

# INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

## Iracambi

All the information about Iracambi is on our website, [www.iracambi.com](http://www.iracambi.com). If you don't find the information you need in this sheet, look at the website: if you still don't find it, e-mail us at [iracambi@iracambi.com](mailto:iracambi@iracambi.com). For latest news about Iracambi, our quarterly newsletters and contact with other volunteers and researchers, join our e-group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iracambi>

## Research Program

### *Research Priorities*

On our website, you can find the details of our research priorities, and download the complete Research Priorities paper. In summary, the priorities are:

1. **Forest Restoration:** to halt continued degradation of the land, restoring the natural balance of forest and productive land use, with the use of alternative methods of land management which will allow forest lands to contribute to sustainable farm livelihoods. Our objective is to conserve biodiversity and forest cover, to restore degraded forest lands, and to increase the forested area through creating forest corridors. We'll do this by: Determining the potential for reconstituting forests by the use of forest corridors and define a methodology for this, based on farmers' needs as well as the technical requirements of such corridors, (looking at what species of trees should be used, how and where they should be planted etc). Identify critical forest fragments for linking through forest corridors. Define best practises for forest restoration. Analyze effects of interplanting species to determine most appropriate mix.

2. **Land Use Planning:** Iracambi lies in the area that has the largest remnant of the Atlantic Rainforest in Minas Gerais, the core of which is the Serra do Brigadeiro State Park, about 13,000 hectares. In addition, there are three municipal conservation areas, plus Iracambi's own private reserve. To date, no systematic plan has been made as to how these areas should be conserved and of what could or should be done to conserve the many other fragments outside the declared conservation areas. Objective: To map the region according to land use and soil types, and to inventory the biodiversity in remaining forest fragments in order to create a land management scheme for rehabilitating degraded lands. We'll do this by: GIS and mapping of current land use and potential; identify remaining forest fragments and land and water resource degradation hot-spots; (eroded slopes, unprotected springs...). Evaluating biological resources to examine the incidence of biological indicators of ecosystem health or sickness. Studying population dynamics and doing inventories of existing forest fragments to determine which patches hold the largest biodiversity and population sizes. Researching best practices for conserving soil fertility and water resources and evaluating alternative land uses that enhance the potential for rehabilitation. Assisting local Government in preparing a management plan that includes policies and practices that will improve the livelihoods of smallholders as well as conserving and restoring biodiversity.

3. **Income Generating Alternatives:** developing additional income sources will be a major factor in influencing farmer's attitudes towards conserving forests. If the forest could provide additional revenue, this could be the deciding factor as to whether a farmer will cut down or preserve. Objective: To discover ways by which forests can generate income and cleared lands can become more productive. By:

- a. Examining the potential of a water conservation scheme that rewards smallholders for their role in conserving and generating water resources.
- b. Researching the potential of smallholder participation in carbon credit schemes, analyzing market potential of "fuzzy carbon" and looking at best methods of reforestation for carbon credits.
- c. Continuing our research on identifying existing and potential medicinal plants native to the forest and creating a methodology for growing, sustainably harvesting, processing, packaging and marketing products derived from medicinals.
- d. Identifying other income generating potentials; eg hearts of palm or ornamental plants.
- e. Researching methods of improving cropland productivity on fragile forest soils through
  - increasing soil fertility,
  - introducing alternative crops,
  - providing more protein in pastures by planting certain tree species in pastures,
  - interplanting coffee with nitrogen fixing species,
  - evaluating the effects of native leguminous tree species on soil fertility and fodder productivity
- f. Best practises of soil and water conservation

4. **Community Understanding and Activism:** to understand the socioeconomic dimensions of the community in which we work. In order to be able to create effective policies we need to have a clear understanding of the social, political, cultural and economic factors which influence decision making within the community. This is particularly important with regard to changes in land management.

We'll do this by:

1. Analyzing environmental policies at national and local level (looking at forest conservation laws, tenure issues, policies affecting land management) and identifying the key players in decision making at local, state and national levels.
2. Analyzing the political assets within the community; human capital, natural capital, financial, physical and intellectual capital, together with the social network, existence of community movements, nonprofits etc.. Analyzing anthropological factors, family, culture, gender etc. Looking at attitudes towards forest conservation.
3. Explore the constraints facing farmers such as
  - Economic constraints due to declining coffee prices, land and forest degradation
  - Land fragmentation due to inheritance laws
  - Identify opportunities for change and
4. Develop collaborative learning methodologies

### **What you need to do before you come:**

It is a condition of your work at Iracambi that your research should directly and prominently acknowledge Iracambi as the site of your study, and that you will give Iracambi a copy of your completed work. To encourage you to remember to leave a copy of your work, we require you to make a deposit of \$50, payable when you make your payment for board and lodging, which we'll refund to you when we get your final report. Any working papers or research material that you collect is yours, but if you would like to donate it to us, we will gladly receive it.

Note that the collection of biological specimens is regulated by strict laws in Brazil. You may not capture live specimens of any animal species without a license that you would be unlikely to be granted, nor may you take any botanical samples out of the country without authorisation from IBAMA (the Environmental Protection Institute). However, Iracambi has a license to collect botanical specimens and donate them to local a herbarium. We insist on absolute adherence to these laws, with no exceptions.

Our laboratory has basic equipment only, so if you need sophisticated equipment, special chemicals or whatever, let us know in advance so that we can see if we can get them for you, or bring it with you. This is an isolated rural area and things that are easily available in big cities may not be so easy to find here. If you don't want to take it back with you when you leave, you can donate it to us – no problem! It is a good idea to try out your equipment over there before you get here, too.

If you expect to use a computer a lot, we urge you to bring your own, with a wireless connection card: ours are always very busy and you could get very frustrated having to join the queue. It is advisable to bring a memory stick, too, even if you don't bring your own computer, so that you can transfer data from our computers to yours and vice versa.

Before you come, you should look at the recommended reading on our reading list (especially the books by Warren Dean and Carlos Galindo-Leal) ([www.iracambi.com/english/further\\_reading.shtml](http://www.iracambi.com/english/further_reading.shtml)) and the technical paper on land use paper by Robin Le Breton, which you can download from the downloads page on the site.

If your research is guided by a mentor or tutor, you need to confirm with them that they will be able to provide you with proper guidance while you are here. We do not have the staff capacity to do this here.

To summarize: you need to

- (1) deposit the \$50 report fee;
- (2) send us your Materials and Methods Plan before you come;
- (3) test any equipment you'll be bringing;
- (4) read up on the Mata Atântica;
- (5) bring a computer if you can, or at least a memory stick;
- (6) get your mentor's confirmation that he/she will continue to give you guidance while you're here.

### **General Logistics**

Iracambi is a self sufficient environment and you are expected to take the initiative for your work, tailor your working style with the facilities available and survive without any close management. We can provide general orientation, but not close supervision of your study: if you need that, you should either arrange it through your own tutors by e-mail, or ask us to arrange it through the nearby Federal University of Viçosa, but you will have to pay the cost of such arrangements. If you are coming under the guidance of a tutor at home, make sure they will be on line to help you, because we cannot guarantee to fill that need. Make sure you have a clear idea of what you are going to do when you come: don't expect us to plan it for you.

### **Brazilian Visa**

Nationals of countries that do not require Brazilian visitors to have visas (i.e. most of EU) do NOT need to get visas before traveling to Brazil. If your country requires 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.

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 non-tourist visa, which is likely to be refused.

### **Getting here**

The Iracambi Research Center is situated on a working farm, located some 8 km from the nearest village Rosário de Limeira, (Limeira for short), which has a few general provision stores, a bakery and a few bars. 25 km from Limeira is Muriaé, an agricultural market town of about 70,000 people, with banks, supermarkets, hospitals, intercity bus services, etc The nearest international airport is at Rio de Janeiro, about 320 kms away.

### **From Rio de Janeiro**

On arrival at Rio you will need to go to the 'Rodoviária Novo Rio' (this is the bus station and most cities or towns in Brazil have one). The ground/first floor of the Rodoviária is the entrance and where the buses depart from and so you will firstly need to make your way up to the second floor where the bus companies have ticket offices. Go to the Rio Doce bus company ticket booth and purchase a ticket to Muriaé. The buses to Muriaé usually leave at around 7am and 11.30am. Buses between Rio and Muriaé sometimes have air-conditioning. The journey will last around 5 hours. On arrival at Muriaé you will need to get another ticket for the next leg of your journey: go through the barrier and upstairs to the 'Novo Horizonte' ticket office and purchase a ticket to Rosário da Limeira. These buses leave at 1.30pm, 2.45pm and 6.00pm (Mon-Fri) and 1.30pm and 8pm (Sat – Sun). The journey should last round 1 ½ hours. The 'Unida' bus company also has some buses from Muriaé to Limeira.

Bus times can change because of heavy rain, road works, holiday seasons etc: it would be advisable to visit the Rodoviária to purchase tickets in advance of your journey if possible, or call the bus company to check the timetable, or check their website ([www.autoviaçao1001.com.br](http://www.autoviaçao1001.com.br)).

**Route 1:**

Depart Rio 7am                      Arrive Muriaé 12 pm                      Depart Muriaé 1.30pm                      Arrive Limeira 3.00pm

**Route 2:**

Depart Rio 12pm                      Arrive Muriaé 5pm                      Depart Muriaé 6pm                      Arrive Limeira 7.30pm

The bus will arrive in the main square of Limeira. It will be easy to spot the taxi rank. Dona Olinda, with a white Volkswagen beetle is the usual driver: however, any of the taxi drivers will know where to take you if you ask for 'Fazenda Iracambi' or 'Fazenda do Robin e Binka'. This drive will take around 20 minutes. It's around 2 hours walking distance, but it's often possible to hitch a lift in a car or on a horse and cart. A taxi costs R\$20 each way. Usually you will be driven to Casa Grande, where Robin and Binka live, then they will deliver you to the house you will be living in. If you are to be driven to another place at Iracambi, such as the Centre, the volunteer manager will e-mail you as soon as they are able to, ask Dona Olinda to drop you there, she charges R\$30 for a taxi ride to the Centre.

From **São Paulo**, there are buses with the Itapemirim company every night to Muriaé at 20:00hrs and getting into Muriaé at about 07:00 the next morning. Don't confuse Rosário da Limeira, Minas Gerais with Limeira, São Paulo or you'll be in for a big surprise (and a long walk).

From **Salvador**, you needn't go via Belo Horizonte unless you particularly want to (it'll add about 7 hours to your journey): the Salvador-Rio de Janeiro Itapemirim buses via Governador Valadares pass right through Muriaé and will drop you off there. It's 26 hrs from Salvador to Muriaé by bus.

**Hotels in Rio**

There's a been a great variety of hotels used by our visitors on their way here in the past. If you are staying overnight we'd suggest that you find appropriate accommodation via a reputable guide book, such as Lonely Planet. If you are traveling up to Iracambi the next morning it would be best to pick a hotel in Catete / Gloria – Copacabana is right at the other end of town from the Rodoviária. However, if you do wish to stay in Copacabana for a day or two, to enjoy the beach before you come to Iracambi, a place we recommend is the Copacabana Praia. The address is: Rua Tenente Marones do Gusmão 85, Copacabana. Tel: 21 2547 5422. The rates are decent (they do change frequently), and costs around R\$30 for a dorm bed, R\$85 for an apartment for two people. If you do decide to stay there, please mention to the management that you are there from Iracambi.

**Money**

You should exchange money as soon as you arrive in Brazil, as it will not be possible once you are at Iracambi. You can change at the airport: the porters will even change for you and their rates are as good as anyone else's, though of course a bank is safer. Avoid the Banco do Brasil – it's a rip-off. In Rio town, there are "casas de cambio" but note that they are not open on weekends. You will maybe find that if you bring cash in US dollars, you may find it easier to change in Reals. There are ATM machines in the nearest town to Iracambi, Muriaé (one and a half hours away) and the volunteer in charge of the commissariat might be persuaded to take money out on your behalf when they visit once a week.

**Costs**

Our program costs US\$25 per day. This covers the cost of full-board self catering accommodation in a two bedroom 4 bed cabins: it does not include extras such as cigarettes or beer. The use of office facilities with internet connection is included, but long distance or international telephone calls will be charged directly to you. It does not include academic supervision by faculty staff from Viçosa University, interpreters, transport off the farm, or travel to other cities, so you need to budget for these items.

**Payment of fees**

Payments to Amigos de Iracambi can be made in the following ways:

1. preferentially: by Credit Card, using PayPal, from the Cash Donations page on our website ([www.iracambi.com/english/donate.shtml](http://www.iracambi.com/english/donate.shtml));
2. By direct transfer to Amigos de Iracambi Bank account in the USA:
3. By direct transfer to Amigos de Iracambi Bank account in the UK:
4. By cash on arrival, either in Brazilian Reais, or US Dollars cash, or US Dollar Travelers Checks.

If you prefer to make transfers to our bank accounts, ask us for the details of the accounts

**Preparing For Your Stay**

We would recommend that you bring the following:

- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping bag inner tube sheets or regular sheets

- Mosquito net
- Towel/s
- Torch/flashlight
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent (lots)
- Antiseptic cream/lotion
- Shorts and long trousers/pants
- Swimwear (there are natural pools to swim in)
- Some warm clothing (perhaps a fleece) for cold evenings
- Rainproof outerwear
- Work gloves
- Terrain sandals, durable boots, possibly rubber boots if your stay is during the rainy season, and of course your soccer boots if you wish – this is Brazil
- Clothing you are willing to wear out (it can be very muddy)
- Telephone charge card – you can get an international one in the airport in Rio
- A sense of humour, flexibility and adaptability

The weather during the summer months (November to March) can be hot (up to 35 degrees) during the day and a tendency for storms and heavy rainfall at night. Temperatures drop in the evening, but still remain relatively warm. Winter months see cooler temperatures of around 20 degrees during the day and down to 6 degrees at night time. Even in the winter, the sun shines very strongly, so you'll still need sun cream.

Electricity is 110 volts 60 cycles, except in the North and North East, where it is 220 volts (the English installed that system).

### Health & Safety

It is important that you ensure you are inoculated against the following:

Hepatitis A  
Tetanus  
Typhoid  
Yellow Fever  
Diphtheria  
Polio

Your doctor may also suggest Hepatitis B and Rabies.

Malaria is not endemic at Iracambi but if you plan to travel to other parts of Brazil, such as the Pantanal or the Amazon, you will need suitable medication. Ask your health center at home before leaving.

AIDS – Brazil is a high risk country, so be careful.

You must have full personal medical insurance, valid for Brazil, and you will be asked to give details of the policy before you come. We recommend that you also have your own personal effects insurance, in case your camera gets stolen in Rio (it happens).

Iracambi does not have contents insurance for the properties on its land and you will be liable to pay for any damages you cause. You will also be expected to take responsibility for your own safety and, therefore, take sensible precautions where necessary.

All tropical environments have an abundance of insects, parasites and exciting sounding diseases. Iracambi is no exception.

**Insects:** There are an enormous number of insects, but none which could harm you. Ticks are a nuisance, especially between July / August, but do not carry Lyme disease. Jiggers, burrowing fleas, are not uncommon in early Summer (November / December).

**Spiders:** There are lots of big, hairy spiders around. They are said to be poisonous, but we've never met anyone who was bitten by one.

**Snakes:** Venomous snakes live in the environment so watch where you step. If you are bitten, serum is stored at the main farmhouse.

### Accommodation and Food

You will live with fellow researchers or conservation volunteers in one of four properties and you may be required to share a room (usually with the same sex). You will be living in accommodation next to the Research Center – two-bedroom houses with sitting rooms and bathrooms with mains electricity.

Food is delivered to the research center each week and cooked lunch is provided on weekdays. For breakfast, dinner and weekend meals it will be your responsibility, together with the other people with whom you share accommodation, to create meals. The food is predominantly vegetarian. 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.

### Culture

The philosophy of inviting researchers to participate in Iracambi's work is to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own work schedules, experience, lifestyle and each other - essentially to be self-sufficient. It's hoped that you will take the initiative to be a clean, tidy, considerate and supportive individual within your home environment

### **Co-ordination & Communication**

#### *Co-ordination of the researchers*

The research coordinator will assist you with any questions or concerns during your stay, help you with the logistics of your research and see that you get your turn at shared researcher facilities.

#### *Communication with the outside world*

Internet access is available at the Center for use outside of work time throughout the week. The Center has a cell phone that operates on a pre-paid Claro system: you can buy credits for our number (except that you can't guarantee that no one else will use them) or buy your own chip (and number) for that phone which you can use as much as you like. (Just remember to put our chip back when you've finished – otherwise no one can call us!). Skype and MSN messenger are available on the computers but owing to the narrow band width up-link, Skype VOIP is not very satisfactory.

Internet access is available 24/7 at the research center. Work related tasks have priority so you'll need to schedule your personal use for after working hours.

The mail is collected from the nearby village of Limeira, generally about once a week, on Tuesdays. Letters to and from Europe take around 2 weeks and parcels 6-7 weeks. From the US, letters take about 10 days to arrive, and parcels about 5 weeks. If your loving family wants to send you expensive presents by mail, you'll probably have to pay hefty customs duties.