



amazoonico

Centro de Rescate de Animales Silvestres

Rio Arajuno – Napo – Ecuador

If you are interested in volunteering at amaZOOnico this pamphlet will give you some information and the answers to some of the frequently asked questions.

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Having an intermediate knowledge of Spanish and/or English is a minimum requirement, as it will make it easier to communicate with local people and other volunteers and make your stay here more enjoyable. We prefer that volunteers speak at least two of the main four languages used at amaZOOnico; the first one being Spanish and the second English, German or French. We offer guided tours in each of these languages. The more languages you speak, the more versatile you will be. We expect you to be able to do tours in Spanish as well as in another language.

What kind of work will I be doing?

Working at amaZOOnico is varied, and not always easy. You will be working five days a week and have two days off. The day generally starts at seven and ends at five (or until the last tourists leave and all animals are cared for).

Our first concern is the animals. Feeding and taking care of the animals is the majority of the work. We have resident and temporary animals. All must be fed two times daily and their enclosures cleaned. Some animals live free and can provide for themselves but most of them require daily care. This involves feeding and cleaning cages. It is a guarantee that you will get dirty during this work and may even be peed on by a monkey, so those with a delicate disposition when it comes to this kind of work would not be suited life at amazoonico. New animals have to be carefully examined and observed. Especially the orphaned animals in the quarantine station, who require a lot of attention and intensive care.

The work can be hard especially when carrying whole banana trunks and other fruit which we buy for the animals from local people three times a week. All of the fruit and food needs to be carried from the river up to the bodega for the animals, and it can be physically challenging work.

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www.amazoonicorescuecenter.com

AmaZOOnico's main source of income is giving guided tours. You will be expected to guide tourists around amaZOOnico, giving information about our projects and animals. Visitors are the main source of income for the centre and without them the centre would not be able to run. Therefore it is important for the volunteer guides to not only have knowledge of the centre and the animals but also be aware of the cultural differences of visitors from around the world.

In addition to the regular work it might be necessary to perform other duties like build enrichments, rake the center, collect fresh leaves for the animals, help with the new construction projects and maintain the center in general.

Which animals are in amaZOOnico? Can we touch the animals?

We take care of 325 animals which live in captivity and semi-captivity (free around the center). This number is always changing since we are often receiving new animals and releasing others.

Among the species of monkeys that live in amaZOOnico are woolly monkeys, squirrel monkeys, spider monkeys, tamarin monkeys, capuchin monkeys and owl monkeys. Other mammals living in amaZOOnico are coatis, tapirs, kinkajous, wild pigs, jaguarundis and ocelots. Also in amaZOOnico are several different species of parrots and toucans and reptiles such as turtles, snakes and caimans.

For security reasons and for the well-being of the animals, amaZOOnico has a policy of no direct contact with animals. Many of the animals that we take care of are in a process of rehabilitation and it is very important that contact with people is as limited as possible. In some very particular cases we require some volunteers to help us with the care of orphaned infants and with special medical treatments that require contact. Other than these special cases, we are very strict about the rule “do not touch the animals”.

What are the living conditions like? Do I have to pay for anything?

You must arrange your own transportation to the project. For food and lodging at amaZOOnico you have to pay 250 \$ U.S. a month.

Once you are here, you will stay in the volunteer house. The house has single, double or triple rooms. The accommodation is given based on the number of volunteers and the time each person is staying. We provide sheets, a pillow and a blanket. Mosquito nets may or may not be available. A gas stove with an oven is provided and is for communal use. There are 4 showers and 4 toilets. Only cold running water is available.

We don't have internet, so if you want to use the internet you need to go to Tena or Ahuano (the nearest local village) on your days off. We do have electricity at amaZOOnico, so we recommend you to bring adapters that fit the type of connection that exists in Ecuador. In some specific points cellphone signal is available, but only with the phone company Claro.

You need to take care of your own laundry. It can be done by hand (in the center we have a washboard) or you can take your clothes to one of the laundry services in Tena.

Food is included in your cost, and is brought on a weekly basis to amaZOOnico. The food is very basic and includes such items as pasta, rice, eggs, flour, powdered milk and fresh vegetables and fruit (depending on what is available). Spices (other than garlic, salt, paprika, curry, pepper and oregano) are expensive and difficult to obtain so you may want to bring a few of your own favorite spices. From Monday to Friday, there is a local cook who prepares breakfast and lunch (meat or vegetarian, as you prefer). The volunteers are in charge of cooking dinners every night in rotating pairs. During the weekends, two different volunteers are also in charge of preparing breakfast and lunch for everyone.

We provide coffee, tea, cocoa and water. Beer and sodas are available at the tourist shop, however you must pay for these items.

If you wish to go to Ahuano or Tena you will need to arrange and pay for your own transportation. A canoe to Ahuano is 15-20\$ U.S. (depending on time of day) and the bus to Tena is 2.50\$ U.S and the canoe 3\$ U.S. Other items of a personal nature like personal hygiene products, cosmetics, stamps, flashlights, postcards, batteries, sweets etc, are all at the expense of the volunteer.

How do I get there?

Amazoonico is located in the Amazon region of Ecuador. From Quito, take a bus to Tena (ideally at 7:00 am). The bus ride is about 5-6 hours and costs approximately 8\$ U.S. From Tena, you should go to the "Centinela del Tena" bus company and take the bus at 14:30 that is heading towards "Comuna los Rios". You need to buy a ticket to "Puerto Barantilla" or Selva Viva, and tell the driver that you are only going as far as Selva Viva. Look at the wooden sign on the left side of the road that says: Selva Viva, Liana Lodge, amazoonico. We will pick you up in a canoe from Puerto Barantilla. The bus from Tena takes about 1.5 hours and costs \$2.50 USD. We must know about your arrival in advance and you must confirm with us on the day of your arrival for us to be able to order you a canoe. Please make sure to phone us on the day of your arrival. From within the country, call us at 063017717.

Do I need any vaccinations?

For this information, it is best to contact the travel advisory clinic in your country. You should be up to date on all your regular vaccinations (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, hepatitis). Rabies is endemic in this part of Ecuador, however the risk of contracting the disease here is minimal. It is best to consult with health professionals in your country to have the latest information and to be more at ease.

It is possible that upon entry into the country you will be asked for the certificate of vaccination against yellow fever. There is no malaria in the region, so you do not need to take any kind of malaria medication while you are here.

How long can I stay in amazoonico?

Since it takes a few weeks to train our volunteers, we request that you be able to stay at amazoonico for a minimum of one month. The longer you can stay the better it is for us and the animals. In Ecuador, you are granted a 90 day visitor's visa upon entry to the country, and it is possible to get a visa for an extended stay once you are here.

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What should I bring?

You will need loose fitting, comfortable work clothes. Do not spend a lot of money on special safari type clothing, as you most likely will be throwing out all your work clothes when you are finished volunteering at amaZOOnico (they will get permanently stained). It is preferable to wear long pants while working because there are lots of insects that bite. In addition to clothes, you should also bring a pair of rubber boots (obligatory for work for safety reasons), as well as some type of rain poncho (these can be purchased very cheaply in Tena). Here at the center we have a lot of rubber boots that former volunteers have left which you are welcome to use.

You should bring a towel, swimwear and your usual personal items. Although mosquitos are not a big problem into the house, you could bring your own mosquito net. We have some but they may or may not be available.

If you're going to bring bug spray, it should be non-toxic as you will be in contact with the animals' food and a common repellent can be toxic for them.

It is essential to bring a flashlight as well as things to entertain yourself in your spare time such books, games, music players or other electronic devices and its own charger. You should also bring your own dictionary. Feel free to bring your own spices, and cook books. Life at amaZOOnico is very simple.

Finally, we recommend that you bring your own lock so you can leave your room locked while you are not in the house.

How do I communicate with my friends and family? How do I communicate with amaZOOnico?

In Tena there are many internet cafes and hostals (we recommend Limon Cocha and Welcome Break) with Wi-fi, where the connection is pretty good. From there you can send e-mails without any problems.

In certain specific points of the center you can find cellular phone signal with the phone company Claro.

Friends and family can send you snail mail or packages to:

C/O AmaZOOnico

Apt. 202

Tena, Napo

Ecuador

Only in cases of emergency you may be reached by family at amazonico@gmail.com. Please restrict use of this email by family to strictly emergency cases.

From Monday to Friday, and also only in cases of emergencies the following phone numbers are also available: +593 (06) 3 017 717 (landline, our preferred number) or +593 099 4143395 (cellular, less reliable).

For any more questions about volunteering feel free to write to us at amazonico@gmail.com (in Ecuador) or our volunteer coordinator in Switzerland Lea Schlunegger volunteers@selvaviva.ec.

We hope you will consider volunteering at amaZOOnico. The setting is beautiful and peaceful. The work can be challenging and rewarding.

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