

A gap year to remember – Raleigh announces its new projects

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While for many, gap years may have become synonymous with whiling away months lazing on the beach, propping up the bar at an English-themed pub or trampling well-trodden tourist trails like hundreds of thousands before, gappers embarking on an expedition with youth and education charity Raleigh can expect an altogether more unique, memorable and worthwhile experience on their year out.

An array of exciting new projects in Borneo, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and India has just been unveiled, if protecting tigers from poachers; bringing safe drinking water to poor communities; climbing active volcanoes or living in one of the largest untouched rainforests in the world sounds a more memorable gap year than throwing shapes in a dodgy nightclub or getting your tongue-pierced, that is?

Borneo

Raleigh's volunteers heading to Borneo could find themselves working in the world-renowned Danum Valley which is home to endangered species including the Sumatran rhino, elephant, clouded leopard and orang-utan – where environmental projects will include extending trails, constructing animal hides and building satellite camps, as well as collecting data for scientists on elephants or insects for example. Described as possibly the largest untouched rainforest in Borneo, if not the world, environmental projects in the Imbak Canyon Conservation Area will also include building basic infrastructure, developing trails through the jungle and constructing bridges across rivers.

Community projects will see Raleigh volunteers living with local families, providing a rare chance to experience life well away from the tourist trappings in rural Borneo. Volunteers will be constructing kindergartens in remote communities; will be installing much-needed gravity-fed water systems to provide safe drinking water; as well as constructing community centres and libraries in off-the-beaten-track locations.

Adventure projects include scuba diving on the coral reefs of the Tungku Abdul Rahman Marine Park whilst conducting survey work and underwater clean-up operations; trekking across arduous and physically challenging terrain in Long Pasia – an area historically inhabited by head hunting tribes; as well as trekking in remote, unspoilt rainforests.

Raleigh's expeditions to Borneo, for 17 to 24 year old venturers, depart on 30 September; 24 October and 14 November 2008. Volunteer managers aged 25+ undertake in-country training and so spend approximately three weeks longer on expedition than venturers.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua

Costa Rica and Nicaragua is Raleigh's only expedition with projects in two countries, and volunteers departing in 2008 will often have the chance to take part in worthwhile projects in both diverse locations.

Community projects will include living with local families whilst constructing schools and community centres in Nicaragua – one of the poorest countries in the northern hemisphere; as well as the chance to help construct schools in indigenous communities in Costa Rica. Projects

to supply clean drinking water to thousands of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans will also be undertaken by Raleigh volunteers.

Costa Rica is home to lush rainforests and a coastline teeming with life, and environmental projects will see Raleigh volunteers building rangers stations and wildlife observation towers as well as clearing trails in national parks. Adventure projects are set to include ambitious and arduous treks from coast-to-coast in Costa Rica; as well as the chance to ascend the active volcano Concepción in Nicaragua.

Raleigh's expeditions to Costa Rica and Nicaragua, for 17 to 24 year old venturers, depart on 10 October; 3 November and 23 November 2008. Volunteer managers aged 25+ undertake in-country training and so spend approximately three weeks longer on expedition than venturers.

India

Launched earlier this year, India is Raleigh's newest expedition destination. New community projects announced for forthcoming expeditions to India include constructing rainwater harvesting systems in rural villages in Karnataka, in order to provide safe and sustainable drinking water throughout the year. Venturers will also be constructing a traditional community centre for tribal villagers in Ragiv Gandhi National Park in Karnataka, whilst living and working alongside local families.

Environmental projects announced include working with WWF India to construct an anti-poaching camp in the Biligiri Rangathan Temple Wildlife Sanctuary to enable better protection of natural resources such as sandalwood and medicinal plants, as well as putting a stop to poaching of endangered species such as tigers and elephants.

Adventure projects in India take place in Kerala and include an intense trek through national parks on a route that rises to altitudes of up to 2,500m and culminates at the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Then there is cycling on a route towards the Arabian Sea, followed by kayaking in the unspoilt backwaters.

Raleigh's expeditions to India, for 17 to 24 year old venturers, depart on 10 October; 3 November and 23 November 2008. Volunteer managers aged 25+ undertake in-country training and so spend approximately three weeks longer on expedition than venturers.

Fundraising targets for venturers on all of the expeditions are £1,500 for four weeks; £1,750 for five weeks; £2,250 for seven weeks and £2,995 for ten weeks. To apply, or to find out more information about Raleigh, visit www.raleighinternational.org or call 020 7183 1270.

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Ends

Notes to Editors:



News release

Raleigh

Raleigh is a youth and education charity. Since 1984 our expeditions have inspired 30,000 people from all walks of life, nationalities and ages to be all they can be, helping them develop new skills, friendships and make a difference to communities and environments across the world.

We all have an expedition inside us. Find yours at www.raleighinternational.org