have become a pest in Kenya and are eaten as a delicacy.

Sloths

Sloths are arboreal mammals noted for slowness of movement and for spending most of their lives hanging upside down in the trees of the tropical rainforests of South America and Central America. The six species are in two families: two-toed sloths and three-toed sloths. In

spite of this traditional naming, all sloths have three toes. The two-toed sloths have two digits, or fingers, on each forelimb.

Baby sloths learn what to eat by licking the lips of their mother. All sloths eat the leaves of the cecropia.

Two-toed sloths have a diverse diet of insects, carrion, fruits, leaves, and small lizards, ranging over up to 140 hectares. Three-toed sloths, on the other hand, have a limited diet of leaves from only a few trees, and no mammal digests as slowly



Kinkajous

The kinkajou is a rainforest mammal of the family Procyonidae related to olingos, coatis, raccoons, and the ringtail and cacomistle. It is the only member of the genus Potos and is also known as the "honey bear" (a name that it shares with the sun bear). Kinkajous may be

mistaken for ferrets or monkeys but are not closely related to either. Although the kinkajou is classified in the order Carnivora and has sharp teeth, its omnivorous diet consists mainly of fruit, particularly figs.

Native to Central America and South America, this mostly frugivorous, arboreal mammal is not an endangered species, though it is seldom seen by people because of its strict nocturnal habits. However, they are hunted for the pet trade, for their fur (to make wallets and horse saddles) and for their meat.

The species has been included in Appendix III of CITES by Honduras, which means that exports from Honduras require an export permit and

exports from other countries require a certificate of origin or re-export. They may live up to 40 years in captivity.



Owls

Owls are birds from the order Strigiformes, which includes about 200 species of mostly solitary and nocturnal birds of prey typified by an upright stance, a large, broad head, binocular vision, and binaural hearing, sharp talons, and feathers adapted for silent flight. Exceptions include the diurnal northern hawk-owl and the gregarious burrowing owl.

Owls hunt mostly small mammals, insects, and other birds, although a few species specialize in hunting fish. They are found in all regions of the Earth except the polar ice caps and some remote islands.

Owls are divided into two families: the true (or typical) owl family, Strigidae, and the barn-owl family, Tytonidae.



Deer

Deer (singular and plural) are the hoofed ruminant mammals forming the family Cervidae. The two main groups of deer are the Cervinae, including the muntjac, the elk (wapiti), the fallow deer, and the chital; and the Capreolinae, including the reindeer (caribou), the roe deer, and the moose. Female reindeer, and male deer of all species except the Chinese water deer, grow and shed new antlers each year. In this they differ from permanently horned antelope, which are part of a different family (Bovidae) within the same order of even-toed ungulates (Artiodactyla).

The musk deer (Moschidae) of Asia and chevrotains (Tragulidae) of tropical African and Asian forests are separate families within the ruminant clade (Ruminantia). They are no more closely related to deer than are other even-toed ungulates.

Deer appears in art from Paleolithic cave paintings onwards, and they have played a role in mythology, religion, and literature throughout history, as well as in heraldry. Their economic importance includes the use of their meat as venison, their skins as soft, strong buckskin, and their antlers as handles for knives. Deer hunting has been a popular activity since at least the Middle Ages and remains a resource for many families today.

Deer are browsers, and feed primarily on leaves. They have small, unspecialized stomachs by ruminant standards, and high nutrition requirements. Rather than eating and digesting vast quantities of low-grade fibrous food as, for example, sheep and cattle do, deer select easily digestible shoots, young leaves, fresh grasses, soft twigs, fruit, fungi, and lichens. The low-fibered food, after minimal fermentation and shredding, passes rapidly through the alimentary canal. The deer require many minerals such as calcium and phosphate in order to support antler growth, and this further necessitates a nutrient-rich diet. There are, however, some reports of deer engaging in carnivorous activity, such as depredating the nest of Northern bobwhites.



Further Readings

While no further reading is required, we think it is always nice to have a travel guidebook with you to read about the area. Lonely Planet, Eyewitness, Frommer's, Budget Travel, and Rand ough Guides are some of the titles we have recommended in the past. Many people also enjoy reading books like The Costa Ri-cans by Richard Biesanz et al, which provides a historic perspective on Costa Rica's™s political and social change. La Loca de Gandoca by Ana Cristina Rossi is a conservation-related novel by a prize-winning tica novelist.