



the
leap

GAP YEAR PROGRAMME

Leap across *Colombia & Costa Rica*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT + TAYRONA CHALLENGE + HISTORIC CITIES

Colombia + *Costa Rica*

Welcome to our two-country, two-coast journey taking you from Colombia's Caribbean rhythms to Costa Rica's wild Pacific. Experience jungle hikes, turtle conservation, cloud forests, and serious soul-fuel along the way.

LOCATIONS:

TAYRONA NATIONAL PARK+
PALOMINO + MONTEVERDE +
SANTA TERESA

ACCOMMODATION:

MIX OF HOSTELS, AND JUNGLE
CAMPS

ENVIRONMENTS:

CITIES + JUNGLE + BEACH

PROJECTS:

TURTLE + MARINE
CONSERVATION + COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

TEAM SIZE:

18 PER DEPARTURE

SOCIAL:

BUZZY COUNTRY + BEACHES
+ BARS

FITNESS:

GOOD FITNESS REQUIRED
FOR SURFING AND TAYRONA
HIKES

STAY LENGTH:

4 WEEKS

Reserve your place

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



Step off the tourist trail and dive into a journey that blends culture, conservation, and challenge — all set against the vibrant backdrops of Colombia's Caribbean coast and Costa Rica's wild Pacific.

Starting in Colombia, where golden beaches meet jungle-covered mountains. You'll:

- Hike through the legendary Tayrona National Park
- Support a local school project in a remote jungle community
- Explore the colonial magic of Cartagena
- Tube through jungle rivers, chase waterfalls, and meet the Indigenous Kogi tribe
- End with a snorkel-filled escape to the Rosario Islands

Then hop across to Costa Rica, where adventure and purpose come together in the cloud forests and coastline:

- Live and work in Monteverde's cloud forest, supporting reforestation whilst zip-wiring over the canopy
- Head to Santa Teresa, where you'll protect endangered turtles, surf uncrowded waves, and soak up the beach-town vibe with yoga and through community projects

This isn't your average gap adventure.

It's meaningful, hands-on, and unforgettable – the kind of journey that shows you why travel matters. You'll return not just with stories, but with real impact, new perspectives, and the kind of confidence that only comes from doing something that matters.



NICARAGUA

CARIBBEAN
SEA

COSTA RICA

4 Monteverde Cloud Forest
Hanging Bridges, Zip Wire + Ficus Tree

San José
Departure

5 Santa Teresa
Turtle Conservation
Surfing, Yoga +
Waterfalls

PANAMA

NORTH PACIFIC
OCEAN

COLOMBIA

Palomino
Beach Chill + River Tubing,
Kids Foundation

2

1

3

Santa Marta
Arrival

Cartagena
Historic City

Tayrona
National Park
Multi-day Trek

Welcome to *Colombia*

Day 1 Santa Marta

Starting in Colombia, you're entry point will be into the old colonial town of Santa Marta where you'll spend the first couple of nights at the central Republica Hostel. here you'll have time to get organised, before heading out on an evening tour to take a deep dive into Colombia's vibrant energy.

Day 2 Minca

You'll kick-start your adventure with a day up in the mountains – the perfect way to shake off the jet lag and dive straight into Colombia's wild side.

First stop: Minca – a peaceful village tucked in the Sierra Nevada, surrounded by waterfalls, jungle, and mountain air. You'll head out to cool off in natural swimming holes at either Pozo Azul or Marinka Falls – both stunning and seriously refreshing.

Afterwards, you'll visit a local coffee and cacao finca to sample some of Colombia's most iconic flavours – freshly brewed, rich, and straight from the source.

Feeling energetic? There's an optional short hike to the Los Pinos viewpoint for those panoramic shots.

Then it's back to Santa Marta for a relaxed evening to do your thing – beach, wander, or feet up – before Tayrona kicks in tomorrow.





Colombia *Itinerary*

Days 3-5 Tayrona National Park

Trekking through Colombia's Best



Your Colombian adventure kicks into gear with a 2-night, 3-day hike through Tayrona National Park - a journey through ever-changing jungle trails, hidden beaches, and remote, wild camping spots.

You'll start early, following the coastal route from Cañaveral to Arrecifes, Piscina, and Cabo San Juan, hiking through lush rainforest and stopping for swims in crystal-clear coves along the way.

Your first night will be spent camping at Arrecifes beach, where you'll fall asleep to the sound of the waves and wake to the rustle of jungle life all around.

The next day, you'll continue deeper into the park, with the option to challenge yourself on a tougher trail up to Pueblito, an ancient indigenous site nestled in the hills. You'll then spend your second night at the iconic Cabo San Juan del Guia - hammocks, tents, sea breeze and stars.

On your final morning, wake early for a sunrise over the Caribbean, and enjoy some well-earned downtime on the beach before beginning your transfer to Palomino.



A person with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved tunic and a white conical hat, is walking away from the camera through a dense, lush green forest. They are carrying a large white tote bag and a smaller brown woven bag. To the left, the arm and hand of another person are visible, wearing a yellow wristband and a pink wristband. The forest is filled with various tropical plants, including palm fronds and thick foliage.

Tayrona was amazing, loved all aspects of it and really enjoyed the trekking and team aspect.

Colombia *Itinerary*

Days 6–10 Palomino

Adventures in Palomino

After your time immersed in Tayrona's wild jungle and remote beaches, you'll emerge into the laid-back, bohemian beach town of Palomino, where the Caribbean Sea meets the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. This stunning stretch of coast will be your base for the next few days, and it's the perfect place to catch your breath and settle into Colombia's coastal rhythm.

You'll kick off with some well-earned downtime – think golden beaches, surfy cafés, and a chance to properly relax. For those wanting to explore, you can trek out to the Quebrada Valencia Waterfall or hike up to the Mundo Nuevo viewpoint for panoramic views over jungle and sea.

But Palomino isn't just about the beach. Soon, you'll head into the mountains for a rare opportunity: a guided visit to the Kogi tribe, one of Colombia's most spiritually rich Indigenous communities. You'll learn about their traditions, their deep-rooted connection to the land, and their powerful vision for sustainable living – it's a meaningful encounter that stays with you.

From there, the adventure continues with a tubing expedition to get back to base – floating gently down the Palomino River, framed by towering mountains and dense forest. It's peaceful, otherworldly, and the perfect way to take in the region's natural beauty.

You'll also spend time at one of the local schools, getting stuck into a light renovation project – think painting, gardening, or sprucing up the classroom – and of course, there'll be plenty of time to connect with the students through games, and shared stories. It's a simple but powerful way to give back and experience daily life in this remote community.



“Everything was amazing. Thank you for such an incredible experience.”

Colombia *Itinerary*

Days 11– 12 Rosario Island

Caribbean Gem

You'll then travel west along the coast towards Cartagena where you'll catch a boat to the famous Rosario Islands – a picture-perfect archipelago of turquoise water – utter heaven.

But this isn't just about hammocks and sunsets (though there'll be plenty of those). You'll stay at an incredible island hostel that also spearheads a local reef conservation project. Here, you'll roll up your sleeves to support vital work – planting mangroves, helping with reef clean-ups, and learning how tourism and marine conservation can go hand-in-hand.

It's hands-on, meaningful, and wildly beautiful. Sun, salt, and purpose all in one place.



Colombia *Itinerary*

Days 13- 14 Cartagena *Culture, Colour + Caribbean Vibes*



After the islands, it's back to the mainland for your final two nights in the magical city of Cartagena.

Here, you'll soak up the city's infectious energy, wandering through cobblestone streets, past balconies dripping with flowers, and diving into the vibrant culture that blends colonial charm with modern Latin flair.

Visit local markets, catch street performers, dance in a plaza, or simply sit with a drink and watch the world go by. **Cartagena is bold, colourful, and unforgettable, the perfect place to celebrate the end of your Colombian adventure.**

This final chapter is all about connection, celebration, and soaking up the soul of Colombia before the next leg of your journey takes you to Costa Rica.

Colombia *Itinerary*

Day 15 Cartagena - Costa Rica

Departure

You'll have a relaxed morning before heading back to the airport for your flight to San Jose, taking with you memories of a truly unforgettable journey through Colombia's rich culture, stunning landscapes, and meaningful connections.



Welcome to *Costa Rica* — — — !

Days 16–18 Monteverde Cloud Forest

Hanging Bridges + Zip Wire + Ficus Tree

Welcome to Costa Rica — a new country, a new energy, and a totally different landscape. You've swapped Colombia's Caribbean coast for misty cloud forests, where the air is cooler, the pace slows down, and nature takes centre stage.

Your first stop will be Santa Elena, a vibrant little town perched on the edge of Monteverde's iconic cloud forest. Think artisan cafés, mountain views, and a traveller vibe that's relaxed but buzzing with possibility.

Each morning, you'll head into the forest — walking hanging bridges above the canopy, climbing through hollow ficus trees, and hiking to viewpoints where, on a clear day, you can see both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts.

Afternoons are free to turn up the adventure: zip-lining, horseback riding, or even bungee jumping for the bold. Optional extras, bookable locally.

Monteverde is like nowhere else on this trip — cooler, greener, more immersive. A chance to reset, rewild, and experience Costa Rica's legendary biodiversity up close.





Costa Rica *Itinerary*

Days 19-27 The Grand Finale: Santa Teresa

Turtle Conservation + Surfing + Yoga + Waterfalls

After jungle treks, cloud forest adventures, and hands-on conservation, it's time for the final chapter of your journey – and we've saved something special for last.

Welcome to Santa Teresa – Costa Rica's dreamy surf town, known for its wild, uncrowded beaches, world-class waves, and golden-hour sunsets that'll stop you in your tracks. It's laid-back, sun-drenched, and full of gappers from around the world chasing the good life.

But don't get too comfy... there's still impact to be made.

Turtle Conservation

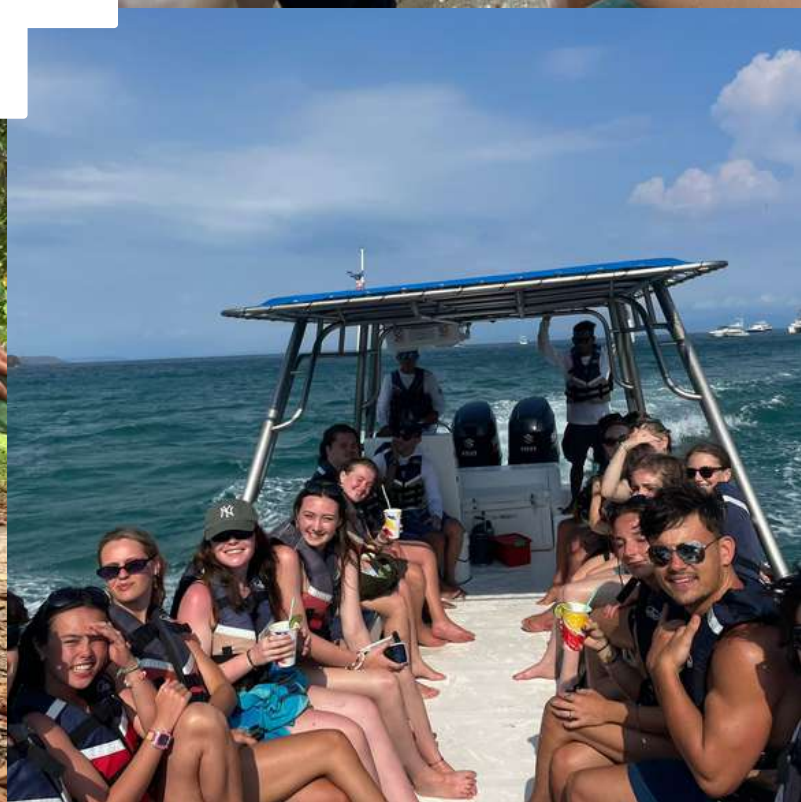
Spend two days/nights at Cirenas, a leading Costa Rican wildlife NGO, helping protect endangered sea turtles. Based on 2km of wild untouched beaches in Manzanillo, you'll safeguard nests and hatchlings of Olive Ridley, Black, Hawksbill, and Leatherback turtles.

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 a surf lesson 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.



Colombia *Accommodation & Food*

Accommodation

Accommodation: handpicked by our team - expect dormitory style accommodation with shared bathrooms in a selection of hostels throughout and campsites in Tayrona.

For example - we stay in places like this:

Santa Marta and Cartagena <https://republicahostels.com/>

Palomino: <https://www.thedreamer.com/palomino>

Food

You'll be provided with two meals a day. Expect a lot of local food with plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, chicken or fish, tempered to western tastes. If you have any special dietary requirements, please let us know.

Good to Know

Dinner will be extra, out and about - please budget about \$15 per meal. Safe drinking water, tea, coffee etc. will be provided throughout. However, you'll have to pay for other soft drinks and beers, etc.



Costa Rica *Accommodation & Food*

San José

Accommodation: Rosa of America Hotel

Food: Supper included

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.

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: Turtle Sancturay – 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.

Dates & Costs 2026

24TH JANUARY 2026	4 WEEKS	£3520
5TH MARCH 2026	4 WEEKS	£3520

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
- All activities as described
- 1 x surfing classes
- 1 x yoga class
- Team airport pick-up and drop off at the end and transfer to and from the projects
- Food as described

NOT INCLUDED:

- International flights and connecting flight to Costa Rica
- 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.

We recommend bringing a combination of a debit card and a Revolut (or similar) card for convenience and security. ATMs are widely available across Colombia and Costa Rica, making it easy to withdraw money as needed. For extra spending, we suggest budgeting around £200 per week, though this may vary based on your weekend activities and dining choices.

Extra *Activities*

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, so you can take advantage of the extra adventures you might want to do:

- Tortuga Island trip from Santa Teresa – budget approx \$75
- Extra surfing lesson – budget approx \$40 – \$60 per lesson
- Extra yoga classes – budget approx \$15 per lesson
- Zip wire at Monteverde – budget approx \$60
- Bungee jumping at Monteverde – approx \$105
- Tarzan Swing – approx \$65

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.

Nitty Gritty

What to Pack?

Clothes

- A selection of light weight trousers and shorts
- 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
- Warm hoody/fleece for cooler evenings
- A lightweight waterproof jacket
- 1 pair trail shoes for the hikes
- 1 pair flip-flops
- 1 pair casual shoes
- 1 pair water shoes - useful, not essential - good for walking in the rivers
- Beach wear: sun hat, swimmers etc

Toiletries & Medical

- Basic everyday toiletries
- Sun cream/after sun
- Travel wash
- Insect repellent
- Antibacterial spray/cream for open wounds.
- Rehydration powders
- Savlon/E45/Sudocream
- Antihistamines
- 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)



Nitty Gritty

What to Pack?

Equipment

- 80 litre rucksack - NO hard-shell SUITCASES
- 20-30 litre day rucksack - make sure this has comfortable straps and a waist belt to take the weight. You will need it for all the hikes.
- Small dry bag
- Waterproof phone cover
- Thin sleeping bag or liner - only needed for the overnight bus journey - personal choice
- Plug adapter - American style required
- 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
- Spanish dictionary / phrase book
- Water bottle x 2 - so you can carry 3 litres at a time
- 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.

Nitty Gritty -FAQ's

Communication

Expect Wifi and phone reception to be patchy on the treks. 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.

Guides

You'll have English-speaking, knowledgeable guides throughout your adventure, each offering expert insights into their country. The guides will change as you travel from Colombia to Costa Rica.

Your Health

Each location will have first aid available on-site. If you face a more serious emergency, you'll need to cover minor medical expenses with your credit card first, and then you can claim those costs back through your travel insurance. This also includes any costs for your host driving you to and from the hospital. In case of an emergency that requires air evacuation, your insurance will handle the bills directly.directly.

Your Team

Maximum of 18 and a minimum of 6 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.

Flights

You'll fly into Santa Marta via Bogotá, then connect from Cartagena to San José. San José to home. Please don't book your flights until we've given you the final itinerary, it's important that your travel plans match up with the schedule we provide. We'll guide you every step of the way.

Nitty Gritty

Behaviour

This is a team experience and looking out and being respectful to one another is vital to create a positive experience for all. However, if anyone puts themselves or others at risk, does not listen to safety advice and is being disrespectful to the team and staff then we have to revert to our discipline procedures. These involve: a verbal warning, followed by a written warning, followed by a dismissal from the program – with no refund. Please do not be that person who ruins it for everyone else.

Managing Expectations

We do our best to describe our programme as accurately as we can so that you have realistic expectations. It's important that you read this document carefully, and listen to the pre-departure zoom, so you are fully prepared with what lies ahead. Please remain flexible, as tasks and projects may change, depending on the needs of the communities, projects on the ground and weather.

Your Safety

We prioritise safety in our gap year programs through detailed risk assessments, safety audits, and adherence to industry standards such as BS8848, Trading Standards, the Year Out Group, and the Gap Year Association. On arrival, teams receive thorough safety briefings and are provided with secure accommodation, risk-assessed vehicles, medical evacuation access, and reliable emergency communications.

Accreditations

We're a member of the Year Out Group and the first UK company accredited by the Gap Year Association.





Reserve your place

INFO@THELEAP.CO.UK

+44 1672 519922

WWW.THELEAP.CO.UK