

GAP SEMESTER



Central America Gap Semester Program

MEXICO, COSTA RICA & GUATEMALA

www.pacificdiscovery.org

Overview

Journey through the cultural and environmental diversity, ancient Mayan ruins, and seascapes of Mexico, Guatemala and Costa Rica!

Join us on this journey, witnessing the cenotes and Mayan ruins of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, down to the black sand beaches and exotic animals of Costa Rica and through the rich highlands of volcanic Guatemala. You will absorb, explore, interact with, and understand the beautiful diversity of these locations. Your days will be as varied as the countries you visit, with a fusion of hands-on volunteer work, connecting with locals, learning the Spanish language, camping under the stars, and a serious dose of adventure. Think scuba diving in Mexico, rafting and surfing in Costa Rica, volcano treks in Guatemala, and standup paddle boarding on Lake Atitlan to name a few!

This gap year program moves organically from the Caribbean to the forested highlands of Central America and across to the Pacific. You get to see it all and make a difference while you're at it! Through a community volunteer project at a local school, some hands-on work at a permaculture farm, helping out on coffee plantations, and caring for endangered wildlife (and sloths!) at an animal rescue center. You will work alongside local communities and truly immerse yourself in their cultures, while learning more about this part of world and its complex ecosystem.





Safety

With our 20 years of operation and more than 100,000 student days in the field, we have an excellent safety record.

We even got voted as one of the Top Gap Year Providers for Safety by students on Go Overseas! Safety is something we pride ourselves on at Pacific Discovery, so it feels amazing to be recognized for the efforts we go through.



Accreditations

We have had our safety management systems assessed and accredited by the Gap Year Association (USA), Year Out Group (UK), and OutdoorsMark (New Zealand). Assessors have commented that our systems are among the best they have observed.



Who We Are

We are an accredited gap year provider that offers experiential gap semester and summer programs to some of the most amazing places on earth. Our programs are deliberate overland journeys, blending authentic immersion in diverse cultures, meaningful service-learning projects, rewarding adventures, wilderness exploration, and personal development.



Our Programs

Our programs are more than simply a travel, time-out or study abroad experience. Each is instead an overland journey of discovery, where students are immersed in a facilitated learning environment, designed to maximize the educational and life-skills potential.



Our Philosophy

We want to make the world a better place by providing extraordinary learning adventures that assist students in gaining the skills, confidence and insight to realize their potential in an increasingly global society; developing empathy for other cultures; furthering understanding of international issues; and heightening appreciation for the earth's wilderness and diversity.

Program Design

Each of our programs incorporate the following six core program components. These six interdependent components, provide immense opportunity for students to learn about themselves, to push their boundaries, question their assumptions, to stimulate problem solving and inquiry skills.



EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Our programs are experiential education programs, meaning that learning is hands-on and tangible. For example, students will learn about a country's history and culture by immersing themselves in it, meeting local people and hearing life stories.



ETHICAL TRAVEL & SUSTAINABILITY

Students show respect for local customs, develop meaningful cross-cultural relationships, learn minimum-impact grassroots travel techniques and come to understand social and ecological issues on a deeper level.



OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Immersion in the wilderness is an opportunity for students to become grounded, teaches appreciation for wild places and provides us the opportunity to explore local environmental issues and relate these issues to global environmental themes



SERVICE LEARNING

Volunteer elements built into our programs allow students to really immerse themselves in a place and share an experience with local people, bridging the gap that often exists between visitor and host.



CULTURAL IMMERSION

We immerse students in the local culture, through homestays, volunteer projects and language study. Students learn empathy for other cultures and build bridges of shared understanding.



PERSONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the program, students are given leadership opportunities from facilitating reflection to coordinating the daily schedule.

Core Educational Components

Our programs are as much a journey of personal development as they are a physical journey, and participants are supported in reflecting together and thinking about their values, goals and what they wish to gain from the program experience.

PRE-PROGRAM

Prior to program start, participants are asked to create some goals for the program – this is personal and unique to each individual group member. Participants are given a suggested outline of skills and competencies that they can choose to focus upon.

DURING PROGRAM

At program orientation, goals participants have identified are discussed in a meeting with the program leaders. Throughout the program, ideas, tools and strategies are discussed that can be useful to help participants achieve their goals both on the program and for the rest of their lives. Participants are encouraged to journal during the program to assist them in clarifying their thoughts and define what they are learning.

TRANSFER AND FOLLOW UP

At the conclusion of the program, participants give a presentation to their group and leaders, summarizing how they've been challenged, what they've learned, how they've grown and how they intend to apply what they've learned to their lives after the program.

Towards the end of the program participants are also asked to write a letter to themselves imagining where they want to be in 6 months' time and identifying behaviors, habits and changes they wish to put in place. These letters are sent to them 6 months after program conclusion, helping reinforce the learning that has occurred.





Sample Itinerary

***This is a guide to what you can expect to do on program.
The order in which the activities occur might vary***

WEEK 1 | MAYAN RUINS, SALSA DANCING & LANGUAGE IMMERSION

After meeting each other in Cancun airport, we'll head south down the spectacular Caribbean coast to the ancient Mayan city of Tulum. Perched atop a cliff overlooking the sea, it is one of the last cities built and inhabited by the Mayans. While we enjoy its brilliant turquoise-blue waters and crushed-coral white sands, we'll spend some time getting to know each other during orientation. Our time will focus on creating a positive and reflective group culture to support us in realizing our program goals.

In Tulum, we will also explore the Mayan ruins along the coast, learn to salsa dance, swim in the crystal clear waters of a cenote (a natural cave system filled with fresh water), and head inland to a Mayan ruin and one of the new seven wonders of the world, Chichén Itzá! We will also get Spanish language classes and put our new skills to use while gaining insight into the culture. The lessons are specific to your level of Spanish and the experienced teachers will help you with relevant conversational Spanish for the journey ahead. We will hear, see, and feel the Spanish language in its natural environment. Considering this language is more widely spoken than English, it's worth your while to get acquainted!

WEEK 2 | BIOSPHERE RESERVE, COOKING CLASS & SCUBA DIVING

Based in Tulum, we will start the week by exploring the sublime natural beauty of Sian Ka'an. This Biosphere Reserve is composed of a delicate balance of ecosystems, complete with tropical forest and coral reefs, blue lagoons, hundreds of bird species and other animal life, and untouched beaches. We will visit the ancient Mayan ruins of Muyil before enjoying a boat ride through the turquoise lagoons, mangroves and Mayan waterways. On our way back, we will float back down through these clear, fresh water canals using our life jackets as a floating seat!

The next few days, we wake up the mind and body with morning yoga classes in preparation for our continued daily Spanish lessons. Don't worry, we won't be stuck in a classroom for this, but are instead being taught outside in the shady garden. After a few hours of absorbing everything we possibly can, we delve deeper into the culture by learning to cook authentic Mexican food and having a cultural exchange with local children. Every day has something new in store for us!

After leaving Tulum, we will meet our diving instructors in Cozumel and get into the headspace of the underwater world. We will be living and breathing diving for a few days! We start by learning in the pool first, ensuring we have all the skills for a lifetime of safe scuba diving ahead of us. Then, it's time to head out on the sea to do dives from a boat!

TO COSTA RICA

WEEK 3 | ANIMAL RESCUE CENTER & MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST

Our time in Mexico has unfortunately come to an end. After spending our final day in Mexico relaxing on the white sand beaches of Cozmel, it's time to fly to one of the happiest countries on earth - Costa Rica! This might stem from the laid-back Tico outlook combined with the incredible model of eco-stewardship Costa Rica boasts. We travel straight to an animal rescue center that is dedicated to protecting and helping endangered Costa Rican wildlife with all means available. This rescue center is home to a variety of animals that were rescued from the illegal animal trade, which is unfortunately still functioning in parts of the country. The goal is to help the animals recover from both physical and psychological wounds that have arisen from their past suffering. We support the center with volunteer work such as working in the animal kitchen, assisting with the sloth garden, helping with the compost, and enriching their homes. We're sure that after a couple of days you'll feel as at home at the center as the spider monkeys and won't want to leave!

It's time to head to Monteverde, right next door to the famous Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. We will fully immerse ourselves in the culture of Costa Rica by living under the same roof as local families for a few days. This homestay gives us the opportunity to live and breathe the local culture, make friends as well as memories, and explore destinations in a truly authentic way. While in Monteverde, we'll experience the coffee culture and learn about the process of sustainable coffee farming. We will also head out for a hike through the Cloud Forest Reserve, keeping our eyes open for the incredibly diverse flora and fauna on offer. This is also home to what we know as The Great Divide, meaning that as you stand on the separation between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, we will be on two continents at once!

WEEK 4 | COMMUNITY SERVICE AT TINAMU

During our third week in Costa Rica, we will spend time in an education center in the rural farming town of Tinamu, situated on the edge of the last remaining virgin rainforest of Costa Rica's beautiful Puriscal County. While we experience the peace, serenity and authenticity of the real Costa Rican culture, we will be working alongside the community on a local project. We will help out in whichever way we can, whether that means getting hands-on with paintwork, building a concrete ramp, or just about anything else. In our free time, we can admire a nearby waterfall, go for a hike, or venture into a mysterious underground cave.

After this workout for our arms, we enjoy a deserved resting day on Uvita beach. Playa Uvita is a spectacular beach surrounded by lush, sweeping mountains, infinite fresh streams and rivers, and a healthy reef offshore that hosts an enormous population of whales for several months each year. Here, we can relax on the long and wide beach, swim in the warm ocean and appreciate the great views. What a great place to call our home for the next week!

WEEK 5 | SURFING & WATERFALLS

Venturing from one captivating destination to another, we journey to Uvita, Costa Rica, where a week of coastal exploration awaits. Our days begin with exhilarating surfing sessions that allow us to ride the Pacific's swells and connect with the energy of the ocean. Balancing our oceanic escapades, we set out on an invigorating hike to Cola Ballena, uncovering lush rainforests and breathtaking coastal panoramas. Nauyaca Falls beckons us and we enjoy a refreshing dip beneath the falls. The journey culminates in Dominical, a charming beach town where we combine relaxation with a final surf session, honing our skills while the sun sets behind us. This week in Uvita encapsulates the essence of Costa Rica's coastal allure, from the rush of surfing to the serenity of waterfalls and the captivating blend of nature and adventure.

WEEK 6 | YOGA RETREAT

Our journey leads us to the Epic Adventure Lodge in Sarapiquí for a four-day yoga retreat that offers a harmonious blend of relaxation, introspection, and preparation for the next chapter. Nestled amidst Costa Rica's lush beauty, the retreat grants us the perfect sanctuary to unwind, meditate, and absorb the profound lessons and experiences from our time in this enchanting country. In our yoga sessions, we find solace in each pose and breath, allowing us to rejuvenate both mind and body. As we immerse ourselves in stillness, we prepare our minds for our next destination, Guatemala, carrying with us the wisdom gained, the memories cherished, and a newfound sense of inner calm. This retreat is a transformative interlude that bridges our Costa Rican odyssey with the forthcoming adventures that await in Guatemala.



TO GUATEMALA

WEEK 7 | CHASING VOLCANOES & EXPERIENCING COFFEE CULTURE

After a week of hard work and animal snuggles, we head to Guatemala. Guatemala is widely considered the hearth of the Maya civilization. Mayans ruled the area that is now Guatemala until around 1000 AD. Today, nearly 40% of the population of Guatemala is indigenous, with the vast majority of those being of Mayan descent. We suggest you take a keen interest in the Mayans - they were the ones who invented chocolate! We take a flight to the mountains and by the evening we'll be dining on corn tortillas in Antigua! Take a day to absorb this new environment of cobble stoned, European-style streets, homemade leather goods and cool cafes.

After a day of rest and exploration in Antigua, we will start an overnight hike at the foothills of the active Pacaya volcano. Expect to get some incredible views of the northern volcanoes throughout the entire hike and roast marshmallows over the geothermal hot spots we encounter. We will see active lava flows light up the night sky after sundown and enjoy sunrise views of volcanoes Agua, Fuego and Acatenanga the next morning. Guatemala isn't only known for volcanoes though - coffee is a very close second! That's why we make our way to a small Mayan community where local farmers work together to grow and process their own coffee for export. We will learn about the work it takes to cultivate coffee, get involved in each step of processing from bean to brew, help out on the coffee plantations, and of course, take a sip of the coffee we produced ourselves.

WEEK 8 | HOMESTAYS & CULTURAL IMMERSION

Antigua is known for its remarkable volcanic landscapes nearby, so we will embark on another multi-day hiking adventure in search of volcanoes and high-altitude lakes. Climbing Volcan Acatenango is on the bucket list of most travelers in Guatemala and you will see why. You'll be stunned by the sights and sounds of the evening fireworks from the nearby active Volcan Fuego as you step out of your tent. While the Pacaya volcano from last week was one of the easier hikes in the area, this 3-day hike up Guatemala's third largest volcano will challenge us - but it will all be worth it, we promise!

After arriving in Quetzalteco, we fully immerse ourselves in the culture of Guatemala by living under the same roof as Guatemalan families while we further our study of the Spanish language. This 5-day homestay is the perfect way to improve our language skills by having the opportunity to talk with the families at least three times a day during meals, and on other occasions during the day. We will also participate in social, cultural and sports activities in the afternoon to provide us with extra practical learning opportunities and to better understand the culture and traditions of Guatemala. This can range from playing football with the children and dance classes, to visiting a local mayan community or water springs nearby.

WEEK 9 | HIKING & EXPLORING AROUND LAKE ATITLAN

Once we've gotten our fix of hot lava views and Spanish lessons, we will connect the dots from village to village in the highlands of Guatemala meandering through cloud forests, streams, corn fields and small pueblos. Every village has their own subtle differences in clothing, language and food. The hiking adventure comes to a close as you see the sun rise over the crater Lake Atitlan, one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. Let us know what you think when you see it!

WEEK 10 | SAN MARCOS EXPLORATION, PADDLE BOARDING & PROGRAM WRAP

It is now time to take a bit of time for ourselves and reflect on all we have experienced and learned over the past 70 days.

This week we will have the chance to stand up paddleboard on the lake as well as explore villages by boat. Hike in the cloud forest early in the morning to spot Quetzal birds in nature and take part in a Temazcal ceremony, which is a complete cleansing experience for your body, mind and spirit in a traditional Mayan sweat lodge and natural sauna. Each day will bring a further exploration into self-reflection, development and empowerment.

Sadly, the time has also come to begin processing the once-in-a-lifetime experiences that the program has taken us on. We are sure that you will reflect on how amazing it was to have a chance to take a break from everything, learn about ourselves, but also prioritize time to experience and have gratitude for these beautiful and historic cultures and environments.

**Each week there will be some designated free time so that you can catch up on email, do laundry, rest, and explore independently with others in the group.*

***Pacific Discovery reserves the right to alter and/or change the order of the itinerary, the focus of the projects, or the activities themselves due to dates, availability, and safety precautions.*



Program Highlights

- Learn to scuba dive and explore the underwater world in Cozumel
- Witness volcanoes glowing in the dark from your tent on overnight hikes
- Float down the lagoons and mangroves in Biosphere Reserve Sian Ka'an
- Exciting 4-day white water rafting journey through rapids and waterfalls on the Pacuare river
- Swim in the crystal-clear waters of a cenote, a natural underground cave
- Care for sloths and monkeys at an animal rescue center
- Help out on coffee plantations and learn how to cultivate coffee
- Give a local school a helping hand during a community volunteer project in Tinamu
- Learn to make authentic Mexican food during a cooking workshop
- Take your dancing skills to the next level with a salsa dancing lesson in Tulum





COUNTRY INFORMATION

Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

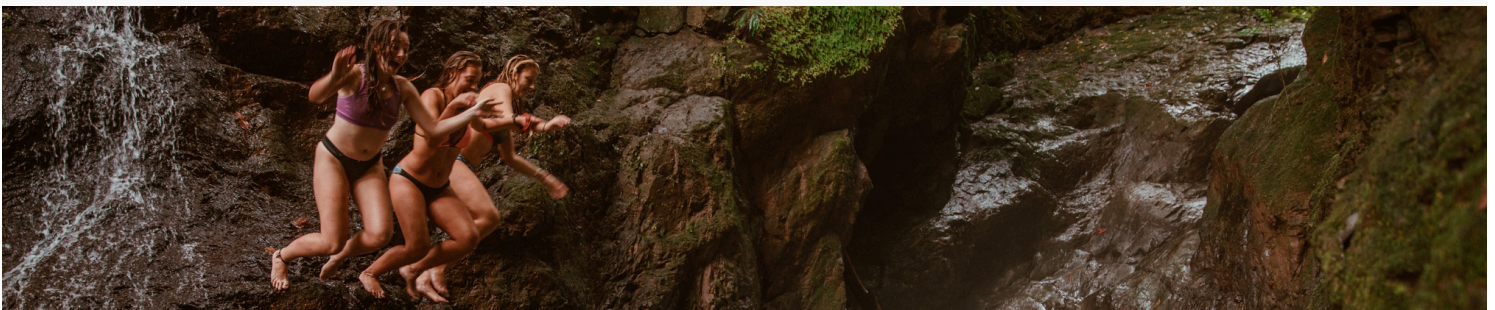
Until the 1960s, when proper road and rail links were finally completed, the Yucatán Peninsula had more contact with Europe, Cuba and the US than with central Mexico. Today, the region remains distinct, with traditional Mayan life alongside massive tourist attractions such as the great Mayan ruins and the super-resort region of Cancún. Once the province of Maya rebels and palm-plantation owners, the Caribbean coast is now the so-called Riviera Maya. The Yucatán Peninsula is the longest continuously settled part of Mexico, with evidence of Maya inhabitants as early as 2500 BC. Today, the Maya still live in the Yucatán, in many cases remarkably true to their old traditions and lifestyle. The culture and language remain a strong source of pride that sets this area apart from central Mexico. Tulum's spectacular coastline covered in warm white sands, jade-green water and balmy breezes, makes it one of the top beaches in Mexico, along with dramatic Mayan ruins and spectacular cenotes.

Guatemala

Spanning a mountainous slice of Central America, Guatemala is loaded with incredible natural, historical and cultural appeal. It is the most populous country in Central America with a population of 16 million. As the birthplace and heartland of the ancient Maya, the country is in many ways defined by the legacy of this early civilization. Their rainforest cities were abandoned centuries ago, but Mayan people continue to thrive in the Guatemalan highlands where traditions and religious rituals, mingled with Catholic practices, endure to form the richest and most distinctive indigenous identity in the hemisphere. Guatemala today is very much a synthesis of Mayan and colonial traditions fused with the omnipresent influences of twenty-first century Latin and North American culture. Baroque churches dating back to the Spanish Conquest coexist with pagan temples that have been sites of worship for millennia. Highland street markets prosper alongside vast glitzy shopping malls, and pre-Columbian festival dances are performed by teenage hip-hop fans.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is often pictured as an oasis of political stability in the midst of a turbulent region. This democratic and prosperous nation is also one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. An ecological treasure-trove whose wide range of habitats, ranging from rainforests and beaches to volcanoes and mangrove swamps, support a fascinating variety of wildlife. Much of it now is protected by an enlightened national conservation system widely regarded as a model of its kind. Revenue from tourism is one of the reasons Costa Ricans – or Ticos, as they are generally known – now enjoy the highest rate of literacy, health care, education and life expectancy in the isthmus.





CLIMATE

Central America is a narrow strip of land connecting North and South America. It lies fully within the tropics, yet has at least a dozen climate zones. It is considerably diverse in local climates, which make generalizations on temperature and rainfall difficult. Broadly, Central America has a humid tropical climate and in most locations, even the coldest month's average above 65. Rainfall is high and regular.

Fall Program – Average temperature ranges during our program:

Tulum, Mexico (min-max): 70-88° Fahrenheit
Antigua, Guatemala (min-max): 60-72° Fahrenheit
San Jose, Costa Rica (min-max): 65-82° Fahrenheit

Spring Program – Average temperature ranges during our program:

Tulum, Mexico (min-max): 65-85° Fahrenheit
Antigua, Guatemala (min-max): 55-74° Fahrenheit
San Jose, Costa Rica (min-max): 65-86° Fahrenheit

MEALS

Meals are fresh, tasty, healthy and varied. Special dietary requirements and vegetarians are catered for. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included in the program cost. Any snacks are at an additional cost, which we recommend budgeting around \$12 per day for. Meals are a mixture of eating out at restaurants and food preparation shared by students.

An average day on program would consist of the following:

Breakfast: rice, beans, eggs, toast

Lunch: sandwiches, wraps, rice, beans, protein and steamed vegetables, eggs

Dinner: tacos, burrito, rice, beans, protein and steamed vegetables, eggs

Camping meals will be adjusted to the cooking equipment at hand.

TRANSPORT

The itinerary has been designed to maximise comfort and safety whilst also giving you the opportunity to experience local transport and take part in daily life. We utilize private vans and buses, private taxis, private and local boats, bicycles and take several flights within the program to avoid long and arduous travel days.

SUITABILITY

Gap programs are intended for students aged 17 - 22. This program is suitable for anyone of average fitness with an enthusiasm for conservation and new experiences. There is always a volunteering component in our programs, so we can give back to the places that give so much to us. You need to be prepared for some physical work during this volunteering portion of the program; i.e. trail building, tree planting or painting. You don't need to have had previous experience with travel or any of the activities offered.

ATTITUDE

The program is a shared group experience. We would like you to join the program with an open mind and a willingness to work together with your group mates to make the program an amazing experience. The programs focus on group cohesion. We appreciate you for being open to learning and challenging your ideas and assumptions in order to get the most from this summer abroad experience.

GROUP SIZE

Group sizes vary per program and are generally 12-14 students, accompanied by two experienced and qualified Pacific Discovery program instructors. Local guides assist with interpretation of some historical sites, cultural experiences, and activities.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

We have selected a dynamic team of inspiring, supportive, resourceful, and highly experienced instructors to lead our programs. Our program instructors are committed to putting your welfare and safety first. They are people in whom you can trust and confide, who remain objective whatever the circumstances, and who take a genuine interest in your well-being. They implicitly understand the importance of balancing the needs of individuals with group objectives, facilitating a high level of group cohesion, inspiring a genuine appreciation for the areas visited and an awareness of minimum impact travel ethics. All of our instructors have Wilderness First Responder (WFR) first aid certification, and extensive group leadership and risk assessment/management training.

ACCOMMODATION

Our accommodation will be a mixture of comfortable and clean hostels, lodges and campsites. Accommodation is diverse, comfortable and carefully chosen to fit our needs and varies per program.



FREE TIME

Programs are heavily scheduled so that we are always on the move and having lots of structured fun; but we highly value rest and reflection. There will be some designated free time in a town or city each week so that you can catch up on email and laundry and rest.



HEALTH

One component of all of our programs is outdoor adventures like hiking, biking and kayaking, so while you don't need to have done any of these before, you will need to be prepared and have the fitness level to give them a go. If you have any queries regarding health recommendations for travel, please contact your doctor, or a travel doctor, to discuss this. For further information refer to: [http:// wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/) We also recommend you be up to date on specific vaccinations that are required to travel in this region.

We recommend that you carry a personal first-aid kit as well as any personal medication. Please be aware that for legal reasons, our program instructors are prohibited from administering any type of drug. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.



SPENDING MONEY

Spending money usually goes towards drinks and snacks, personal shopping, laundry, email, entertainment, and optional activities. We recommend you budget approximately \$100 a week for this, but this varies per student and per program. The amount of spending money you bring depends on your budget and shopping habits. You need to bring this money yourself.

Optional activities are available on many programs that can add to this cost, such as skydiving, bungee jumping, extra surfing lessons, etc.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

Our students value the opportunity to wind down, immerse in their surroundings and talk to each other. We encourage students to self manage their phone use, and we strongly encourage flight mode. This allows students to still take photos and send updates to family when in wifi, but allows them to be fully connected to the locals, service work and community when they're out and about. You are able to purchase a SIM or use international roaming plans if you wish. The easiest option is to use the WIFI available at places we stay in main cities and towns. Family and friends will also be able to keep in touch and follow your adventures through Pacific Discovery's social media pages, and through an online Facebook album for your group (which your instructors will upload photos to each week).



PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Travel abroad requires a passport. If you don't have one, you need to apply for one as soon as you apply for this program.

US Government Passport website: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>

If you already have a passport, it must be valid for more than 6 months after program end, otherwise you need to get a new one issued before joining the program. Pacific Discovery will contact you regarding visa requirements and arrangements after you apply for the program.



TRAVEL INSURANCE

Pacific Discovery requires all students to purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy for the duration of the program. Travel insurance provides cover in the event of medical expenses due to illness, injury, and emergency medical evacuation. Travel insurance may also include cover for loss of baggage or personal effects, and trip cancellation or trip curtailment.

To arrange your policy, [click here to go to our website](#).



COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives greatly, and Pacific Discovery has developed rigorous policies for safety based on professional advice and endorsement. The health of our students is of the utmost importance at all times. We are working closely and regularly with health professionals on our COVID-19 policy, as the situation continues to develop.

[Read our full COVID-19 policy here.](#)



PEACE OF MIND

Pacific Discovery is an educational travel organization accredited with American Gap Association (USA). Since its inception in 2001, Pacific Discovery has taken several thousand students, graduates, faculty, family and special interest groups, on experiential travel and volunteer programs, utilizing a staff of experienced and qualified program instructors. We have an exemplary safety record, comprehensive Risk Management Systems and a database of alumni, parents, advisors and faculty, who are happy to be contacted for feedback. The program carries public liability insurance, and student funds are held securely until disbursement.

Program Tuition & Costs

A \$500 application fee is due when you apply. Upon acceptance into the program, a deposit is due within 14 days. Balance of program cost to be paid 60 days prior to departure.

Included in Program Tuition

- All in-country travel and transport
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All activities, excursions, entry fees and adventure travel as described in the itinerary
- Informal lectures from resident experts on conservation and sustainability, history, and culture.
- Experienced program Instructors and local guides.

Not Included in Program Tuition

- Travel (international flights) between your home and the program
- Internal flights
- Visas
- Spending money (we suggest allowing \$15 per day for drinks, snacks and personal expenses)
- Travel insurance
- Optional academic credit
- Optional activity costs ie skydiving, bungee jumping, and additional surf lessons.



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Students should not book their travel until after they have received the flight confirmation email from Pacific Discovery with the program flight requirements and travel agent details. This is sent out 2-3 months ahead of program departure. This information is also made available in the student portal login section of our website.

Our preferred groups travel agent, [The Travellist Co.](#), can assist you to arrange international flights from your nearest regional airport, and return home. We prefer you to arrange your flights through our group travel agent to simplify arrival logistics, and so that you are traveling to and from the program with others in your group.





College Credit

Our programs are a structured syllabus with clear learning outcomes that offer true personal growth and global awareness. As a reputable gap year provider since 2001, we have developed strong industry connections, including two educational institutions which we offer college credits through for our programs.

Pacific Discovery partners with Seattle Central College to offer college credit, a recognized educational provider who offers exceptional study options for students. We have been running college credit options for students for several years now with this provider, and as long as requirements are completed, the system has been an excellent option for students in regard to continuation of study, deferment and easy transfer to other institutions.

If you're keen to explore this option further, please reach out to us using the contact details provided at the end of this catalogue. We'd love to help you identify what options are available to you and support you throughout the process.

Scholarships & Financial Aid

We want to make our programs as accessible as possible. Although we charge the minimum we can for our programs, we recognize that they can still be difficult to fund for many families. Please note that these scholarships go directly towards the tuition costs for the program and do not include assistance towards the cost of international flights. We expect scholarship recipients to demonstrate their commitment to this opportunity by fundraising for their international flights, personal spending, and the balance of tuition.

Our students supplement the program costs in a variety of ways. We encourage you to get creative! Create a Kickstarter, find a part-time job, fundraise. Think big and small. Each dollar adds up to one amazing adventure abroad.

- Exploration Scholarship
- Diverse Voices Scholarship
- Financial Need Scholarship
- Gap Year Ambassador Fellowship

To apply, please go to pacificdiscovery.org/need-to-know/scholarships-financial-aid



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