



IRACAMBI ATLANTIC RAINFOREST RESEARCH CENTER

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Iracambi

All the information you will need about Iracambi is either on this document or on our website, <http://www.iracambi.com>. If you still have further queries in this regard, please feel free to e-mail us at volunteers@iracambi.com. If you are interested in receiving the latest news about Iracambi, our quarterly newsletters and other announcements, feel free to join our e-group at <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/iracambi>

Volunteer Program

The Iracambi Atlantic Research Center is situated on a working farm, located about 8 km from the nearest village Rosário da Limeira, which has a few general provision stores, a bakery and a few bars. (There's a map on the website: click the tab at the bottom of the Volunteer page).

The selection of projects below is not exhaustive. They are however, the most common volunteer programs where we are always looking for volunteers to work in. We, however, also accept people who have a wide range of skills, enthusiasm and knowledge, which we believe can add to the work that we do in a variety of different ways. If you would like to participate in our program but don't see a natural fit between your skills and experience please contact us!

We are happy to fit people into our programs, as long as you bring energy and a proactive attitude!

- **Trails:** We have 11 trails on the Fazenda, which need to be maintained year round. The purpose of the trails is to provide access to the rainforest for researchers, school children and volunteers. The trails need to be maintained so that all these people can use them. They have a system of marker posts at 100-meter intervals to guide people around the trails. Volunteers work year-round to keep them clear; which is a bigger job in the wet season than in the dry.
- **Environmental Education:** The Environmental Education Program is one of the areas in which we are able to directly pass on the ideas and knowledge that are generated here at Iracambi.

The Environmental Education Coordinator is a volunteer position that entails coordinating with local schools to arrange times for classes and trips - either at school or at Iracambi. The coordinator prepares the lessons in conjunction with our existing resources as well as the curriculum the school is working on at that time.

School trips to Iracambi consist of a mixture of classroom and outdoor study, based on the trails, the nursery and the other natural resources we have at our disposal. In order to be able to work on the Environmental Education Program, volunteers need to have a strong command of the Portuguese language, a love of kids and the ability to work with other volunteers. For those who can write in Portuguese as well, there are always opportunities for publishing articles in the local papers.

We look for educational opportunities for all ages and even for our own staff and volunteers as well. Past volunteers have written, directed and produced videos on environmental themes that have been enthusiastically received locally. We also run a twice-weekly show on the community radio.

We have a kids' web page in English, and we hope to create real time links by Internet with schools outside of Brazil. This role requires flexibility and patience, since school authorities are not always well organized, but it's one of the best jobs we offer, and we can truly say that the sky is the limit! School terms run from February through end June, and mid July through



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December. The rest of the year we use people's educational expertise to work on larger projects such as the website and integrating education into our other programs.

- **I.T. Manager:** We have a networked computer system, which needs to be maintained. We work on a somewhat quirky satellite modem with our Internet connection depending largely on the weather, and given our geographical position it is important that our connection is as constant as possible. Our IT manager will be expected to work with other team members on the use of different programs, as well as making sure that our Iracambi Guide to the Computer System is kept up to date.
- **Information Manager:** As our work expands and more people take part in it, we need better systems to ensure that the information we have is in the place and in the format we need it. We have outgrown our original system and we need someone to help us to the next level.
- **GIS (Geographical Information Systems):** The Iracambi GIS project is mapping a 200 square kilometer project area of rainforest and smallholder farms. The results of this project are being put to work in the first ever-local county land management program. You can read more about this on the Iracambi GIS website <http://www.iracambigis.esmartdesign.com>

We want to develop and produce a comprehensive coverage of topographical and land use maps for the whole of the nine county Serra do Brigadeiro Development Territory. The project also aims to identify existing land resources and land use patterns, especially those of high conservation priority. All the information we get from the mapping is then put on to our GIS. We need people who can map the area using GPS..

- **Website Manager:** Our website is one of the main links we have with the outside world. We want to keep it as up to date as possible, and where relevant, extend the things that the website can do and the information it has. We have also added a kids website which needs to be maintained and updated.
- **Carpentry/Maintenance:** One of the most crucial roles at Iracambi! The buildings need to be maintained, and we are constantly improving our infrastructure (with very limited resources). Within this area there are a number of different roles: plumbing, building and repairing furniture, as well as any renovations that need to be done. At the moment the trails need new steps, boardwalks, bridges and signs, and our nursery needs new planting tables and benches.
- **Marketing:** We always need volunteers with graphic art skills and or marketing experience to help us effectively spread the word about Iracambi, for fundraising, for informing the local (and global) community about our work and for attracting researchers and volunteers. There are also programs – such as Forest Futures – which offer sponsorship opportunities and we need to develop materials to publicize thee..
- **Fundraising:** A full time and vital job! Volunteers in this area are asked to keep in touch with both current and potential funders; establish a working template for common grant applications; look for innovative ways to raise funds and find ways to make better use of our network of students, volunteers, directors and friends from around the world.

Costs

The charges for our volunteer program are as follows:

For the first month: Br R\$1200; for the second month: Br R\$1150; for the third and subsequent months: Br R\$1100. This covers the cost of shared accommodation in a typical rural farmhouse with full board, so you won't incur any other expenditure except for luxuries like chocolate or beer!



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Depending on space available in the houses at the time of arrival, we have a specialized housing option (R\$150 more per month) for volunteers who have special needs or are interested in paying more for newer housing.

Researchers who will be getting academic credit, superior accommodation and a certain level of supervision required by their University and/or by Iracambi pay Br R\$50 per day.

Deposit

Every volunteer and researcher must pay a deposit of 100 Reais upon arrival at Iracambi. This deposit will cover the loss or breakage of any tools, bedding and books and anything else that is borrowed.

- Tools: The tools at the Center are looked after by the trail manager and must be checked out before use. At the end of each day they will be checked and any missing noted.
- Movies: There is a small collection of DVD movies available that you may borrow. If you'd like to add to the DVD collection by donating your old favorites, you'll find us appreciative.
- Bedding: Bedding will be given to you when you pay the deposit. This includes sheets and blankets. However, a sleeping bag is also recommended. It can get cold at night, and volunteers have been known to get quite comfortable sleeping out on the deck, in hammocks or up on the nearest mountain peak.

Insurance

You need to have full accident and health insurance, and you will need to provide us with the number of the policy and the name of the insurer when you arrive.

If you are a student, you could try the Student Travel Association at:

http://www.statravel.com/cps/rde/xchg/us_division_web_live/hs.xsl/519.htm ; or you could try <http://www.travelinsured.com/>

The friendly people from Foggy Bottom have some suggestions as well:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

Iracambi Life

Our Location on a Working Farm in the Atlantic Rainforest

Iracambi is a hard working environment in a beautiful, rugged and unforgiving terrain. This can sometimes be challenging but always a lot of fun and a very different experience to every-day life in Europe, the United States or other urban areas around the world.

The land is full of opportunity for adventure and discovery which makes the work much more interesting! It is, however, a large farm where walking is the main form of transport and although every effort is made to locate you as near to your work as possible you will find yourself walking a lot (and getting fit)! The rainforest around Iracambi is fragmented; so do not expect to be surrounded by primary rainforest – although you can get into the forest fairly easily. The farm consists of roughly 45% rainforest and the rest is farmland.



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Working Culture

Iracambi is a self-sufficient environment and you are expected to take the initiative to carry out the projects you will be doing here. Volunteers come from all types of work backgrounds, and we expect you to tailor your working style to the facilities and resources we have available. We work to place volunteers in appropriate roles for their skills and our needs, but we also expect you to be prepared to learn new skills: a two-way learning process that benefits us both. If you do have any problems we do have a small staff of Coordinators who are available for supervision and who can provide you assistance as you go along - you just need to know when and what to ask...

We have an informal, participatory structure here in terms of decision-making, where everyone is encouraged to bring new ideas to bear on our organization.

Work at Iracambi is from 9 – 5 Monday to Friday for everybody. Implicit in acceptance of a place here is the knowledge that the work that you do is vital and thus during work hours you are here to work.

There is a weekly group activity and volunteer meeting on Wednesdays. These are fun and are an opportunity for getting larger projects done, sharing ideas and making friends. Implicit in acceptance of a place here is the knowledge that the work that you do is vital and thus during work hours you are here to work. Iracambi is however a place of enjoyment, fulfillment and productivity for everyone and there are lots of opportunities to get out and enjoy the area!

We understand that you may want to travel further a-field than Muriaé (45 km down the mountain) on the weekend, and because of our location you will find it difficult to fit in to two days. In general, transportation is slow and depends on making the right bus connections. We allow volunteers to take two days off per month, and if you add them to weekends you will be able to get to the beach or to the colonial towns. If you have plans to travel for longer than this during your time here then this will need to be discussed before your arrival with the Volunteer Coordinator and the Program Coordinator.

Accommodation and food

You will live with fellow volunteers in the main Center building, a converted farm house with 4 bedrooms, each with four beds. The building is traditional and simple in design.

Depending on availability and your own willingness to pay an extra \$50 a month, you may be able to live in one of the researcher cabins. These have two bedrooms each two beds in each and a bathroom for each cabin: they are a little more up-market.

The food is delivered once a week from the supermarket and also bought in locally from the community: it is predominantly vegetarian. Lunch is cooked every weekday by Dona Carminha, but the preparation of breakfast, dinner and lunches at weekends are the responsibility of the volunteers. Household chores are shared between volunteers, and it's up to each of you to equally pull your weight so you can all live together harmoniously.

Free time

There are many new things to try in your spare time including horseback riding, swimming in the waterfalls, climbing the local mountains, and walking the trails, and a lot more.

You can also take trips into Rosario de Limeira and Muriaé for the weekend where there are a number of shops, bars, restaurants and a couple of clubs playing forró and dance music. There is also a recently opened adventure center in Muriaé, which offers paintball, climbing and more.



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Coordination of the volunteers

Gustavo, the volunteer manager, handles the logistics and will be able to assist you with any questions or concerns during your stay. He is responsible for welcoming you, getting you orientated logistically and being your first point of contact if you have any issues, questions or suggestions about your work or accommodation. From there you will work with the Program Coordinator and the other staff in determining your role and specific work objectives for your time here.

Communication with the Outside World

Internet access is available at the Center for use outside of work time throughout the week. They are available from 9am-7pm Monday to Friday. Personal Internet use is available from 5pm-7pm. You can also receive phone calls, or make them using your own calling card during these times, as well as Saturday morning from 9am-12pm. Skype and MSN messenger are available on these computers but owing to the narrow band width up-link, Skype VOIP is not very satisfactory.

Mail is collected weekly from Limeira, and should be sent to the following address:

Fazenda Iracambi
Caixa Postal No. 1
Rosário da Limeira
36878-000
Minas Gerais
Brazil

Don't ask your friends to send you expensive luxury items by mail as you may end up paying hefty import duties.

Brazilian Visa

Our national policy on immigration is to be nice to those countries that are nice to us. So, if your country does not require Brazilian visitors to have visas (i.e. most of EU) then you do NOT need to get visas before traveling to Brazil. If your country does require visiting Brazilians to have visas (i.e. USA, Canada) you WILL have to get a visa BEFORE you travel. If in doubt, check with the Brazilian consulate in your country. A list of the Brazilian consular and diplomatic missions abroad can be found at: <http://www.mre.gov.br/ingles/ministerio/missions/index.asp>.

Tourist visas and Tourist entry permits (given on arrival to those who do not need visas) are generally valid for 90 days, renewable by the Federal Police for a further 90 days. When you are asked why you want to come to Brazil, give "tourism" as a reason for entry: you will not be eligible for a "volunteer visa" which are only for social or religious workers who don't pay anything. If you state "study" as a reason, you will be asked to get a student visa which is a great deal more complicated.

In the case of US citizens, we regret that because of the tightening of entry requirements for Brazilian citizens entering the US, the Brazilian Foreign Affairs Ministry has tightened the regulations for US visitors to Brazil. One consequence is that you should not try to apply for more than 90 days in the first instance: if you do, the consulate may well automatically reclassify your application as a non-tourist visa, which is likely to be refused.

Gustavo Toledo

Volunteer Program Coordinator