

TREK TO THE LOST CITY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This is a tough challenge, and not one which should be done without committed training. It is important to focus on **endurance** fitness rather than speed as it is certainly not a race. Try to train with your day pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your training. Sticking to our training plan will really pay off and while any exercise helps, the best form of preparation is to train with your day pack on, walking on hilly terrain for long periods on consecutive days. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for between 5 and 8 hours each day, so good fitness is very important. This trek should be achievable for most people provided they train well in advance.

Keep in mind that this is a **tough** trek and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical trekking, rain and heat, the difference in culture or something else. It is great if you can work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking within the rainforests and cloud-forests are amazing!

What will the trekking be like?

You will be trekking through varied terrain, ranging from good wide limestone tracks to narrow, overgrown jungle paths on rock or clay. There are many steep sections up and down-hill, and trekking conditions may be muddy and slippery, especially after rain. There is **very little flat ground**. If you are unsteady on your feet on uneven ground you will find trekking poles useful; these also help when you are tired, or need to give your knees relief, but do make sure you get used to them when training. This is a **remote area** without vehicle access, so you need to be confident of your fitness and stamina. The heat and humidity add to the challenge on this trek, making the uphill sections feel particularly relentless; there's a reason this challenge is graded as **tough!** Our final day of trekking takes us on sandy coastal trails.

What is the accommodation like?

In Santa Marta and Cartagena you will be staying in good 3-4* hotels on a twin-share basis. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex, and similar age where possible – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so. Whilst trekking we stay in campsites along the trail run by local communities. Facilities are really good considering the remote jungle location, but you may find conditions fairly rustic if you are only used to nice hotels. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge and makes your

What are the campsites like?

Each camp has flushing sit-on toilets and showers (expect cold water – though it's welcome in the heat!), a communal eating area with long tables and benches, and a small shop. Bathing is also permitted in the river (5 mins walk) provided you have bio-degradable toiletries. We sleep in sheltered open-sided buildings, in rows of wooden bunks separated by mosquito nets; it's communal living, but the nets give the impression that you're in a private tent. Bunks have thick mattresses with sheet and blanket provided; you only need a sleeping-bag liner. Because of a camp-wide 'bunk etiquette' they are very clean (shower and change into clean clothes beforehand, bags and wet gear cannot go inside bunks). In the rare case that bunks are unavailable, we will sleep in pre-slung hammocks under shelters. There is power from a generator for a couple of hours each evening.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms in the hotels at the start and end of the trip, subject to request and at an additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. During the trek itself, single supplements are not an option. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!



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DISCOVER
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Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by **experienced Discover Adventure leaders**. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us?

Depending on **group size**, an expedition doctor or medic will accompany us. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our support crew is made up of local guides, drivers and cooks. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about **local customs and lifestyles**; there are plenty of opportunities to learn about the indigenous culture. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

What are the transport arrangements for the group?

We will travel by coach or minibus, depending on the group size; there are several transfers during the itinerary. Main roads are generally good, smooth tarmac. The trailhead is reached on wide dirt tracks which are a little bumpy; we switch to 4 x 4 vehicles for this section (60-70 minutes at start and end).

Do I need to carry my own kit?

We don't need that much when trekking, so we carry our own gear on the trail. You will need a comfortable day-sack which can hold what you need during the day (leg waterproofs, sun-cream, hat, camera, water and snacks, etc), as well as overnight gear and a spare set of clothes. Adopt a 'set to wear and set as spare' approach to keep the weight down. Everything gets sweaty and dirty in the rainforest, so there's no point worrying about clean clothes! There are plenty of washing lines at each camp to hang out any wet gear. Any kit not needed while trekking can be left in the hotel.

What will the weather be like?

There is a sub-tropical climate all year round, and it is usually **hot and humid** (humidity varies between 75% and 95%). It's a rainforest, so expect some rainfall! Ensure your waterproof gear is breathable to avoid overheating in the rain. Despite the heat, it is advisable to cover your arms and legs when trekking through rainforest. Much of the time you will be in the shade, but when exposed to the sun do not underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it is cloudy or windy. Please bring minimum Factor 30 sun-cream along with a high SPF lip salve. A sun hat and quality sunglasses are also a must. Temperatures cool a little at night.

What will I be eating?

You will eat very well whilst on the trek; food is local in style. Breakfast typically include pancakes, eggs/sausage, tropical fruit and tea and coffee, while lunches and dinners are usually traditional cooked food, such as meat, rice, beans, lentils, potatoes, salad and vegetable dishes, with fresh fruit juice. The food is fresh and plentiful so do make sure you eat enough to give you the energy you will need for your exertions.



I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home –in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.



What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a final meal together as a group to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night.

Do I need to bring snacks?

Some snacks are provided (fruit, popcorn, crisps or nuts), but bring extra – 2-3 tasty treats to keep you going each day. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars, flapjacks, salted nuts, biscuits, and a packet of sweets. Chocolate will melt! Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important. Snacks and chilled drinks can also be bought at a couple of check-points along the trail.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge and the hot and humid climate, you will need to drink significantly more than you would trekking in the UK. Each camp has barrels of treated drinking water, so ensure that you top up your bottles and hydration systems. Sterilised water is very safe and a method we use on the majority of our overseas treks. As a back-up in case there are any problems with the water supply, we ask that you bring a pack of water purification tablets with you so you can treat your own water. It is advisable to bring a minimum of 16 tablets, which would allow for 4 litres per day for each day of trekking. You will need to follow the instructions provided with whichever type of tablet you purchase, to ensure that you leave the tablets to sit in the water for the correct length of time. You can also top up your water along the trail from the many streams; we advise water-bottles with in-built treatment systems, or again using purification tablets. It is also a good idea to take plenty of rehydration sachets with you too as you will sweat a lot! Please do not be tempted to drink tap water, or even clean your teeth in it – a dodgy stomach can ruin your trip. Ensure you get used to carrying 2-3L of water when training.

What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are rarely toilet facilities during the day, so please be prepared. You will need to take wet wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst out on your trek. These can then be discarded at camp or lunch. Please do your utmost to keep our environmental impact to a minimum. Toilet facilities at camp are seated, flushing toilets which is impressive given the location! Toilet paper must be discarded in the basket provided, not flushed. Our hotels are tourist-class and facilities are generally very good.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able.** They are all very approachable!

What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have radios and emergency satellite phone, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus as necessary. If you are feeling unwell, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.



How much money will I need to bring with me?

We suggest that you take around £150-200 of spending money with you in US\$, as this works well in most areas. This guideline does depend on how many souvenirs you may want to buy. You will need to set aside money for the meals typically not included (check your itinerary for details), any international departure tax and money for local crew tips.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to **depart from the group arrangements**, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.

What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is **\$40-45 per participant** which is split out between the local crew but this is of course at your discretion. Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally, as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the trek. Your trip leader will give you further advice.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotel may not be as fast as you're used to at home and there won't be any internet access when out on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited and, unsurprisingly, there are no charging points when trekking or in camp. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device. Treat this challenge like a 'Digital Detox' and tell your relatives that no news is good news; the satellite phone is for emergencies only.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for trekking. Participants residing in the UK can purchase insurance through our website with Insure2Travel via [this link](#); otherwise you are able to source your own preferred cover with a company of your choosing.



When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure usually confirms the main group flight details 5 months prior to trip departure so you know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent **Final Joining Instructions** a month prior to trip departure, confirming details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.

Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements and a land-only discount will be applied when you return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' (sent at the time of booking).

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); you will also need to return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' with your request. Note that you will remain on the same flight path returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.



What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trekking experience, but not too much! Ensure your clothing and kit is lightweight as you will be carrying it. Make sure your walking boots are waterproof and well-worn in. You may also wish to bring some foot powder with you to absorb sweat and help to prevent blisters. Avoid cotton as it absorbs sweat; breathable, wicking material is a must. If you intend to trek with poles, ensure that you train with them. Don't forget your charity t-shirt for photos at the end! If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants 15% off any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. You will not need anything like this much. Remember that on the trail we carry our own gear and everything else is left at the hotel. Travel lightly and take only small bottles of toiletries. If you stick to our advice on the kit list you will manage with no problems. Don't forget that suitcases are not suitable, **soft rucksacks/kitbags only** (with no wheels on). Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable, please ask for details.

What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry. UK citizens can enter Colombia without a visa at the discretion of the Colombian Immigration Officer on arrival, as per the foreign travel advice [given here](#). However, if your flights are transiting the USA you will need to apply for authorisation to enter the States under the **Visa Waiver Program**. Please refer to the information [given here](#) and confirmed by your Challenge Co-ordinator. Other nationalities are responsible for checking their entry requirements – please do so in good time.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. You can find some guidance and information on the www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk website. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Passenger Portal

We have a **Passenger Portal** which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

Download the app!

We use the **VAMOOS** travel app that can be downloaded from the App store to your smartphone. The app can be used offline, and allows you to access all of your challenge documents from your phone. Just download the app and enter your unique code at the prompt (please ask for your specific code).



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