



## LOST FROGS OF ALTA VERAPAZ 2022



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# Expedition



**LOST FROGS OF ALTA  
VERAPAZ - Amphibian  
Conservation in the  
Highlands of Guatemala**

## **DATES**

**19 - 29 September 2022  
11 Days/10 Nights**

## **CONTACT**

**[info@explorewithindigo.com](mailto:info@explorewithindigo.com)**



# Welcome

Welcome to **Indigo Expeditions**, and thank you for connecting with us!

We're inviting you to connect with the cloud forests of **Alta Verapaz** in search of lost frogs. Staying at the agroecology centre of **Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC)**, you'll join our amphibian conservation project, established in 2014.

During your **Lost Frogs of Alta Verapaz Expedition** you'll experience life in the mountains of Guatemala's Central Highlands.

Living alongside the **Q'eqchi Maya**, you'll be contributing to long term efforts to safeguard these precious forests in the clouds.

You'll explore the wondrous and varied wildlife of the region whilst also learning about sustainable agriculture and modern **Mayan culture**.

Staying in a highly sustainable building, you'll be in shared dorms each with its own bathroom – supplied with fresh hot water – pure luxury! Food is predominantly vegetarian and lovingly made from the organic crops grown on site.

In 2022 we'll combine our ecological survey efforts with practical habitat conservation activities. You'll have the opportunity to:

- Perform forest surveys of **critically endangered amphibians** and endemic reptiles,
- Help us **restore degraded forest habitats**, and
- Make a contribution to the **conservation of endemic amphibians and reptiles** of the highland region of Guatemala.

Expedition places are **limited to 12** and no previous field experience is required.

Thank you for expressing your interest to ***explore with us!*** Any more questions?

Get in touch! [info@explorewithindigo.com](mailto:info@explorewithindigo.com)

Rowland Griffin – Director, Indigo Expeditions





# About us

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is of a world where the inter-connectedness of all life is honoured & appreciated, bringing humankind into harmonious relationship with Nature, the Earth and all Creatures in the web of life.

## OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to be of Planetary Service, effecting Positive Change for humanity, by addressing wildlife conservation needs, and demonstrating an Appreciation for All Life.

## INITIATIVES

**Conservation expeditions** – promoting the importance of field biology, ecology, and experiencing nature directly. We encourage developing an appreciation for all life.

**Conservation projects** – providing training with a focus on ethical and respectful survey and monitoring protocols. We encourage applying these ethics in our personal lives and in the world.

**Education** – developing training programmes to empower others through a deeper understanding of ecology. We encourage learning from nature to explore ecology.

**Inspiring others** – by modelling planetary service. We encourage working with Integrity and Compassion for All Life.

“

Many many thanks to Rowland for your tireless effort and enthusiasm and for imparting your knowledge of this magnificent habitat.

My expectations have been blown out of the water in every respect. We have spent 10 days in the most awesome of places, in great company, with exceptional food and have found some truly amazing creatures.

To be able to be part of such important work is a truly gratifying experience.

~ AMY SHURING



# INDIGO TEAM



## Rowland Griffin

EXPEDITION LEADER

*Advocate for connection to nature  
and wildlife conservation.*

[rowland@explorewithindigo.com](mailto:rowland@explorewithindigo.com)

“

A huge thanks to Rowland and Indigo Expeditions for yet another incredible experience.

This is the third time I have been out to this amazing country and spent it not only with a good friend, but a great teacher in fieldwork and practical herpetology.

I couldn't recommend this experience more!

~ ADAM RADOVANOVIC



# Expedition



## EXPEDITION ACTIVITIES

- Monitoring endangered amphibians
- Surveying rare reptiles
- Restoring degraded habitats
- Practical conservation tasks

**Alta Verapaz, Guatemala**

**Dates: 19 - 29 September 2022**

**Expedition: 11 Days / 10 Nights**

## AMPHIBIAN CONSERVATION

Since 2014 we have surveyed the populations of amphibians and reptiles at Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC), an organisation committed to alleviating poverty and protecting forests through education, and reforestation.

We have found 53 species of amphibians and reptiles during our conservation surveys, as part of our amphibian project to support ecological improvements to agriculture.

Many of the amphibians and reptiles at CCFC are endemic to the mountains of the Central Highlands and are considered in danger of extinction. This year Indigo will be combining our conservation and survey efforts with practical habitat conservation activities.

# Itinerary

## ARRIVAL DAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2022

Please arrive in Guatemala City the day BEFORE your expedition starts.

Most International flights to La Aurora International Airport arrive in the evening.

## DAY 1: DEPART GUATEMALA CITY

You'll be met by your expedition leader for breakfast at your hotel, before heading up into the mountains of Alta Verapaz. Your journey will take you east of Guatemala and through the dry Motagua Valley before the long climb into the cloud forests.

With a quick stop for a light lunch along the way, you'll arrive in the clouds around mid afternoon. Settling into your new surroundings, you'll take a tour of the facilities and get to know a little of the amazing work that is going on at Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC).

After a long day on the road there will be plenty of time for you to unwind and relax into the swing of mountain life.

## DAY 2:

After a delicious breakfast you'll take your first look at the valley and learn more about the agricultural practices used here and how they fit in with wider conservation goals.

In the evening you'll venture out to explore the cloud forests as they unveil their secrets.

## DAY 3:

Your day will start with an introduction to Indigo Expeditions cloud forest conservation project here in the highlands. You'll visit a local cave nearby and learn about their importance to the Mayan communities.

## DAY 4:

Today you'll have the opportunity to contribute to habitat restoration projects in a nearby patch of remnant cloud forest. With cloud forests rapidly disappearing these activities are critical to the survival of the species that are found here.

You'll have the afternoon and evening free to soak up the atmosphere of the landscape and cloud forests.

## DAY 5:

Having had time to settle into the routine of cloud forest life, today you'll take a long hike to the top of the mountains. The forests here are stacked full of wildlife and you never know what you might encounter.

Hummingbirds, highland guans, oropendula, and swallow-tailed kites are some of the regular bird visitors, along with many mammal species including, margay, cacomistle, kinkajou, paca, and tayra (a giant 1 metre long weasel).

## DAY 6:

After yesterday's trek, today is free for you to relax and enjoy your surroundings and maybe go for a swim in the river.





# Itinerary

## DAY 7:

After breakfast you'll head into Coban, the Capital of Alta Verapaz, and a great place to go shopping in the markets for authentic artisanal souvenirs, or to just grab a coffee and watch the world go by.

In the evening you'll spend some time looking for more amazing wildlife with the Indigo field team on one of their surveys.

With over 50 species of amphibians and reptiles the forests here are full of rare and endemic species including, black-eyed treefrogs, spike-thumb frogs, glass frogs, salamanders, alligator lizards, helmeted iguanas, highland parrot snakes, coral snakes, and of course the green pitviper *Bothriechis aurifer*, known locally as Rax Bolay.

## DAY 8:

After soaking up the morning views you'll head by private bus to the Biotopo del Quetzal in Baja Verapaz, a nearby cloud forest nature reserve.

Here you'll have the opportunity to experience a different cloud forest at a higher elevation. We'll bring an overnight bag as we'll be staying in the heart of the Biotopo tonight, giving you the chance to explore the night life here.

You'll stay in shared cabins nestled into the forest.

## DAY 9:

With an early rise you're in for a real treat today! This is one of the best places to see Guatemala's national bird, the resplendent quetzal.

Your day will start with some pre-breakfast bird watching. There'll be a final chance to explore the waterfalls and pools before heading back to CCFC.

## DAY 10:

Today is your last full day in the clouds.

You'll take a hike up the canyon, through primary cloud forest to reach the 'big' cave, an important ceremonial site for the local Mayan communities, it's well worth the trek.

The canyon is a fabulous place to spot trogons, hummingbirds and much more.

## DAY 11:

After a relaxed breakfast, you'll leave CCFC midmorning to arrive back at your hotel in Guatemala City in the late afternoon.

## FOOD & ACCOMMODATION

You'll be full board at CCFC in shared accommodation comprising comfortable bunkbed rooms.

Meals include: breakfast, lunch, and an evening meal. Mineral water is provided.

## DEPARTURE 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

Please arrange your International flight from Guatemala City to depart on the 30 September 2022.





# Alta Verapaz





# Alta Verapaz





# Alta Verapaz





# EXPEDITION MAP

RESEARCH SITE FOR  
LOST FROGS  
EXPEDITION



ARRIVAL LA AURORA  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT (GUA)  
GUATEMALA CITY



# Preparing

## FOR YOUR EXPEDITION

### 1) VISA

If you are travelling via the US (including in-transit) you will need to apply for an ESTA (Electronic System For Travel Authorisation). You need to apply online:

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

The tourist visa for Guatemala lasts for 90 days from the date of your arrival and is applied for at arrival in the airport. Please check your countries travel advice bureau for full requirements for your nationality.

### 2) FLIGHTS

Please arrive in Guatemala City the day BEFORE your Expedition. Most International flights to La Aurora International Airport arrive in the evening.

### 3) TRAVEL ADVICE

You may wish to check the travel advice from the Foreign Office, or your countries travel advice bureau, about Guatemala. However in our experience we have found Guatemala to be a safe country to travel as a group.

### 4) IMMUNISATIONS

We recommend that you seek the advice of a medical professional regarding anti-malarials and any immunisations you may need.

### 6) CURRENCY

The official currency in Guatemala is the Quetzal (GTQ) named after the resplendent quetzal, Guatemala's national bird.

US Dollars (USD) are also widely accepted, we recommend smaller denomination bills of \$20 or less.

It is recommended to bring some cash for any additional meals in the hotel on your arrival night in Guatemala, and for any souvenirs you may wish to purchase from local artisans.

“

This experience for me was a blessing in all ways.

I learned to respect nature more than I had, and to respect reptiles because of the importance that they have for the environment.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explore and learn from you. And to meet wonderful Guatemalans and foreigners that make such a wonderful and good impact to our country.. we respect and thank you very much.

~ TIGRE





# What to bring

While this is not an exhaustive list, these items are recommended for your [Indigo Expedition](#):

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport and other travel documents, including a printed copy of your travel insurance policy. We also recommend bringing a duplicate of these documents and a photocopy of your passport.

## ESSENTIAL FIELD KIT

- Sturdy walking boots – Essential!
- Field clothes: At least two sets of suitable field clothes. Quick drying long sleeved tops and trousers. We recommend thicker fabrics as they will protect you from biting insects more effectively.
- Sunhat & sun block.
- Casual wear: Clothes to relax in, including warmer items for the evening.
- Day pack: For carrying cameras, batteries, snacks and water etc.
- Batteries: For any electrical equipment such as head torch and camera. Rechargeables if possible.
- Head torch: You will need a good quality head torch for nocturnal surveys. ESSENTIAL minimum 300 lumens.
- Waterproofs: Lightweight waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers.
- Adaptors: For plugging in, and recharging, equipment and batteries. Guatemala uses a standard US two pin plug.
- Zip lock bags and dry bags will help keep important documents and electrical equipment dry and free of humidity. TOP TIP: add sachets of silica gel to zip lock bags and dry bags with the things you don't want getting wet.
- Water bottle and rehydration sachets.
- Non-DEET insect repellent: Lots of it! Please note: DEET is harmful to amphibians, reptiles and the environment.

## MEDICAL KIT

- Please bring a basic first aid travel kit. Please note although Indigo Expeditions has medical kits, we can not provide any medication to participants.

## OTHER ITEMS

- Camera and/or binoculars: Optional but highly recommended!
- Snacks: While you will receive three meals a day on your expedition, please feel free to bring extra treats!
- Prescription medicines: Enough to last the expedition.

## WASH BAG

- Toiletries: To include travel towel, talcum powder, sun block, wet wipes, and ear plugs!



# Testimonials

“

Thank you for demonstrating your profound appreciation for nature and every living creature and the vast complexities of our inter connectedness. We appreciate your professionalism and skilful handling of all the animals, with great care.

We are impressed by your serious, patient and generous teaching of others, your wealth of knowledge, expertise and skill for working with and understanding reptiles and amphibians.

We are pleased to count you as our friends and part of our conservation team.

**~ ROB AND TARA**

“

Thank you very much for letting me share another wonderful adventure with Indigo. I consider it a privilege, not only being able to experience so many great moments, but also having the opportunity to learn from such a great human being in a herpetological and personal way.

Thank you for teaching me so much and for all your effort put in protecting Guatemalan flora and fauna.

**~ DANIEL GYGAX**





# Travel Notes



