

# Costa Rica Green Turtle Research



# Welcome Letter

Welcome to the SEE Turtles Costa Rica Sea Turtle Adventure! On this unique volunteer vacation, you will spend six days exploring this beautiful country including two days working with researchers helping to catch and study green and hawksbill sea turtles in the Golfo Dulce, a calm gulf located between the Osa Peninsula and southern Pacific coast. You'll also participate in a reforestation project, visit a chocolate farm and more.

By joining this trip, you will be directly supporting community-based conservation of these turtles by providing alternative income to poaching and generating funds to expand their efforts. We started SEE Turtles in 2008 to encourage travelers to visit turtle conservation projects where their visit will make a difference in efforts to protect these endangered creatures.

With the help of travelers like you, we have generated more than \$1 million for turtle conservation and local communities and have helped to save more than 2 million baby turtles at important nesting beaches. For these efforts, we received the prestigious Changemakers Award from the World Travel & Tourism Council in 2019.

Please join us on this action-packed volunteer trip. We will meet and interact with the dedicated people working to protect their natural resources and learn much about the biology and threats facing Costa Rica's wildlife, all while enjoying one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

 in Costa Rica!

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Cover photos: Hal Brindley  
Right: Neil Osborne



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# Trip Information

The southern Pacific region of Costa Rica is a truly spectacular place. The Osa Peninsula is an extraordinary rainforest, with more than 2/3rds under protection and the Golfo Dulce is one of just three tropical fjords, with dramatic views in every direction. These waters are home to 2 species of sea turtles, plus dolphins, humpback whales, and more. The land and sea are intimately connected here, with deforestation and pollution from land affecting the diverse ocean life.

On this unique journey, you will work with researchers to catch and study green and hawksbill sea turtles to study and release. These turtles forage and grow in the gulf and nest elsewhere, so catching these turtles is the only way to study them. You'll also help restore mangroves that are critical to the growth of fish and sea turtles and visit an organic farm that grows and makes its own chocolate (yum).

There will also be free time to explore the area, taking a rainforest hike, renting a kayak, or swimming in the gulf (cost not included). This trip can also be done year round as a private trip for families (8 years and up), and small groups. Profits from this trip will help to save at least 500 hatchlings at a turtle nesting beach per participant.

## Is This Trip Right For Me?

Costa Rica is a safe and beautiful country that receives more than 1 million international tourists annually. This is a fairly an active trip that requires some of physical fitness and an ability to manage sometimes challenging conditions including weather and heat, bugs, and long bus rides. The accommodations are comfortable but plan to spend significant time on boats and on the beach while waiting for turtles to be caught.

## Conservation Impact Pricing:

SEE Turtles is the first and only operator to provide transparent pricing that shows the economic impact of each trip on turtle and wildlife conservation and benefits to local communities.

- **Turtle Conservation:** \$425 of the trip price goes to local partners working to protect sea turtles.
- **Local Communities:** \$200 of the tour price stays in communities around turtle conservation programs.
- **Travel Costs:** \$1,370 of the price pays for the guide, transport, accommodations, insurance, and other costs.

[Register Here](#)

**Dates:** Dec 4 - 11, 2021

**Price:** \$1,995 pp

Private trips available Dec - August. The tour can be customized to fit your group and budget, contact us for details.

## Private Trip Pricing: (Good through 2021)

- 2 pax: \$2,495 pp
- 3-4 pax: \$2,095 pp
- 5-6 pax: \$1,995 pp
- 7+: \$1,895 pp

## Discounts:

- \$100 discount for kids under 18
- \$50 discount for paying by check
- Additional discounts available for groups of 9 or more

## Includes:

In-country transport, meals, lodging, activities, guides, and a donation to turtle conservation.

## Excludes:

Airfare to Costa Rica, personal items, and tips for the guide and driver.

## Notes:

- Minimum recommended age is 8 years, under 18 needs to be accompanied by an adult.
- Group size is limited to 15 people maximum.

Worry-Free Cancellation Policy

# Detailed Itinerary

## DAY 1: ARRIVE TO SAN JOSE

Fly into San Jose International Airport (SJO) anytime on the first scheduled day. Our guides pick you up from the airport and take you to La Rosa de America, a comfortable hotel near the airport in Alajuela with lovely gardens and a pool. Dinner the first night is not included (available at the hotel for \$10 pp.) The guide will meet you in the morning.

## DAY 2: DRIVE TO THE OSA PENINSULA

Wake up with a delicious Costa Rica breakfast buffet of eggs, gallo pinto (Costa Rica's famous breakfast rice and beans), fresh tropical fruit, and more. After breakfast, you'll head to the South Pacific coast in a private vehicle (about a 5-6 hour drive depending on breaks and traffic). Along the way, you will stop for lunch and take in the beautiful views, including a bridge where you can spot giant crocodiles (from a safe distance). After settling in to your cabins, researchers from our partner Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST) will give an orientation to the turtle research and train you in data collection techniques. This evening, relax and get a good night's sleep. Overnight at Delfines de Golfo, a simple family lodge with electricity, air conditioning, private bath with hot water, and TVs.

## DAY 3: SEA TURTLE RESEARCH

Today is all about sea turtles. Head out in a shaded boat with researchers to help set nets in key turtle spots (timing dependent on the tide). You will have the opportunity to help bring in the turtles, measure them, and perhaps even tag them. You'll be looking mainly for green turtles and hawksbills, which are both endangered. The Golfo Dulce (Sweet Gulf) is generally a very calm body of water and great for swimming. Once you arrive to the research spots (15-20 minute boat ride), the staff will set out the nets and participants can hop in the water to help stretch out the nets. The boats will then take the group ashore, where you can spread out a towel on the beach or grass and enjoy the morning. The staff will stay with the nets and bring in the turtles when caught. Once the turtle is brought ashore, a variety of tasks will be split up among the staff and volunteers, including measuring the shell and tail, attaching a metal tag to the turtle's front flipper, taking a tissue sample, and recording the data. In between turtles, you are free to swim in the calm waters, take a walk up the beach to look



#### **DAY 4: MANGROVE RESTORATION**

Today, you will be protecting sea turtles by land, by supporting reforestation and organic farming. This morning, you will participate in LAST's mangrove reforestation program by working in the nursery and planting young trees. Mangroves are critical habitat for juvenile sea turtles, fish, and other ocean life and this area has lost much of its mangrove forests over the past few decades (the wood is popular for construction). We will also help in their small turtle rescue center if there are turtles present. (B, L, D)

#### **DAY 5: MANGROVES & CHOCOLATE**

Today you'll visit a nearby organic farm to taste a variety of fruits from around the world and to learn about the origins of chocolate, which is native to this region. Pesticides and other chemicals from farms can cause illness in sea turtles, so supporting organic methods is an important way to protect the ocean. You will see the entire process of making chocolate, from growing cacao to harvesting, drying, fermenting and of course tasting, finishing up with a dark chocolate fondue. There will be some additional downtime in the afternoon. (B, L, D)

#### **DAY 6: HAWKSBILL TURTLE RESEARCH**

Today you will be studying hawksbill sea turtles, which are critically endangered around the world primarily due to the trade in products made from their shells. These turtles are also usually juveniles and are smaller than the greens, averaging 2-3 feet in length and 30-40 lbs. You will collect data including their length and width, check their shells for parasites (not a risk for humans), and weigh and tag them before releasing back to the water. You can take a swim in the beautiful Golfo Dulce, explore the coastline to look for macaws, sloths, and other wildlife, or help clean up plastic that washes ashore. (B, L, D)

#### **DAY 7: RETURN TO THE CENTRAL VALLEY**

Today, after breakfast, the group will pack up the bus and head back north to San Jose. The drive will be broken up with lunch and a walk along the way, getting back to the city in the afternoon. Feel free to take a walk in the city and visit a museum if time allows, before joining the group for a celebratory dinner on the town this evening. Overnight at La Rosa de America. (B, L, D)

#### **DAY 8: DEPART**

Head out from the hotel in time to catch your flight or extend your stay and visit other parts of this beautiful country. (B)



# Sea Turtle

## Research Information

### **In-Water Turtle Monitoring**

Foraging sea turtles are mainly found in shallow (<100 feet), hard-bottom substrates or seagrass beds in coastal areas and in some cases around coral reefs. By sampling the Golfo Dulce, it is possible to gain information on the demographic structure of the population, such as the abundance of immature, adults, male and non-breeding females, and their behavior.

Once a sea turtle is caught, they are untangled from the net, taken into the boat, and brought ashore. We check every individual for wounds or anomalies. Then we take data of the biometry of the turtle (length and width of the carapace, weight, and other data) and tag them with metal and PIT tags in case the sea turtle doesn't have any tag, and take tissue samples to examine the mitochondrial DNA to reconstruct the lineage of the females. All the data (size, tag-number, sample numbers) needs to be recorded in a clean and correct manner and research staff is there to help volunteers.



# Our Conservation Partner

## Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST)

The mission of LAST is to improve the conservation status of the marine turtles in Costa Rica. Their projects include nesting beach conservation projects in the Osa Peninsula and elsewhere. To date, we have donated more than \$20,000 to protect leatherback turtles along Costa Rica's Caribbean coast and sent dozens of volunteers to participate in their projects. [Learn more about LAST on their website.](#)

## Osa In-Water Research Project

The project Osa In-Water is located on Playa Blanca, close to Puerto Jiménez on the Osa Peninsula in the southern Pacific province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica. The surrounding landscape of Playa Blanca is a lot of flat farmland, however most of the Osa Peninsula is under some kind of protection. The reason why is because this area is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots worldwide, with a vast variety of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects.

The Golfo Dulce, the body of water between the mainland and the Osa Peninsula, is one of just four tropical fjords worldwide and hosts a fascinating variety of marine life, including sea turtles, two species of dolphins, and at some points during the year humpback whales and whale sharks.





# Background Information

## Green Sea Turtles

The green turtle is the second largest after the leatherback. They can weigh up to 500 lbs (225 kg) and reach four feet (1.2 m) in length. The adult is an herbivore, dining on sea grasses, seaweeds, algae and other forms of marine plant life. Their beak is sharp and finely serrated, perfectly adapted for grazing in seagrass beds and scraping algae off of hard surfaces. This species can be found in the sub-tropics and tropics worldwide, with major nesting beaches in Tortuguero (Costa Rica), Oman, Florida, and Raine Island (Australia) where thousands of turtles nest each night during peak nesting season. The green turtles you find in the Pacific are also known as black turtles due to their darker shells.

Most scientists believe that black turtles are a sub-species of green turtles but some believe they are a different species.

[Learn more about green turtles on our website.](#)



Photo: Hal Brindley



Photo: Neil Ever Osborne

## Hawksbill Sea Turtles

Considered by many to be the most beautiful of sea turtles for their colorful shells, the hawksbill is found in tropical waters around the world. They spend their time in coral reefs, rocky areas, lagoons, mangroves, oceanic islands, and shallow coastal areas. Named for its narrow head and sharp, bird-like beak, hawksbills can reach into cracks and crevices of coral reefs looking for food. Their diet is very specialized, feeding almost exclusively on sponges. One of the smaller turtles, adults weigh between 100-200 pounds (45 - 90 kg) and reach 2-3 feet (roughly .5 to 1 meter) in length.

[Learn more about their diet.](#)

This species inhabits tropical and some sub-tropical regions in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. The largest populations occur in the Caribbean Sea, the Seychelles, Indonesia, Mexico, and Australia. Hawksbills are not found in the Mediterranean and few are found in US waters; only a handful nest in Florida each year. [Learn more about hawksbill turtles on our website.](#)



# Accommodations

## La Rosa de America

Located in Alajuela, a short drive from Juan Santamaria Airport, La Rosa de America is an oasis of lush gardens and special amenities, close to the most beautiful and popular sights and attractions in and around the Central Valley. They have a lovely pool, excellent breakfasts, and is quiet and secure. The group will stay here on the first and last nights of the trip.



## Delfines de Osa

Another family-owned lodge (our favorite kind of lodge) in the small town of La Palma, located about a mile from Playa Blanca, where the research station is based. Delfines is on the edge of town in a secure spot. Each individual cabin comes with a private bathroom (with hot water), television, fan, and air conditioner. Some rooms come with bunk beds for kids. Meals are prepared on site and vegetarians are easily accommodated. A small above ground pool is great for a quick dip on hot days and bikes are available to take a ride through town or over to the beach.



Photos: Hal Brindley

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Turtle Issues

### **Am I guaranteed to see a sea turtle?**

As with most wild animals, there is never a guarantee to see a sea turtle (they are endangered of course). However, the research team does catch turtles most of the times they set the nets. Green turtles are more likely to be found than hawksbills. In this part of the country, the turtles forage in the Gulf and there aren't distinguishable seasons when it is more or less likely to see a sea turtle.

### **Should I worry about poachers?**

Nope. This trip does not involve walking a nesting beach so no poachers around here. We do send people to turtle nesting beaches in Costa Rica on other trips, but we are confident of the safety of every place we sent people.

### **How does this trip benefit turtle conservation?**

Of the \$1,995 cost, \$425 of that (21%) goes to Latin American Sea Turtles for in-water monitoring and funds that support our Billion Baby Turtles (which helps save 500 hatchlings) and Too Rare To Wear programs and general operations. The trip also includes 2 volunteer shifts helping collect data on green and hawksbill turtles. [Learn more about our Conservation Impact Pricing.](#)

### **Will I get to do every volunteer job on the trip?**

As we can't guarantee that you will see a sea turtle, we also can't guarantee you'll get to do every job in the volunteer program. We hope to give every participant the opportunity to do each job but it depends on the number of participants, the number of turtles encountered, and the individual circumstances with each turtle (sometimes more complicated situations require the researchers to do specific jobs). Generally the tagging and tissue sampling are done only by research staff. If there is one specific job you really want to do, let your guide know and they will do his best to accommodate your request. Check out the Turtle Research section to learn more.



# Logistical/Travel Questions

## Can I call home or check my email while in Costa Rica?

Calling home from Costa Rica can be expensive. For email, you should not rely on or expect to be able to get online while on the trip. The cabins at this project have WiFi in the main kitchen but it can be very spotty and often does not work. Cell phones from the US or Canada often do not work or automatically switch you to a local service which activates international roaming fees. If you plan to bring a cell phone, please check with your provider about coverage and cost.

## Are the electrical outlets the same as in the US?

The voltage in Costa Rica is the same as the states. However, most outlets are 2 prong instead of 3 prong, so if you are bringing something that needs 3 prongs you need to bring an adapter.

## Can I go to an ATM in Costa Rica?

Although there are ATMs in Costa Rica, much of the time you will be in places where they are not available. And in places where they do have ATMs, they don't always work. The bottom line – while you may be able to get cash from ATMs, don't count on it.

## How should I handle medications I need to bring?

If you plan to bring personal medicine to Costa Rica, please consider the following:

- Carry just the necessary quantity, which is the quantity normally used by a person having your health problem.
- Bring a prescription or a written statement from your doctor, specifying that the medicine is being used under his/her control and that you need it for your physical health.
- Have the medicines labeled or properly identified.

## Do I need any vaccinations before going?

Since we are not doctors, we cannot give you advice on vaccinations. We recommend speaking with your doctor or visiting a travel clinic. You can also [check the CDC website for Costa Rica](#) for the most up-to-date information.

## What is the weather like on Costa Rica's Pacific coast?

There are two seasons in this part of Costa Rica. The dry season (aka summer) lasts from December to May. The rainy season (aka winter) is from July to November though its generally only October and November where the weather gets bad, otherwise it rains but usually not all day.



Photo: James Richard

# Eco-Friendly Travel

SEE Turtles strives to reduce the environmental impact of our trips wherever possible. Sometimes we need help from you, the traveler, so here are some ways that we (and you) can help.

## Tortoiseshell Jewelry

Did you know that tortoiseshell is actually hawksbill sea turtle shell? This is a major threat to hawksbills, which are critically endangered. Souvenirs made from their shells include bracelets, earrings, guitar picks, and combs. Below is a photo to recognizing these items and we encourage our travelers not only to not purchase these items but also to refuse to purchase from stores that offer them and to alert your guide when you see these items for sale. [Learn more at TooRareToWear.org](http://TooRareToWear.org).

## Reducing Plastic Use

Another major threat to sea turtles is plastic in the ocean, which can be confused for jellyfish. SEE Turtles is a member of "Travelers Against Plastic," an organization that reduces plastic waste created on vacation. We encourage travelers to bring reusable water bottles to refill; you can go through as many as 15-20 bottles on one trip per person. Another suggestion is to ask for no straws with your drinks. Souvenirs can be stored in day packs instead of disposable bags.

## Reef-Friendly Sunscreen

Did you know that sunscreen can damage coral reefs? The ingredient "oxybenzone" has been found to cause harm in even very small quantities and an estimated 4,000 - 6,000 tons per year. Look for sunscreen without this ingredient (zinc oxide or titanium oxide are both safe), or wear a shirt while swimming to reduce the need for sunscreen.

## Reducing Carbon Emissions

Travel by it's nature is very carbon-intensive. Some ways you can reduce your emissions include leaving electronic devices at home, using fans instead of AC, by turning of AC, fans, and lights when not at hotels or cabins, and by using public transportation when possible. For sites with limited electricity, you can purchase a solar powered charger to recharge small electronics. You can also purchase carbon offsets. One we recommend is "Seagrass Grow" a program with our former organization The Ocean Foundation. The offsets are used to restore important seagrass beds, which are important habitat for green sea turtles.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY & AVOID HAWKSBILL TURTLESHELL

Endangered hawksbill turtles are hunted for their shells to make souvenirs. Help save this turtle by avoiding vendors selling turtleshell products.

IMITATION		TURTLESHELL	
	<b>PLASTIC</b> Uniform pattern with markings		<b>COLOR</b> Browns, oranges, amber, yellow
	<b>COCONUT</b> Brown on top, beige underneath		<b>PATTERN</b> Assymetric and irregular shapes
	<b>HORN</b> Heavy with black/white coloring		<b>SURFACE</b> Color pattern visible throughout

# Travel Insurance...



## That Saves Baby Turtles!

SEE Turtles partners with World Nomads to offer world-class travel insurance for your next trip. World Nomads is a socially responsible travel insurance company that has a great record of customer service. When you use World Nomads insurance, they will donate 10% of the cost of the policy to help save baby sea turtles through our Billion Baby Turtles program. Through their Footprints Network, they have helped to save more than 20,000 baby turtles in Cuba, El Salvador, and elsewhere!

World Nomads covers a wide range of activities and helps with trip cancellation, lost baggage, medical bills, theft, and more. No matter whether you travel with us, another operator, or on your own, this insurance will have you covered and have a real impact on conservation efforts. [Click here](#) to get a fast free quote for a policy for your next trip.

[Click For A Quote](#)



# Recommended Packing List

Pack in a duffel bag/suitcase/backpack that you can carry yourself and a day pack.

\* Indicates required items.

## Clothing

- Bathing suit and beach towel
- Water shoes or sandals
- 3-4 Pairs socks
- 3-4 Pairs shorts
- 5-6 T-shirts or short sleeve shirts
- Rain gear or poncho
- Sun hat for the beach
- Underwear, pajamas or sleepwear
- Sandals for beach walking
- Wetsuit for snorkeling
- Warmer clothes for evenings (long pants, light jacket)

## Toiletries

- Comb/brush
- Biodegradable shampoo/soap
- Sunscreen 30+ (waterproof and reef-friendly)
- Insect repellent & after-bite stick
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste/toothbrush
- Washcloth & beach towel
- Hand Sanitizer (small bottle)

## Other Stuff

- Prescription medications (in carry on baggage)
- Refillable bottle for water (clean water will be provided).
- Passport and a photocopy of passport (kept separately)
- Money for souvenirs and personal items
- Camera & spare battery
- Binoculars (your guide may also have a pair)
- Small flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Large ziplock bags for wet clothes & shoes
- Ziplock bags for electronics
- Sunglasses



Photo: James Richard

# About Us

SEE Turtles was launched in 2008 as the world's first effort to protect these species through ecotourism. Since then, we have expanded to include educational programs and our Billion Baby Turtles project. To date, we have brought more than 1,300 people to visit turtle projects, generated more than US \$1 million for turtle conservation and local communities, saved more than 2 million turtle hatchlings at more than 20 projects around the world, and reached more than 10,000 students with our educational programs.

SEE Turtles is an independent 501c3 organization based in Oregon. We received the 2019 Changemakers Award from the World Travel & Tourism Council for our work to protect wildlife through travel. SEE Turtles is an independent 501c3 organization based in Oregon.



[www.SEEturtles.org](http://www.SEEturtles.org)  
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Photo: Juan Ma Gonzalez



# Terms & Conditions

## Payment Policies

Full payment of the total price of the expedition is due no later than 60 days (2 months) before departure. Travelers can choose to do monthly payments (the balance of the trip cost after deposit, divided evenly between the remaining months before the final payment is due) or pay 50% of the balance at 120 days before the trip with the remaining balance due 60 days before the trip. Monthly payment plans are unavailable within 4 months of trip departure. We reserve the right to cancel a reservation if payment is not made on time. In such cases, all payments are non-refundable.

## Cancellation Policy:

If you cancel your space, it must be in writing and is effective the day we receive it in our office. Your cancellation will entitle you to a refund of any deposit or payment made to us, less a cancellation fee, according to the following schedule:

- 180 days or more prior to departure: \$100.00
- 120 to 179 days prior to departure: \$300.00
- 60 to 119 days prior to departure: 50% of expedition fee
- 59 days or less prior to departure: 100% of expedition fee

Cancellation fees can be used towards future SEE Turtles trips with no penalties or expiration except in the case of cancellations within 60 days prior to departure, when payments to local providers has already been completed. Any fees paid can be deducted from a future trip, based on available dates for cancellations made before 60 days prior to departure.

## Transfers:

Depending on availability, you may transfer from one trip to another four months prior to departure at no charge. If you transfer less than four months prior to departure, you may be subject to the cancellation fees. Registration fees paid may be transferred to another traveler up until 2 months before departure with prior notice provided. In some cases, transfers may be made less than 2 months before departure.

## Cancelled Trips:

We reserve the right to cancel any trip prior to scheduled departure due to not meeting our minimum number required or logistical problems (vessel breakdown, strikes, etc.). You may transfer to another expedition or we will refund all payments made to SEE Turtles in full. In no event, however, shall our liability exceed the obligation to refund the amount you paid to us. Trip cancellation due to too few registrations normally occurs at a minimum of two months prior to departure. Refunds will not be given for individual hotel rooms, meals, sightseeing trips, or expedition arrangements for any reason. Expedition costs are quoted as a package; credits are not given for services not used.

## Trip Cost Includes:

Accommodations, airport transfers as specified in the trip itinerary, excursions, entrance fees, local guides, most permits, and meals, unless otherwise indicated in the itinerary. SEE Turtles reserves the right to make any changes in the itinerary or to substitute hotels, modes of transport, or guides, for those mentioned in the literature if circumstances require it.

## Trip Cost Does Not Include:

The cost of international air to the tour starting point (unless otherwise indicated in the itinerary) airport taxes, passport and visa fees, immunizations, insurance of any kind, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, gratuities, excess baggage, items of a personal nature, medical costs, costs of hospitalization, additional expenses arising from the delay or extension of a trip due to weather, political disputes, illness, failure of transportation, or other causes beyond our control.

## Children on Trips:

Some SEE Turtles trips are suitable for children, depending on the child's age and experience. Anyone under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please call before sending a trip deposit for anyone under 18 years of age.

**Unexpected Trip Costs:** We reserve the right to raise the trip fee if there are cost increases beyond our control. These cases are extremely rare and would only occur where unforeseen cost increases from suppliers would result in a financial loss for the organization. In these cases, registered clients are given the option to transfer or cancel with no penalties.

**Transfers:** Depending on availability, you may transfer from one trip to another four months prior to departure at no charge. If you transfer less than four months prior to departure, you may be subject to the cancellation fees. Registration fees paid may be transferred to another traveler up until 2 months before departure with prior notice provided. In some cases, transfers may be made less than 2 months before departure.

**Travel Protection Policy:** We require all participants to obtain individual travel insurance to protect yourself and your equipment. Travel insurance may reimburse you for non-refundable air and expedition costs should you need to cancel or interrupt your trip. The carrier can be any insurance provider but we can provide recommendations. Proof of insurance is required before participating on the trip.

**Accommodations:** Land accommodations are based on double occupancy unless otherwise indicated in the trip description. We can try to match single travelers of the same sex but some trips require a single supplement if single rooms are preferred to there is no match available.

**Single Travelers:** If you are a single traveler wishing to share accommodations, we will try to match you with a roommate. If no roommate becomes available, you may be required to pay the Single Supplement Fee listed in the trip description if applicable. If you request a single, private room you must pay the Single Supplement Fee listed in the trip description regardless of sign-up date. Please note that single accommodations are not always available.

**Budget Airfare Caution:** We recommend against buying non-refundable airline tickets until your trip departure has been confirmed (usually a minimum of 90 days before departure). Budget air tickets often carry restrictions and you risk penalties in the event of itinerary or date changes or trip cancellation. Please await confirmation of the trip before purchasing non-refundable airfare.

**Withdrawal:** SEE Turtles reserves the right to require any participant to withdraw from an expedition at any time if the expedition director deems his/her acts or conduct to be detrimental to or incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort, or welfare of the expedition. In such cases, no refunds will be given.

**Medical Issues:** Although SEE Turtles trips are not generally very physically demanding, you must be in general good health to participate. It is the passengers' responsibility to judge the appropriateness of their physical capabilities to these travel activities. Anyone with medical problems or restrictions must make them known to us well in advance of the trip and should have a personal supply of any special medications they may need. The trip leader has the right to disqualify any member from the group at any time if considered medically necessary; no refund will be made under such circumstances. SEE Turtles and its affiliates take no responsibility for special arrangements required by passengers physically unable to complete a trip and assume no liability regarding provision of medical care or medical evacuation.

**Release Forms:** On some trips you may need to sign an additional release form by our local partners and/or tour operators.

**Suppliers of Services:** SEE Turtles is performing a non-profit service by informing potential participants of worthwhile expeditions. However, SEE Turtles is acting independently and has no business association as partner or joint venture with any boat owner, resort, hotel, carrier, SCUBA operation, or other services. Any claims for inadequate performance or non-performance of services may be made against the supplier of those services but shall not be made against SEE Turtles.

**SCUBA Diving:** SEE Turtles does not offer SCUBA diving as part of any of our trips. Participants may participate in diving while on a trip but acknowledges that SEE Turtles has no responsibility for the actions, performance, or equipment of any SCUBA services offered by hotels or dive shops. We recommend that any travelers planning to dive while on a SEE Turtles trip research the safety record of the operators and obtain additional divers insurance.