

HANDBOOK

CAMP ALTIPLANO

TWO WEEKS RESTORATION EXPERIENCE

27TH JANUARY TO 7TH FEBRUARY 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Camp Altiplano Restoration Experience is a two-weeks regenerative, hands on practice and educational program at Camp Altiplano, in the region of Murcia, Spain, from the 27th of January till the 7th of February. In the context of a semi-arid region, with extreme weather conditions and severe degradation issues, you will learn about the causes of ecosystem degradation, and participate with your work in the local restoration efforts. The morning activities will mainly be focused on practical restoration works, such as tree planting in natural areas, while in the afternoons you'll have the chance to learn about other regenerative practices and topics, also getting in touch with local farms that are practicing regenerative agriculture.

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 La Junquera farm, 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 consists 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 coexist 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

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

The first volunteers coming in 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 out on our site and in the wider region. Since the camp started, thousands of trees have been planted, tons of compost have been applied, and 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 Murcia Altiplano in southern Spain between Granada and Murcia.

If you are not travelling to the camp by car, we can arrange a pick-up and drop-off in the nearest big town, Caravaca de la Cruz, for an additional 5 euros fee. In this case we ask you to be there the latest by Sunday 26th of January. We will arrange a pick up around 5:30pm in town. For further details please get in touch with us.

If you are flying here, Alicante and Murcia are the closest airports. From Alicante, there's a bus connection to Caravaca in the morning. From

Murcia there's a bus to Caravaca 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.

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

- Tree planting
- Aromatics intercropping
- Pruning
- Plants propagation
- Bee keeping
- Water management and erosion control
- Microorganisms reproduction

WHAT TO EXPECT

You can expect astonishing views of the landscape, living in a farm house far away from city lights, surrounded by extreme peace. Some of you will be hosted in the village nearby, where one bakery, two bars and one little vegetable shop won't disturb the quietness of this land.

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 warm days, or a 1-meter snowfall. Nights, especially, are really cold, and temperatures can drop below freezing. It might rain, it might get really windy, or it might be lovely. It's winter in the

Altiplano, baby! Don't forget your sleeping bag for the night, and 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 the climate can be quite dry even in this season.

ACCOMMODATION

9 of the participants will be hosted in a freshly renovated farm house 4 km away from the camp, in the farm of La Junquera. You will be sharing room with one other person. The house has heating, hot water, a kitchen, and great neighbors. From here you can reach the camp on a dirt road by bike (we can offer you one) or by car (our 4x4).

6 of the participants will stay in the nearby village of Topares, a 10 minutes' drive from La Junquera

farm. You will have a kitchen, central heating and hot water. Rooms are for two people. In the small village you have a bakery, two bars, and a little and basic grocery shop. From here you can reach La Junquera farm with a car we will provide.

There's wifi in all accommodations. Phone network however is poor at the farm, so you might have to wander outside of the house to find a good spot for your phone calls. Or use the internet.

FOOD

We will provide all the needed groceries for breakfast, a break, lunch and dinner. You will cook the meals, preferably vegetarians. Both at camp and in the farmhouse at La Junquera there's kitchens that we will use for meals preparation. We can make turns, having two different people preparing each meal (lunch or dinner). 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!

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

FACILITIES

- Homestay
- Kitchen
- Learning centre
- Toilets
- Compost toilets
- Wifi at accommodations

WHAT TO BRING

- Work boots/comfortable sturdy shoes
- Sleeping bag
- Thermals
- Clothes for cold temperatures and to protect from the wind
- 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)

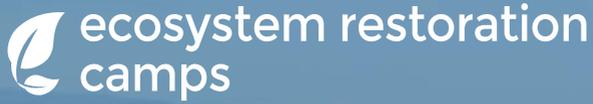
COSTS

The two weeks experience costs €450 for all participants and €400 for Ecosystem Restoration Camps members. This covers accommodation, three meals a day and snacks (not in the weekend), and all lessons.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at all about the experience.

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Camp Altiplano



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