



I WANT TO COME VOLUNTEER, BUT I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS! :)

What animals are in amaZOOnico? Why can't we touch the animals?

We take care of approx. 150 animals who live in captivity and semi-captivity (free around the center). This number is always changing because we regularly receive new animals and release others.

Most of these animals are not candidates for release. That is why they are in the tourist area, to help us share the message against wildlife trafficking with our visitors. Those that are releasable are in semi-freedom throughout the center or in the non-tourist part to avoid human contact as much as possible. Human interaction with animals causes stress and dependence, which does not help them build the skills they need to survive on their own. In addition, human interaction makes animals unafraid of humans, making it very easy for illegal hunters to capture them in the wild. So, we try to minimize human interaction for our releasable animals and limit it for all others.

Among the species of monkeys that live in amaZOOnico are woolly monkeys, squirrel monkeys, spider monkeys and tamarin monkeys. Other mammals living in amaZOOnico include coatis, tapirs, wild pigs, and ocelots. There are also 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; however as a volunteer you will see the animals every day whilst cleaning, feeding or running tours.

What kind of work will I be doing?



The work at amaZOOnico is varied, and not easy! You will be working five days a week and have two days off. A work day starts at 7:00am and ends when the last tourists leave and all animals are cared for (usually around 3 or 3:30pm).

The work can be hard. For example, all of the fruit we buy for the animals from local people needs to be carried from the river upstairs to the bodega three times a week, which is physically challenging. When we receive additional deliveries from canoe, we rely on volunteers to help carry these upstairs as well. You should expect to regularly carry loads of up to 40 pounds (~20 kg) on uneven ground.

Every day you will be cleaning the cages and feeding the animals alongside other volunteers.

amaZOOnico's main source of income is leading educational visits around the center. You will be expected to guide tourists around amaZOOnico, giving information about our projects and animals and encouraging them to support us further through either purchases in our shop or donations.

In addition to the regular work, you must complete other tasks like building enrichments, raking the center, collecting fresh leaves for the animals, helping with new construction projects and general maintenance. If you think of ways that you can assist further using your specific skillset, please share your ideas with the administrators.

The intensity of the work is hard since there are many tasks to complete and all of them are important for the wellbeing of the animals and the people of the center. For this reason, we need people who are willing, efficient, helpful and positive to be able to take on all the work in the most harmonious way possible.

Why do I have to pay a volunteer fee?

- **Cost:** We are a non-profit organization. The money that the center receives from its visitors and donors (our only source of income, as we receive no financial support



from any other organization) goes directly to the welfare of our releasable and non-releasable animals and the maintenance of the center. For this reason we cannot afford to also pay for volunteers.

Therefore, you must pay for your own transportation to the project and the cost of your food and lodging in our center. We charge 400 \$ U.S. a month, which is non refundable. The center makes no additional profit from the volunteer fee because we want to offer the lowest possible price, so that everyone who wants to is able to afford this experience. For this reason, we ask that the volunteers not demand amenities that the center cannot offer with this low price (certain things that we can not offer because they would increase the cost are, for example, WIFI, or hot water in the showers). Volunteers can buy everything they want in the city on their days off.

What are the living conditions like?

- **Volunteer house:** 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 you may have to share your room. We provide sheets, a pillow, and a blanket. A gas stove, an electric stove and an oven is provided for communal use. There are 4 showers and 4 toilets. Only cold running water is available.
- **Wifi:** In our animal rescue center there is no internet access for volunteers. There is only internet in the office and for office equipment. We have free WIFI that volunteers may access in our research center, which is a 10 minute walk from the volunteer house. Volunteers can also use the internet at Liana Lodge after work (5 min in canoe) where the wifi is free for amazoonico volunteers. Also, in Tena (you can go there on your days off) there are many internet cafes and hostels (we recommend Limoncocha) with Wi-fi, where the connection is pretty good.
- **Phone reception and Internet 3G :** In much of the center and the house, you can find reasonable 3G cellular phone service on the **Claro** network which works well for calls and Whatsapp messages. It is typically not enough to download or take video calls. We use Whatsapp to organize work so you will need 3G to communicate with the other volunteers and staff. We strongly recommend volunteers to buy a Claro SIM



card before arriving. You can buy one in Tena or in Quito city center for 15\$ U.S. It is also possible in Quito airport but it costs much more, around 35\$ U.S. There are also travel eSIMs available through app stores, for similar costs.

- **Electricity:** We do have electricity at amaZOOnico, so we recommend you bring an adapter that fits the type of connection that exists in Ecuador. We sometimes have energy breakdowns and don't have electricity for a few hours or days, so its recommended to bring a powerbank.
- **Laundry:** It can be done by hand (in the center we have a washboard) or you can use our laundry service from Monday to Friday (from 7 to 17h). The cost is 5\$ U.S from 0 to 5kg, and 1\$ U.S extra for every kilo afterwards. Our laundry service is basic, we do not fold the clothes or take any special care for different items. If you need a professional laundry you can find them in Tena.
- **Food:** Food is included in the volunteer fee, and is brought on a bi-weekly basis to amaZOOnico. The food is very basic and includes items like pasta, rice, eggs, flour, powdered milk, legumes and fresh vegetables (depending on what is available). We provide coffee, tea, cocoa and water. Beer and sodas are available at the tourist shop, however you must pay for these items (volunteers have discounts on every item in the shop). Other things like fruits or certain spices are too expensive for the center, so we recommend you to buy whatever you want that you can't have here in the city on your days off.

Everyday, there is a local cook who prepares breakfast and lunch (meat or vegetarian/vegan, as you prefer). The volunteers are in charge of cooking dinners every night on a rotating plan. Only the local chef cooks the meat that the center buys. So, all the dinners during the week will be vegetarian. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements or food allergies.

- **Transportation:** 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\$ U.S. (depending on time of day), the bus to Tena is 2.40\$ U.S, and the canoe to Puerto Barrantilla 6\$ U.S.
- **Others:** Other personal items like hygiene products, cosmetics, stamps, flashlights, postcards, batteries, sweets, etc., are all at the expense of the volunteer.



Do I need to speak Spanish?

Having an intermediate knowledge of Spanish and/or English is useful, 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. It is desirable that you can do tours in 2 languages, if possible :)

What happens after work? What can I do on my days off?

Volunteers are free to rest or explore around after work. We recommend walking around, swimming in the river, going to Liana Lodge, lounging in the hammocks, etc. We are sure you will find more than one way to enjoy this jungle experience. Whatever you decide to do with your free time, we would appreciate it if you tell us your plans, so we know where you are (for security reasons).

On your days off, you can stay in the center and just rest. You can also do walks in the jungle with a forest guard or go to other cities to explore them.

Please note that days off are assigned each week depending on the needs of the center. They are not necessarily Saturday and Sunday, consecutive, or together with your friends.

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). It is best to consult with health professionals in your country to have the latest information and to be more at ease.

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? And do I need a VISA?



Since it takes a few weeks to train our volunteers, we request that you be able to stay at amaZOOnico for a minimum of four weeks. The longer you can stay the better it is for us and the animals.

In Ecuador, you are granted a 90 day visitors visa upon entry to the country, and it is possible to get a visa for an extended stay (90 more days) once you are here only with your passport. If you want to stay more than 90 days, it is recommended that you ask for a volunteer VISA. You should apply for this kind of VISA before coming to Ecuador. We are happy to assist by sending the paperwork required from our side. Take a look at the Ecuadorian Government website to find out more:

Volunteer VISA:

<https://www.gob.ec/mremh/tramites/concesion-visa-residencia-temporal-voluntario-misionero>

VISA extension:

<https://www.gob.ec/mdi/tramites/emision-registro-prorroga-migratoria-permanencia-pais>

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 some type of rain poncho and a pair of rubber boots. We have many pairs but we might not have your size. You should bring a quick drying towel and your usual personal items. It is essential to bring a flashlight as well as things to entertain yourself in your spare time such as books, games, or other electronic devices and its own charger.

Although mosquitos are not a big problem in the house, you can bring your own **mosquito net**. If you're going to bring **bug spray**, it should be non-toxic bug spray as you will be in contact with the animals' food and most common repellents can be toxic for them. It is



likely you will be bitten by some bugs no matter what, so a soothing ointment /balm is also recommended.

A little bit of money in **small bills** is handy to pay for canoes and things you might want to buy from the local businesses around here. There are plenty of ATMs in Tena as well. Finally, we recommend that you bring your own **lock** so you can leave your room locked while you are not in the house. Life at amazOOnico is very simple.

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

- **Wifi** : In our animal rescue center there is no wifi access for volunteers. There is only wifi in the office and for office equipment. There is wifi access for volunteers at our research center, which is a 10 minute walk from the volunteer house. You can also use the internet at Liana Lodge after work (5min in Canoe) where the wifi is free for amazoonico volunteers. Also, In Tena (you can go there on your days off) there are many internet cafes and hostels with WIFI, where the connection is pretty good.
- **3G Cellular phone coverage** : Additionally, around much of the center you can find 3G cellular phone coverage with the phone company Claro. You will need to buy a SIM card or eSIM before arriving to use this.

Only in cases of emergency you may be reached by family at info@amazoonicorescue.org.

Please restrict use of this email by family to strictly emergency cases.

From 8am to 5pm, and also only in cases of emergencies the following phone numbers are also available: +593 (06) 3 017 717 (landline) or +593 099 4143395 (cellular)

What about the weather?

There are two seasons in this rainforest. The dry season (hotter) and the rainy season (colder). However, almost every day both sun and rain appear, it is only the intensity that changes. There is always a high humidity index and the temperature varies between 17 and 30 degrees Celsius.



Is the center safe? What can I do in an emergency case?

Yes.

When you arrive, we will give you some health and security instructions that you must follow carefully in order to be healthy and safe during your time here.

Volunteers have their own room (shared sometimes). Although theft is not common, we recommend volunteers bring their own lock to secure their personal rooms. AmaZOOnico is not liable for any lost or stolen items.

Medical care is accessible in Ahuano ([centro de salud](#)) or Tena ([private clinic](#)). You must cover all your health expenses (medicines, transport, etc.). If you need to leave the project for health reasons (physical or mental) amaZOOnico will not refund your volunteer fee.

AmaZOOnico is not liable for any injuries or illnesses sustained by volunteers during their stay. Volunteers should inform themselves of the risks of accepting this work, and acknowledge their understanding by reviewing and signing our [Volunteer Agreement](#).

How do I get there?

Please see detailed instructions [here](#). Note that all arrivals must be on Sundays at 11:30am

If you have more questions, just let us know at

info@amazoonicorecue.org

We're happy to help :)