

Costa Rica Teaching and Big Cats

Participate in our Conservation and Community Adventure whilst living in the surroundings of beautiful Costa Rica

Nestling between its tropical Caribbean and Pacific coasts, Costa Rica is one of the most breathtaking countries in the world. Travel to this tropical paradise and contribute your time to this exciting two-part conservation & teaching project that will fully integrate you into the local community and leave you forever in love with the people, landscapes, beaches, rainforests, volcanoes and wildlife that this magical destination has to offer. This project gives you the opportunity to get involved with big cats conservation, community teaching, jungle teaching and sports coaching. Combining the different fields will allow you to merge conservation and community work during your time in Costa Rica, giving you the best of both worlds and a real insight into the Costa Rican culture! You can teach English in the local schools or take part in an exciting sports coaching project, whilst fully immersing yourself in the lives and colourful culture of Costa Rica's friendly, welcoming people. Furthermore, on your weekends off you can enjoy trips around the local countryside offering you in a world of adventure sports, tremendous landscapes of natural beauty, great food, lively music and laid-back people.

By combining the placements, you also get a chance to volunteer in the jungle too! Costa Rica is home to over 500,000 different species of animals, giving it the highest species density of any country in the world. Over 50% of species found in the country call the Osa Peninsula home, meaning this project is located in the most biodiverse region of one of the most biodiverse countries on the globe – truly a hotspot within a hotspot! Due to the remote location, there is a lack of resources for teaching and learning English and this is a good opportunity for you to step in and help the community! The camp itself is based amongst dense tropical forest on the edge of Corcovado National Park, close to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, which is perfect for enthusiastic and energetic conservationists, to work together to carry out critical surveys and data collection activities. Near camp, there is also a small primary school where you will get to teach school children English and provide them with support for other aspects of their lives and education. The school staff are also extremely keen to develop their English teaching curriculum and you will also provide English lessons to local adults to increase the positive impact of language education on the community of the region.

Costa Rica's inhabitants and community are being gravely challenged by habitat fragmentation and destruction, pollution, poaching and climate change more broadly. Over the past several years, Frontier has been working to assist the long term goals of this exquisite part of the world by creating projects that allow you to help support the countries development as well as give you the opportunity to explore the great outdoors. This project will give you the opportunity to get involved with community development and big cats conservation, in and out of the jungle!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

During your trip, you will make amazing and memorable experiences, as well as useful lifelong career skills.

These can include:

- Practical research and conservation experience
- Assisting with the conservation of vital habitats and their resident species
- Studying the ecology and behaviour of several big cat species including jaguars, ocelot, and the Puma
- Working within one of the world's most biodiverse forest ecosystems
- Working to improve the conservation status of some of the world's most endangered big cat species

- Discovering a land of intense beauty and colourful culture
- Helping improve the lives of local children and communities
- Earning your TEFL certificate for free if you complete 20 teaching hours
- Helping improve the lives of local children and communities

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- CV required
- DBS Check

FAST FACTS

Location:

Costa Rica

Transport:

Airport pick-up and transfer to Frontier house

Accommodation:

Frontier volunteer house or upgrade to a local hostel on teaching and sports projects.

Eco Jungle Research camp on Conservation and Jungle Teaching Projects.

What does the project do?

The Teaching & Big Cats Project allows you to engage in hands on experience with conservation and community projects in Costa Rica. You can start your Costa Rican journey in the awe-inspiring rainforests and finish in the company of the local community, teaching English to children and offering them as much support as you can before you leave! There are a few teaching options for you to choose in this project depending on your preference and teaching methods. If you're more outdoorsy, Jungle Teaching would be perfect as you spend most of your time teaching children outside of the classroom. If you wish to teach children sports instead, Sports Coaching may be the ideal choice for you. You may select as many combinations you wish to join, taking into account the duration of your stay in Costa Rica. By doing this, you'll gain invaluable, hands-on experience in both teaching and conservation projects at different locations and take part in a wide range of activities. There are 4 main placements included on this project and you are given the option to choose the number of weeks on each one.

The 4 placements include:

- Costa Rica Big Cats Conservation
- Costa Rica Teaching
- Costa Rica Jungle Teaching
- Costa Rica Sports Coaching

We have included more information on each placement below.

Costa Rica Big Cats Conservation

Corcovado National Park, one of the largest tropical primary lowland rainforests in the world is also home to a large range of endangered plant and animal species. Over millennia, Costa Rica's balance of perfect weather and food abundance has fabricated a dramatic and ideal habitat for hundreds of bird and mammal species, including a large range of endangered big cats. Big Cats haven't had much luck when it comes to population numbers. Roughly 80% of the 40 big cat species are considered to be vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered. Luckily for us, six of these magnificent species can still be found in Costa Rica's protected area – the ocelot, margay, puma,

jaguar, oncilla and the jaguarondi.

Working on the Big Cat Conservation projects in Costa Rica will allow you to lend a helping hand to the remarkable species. During your stay your tasks will include:

- Carrying out extensive and broad biodiversity surveys
- Collecting valuable data on endangered big cat species such as the Margay
- Walking big cat transects to collect valuable data on various big cat species
- Setting up camera traps around the camp to collect footage of passers by

In addition to the surveys which use direct observations, we also record indirect evidence of mammals through camera trapping and the identification of tracks and scats. All these signs are recorded in order to build a better understanding of the abundance and distribution of big cats in the area. This data is crucial in order to assess the effectiveness of conservation measures, and in particular whether wildlife corridors between protected areas are sufficient to ensure the long-term survival of big cat populations in Costa Rica.

So far, volunteers in the past have managed to collect footage of four different wildcats of Costa Rica using camera traps. The camp situated near the rainforests is popular amongst our four-legged friends. Volunteers live and work with other enthusiastic and energetic conservationists, working together to carry out critical surveys and data collection activities. Joining this vitally important project will not only give you an opportunity to experience a world of fragile beauty, but to more importantly contribute to the conservation of Costa Rica's precious and unique habitats for the future. For more information, please see this link:

<https://frontier.ac.uk/projects/750/Costa-Rica-Big-Cats-Conservation>

Costa Rica Teaching

During this placement you will be working in a local school offering support to children learning English and supporting them with other aspects of their lives and education. Frontier volunteers work with a local school in Puerto Jimenez which is always in need of assistance from volunteers. This project has recently taken off and the school staff are extremely keen to develop their English teaching curriculum to increase the positive impact of language education on the community of the region. You will benefit in terms of your personal and professional experience and will be encouraged to formulate ideas and develop your teaching skills and techniques. Working with the local teachers you will be working one on one or with small groups, focusing on those children who are behind in their education. You may be asked to help with a variety of essential subjects such as basic maths, English, reading, and you may also be asked to plan your own lessons for your small group. Your level of involvement will obviously depend on the length of your stay as well as your existing skills and qualifications.

For more information, please see this link:

<https://frontier.ac.uk/projects/393/Costa-Rica-Teaching>

Costa Rica Jungle Teaching

This project aims to help improve the social and economic well-being of some of the poorest children in various communities, within outlying areas of the Osa Peninsula. The number of people living below the poverty line in Costa Rica is on the decline in recent years, though individuals and communities still face barriers to full participation in economic activities which can help to improve

their well-beings. You will contribute to the improvement of the communities' future by helping to provide basic education and conversational English. The project will allow you to not only contribute towards the well-being of underprivileged children, but also quickly improve your Spanish language skills, through interacting with the local community members and making new friends and exploring the all that the region of Costa Rica has to offer! Whatever your schedule you will engage fully with local children, using your creativity and initiative to assist in the activities of the project. For more information, please see this link:

<https://frontier.ac.uk/projects/863/Costa-Rica-Jungle-Teaching>

Costa Rica Sports Coaching

Many young people lack the opportunity to play sport in a well-structured environment. This placement aims to offer young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to benefit from structured sports training. Although the focus is on sport, the project's aims are far larger. The goal is to inspire young people and teach life skills, developing a responsible youth generation, as well as bridging social divides and enhancing awareness of a wide range of social and health issues. Essentially sport is used as a vehicle to holistically improve the lives of young people from township communities.

For more information, please see this link:

<https://frontier.ac.uk/projects/864/Costa-Rica-Sports-Coaching>

What will I be doing?

As you embark upon this combined project, your work schedule will be challenging, varied and sometimes unpredictable but it will also always be enjoyable and memorable! During the conservation placement you will mostly include conducting big cat surveys. However, you will also be maintaining the forest trails which will be great way to explore the jungles of Costa Rica. These trails are particularly important as they will be used as groundwork for your data collection. The community based placements will involve a range of activities but will mostly focus on teaching children and sports coaching. You will be based in a local school offering support to children playing sports, learning English and supporting them with other aspects of their lives and education. Furthermore, you will also be working closely with sports clubs to organise sports events. This is an amazing opportunity to make a difference within the community, especially as we work with a local school in Puerto Jimenez who always need assistance from volunteers!

Sample Itinerary

This is a specimen itinerary for a 2 week project and the order and duration of the project components is subject to change. Timing the community and adventure phases may vary depending on the time of year you depart.

The 2 week project option allows you to take part in your choice of 2 projects from those listed above, each for 1 week.

Day 1 &2: Orientation

Arrive in Puerto Jimenez and receive orientation and briefing by the Frontier staff at camp.

Week 1: Teaching

Your work schedule will cover a comprehensive, varied and enjoyable teaching programme which

will engage you fully with your pupils and awaken your creativity and initiative. You may be helping a local teacher at the school as well as being required to take control of your own lessons, which will encourage you to formulate ideas and develop your teaching skills and techniques. You may be involved with activities such as marking pupil's work and producing an inspiring teaching strategy, including preparing homework and assembling innovative and effective lesson plans.

As well as this you, will have the opportunity to help with lots of extracurricular activities which will vary extensively depending on your personal skills and interests – whether it is helping to organise a school show or playing football with the super competitive and highly skilled local kids. You may even get the chance to join the Frontier marine or forest camps for their regular Friday night themed parties, depending on the overall work programme. The teaching programme is demanding but thoroughly rewarding and is excellent preparation for anyone looking at a career in teaching or who is just keen to get exposure to this worthwhile field of work. Whatever you decide, you are sure to gain huge satisfaction from inspiring these communities, whilst significantly enhancing your own skills and experience.

Week 2: Conservation

You will have the chance to explore the forest surrounding Carate and maybe even further afield on the mainland. You will experience a truly remote environment, spotting rarely seen wildlife along the way. You may have the chance to carry out opportunistic wildlife spotting as you travel. We have rigged remote camera traps in and round camp to try and capture rare images of 5 big cat species native to Costa Rica including, jaguarondi, ocelot, margay, puma and jaguar! This is a truly exciting project to be part of.

You could be taking part in any of the following:

- Vegetation surveying
- Big cat sampling

Day 14 Travel to the airport and prepare for departure

You will be dropped off at the airport in time for your return flight.

If this is your first time doing conservation work, don't worry! It will only take a short while for you to feel totally at home on camp and confident with the science work. Although the work is intense, you'll find that living in such a beautiful and inaccessible environment alongside friends who share your passion for conservation will be the experience of a lifetime!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

You will be greeted at the local Airport in Puerto Jimenez by a Frontier staff member and walk 15 minutes to the Frontier house. Please arrange to arrive on Sunday afternoon.

There are two airlines which fly to Puerto Jimenez, Sansa and Natureair or if you're up for it there is also a bus service from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez. Your Project Coordinator can give you further information about this bus journey. You may have to organise your own transport back to the airport after you have completed your project depending on your project end date, which is very straight forward and the Project Coordinator can help you with this.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

You will be staying in the Frontier house in Puerto Jimenez close to the local community. Your accommodation will be in a shared room and will be basic but clean, tidy and comfortable. If you would prefer, you can upgrade to local hostel accommodation for an additional fee of \$50 per week.

In the jungle, you will be staying in simple, shared, mixed-sex eco-cabins amidst the jungles near to Carate, where the school is located. This is a jungle research camp, so a mosquito net is an absolute must! We have tried to keep the camp in harmony with its pristine surroundings, so conditions are simple, environmentally friendly and comfortable. You can even bring a hammock and sleep among the stars if you wish; camp life would be a perfect place to re-connect with nature. The camp is situated about a 5 minute walk from away Playa Carate, a beach which stretches for over 20 miles all the way into Corcovado National Park. There are cool, refreshing showers and toilets on camp too. Life on camp is a unique experience and you'll be feeling at one with the jungle before you know it!

WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Costa Rican food is simple but delicious, with a focus on rice, beans and good quality fruit and vegetables. Whilst on camp everyone will take part in cooking, some even discover some hidden culinary talents! Camp staples are local dishes, as well as rice, pasta, legumes, and a selection of local, delicious, fresh fruit and vegetables! When in Puerto Jimenez, you will be provided with food for the school week leaving your weekends free for you to enjoy reasonably priced meals in local bars and restaurants around town or trying out street stalls. You can get creative learning how to make gallo pinto, the staple food of the nation, which is fried rice and black beans or other favourites such as crispy tortillas stuffed with delicious cheeses, vegetables and every now and then some diced meat.

On account of the lush nature of Costa Rica's natural habitats, the range of fresh fruit and vegetables is vast and abundant, so make sure you sample some of the fresh market produce. Another thing to try is some Costa Rican coffee, famous the world over and representing the country's biggest export, its fragrant aroma synonymous with the lush plantations found in Central America. And don't forget the rum!

COSTS

1 week	US\$ 795
2 weeks	US\$ 1,195
3 weeks	US\$ 1,645
4 weeks	US\$ 1,895
5 weeks	US\$ 2,045
6 weeks	US\$ 2,295
7 weeks	US\$ 2,495
8 weeks	US\$ 2,845
10 weeks	US\$ 3,245
20 weeks	US\$ 5,395
Extra week	US\$ 295
Christmas week	US\$ 295

DEPARTURE DATES

Every Monday

DURATION

You can join this project for a minimum of 1 week

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

- Pre-departure support & documentation
- Travel advice & documentation
- Kit advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier t-shirt (UK)
- UK residential briefing weekend including food, accommodation and training (extra cost applies)

In-country

- Accommodation
- 3 meals daily (while on project)
- Project orientation and training
- Airport pick-up, Mondays before 12:00pm
- In-country emergency support
- 24-hour international HQ backup
- Qualifications available

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Puerto Jimenez (PJM)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Call us on 020 7613 2422 (UK) / 1 949 336 8178 (US)

Mail us on info@frontier.ac.uk

Check out our social media here:

Project details were correct at the time this document was generated. Price, dates and other details are subject to change. Please see our website for current details for this project.