



Volunteer Guidelines

- 1) [Introduction](#)
- 2) [What to bring](#)
- 3) [What is provided](#)
- 4) [How to get to REGUA](#)
- 5) [Settling in](#)
- 6) [Infrastructure](#)
- 7) [Routine](#)
- 8) [House rules](#)
- 9) [Leisure time](#)
- 10) [Precautions](#)
- 11) [Contact information](#)

1) Introduction

Welcome to REGUA!

REGUA directors and staff are delighted to have you here and we sincerely hope that your stay with us will be a very enriching experience in your life! Thank you for choosing REGUA as your destination.

REGUA is a non-governmental organization whose mission is the protection of the Guapiaçu river catchment situated within the 3rd district of Cachoeiras de Macacu Municipality. REGUA protects an area of around 7000 hectares of Atlantic Rain Forest covering a wide altitudinal range from 30 m a.s.l to nearly 2,000 m a.s.l. The higher areas of REGUA, where the most pristine forests are found, are included in the newly created Três Picos State Park. The Atlantic Rainforest is one of Unesco's World Natural Heritage or Biosphere Reserve and is under Brazilian Federal protection. REGUA staff and activities are largely funded by BART (Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest Trust) and the World Land Trust based in England.

The Volunteer programme started in 2006 and the results from this initiative have been extremely positive: There has been a genuine and fruitful interaction between volunteers and our staff, which both parties seem to have benefited from. Our staff has been impressed by the volunteers' enthusiasm and seriousness when tackling the different array of activities in the reserve.

REGUA works with:

- Ecotourism
- Research
- Environmental Education
- Restoration of degraded areas
- Protection of the forest

Ecotourism: The Guapi Assu Bird Lodge caters for up to 18 visitors. The majority of are birdwatchers from Europe and the USA who enjoy walking through our very complete trail system in the forest and around the wetlands area. Visitor numbers are steadily increasing. All the proceeds go towards the REGUA conservation project. There is a very solid infrastructure to back this activity with staff comprising of a driver, several cooks, a handy-man and a gardener. We started promoting the Lodge through "word of mouth" with very good results but more recently visitors come via the website www.regua.co.uk. Our bird list is revised frequently and at present we have over 460 different bird species, with 120 endemics.

Research: Amongst other projects, REGUA is involved in a Red-billed Curassow reintroduction project with a biologist on site to monitor its progress. These birds (*Crax Blumenbachii*) are a threatened species and have been hunted out to extinction in our state of Rio de Janeiro over 100 years ago. The curassows which have arrived at REGUA are part of a captive breeding project in the state of Minas Gerais with whom REGUA has links.

Environmental Education: The Young Rangers Programme: this programme is proving very successful and consists of a weekly gathering at our Conservation Centre of youngsters between the ages of 7-16 with the objective of raising their environmental awareness and their knowledge of the Atlantic Rain Forest biome. We hope that the young rangers, who are part of this project, will in turn, become committed advocates for the conservation of nature and specifically of this very special ecosystem which is the Atlantic Rain Forest. We intend having school children from our entire municipality

visiting the reserve under the supervision of our environmental education officer. These visits consist of guided walks around the wetlands and some activities in the classroom.

Restoration of degraded areas: We have successfully restored an area of old wetlands which were drained in the 70s for cattle grazing. It is an area of approximately 45 hectares which will provide food and shelter for myriads of life forms. We have re-introduced an arboreal anaerobic climax species (*Tabebuia Cassinoides*). Aquatic avifauna is gradually increasing with over 100 species recorded so far. We have planted trees around the wetlands and on newly acquired land as part of our restoration project with the rangers help. REGUA has established its own nursery where seeds collected in the forest are grown into saplings for planting.

Protection of the forest: For this purpose, we count on 10 rangers (all of them ex-hunters from adjacent communities to REGUA) who walk through the forest on a daily basis making sure that there are no hunters and forest fires. They are also in charge of keeping the trail system clean of vegetation ensuring easy access to the forest for visitors and the different research activities in it.

2) What to bring

Suggested Clothing

- Working clothes that can get dirty, torn etc.
- Long trousers and long sleeved tops for in the forest
- Waterproofs
- Clothes for hot weather
- Jumpers for night-time
- Clothes for leisure time
- Good walking boots or shoes
- Open shoes e.g. sandals or flip-flops (which are available for £3 in Brazil)
- Swim wear
- Hat
- Hairdryer
- Small padlock for locking any valuable items in the lockers provided

Necessities

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Anti-itch cream
- Antiseptic cream
- Alarm clock
- Flash light

Recommended items

- USB pen
- Camera
- Batteries
- MP3 player or music
- Note book

- Plug socket converter (2 round pin plug)
- First aid kit (plasters, medical tape, bandages, pain killers, anti-diarrhea pills, rehydration sachets, butterfly strips/steri-strips)
- Folding umbrella

3) What is provided

3 meals a day, except Saturday evenings and all day on Sundays

Bed linen and towels

Laundry

Internet

Library

Lockers for valuables

Facilities

TV and DVD player

Ping-pong and Billiard table

Games: Monopoly, Scrabble and Uno

4) How to get to REGUA

Collection

A pick-up can be arranged from the airport or hostels in Rio de Janeiro to REGUA. This will cost US\$180. Pick-ups can be arranged between 6 am to 9 pm. If you arrive later, there are some very good hostels in Rio to stay in.

By bus/taxi

At the airport it is possible to take a bus to the Rodoviaria (bus station) in Rio de Janeiro, around 10 reais. Taxis are also available at the entrance. They vary in price, so always ask before you get in. At the Rodoviaria, look for the 1001 bus company and buy a ticket to Cachoeiras de Macacu. This is the bus that goes to Nova Friburgo. The ticket will cost a little less than 20 reais. If you do not know where to get off, ask the driver to tell you when the bus stops at the Rodoviaria of Cachoeiras de Macacu, it takes about 1.5 hours to get there. There you can take a bus of Coletivo de Guapiaçu company. The bus that stops directly outside REGUA goes to Areal and is around the corner from the number 8 bus stop. You can also take the bus to Guapiaçu at the number 8 bus stop. On this bus you will be required to walk 15 minutes to REGUA from the bus stop. Ask the driver to tell you when it is time get off. There you take the road in front of the bus stop. After crossing the first bridge, take the first road on your left and after the second bridge you find the reserve on your right side.

Bus services

Areal to Cachoeiras	Monday to Saturday- 6:30 am 10:30 am and 2:10 pm Sunday- 10:30 am
---------------------	--

Cachoeiras to Areal	Monday to Saturday- 9:00 am 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm Sunday- 5:00 pm
---------------------	---

Guapiaçu to Cachoeiras	Monday to Saturday- 6:40 am 10:40 am and 3:40 pm Sunday- 6:40 am and 5:00 pm
Cachoeiras to Guapiaçu	Monday and Wednesday- 9:00 am 1:30 pm and 5:30 pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday- 9:00 am 2:00 pm and 5:30 pm Saturday- 9:00 am 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm Sunday- 9:00 am and 5:00 pm

5) Settling in

Climate

Situated in the tropical South Atlantic, Rio de Janeiro state is warm all year round. Summers, between November and March, are very hot and humid, and temperatures vary between 20-40°C. Summer is the rainy season, while winter is the dry season. Winters (June to September) are cool and dry with temperatures from 15-30°C, and night times can get cold, with some precipitation.

Creepy crawlies

Coming to a tropical rainforest means getting used to the variety of insects and other pleasant and less pleasant animals. Mosquitos, ants, sandflies and some other biting or stinging insects are the biggest problem for most volunteers. Even with good insect repellent, there is a good chance of being bitten. A good anti-itch cream is the best solution, and if you still scratch a lot, some anti-septic cream. It is important to take good care of these bites. Some people have had to take antibiotics after infection of insect bites, but this is usually due to scratching with dirty nails and not washing out the wounds enough. Luckily there is no danger from malaria or yellow fever in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Luxuries

Brazil is a developing country, and has almost the same facilities as Western countries. Some luxuries however are less available. Internet can be slow but is constantly improving. Similarly, some mobile phones will not get reception here but this is increasingly improving.

Cultural differences

Brazil is known as a melting pot for a very great variety of cultures and origins. Being at REGUA gives you a good opportunity to get to know the Brazilian way of life. There are of course some differences between Brazilian culture and Western culture. Even if you do not agree with some of the visions, have respect for other people's lifestyle.

People here are very friendly, helpful and open, but hardly anybody speaks English. It comes in handy to learn some Portuguese or to take a phrasebook with you to REGUA. Most volunteers pick up some basic Portuguese while staying here.

6) Infrastructure

REGUA facilities

There are four volunteer houses, casa 1, 2, 3 and 4. In total there are 9 rooms, each with 2 beds. Depending on the number of volunteers, you can have your own room. Each house has a bathroom, with shower and toilet. Hot water is not always guaranteed.

The visitors' centre has a kitchen, a dining room, a classroom with TV and DVD-player, which can be used by the volunteers after work-hours, an office with 2 rooms, one for REGUA staff and one for volunteers and researchers. Both rooms have computers with internet access and a toilet. Finally there is a storage room, where equipment is stored. There are plans to further develop the infrastructure of the centre. Near the conservation centre there is a toilet bloc.

On the top of the hill you can find the Lodge, where the tourists stay. It has a pool and a veranda with humming-bird feeders.

At the bottom of the hill you will find casa 1, 2 and 3, near to the wetlands. A trail starts at the visitors' centre and goes around the wetlands.

Surroundings

Located 4 km away you can find Guapiaçu. This local village has a shop and several bars. To get to Guapiaçu, on leaving REGUA turn left, at the end of the road turn left again. Follow this road for about 3 km until you arrive at a crossroad where you can find a small church on your right. Turn right and follow the road until you come across a footbridge. After crossing this bridge you turn left. Follow the road until you enter the town.

Located 3 km away you can find Matumbo, a small local village which also has some bars and a shop from where you can buy basic necessities. To get to Matumbo, on leaving REGUA turn right and follow the road until you see the shop on the crossroads. Cachoeiras de Macacu is the nearest sizeable town at a distance of 32 km from Guapiaçu. There are a number of larger shops, bars, public telephones, internet services, restaurants and a regular bus service with good connections. To get there, you need to take the bus. For the bus time-table see chapter 4.

7) Routine

Recycling

We have established a recycling system, which staff and volunteers are encouraged to use. We recycle glass, plastics and paper/cardboard. The recycling bins can be found in the visitor centre.

Working hours

The working day starts at 8 am until midday when we get lunch. Work starts again at 1 pm to 4 pm.

Laundry and cleaning

Laundry and cleaning services are provided. Usually laundry takes place on a Monday and Friday. Rooms are cleaned at least once a week.

Food

Breakfast starts at 7 am. A hot buffet style lunch is served between 12 and 1 pm. There will be food left in the communal kitchen on the cooker for dinner; all you have to do is heat it. After dinner volunteers must wash their dishes, including pots and pans. On Sundays volunteers will have to buy their own food. There is also filtered water available next to the kitchen at the visitors' centre.

Toilet

In Brazil you cannot throw toilet paper in the toilet! Please throw it in the bin next to it. Otherwise the toilets get blocked.

8) House rules

We need your help in maintaining your house in order by respecting the rules that will make your stay always comfortable and pleasant.

REGUA does not provide alcoholic drinks but consumption is not prohibited. Excesses set bad examples to REGUA staff and reflect badly on the volunteer programme.

No parties are permitted during weekdays, and REGUA needs to be informed if social gatherings are organized during weekends.

REGUA charges its volunteers a monthly charge, which covers the basic costs of food and accommodation. Please pay in advance either into our UK bank account or at the reserve.

Valuables: REGUA cannot accept responsibility for valuables left unattended at the reserve. A safe is provided where the volunteer can leave their valuables such as passport and money upon request. Each Casa has a key provided which is the responsibility of the volunteers to keep locked and secure. REGUA also has a night-watchman who patrols the main accommodation area.

REGUA cannot be responsible for their volunteers safety outside working hours. REGUA is a non-profit organization registered in Brazil and students above 18 years of age are responsible for their own actions. If activity is seen to be dangerous, the student can make a decision whether he/she wishes to continue. The forests have snakes and the terrain is mountainous making for potentially hazardous health conditions. In the unlikely event, REGUA vehicles can be used to help transport to the local hospital or doctor and we can help with any language barriers to resolve any health issues.

9) Leisure time

The weekends are free and a great opportunity to see the surroundings of REGUA or some of the nearby cities or towns.

Leisure nearby

Trails with different levels of difficulty start from the conservation centre and are marked in different colours. The most popular trails are the yellow marked trail around the wetlands and the green trail, which starts from Casa Pesquisa (a 3km drive from the visitor centre) and leads to a spectacular waterfall.

It is possible to go horseback riding in the weekends. There are two horses available at REGUA which are used during the week for cattle herding. To go horseback riding, you first have to ask for permission from Nicholas or Raquel.

There is camping gear available at REGUA, so you can go camping in the forest. There are several good sites to set up a tent at the trails.

Leisure further away

The most obvious city trip is to Rio de Janeiro, which is only 2 hours away. For more info about tourist attractions in Rio, there are a lot of guides and in the hostels you can always ask someone, they will be happy to help. Be aware that Rio is quite expensive in South American terms. Most of the trips that are offered in hostels cost a lot and there are ways to do those things for a much lower price. Just ask around, you will probably find someone who knows the city. Buses are quite cheap and go almost anywhere in Rio. They also drive around at night, so it is not necessary to take a taxi. You can find free maps of Rio in the metro stations. When looking on the map, be aware that some routes go through favelas, which are not marked on it. It is advisable to avoid walking through them, so make sure you know the routes or take a bus.

Other nearby towns and cities worth visiting are: Cabo Frio, Nova Friburgo, Niterói, Petrópolis, Teresópolis and Ouro Preto.

10) Precautions

Going into the rainforest

The rainforest is full of toxic, biting, stinging, defensive and organised insects and stinging, spiked and toxic plants. So it is advisable to wear long trousers and long sleeved T-shirts and sturdy footwear. Try and stay on the trails, as there is less danger of being attacked.

Snakes

There are some very poisonous snakes present in the REGUA area but normally they disappear once they hear you coming. But you should still be careful when entering high grass or shrubs. Always wear sensible shoes in the forest – no one has yet been bitten by a snake but several people have inadvertently trodden on them!

Rain

Do not let rain stop you from taking a walk. But know that after a few days of rain, especially in the rainy season, a little water stream can turn into a wild river and steep hills can get slippery.

Heat

The summertime is very hot. At least the first few weeks you are here it is better to avoid too much sun, wear sunscreen and maybe a hat. Winter is also hot, only at night it can get chilly and you need a sweater/fleece.

Check your shoes

Before putting your feet in walking shoes, check them for spiders and other insects.

11) Contact information

Postal address:

REGUA
Caixa postal 98.104
Cachoeiras de Macacu
Estado do Rio de Janeiro
C.E.P. 28.680-000 Brasil

Phone numbers:

- The telephone of the office: 21 - 9859 - 2080
- Nicholas and Raquel personal numbers:
- 21 - 2745 - 3998
- 22 - 2533 - 3603 (Nova Friburgo)
- Alcenir: 21-9240-4896

Email address:

- aregua@terra.com.br

For further information about the REGUA project go to www.regua.co.uk.