

HANDBOOK

CAMP ALTIPLANO

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is thought for volunteers and participants of courses and experiences organized at Camp Altiplano, providing background information about the project and the location, and practical advice concerning travel, what to bring, and what to expect during your stay at Camp Altiplano.

THE ORGANISATIONS

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION CAMPS

Ecosystem Restoration Camps is a Dutch non-profit foundation that supports camps that act as research and training centres for the restoration of degraded ecosystems. They have been operating since February 2017.

Camp Altiplano, where the restoration experience is taking place, is the first camp established within the foundation, training people and supporting farmers in ecosystem restoration in the south of Spain. The 5 hectares of land where the camp is located belong to the farm La Junquera, an organic regenerative farm in the province of Murcia (Spain).

Vision

We envision a fully-functional, peaceful, abundant, biologically diverse Earth brought about through cooperative efforts for the ecological restoration of degraded lands.

Objectives

To train people in techniques for restoring land and provide practical opportunities for people to practice new approaches to landscape restoration.
To build research, training and innovation centers to engage people in ecosystem restoration.
To manage a flow of volunteers of all ages to restore agricultural and natural ecosystems
To increase the organic matter, carbon content and water retention capacity of the soil to stimulate large scale carbon sequestration

To improve the livelihoods of farmers, landowners and local communities around the camps.

FARM LA JUNQUERA

La Junquera is an organic farm and village, which is being brought back to life and transformed into a regenerative hotspot in the region. Alfonso, the owner of the farm, works in line with the 4 returns principles of Commonland: Inspiration, Social Capital, Natural Capital and Financial Capital. Diversification is at the core of this business.

The farm consists of an approximate 1100 hectares of hilly land with an average elevation of 1100 meters. Everything is organic and turning bit by bit into a fully regenerative production system: cereals, almonds, pistachio, walnuts, apples, cherries, grapevines and vegetables. Some of the land is rented out to shepherds. About 300 hectares consist of natural zones spread around the farm. The farm cows are from a local breed that was slowly being forgotten, and now is being brought back. Swales, keyline plantations, limited tilling, and ponds are amongst the practices put into place here.

La Junquera also coexists in symbiosis with multiple projects. Camp Altiplano is located on 5 hectares of the farm, bringing here volunteers and experts from all over the world. The Regeneration Academy is a knowledge hub also located on the same land, which trains international students in regenerative farming and helps the farm make better decisions on restoring landscape, biodiversity and sustainable profit.

The vision is to develop La Junquera into an inspiration for farms in the region, reviving the village and local community, generating economic activity, and restoring the degraded natural zones.





ALVELAL

Alvelal is a local organization connecting farmers, experts, researchers and the wider public. It works with regenerative agriculture and livestock management to improve soil fertility and water management. Their projects range from natural zones restoration, providing support to regenerative farms creating examples for the regions, promoting the marketing of products coming from regenerative agriculture, working with researchers and universities to create

evidence of the positive impact of regenerative practices.

Its goal is to mobilize the local society promoting the idea that a self-sufficient, dignified region full of life and prosperity is possible.

Camp Altiplano has been organizing activities in cooperation with Alvelal, and the goal is to spread the restoration efforts to the farms participating in the network, bringing participants of the courses to the broader region.

CAMP ALTIPLANO

Camp Altiplano, established in 2017, is the first venture of the Ecosystem Restoration Camps Foundation. Located on the high steppe of south-eastern Spain, at 1,200 metres of elevation and with an average annual rainfall of 250 mm, it's a very challenging case for restoration. This semi-arid ecosystem has been severely degraded by deforestation, industrial agriculture, overgrazing, water exploitation and climate change.

The first volunteers had to deal with a bare, ex-barley field, and step by step started to restore the soil, plant trees, and build a camping village to house earth

restorers who want to support restoration both on our site and in the wider region. Since the camp started thousands of trees have been planted, tons of compost has been applied, hundreds of people have participated in the activities, both in the Camp and on the surrounding farms.

Camp Altiplano is now part of a growing network of organizations and individuals working towards the regeneration of degraded land in Murcia and Andalucía. The camp connects volunteers, farmers and landowners with the goal of catalyzing restoration on a large scale.

HOW TO GET THERE

Camp Altiplano is situated in a quite remote area of the Murcian Altiplano in southern Spain, between Granada and Murcia. You can find [here](#) the exact location.

If you are not travelling to camp by car, Caravaca de la Cruz is the closest town you can reach with public transport, by bus from Alicante (once a day in the morning) or Murcia (one bus every hour).

Alternatively you can check for a ride to Caravaca de la Cruz on [blablacar.com](#) which is an affordable and popular platform for arranging lift shares in Spain. Usually we organize communal pick

ups from Caravaca to the camp when courses are starting. You will receive more information about this before your arrival.

If you are flying here, Alicante and Murcia are the closest airports. If you would like to travel to Spain by train then [The Man in Seat 61](#) and [RailEurope](#) are useful tools for planning your journey.

Please consider off-setting the carbon from your journey, especially if you need to take a flight to Spain. You can find various options for this online, or you could make a donation to the Ecosystem Restoration Camp Foundation to further support our work.



RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Depending on the season, and on the course you are participating in, you will be joining a variety of activities at camp. Here a list of possible ones to give you an idea.

- Tree planting (November-March)
- Pruning (winter)
- Plants propagation
- Erosion control earthworks
- Construction
- Monitoring
- Making and applying compost/ compost teas

WHAT TO EXPECT

You can expect astonishing views of the landscape, living in a wonderful campsite far away from city lights, surrounded by extreme peace.

The closest village, Topares, is 10 mins away by car, with one bakery, a little grocery shop and two bars. You will be learning everything about land degradation in the area, and you will hear directly from farmers about their experiences in regenerative practices. You will put

into practice techniques for land regeneration, and assist workshops taught by local experts and trained educators.

Meals and days will be shared with a varied and inspiring group of people. Cooking your meals is going to be a fundamental part of the whole experience: you will take turns to prepare delicious meals for your fellow campers. We will provide the ingredients, you add the love!



CLIMATE

Be prepared for anything: you might get sunny hot days in summer, or a 1-meter snowfall in winter. Nights, especially, are really cold, and temperatures can drop below freezing. Even in summer, temperatures go down at night. It might rain, it might get really windy,

especially in winter, or you might have to hunt for a bit of shade. Don't forget your sleeping bag for the night, and, if you are coming in winter, a warm rainproof jacket for the day. A hat and gloves won't hurt either. Drink plenty of water: we are at high altitudes, and it can get really dry.

ACCOMMODATION

The main accommodation is a strawbale house, with bunkbeds and hosting up to 14 people. We have a second little house, made of stones wood and cob, that can host two people.

If the group is larger, some of you will sleep in bell tents. Water availability is reduced at camp, as there is no drinking water source. We use water from the ponds for showers and dishwashing, and bring water from La Junquera village (4km away on a dirt road) for

drinking and cooking. Water there comes from a groundwater source tested every 6 months, and it's safe for drinking. So don't forget your water bottle.

We have a fully functional kitchen, dry compost toilets, and an outdoor shower. So please only bring biodegradable toiletry products, as everything goes back to the land. Electricity comes from solar panels, and should be used with consideration. There is phone reception but no wifi.

FOOD

We will provide all the needed groceries for breakfast, a break, lunch and dinner. You will cook the meals, preferably vegetarians. We get our food supplies from a local cooperative, which provides seasonal and local produce.

Usually we organize cooking shifts, so that everybody will cook

at least once, two people at a time, for everybody. If you have no experience in preparing large meals don't worry, you can ask us for advice and help, or find a more experienced cooking partner.

Everybody will appreciate your warm meals after a long day of work!

FACILITIES

- Dormitory
- Kitchen
- Compost toilets
- Outdoor shower

WHAT TO BRING

- Work boots/comfortable sturdy shoes
- Sleeping bag
- Thermals
- Clothes for cold temperatures and to protect from the wind (in winter)
- Gloves
- Towel
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Natural sun-cream
- Natural toiletries
- Water bottle
- Books, paper/pens, playing cards, for evenings
- A musical instrument, if you play
- Cash (there is no ATM in Topares or around, make sure you have enough cash for any extra)

COSTS

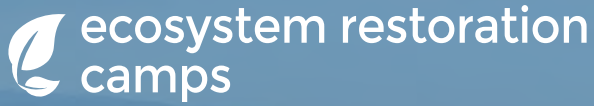
Depending on the type of experience you are joining, prices vary. You will find detailed information on our website, together with the course description. The courses cost usually covers accommodation, three meals a day and snacks, and all lessons.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about your experience at Camp Altiplano.

Email: Silvia Quarta at ercaltiplano@gmail.com

Phone +34 622 658 064



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if you have any questions about the experience.
