



the
leap

GAP YEAR PROGRAMME

Leap to Costa Rica

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT + CONSERVATION + JUNGLE ADVENTURE

Costa Rica *Uncovered*

Dive into a life-changing, 4-week Costa Rican adventure that combines conservation, community, and thrill. Explore four unique regions—each bringing its own unforgettable experiences.

LOCATIONS:

MANUEL ANTONIO + NATUWA +
MONTEVERDE + SANTA TERESA

ACCOMMODATION:

MIX OF HOSTELS + FINCA

ENVIRONMENTS:

JUNGLE, CLOUD FOREST +
BEACH

TEAM SIZE:

MAX 22 PER DEPARTURE

SOCIAL:

BUZZY BEACH BARS

FITNESS:

GENTLE JUNGLE HIKES

STAY LENGTH:

4 WEEKS

Reserve your place

INFO@THELEAP.CO.UK / +44 1672 519922





This unique adventure blends exploration and community impact, with comfortable hostels, rustic wildlife camps, and pristine beaches as your home base. Get ready for Costa Rica like never before—an unforgettable mix of adventure, contribution, and natural beauty.

Your adventure starts near Manuel Antonio National Park, where jungle trails, waterfalls, and vibrant wildlife meet meaningful community work in the fishing village of Cocal. Next up you'll journey to Monteverde's cloud forests, where canopy zip lines, treetop bridges, and hikes showcase incredible biodiversity. Your adventure intensifies at Natuwa Wildlife Sanctuary, where you'll engage in hands-on work with Costa Rica's most exotic wildlife - feeding and caring for animals in their natural habitat - a challenging, fulfilling experience.

Your adventure rounds off in the hip and groovy town of Santa Teresa, famous for its uncrowded beaches and perfect waves. Spend two nights working with ASVO's turtle conservation project, safeguarding endangered sea turtles, while also enjoying surf lessons, yoga, and connecting with the local culture.

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

CARIBBEAN
SEA

3 Monteverde Cloud Forest
Hanging Bridges
Zip Wire + Fiscus Tree

Natuwa Wildlife
Sanctuary
Wildlife Conservation

1 San José
Arrival / Departure

5 Santa Teresa
Turtle Conservation
Surfing, Yoga + Waterfalls

2 Manuel Antonio
National Park
Community Project
+ Waterfall Hikes

NORTH PACIFIC
OCEAN

PANAMA

Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Day 1 San José

Arrive + Settle in

Upon arrival, you'll settle into the Rosa of America hostel near the airport, nestled among lush tropical gardens.

Here the team assembles with the Leap guides for the 4 week adventure ahead.



Days 2-6 Manuel Antonio National Park

Community Project + Waterfall Hikes

After an early start (thanks to jet lag and the lively tropical birds), you'll enjoy breakfast and perhaps a refreshing swim before beginning your journey to the renowned Manuel Antonio National Park. Here, you'll spend five nights on the edge of the park, staying in a private finca where you'll immerse yourself in both adventure and community contribution.

Your time will be divided between exploring the lush rainforests of Manuel Antonio and working in the nearby fishing village of Cocal, where The Leap has supported a community center since 2021. This center is a lifeline for local families, providing a safe space for kids while parents' work. During your stay, you'll take on a variety of tasks: playing with the children, beach clean-ups, creating signs to promote litter-free zones, and crafting beach furniture from recycled tires.

Expect a rewarding blend of activities, from hands-on community projects to hiking through waterfalls and discovering the vibrant biodiversity of the park.



“The trip to Costa Rica was so well organised, great programme and fantastic experiences.

Thank you so much for everything. Our daughter has made memories and friends for ever.

Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Days 7-10 Monteverde Cloud Forest

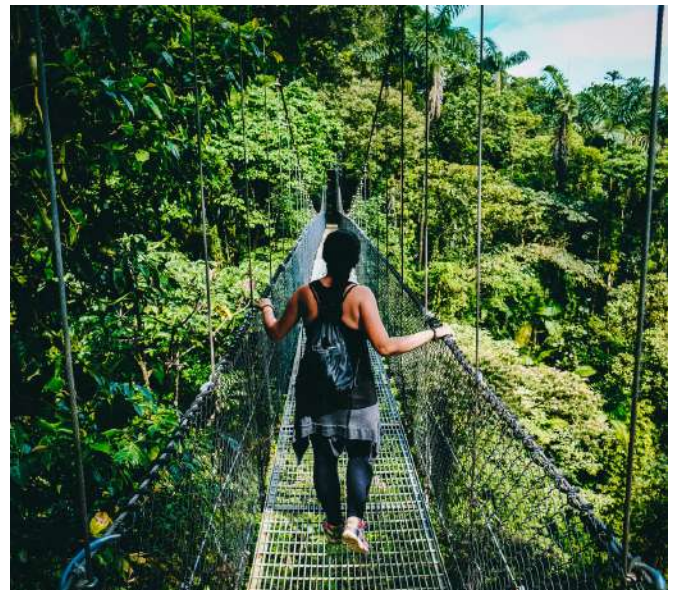
Hanging Bridges + Zip Wire + Ficus Tree

Your second phase takes you to the stunning cloud forests of Monteverde, perched on the spine of Costa Rica's continental divide. Here, you'll stay in the vibrant town of Santa Elena, a hotspot for travellers, filled with cool restaurants and artisan shops that are perfect for exploring in your downtime.

Every morning kicks off with an adventure into the cloud forest, where you'll head out to walk across hanging bridges that give you an epic view of the treetops and all the action below. Couple of the highlights? Climbing up and inside a giant, hollow Ficus tree and hiking to the highest point in Monteverde to find the perfect sunset. If the skies are clear, you'll get a rare view that spans from the Pacific to the Caribbean coast.

Afternoons are free for you to dive into some seriously fun options. You can choose to zip line through the forest, go horseback riding, or even try bungee jumping if you're feeling extra brave. These add-ons can be booked on-site, so you can pick and choose based on your vibe. Monteverde's cloud forest is like nothing you've ever seen, with its misty atmosphere feeding an insanely diverse ecosystem. Expect to encounter some amazing wildlife, with over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, thousands of insects, and 2,500+ types of plants.

Get ready for an adventure that's part nature, part adrenaline, and 100% unforgettable.





A woman wearing a red helmet and a dark long-sleeved shirt is ziplining over a dense, green forest. She is smiling and has her arms outstretched. The background is a vast, sunlit forest with many trees. The zipline cable is visible, and she is holding onto it with her right hand. The overall scene is bright and adventurous.

“The Leap responsible for my son's "best time of [his] life." The Leap was consistently helpful and encouraging from the word go. Zoe was amazing, as was Milly.

Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Days 11–14 Natuwa Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife Conservation

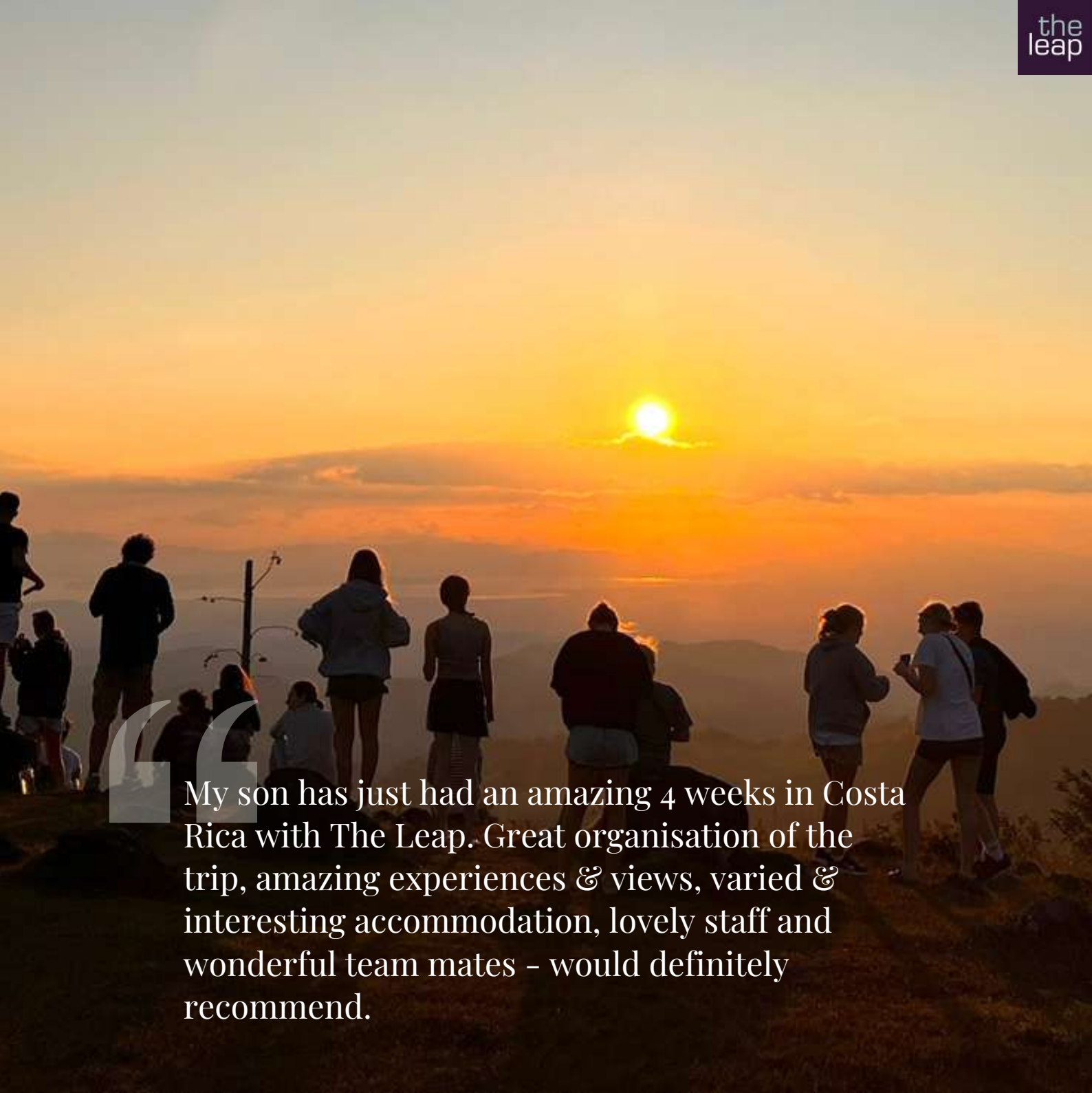
Get ready for the most challenging and rewarding part of your adventure. This place is pure magic, home to an incredible array of wildlife—from tropical birds and sloths to elusive panthers and jaguars.

It's a true wilderness experience where you'll have a front-row seat to Costa Rica's most exotic animals. The work here is intense but fulfilling, with early mornings starting around 6 a.m. and wrapping up around 3 p.m.

To make the most impact, you'll be divided into small groups to take on tasks like feeding the wildlife, cleaning enclosures, and helping with basic renovations around the sanctuary. It's hands-on work in the heat, but the experience of caring for these animals up close is beyond rewarding.





A group of people are silhouetted against a bright sunset over a mountain range. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow. The people are standing on a hillside, looking out over the landscape. Some are taking photos, and others are talking. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

“My son has just had an amazing 4 weeks in Costa Rica with The Leap. Great organisation of the trip, amazing experiences & views, varied & interesting accommodation, lovely staff and wonderful team mates - would definitely recommend.

Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Days 15-27 Santa Teresa

Turtle Conservation + Surfing + Yoga + Waterfalls

After exploring the jungle, adventuring in the cloud forest, and helping with wildlife conservation, it's time for the final phase of your journey in Santa Teresa. Known worldwide for its pristine, uncrowded beaches and epic surf breaks, Santa Teresa is a hotspot for gappers, with its cool, laid-back vibe, perfect waves, and yoga culture. But don't get too comfortable—it's not all play. Here, you'll dive into a mix of adventure, and meaningful volunteer projects.

Turtle Conservation

Spend two days/nights at Cirenas, a leading Costa Rican wildlife NGO, helping protect endangered sea turtles. Based on 2km of wild untouched beaches in Manzanillo, you'll safeguard nests and hatchlings of Olive Ridley, Black, Hawksbill, and Leatherback turtles.

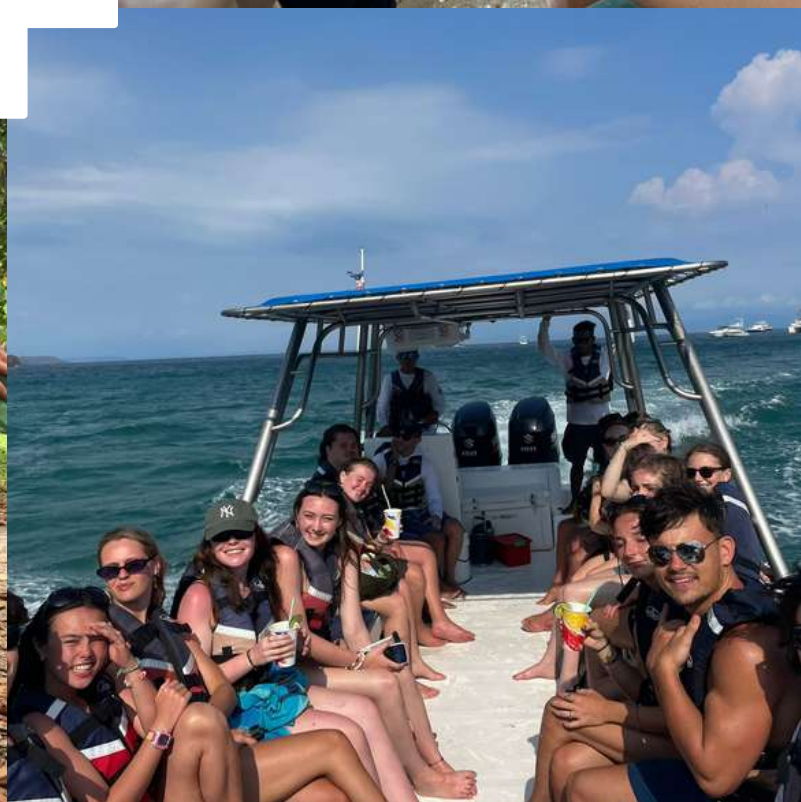
Your work includes 4-6 hours daily, occasional night patrols, beach clean-ups, maintenance, data collection, and the unforgettable release of baby turtles into the ocean.

Adventure

Alongside your conservation work, you'll explore Montezuma's waterfalls, take two surf lessons in Santa Teresa, and enjoy a yoga session.

Santa Teresa combines adventure and relaxation, offering iconic surf, yoga, and breathtaking sunsets.

It's the ideal way to end your Leap experience blending meaningful work with the best of Costa Rica's natural beauty and culture.



Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Day 28 San José

Departure

On your final day, you'll return to San Jose and settle back into the Rosa of America hostel for a relaxing night, getting ready for your flight home the next day.



Costa Rica *Staying & Food*

San José

Accommodation: Rosa of America Hotel

Food: Supper included

Manuel Antonio National Park

Accommodation: The finca comes with a pool, football pitch, badminton, and volleyball – so lots to do, and you'll sleep to the noise of capuchin and howler monkeys. Dorm style accommodation with bunkbeds, western style WC and showers with hot and cold water. It's an off-grid experience for this phase, no WIFI in the finca.

Food: All meals included apart from 2 suppers out. Expect mix of local and European dishes.

Monteverde Cloud Forest

Accommodation: Local hostel, dorm style accommodation – hot and cold showers.

Food: 2 meals a day provided. Expect a mix of local style food and picnics. Supper not included, so you can explore the area.

Natuwa Wildlife Sanctuary

Accommodation: You will be living in the volunteer accommodation which consists of a long house style bungalow, with a communal hang out area. It is rustic and basic – no mod cons here. It has a non – smoking, no alcohol policy on site.

Food: All meals included. Expect local pinto style food.

Costa Rica *Staying & Food*

Santa Teresa

Accommodation: Your main base will be at the buzzing Jakera Camp, which is a jungle paradise wrapped around a swimming pool area and overlooked by a rich tropical forest bursting with wildlife including capuchin and howler monkeys. You will sleep in one the bungalows dotted around the tropical gardens and central hub where you eat and chill out. Dorm style accommodation with bunkbeds, western style WC and showers with hot and cold water. Approx. a 10 minute (800 m) walk to the beach.

Food: 2 meals a day provided. Supper is extra out and about.

Accommodation: Cirenas – rustic cabin 10 min walk from the beach.

Food: 3 meals a day provided.

Good to Know

On the meals that aren't catered, please budget approx. \$20 plus drinks, in a restaurant or cheaper in a café, self-catering option available at Santa Teresa.

On transfer days, lunches may be extra on the road, depending on the travel times.



Costa Rica *Dates & Costs* 2026

8TH JANUARY 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
12TH FEBRUARY 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
19TH MARCH 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
23RD APRIL 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
29TH MAY 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
9TH JULY 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320
15TH OCTOBER 2026	4 WEEKS	£3320

Costa Rica *Dates & Costs* 2026

INCLUDED:

- Itinerary as described
- 24-hour emergency back-up, management and support by UK team and in-country team
- Safety and induction course upon arrival
- Accommodation throughout
- Guides throughout
- 2 x surfing classes
- 2 x yoga class
- Tour of Antonio Manuel National Park by your Leap guide
- Tour of the waterfalls with Leap guide
- Team airport pick-up and drop off at the end and transfer to and from the projects
- Food as described

NOT INCLUDED:

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Medical expenses (reclaimable through travel insurance)
- Soft drinks/beer etc,
- Other food (unless described)
- Separate transfers – if you do not arrive or leave on the main team flight or at a similar time as this flight, you will have to pay a private transfer fee on arrival to the project – budget \$150 each way.

Costa Rica *Dates & Costs* 2026

Optional Things to Budget for

Laundry

You can either wash your own clothes or use a laundry service in the local towns, budget about \$10 per load.

Popular extra activities

Your days are going to be busy and varied as the projects and activities are weaved together, but we promise some downtime, weekends free at Santa Teresa, so you take advantage of the extra adventures you might want to do.

Tortuga Island trip from Santa Teresa – budget \$75

Extra surfing lesson – budget about \$60 per lesson

Yoga classes – budget about \$15 per lesson

Zip wire at Monteverde – budget \$60

Bungee jumping at Monteverde – \$85

Please note

Travel at the weekend, or any of these extra activities, is at your own expense and risk. We cannot be responsible but, if anything happens, we will of course be there to assist. Please ensure that you have adequate medical insurance before carrying out activities – especially bungee jumping.



“ This trip has left me with a group of life long friends from around the world, experiences that will affect me forever and skills to help me through life. I would highly recommend this trip.

Costa Rica *Nitty Gritty*

What to Pack?

Clothes

Less is more and a laundry service is available throughout – budget about \$10 per load.

- A selection of light weight trousers, shorts, t-shirts to wear during the day for project work
- A selection of nice clothes for going out in the evenings
- Dark long sleeved t-shirt and trousers for the night work at the turtle sanctuary
- UV vest for surfing
- A hoodie/fleece for cooler evenings in the cloud forest
- A lightweight waterproof jacket
- 1 pair of sturdy trainers
- 1 pair flip-flops
- 1 pair casual shoes
- Beach wear: sun hat, swimmers etc.

Toiletries & Medical

- Basic everyday toiletries
- Sun cream/after sun
- Travel wash
- Hand sanitiser
- Insect repellent
- Antibacterial spray/cream for open wounds
- Rehydration powders
- Savlon
- Antihistamines
- E45/Sudocream
- Immodium
- Mediplasters
- Personal Medication: Bring extra supplies, know the generic names of your medication, and ensure you can manage allergies (e.g. carry an epipen if necessary)

Costa Rica *Nitty Gritty*

What to Pack?

Equipment

- Rucksack - NO hard-shell SUITCASES
- Day rucksack
- Small dry bag
- Waterproof phone cover
- Packing cubes - useful to manage our rucksack
- Towel/sarong x 2. The microfibre towels are great as they dry quickly
- 1 pair of working gloves - a pair of sturdy gardening gloves will do the job
- Head torch with flashlight, red LED option
- Plug adapter required - they have American style plugs
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle
- Spare, cheap phone - just in case you lose/break your mobile
- Portable phone charger

Good to Know

No hard suitcases allowed - they are a nightmare to travel with.

Go for a rucksack or a duffle bag.

Costa Rica *Nitty Gritty*

Project Management

Project management is provided by our long-term partners at Jakera run by Chris Patterson and his team in Santa Teresa. Chris has spent a lifetime in ecotourism and is passionate about community and conservation-based projects. You will have local guides with you at all times.

Communication

We will provide you with the 24/7 emergency number for The Leap. Expect Wifi and phone reception to be patchy at the Finca and ASVO. If you have any issues or concerns at any point, please talk to your guides who will do all they can to resolve any issues or contact us.

Your Health

Each location will have first aid on site. For more serious emergencies: Volunteers need to pay for minor medical expenses on their credit card and then reclaim these expenses back through their travel insurance. This includes the cost of the host driving a volunteer to and from hospital. In an emergency, and where evacuation by air is necessary, the insurers will settle bills directly.

Your Team

Maximum of 22 and a minimum of 12 volunteers per departure. The programme cannot run with fewer than this. 5 to 6 weeks prior to departure, if the minimum group size hasn't been met, you will be offered an alternative placement or a postponement, depending on availability and preference. Anyone aged 18- 22 can participate.

Other Volunteers

You'll meet other volunteers whilst in Santa Teresa who receive guests from all over the world. All contributes to a great social scene.



“Everyday was a new adventure, from building hatcheries for turtle eggs to teaching English at a local school to playing volleyball with the Costa Rican coast guards to watching a turtle lay eggs. I would highly recommend this trip.



Reserve your place

INFO@THELEAP.CO.UK

+44 1672 519922

WWW.THELEAP.CO.UK/GAPYEAR