

# crees volunteer

## FAQs 2011



### Who can apply?

Anyone over 18, all you need is enthusiasm and passion, speak either English or Spanish and have a basic level of fitness (so you can hike on the trails, hop on and off a boat, etc.)

### What kind of people volunteers?

Our volunteers vary programme to programme but there is always a good mix of motivated university students, recent graduates, and career breakers looking to have an amazing experience, contribute, and learn.

### How long can I volunteer for?

There isn't a time limit on the length of time a volunteer can spend with us, but you should be aware of visa issues if you are considering volunteering for longer than 3 months. We have programmes of differing lengths.

### How much does it cost to volunteer?

4 weeks- \$2,099.00 USD  
6 weeks- \$2,599.00 USD  
8 weeks- \$3,199.00 USD  
10 weeks- \$3,699.00 USD  
12 weeks- \$4,299.00 USD

### Why do I have to pay to volunteer?

As a charitable organisation, we charge a programme fee to ensure that all of our logistical overheads are met. This means that included in your programme fee is the cost of all accommodation, including stay at our award-winning eco-lodge, food, transport to and from the jungle, staff support, orientation, project and safety training. In return for your hard work, not only will you receive the satisfaction of making a real, tangible difference in people's lives and help protect the Amazon rainforest from further human encroachment, you will have the experience of a life time in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, gaining life-long skills and friends. Our volunteering programme is essential for the running of our projects, not only because it supplies vital hands on the ground for our project work, but because it also provides much needed financial support. In fact, 100% of our volunteer programme profits go back into the project work, meaning volunteers with our programme, unlike some others, can be sure that their programme fees exist as a means to improve local communities and the environment.

### What does a typical 4 week itinerary look like?

Have more questions? Want to apply?  
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A typical four week itinerary allows for the one week training period and several days to participate in conservation and community projects. Additionally, an adventure-filled four-day expedition will round off your time in the rainforest by doing white river rafting, visiting a hot spring and staying with the Native Community of Queros.

### SUMMARY

DAY 1-2: Cusco - Registration & Orientation

DAY 3: Cusco to Cloud Forest (Travel Day)

DAY 4: Cloud Forest to MLC (Travel Day)

DAY 5 – 10: Training Programme

DAY 11 – 27: Project Work

DAY 28 – 31: 4 day Expedition

DAY 32: Return to Cusco

DAY 33: Sign off in the Cusco Office

**Total Days: 33**

### What's included in the programme?

- Pre Departure Pack and support by our UK office
- Airport Collection and Drop-off in Cusco, Peru
- Lodging in Cusco, the Manu Cloud Forest & Manu Learning Centre
- 3 delicious meals a day with water, juice, tea or coffee
- All transport from Cusco to and within Manu
- Supervised Training and Project participation
- Plus, a 4 day expedition: trek to hot springs and visit native communities to try your hand at skills like weaving, cooking and archery.

### What's not included?

- Airfares (international or domestic)
- Vaccines (Required, please consult your doctor)
- Comprehensive Insurance (Required)
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, snacks

### On average, how many volunteers are at the site?

3 to 8 depending on the month of the year. We have a limited space for 12 people per programme. There may also be various researchers, school or university groups present at the MLC whilst you're there.

### Where will I sleep?

The MLC has a community feel and provides beautifully comfortable, airy accommodation. The centre has a solar powered internet connection, environmentally sound septic system and gravity fed water pumps in order to minimise its impact on the environment. Each pod has two single beds in them, which can be turned into bunk beds should there be a large number of volunteers.



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**Your website explains that there will be opportunities to do a variety of different activities volunteers can participate in and a certain amount of freedom in deciding what we will work on. When will the sorts of jobs we do be determined? Before the trip begins or once we arrive?**

Yes, there are different projects which you will be working on. Because of the seasonality of the rainforest, the projects available might change at different times of the year. For example, no community projects run on the rainy season because the river floods, but all wildlife and forest monitoring run all year around. March is right at the end of the rainy season and the forest is super green and it's easier than usual to spot animals (think seeing people in the parks at the beginning of the summer!) The projects or jobs of your preference are determined after you try your hand at all of them during the week of training, with the Volunteer leader and project coordinators, once in Manu. Should your particular group of volunteers all favour working on a particular project, like Macaw monitoring or building a bio-garden, then we can focus the group's activities on that.

#### **How long do I need to book in advance?**

Ideally volunteers should apply at least one month prior to their placement start date. We will where possible try and accommodate late bookings. To get the best airfares etc., we think is a good idea to plan 2 – 4 months ahead.

#### **What happens if I cancel once I have made a booking?**

In order to confirm your volunteer placement you need to make a non-refundable deposit 20% of the total of your programme. Payments made in excess of the required deposit will be reimbursed if notification is provided in writing no later than 45 days prior to your placement start date. Once within 45 days of your placement start date, refunds will not be issued in the event of cancellation.

#### **I read that you have internet. Do we bring laptops to utilize it?**

You may bring your laptop if you wish, but please be aware that laptops often do not cope well with the humid conditions, although a zip lock bag and some silica gel can go some way to protect it. There are computers available at Manu which you will be able to use. We charge a small price for the internet in Manu to contribute towards running the generator needed for satellite internet. To minimize the environmental impact we only use it one hour a day, during which you may also charge your laptop. There are also computers which you might be able to use in the nearby town of Salvacion.

#### **Where do we go on the free expedition?**

The expedition takes place after the 4th week of each programme, and includes a visit to a native community of people and a trek to a jungle hot spring. Sometimes it is also possible to raft down the river as part of the excursion.

#### **Would you recommend the add-ons?**

It would be a shame to come all the way to Peru and miss out on an opportunity to visit Machu Picchu, or see some of the amazing historical sites Peru has to offer. Arriving by foot to the Inca ruins along the Salkantay or Inca trail is incredibly rewarding, but if you prefer to relax and relish the views, catching the train is very enjoyable. If you're interested in Machu Picchu please be aware that, as visitors there are limited, you need to book at least three months in advance to secure a place. For more information about the add-ons, please email us.

#### **What vaccinations should I have?**

Travellers are advised to visit their doctor for advice prior to travel. Yellow Fever, Hepatitis A, Tetanus and typhoid are mandatory. We also advise vaccinations against TB & Diphtheria, and Hepatitis B. Rabies is advised, and is mandatory if you wish to handle small mammals during research.

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### **I hear that Malaria is pretty uncommon in this area, but would you recommend taking Malaria pills just in case?**

The **crees** volunteer programme takes place in Malaria free areas. The Manu Learning Centre, Cusco and all mountains over 2500m areas are not malarial areas, but if you are planning a visit other areas in the jungle or lowland areas then you may want to arrange for malaria prophylaxis (on advice from your GP). Most people take Doxycycline in Peru (this is cheaply available from all chemists in Cusco).

### **How much money would you recommend bringing? Should I bring it in cash?**

We suggest bringing about USD 150 cash to use as soon as you arrive, travellers cheques and credit cards as extra emergency backup. You can also bring some spending money with you to the MLC, for you to pay for anything you might buy in Salvacion. The MLC has a bar and a shop for equipment, from which any purchases can be put into the volunteer account and are payable at the end of the programme.

### **What sort of vehicle takes us to the Manu Learning Centre?**

Depending on the size of the group, this could be a 4x4 or an adapted minibus for the trip from Cuzco to Atalaya (a port in the jungle) and a motor boat for the final leg from Atalaya's port to the Manu Learning Centre.



### **If I apply and am accepted into the programme, how long will it be before I receive an itinerary (so I can plan my flight, etc.)?**

The programme has fixed dates so once accepted, you will know the exact dates. To those you could immediately allow for extra days for any tours you decide to take.

### **What do I do with my laundry?**

You'll wash your own clothes by hand at the MLC in buckets or sinks, whenever you wish to. There will be some free time every day in which you could use to do some laundry. We ask volunteers to bring biodegradable soap (which can readily be bought in many shops at home, in Cusco, or online) to minimise environmental impacts.

### **I'm staying overnight in Lima and I've heard taxi's in Lima can often be very unreliable. What's your advice?**

We strongly advise volunteers to ask us to arrange taxi transport. We are partners with a small taxi company in Lima who can ensure your safety to and from your hotel. If you send us your flight details they will pick you up inside the airport with a sign with your name on it.

### **How long before the programme start do I need to arrive in Cusco?**

The first day of your programme is set aside for resting and altitude acclimatisation, and the first two nights are spent in Cusco, so there is no need to arrive before the date you're due to start your programme.



### When I get to Cusco, where should I go?

One of our staff will be at the airport to meet you, holding a sign with your name on it. Prior to your departure, please email us a recent photo so we can recognise you. If for any reason you cannot find anyone, please call the Cusco office at 0051 842 62 433.

### When is payment due?

Once accepted onto the programme you will be invoiced the full amount, and are required to pay a 20% deposit to secure your place. The rest of your placement fee is due 30 days before your start day. Payments for trips to Machu Picchu visits and the Inca trail however are required immediately. (For more information, please request an add-ons booklet.)

### How scientific is your research methodology?

All of our studies are overviewed by experts in their field using internationally recognized techniques, and our staff have been highly trained to insure consistency in recordings. After their training schedule, volunteers' recordings are monitored for 2 weeks to ensure they are making observations consistently.

### Do I have to come from a scientific/biological background to take part?

No, not at all. Whilst many of our volunteers do have a scientific background, many others come from a wide range of backgrounds. All of your skills can be utilized in different ways, and as long as you have enthusiasm and are committed to the programme aims, it doesn't matter what your credentials are.

### When is the rainy / dry seasons?

We have noticed the seasons shift over the last few years in Peru; the rainy season now runs from the end of December to around the end of April, and the dry season from May to October/November.

### Do I need to learn Spanish?

Spanish is not essential to participate in the volunteer programme as all of the volunteer programme staff speak English fluently. However, some of the other staff at the MLC, such as those who work in the kitchens and projects, have less English knowledge. As the staff at **crees** are like a big family to make the most out of your time at the MLC it would be a good idea to have some Spanish, and once in Peru you will find it easy to build upon this.

### What Insurance would you advise?

We recommend that you buy comprehensive travel insurance for your trip. It is important to check that you are covered for a voluntary placement, trekking activities above 2500m (both Cusco and the Inca trail are higher than this), repatriation, a medical cover minimum of \$50000 and an emergency medical evacuation minimum of at least \$15000 for emergency medical transport.

Past volunteers have often favoured *Campbell Irvine* or *World Nomads*.

### Do I need a visa?

If you are from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia you do not require a visa to come through Peru as a tourist. The same applies to all countries within the EU except for Albania, Armenia, Latvia or Bosnia; volunteers from these countries or from others than those listed will need to contact their embassies for more information. When coming through customs it is best to say you are here for holidays; as the concept of volunteering is perhaps not as well known in Peru and customs officers may want you to produce a business visa. On arrival, ask for your passport to be stamped for a stay of up to 90 days.

### Is the jungle dangerous? What happens if there is an incident?

There of course many more wild animals in the jungle than it is likely you will come across in your own lives, and it is important to be aware of this. However, since 2005 when **crees** started accepting volunteers on

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placement, there has never been an incident where a volunteer has been seriously hurt. Should there be an incident, there is strict protocol in place. Your safety is our top priority and our staff have been trained to respond if somebody is hurt or injured in the field. Staff have 24-hour radio and internet access, so if a situation cannot be resolved immediately in the field, help can be contacted. The nearest medical clinic is in Salvacion, approximately one hour away from the MLC (although this does depend on weather) and from there any injury can be reassessed. If necessary, the injured person(s) can be evacuated by helicopter or driven over land to a hospital in Cusco.

### **Will my things get ruined if I bring them to the jungle?**

The high humidity can often cause problems with personal belongs; paper can rot, and cameras can break due to high humidity. This process can be prevented by using zip-locked bags and toasted rice or silica gel to store valuables and paper. Don't bring any clothing which you will be devastated if it gets ruined; second hand or cheap you don't mind wearing out during your time at the MLC are fine.

### **Could I potentially leave items crees office in Cusco that I don't need to take to the jungle with me?**

Yes, that's fine. You can also leave passports and other important documents there too in the safe, if you wish.

### **Want to see for yourself?**

Check out project photos and our volunteer blog: [www.facebook.com/ManuLearningCentre](http://www.facebook.com/ManuLearningCentre)

