

Ecolodge

Ecoposada del Estero Ecolodge is located at Lagoon Iberá in Colonia Carlos Pellegrini in the Iberá Wetlands. Iberá Wetlands is a provincial reserve covering more than 1.500.000 hectares in the heart of the Province of Corrientes.

It is internationally recognized as Ramsar site for its scenic beauty and the biodiversity of its ecosystems. Determined to preserve this wonderful environment, the Ecoposada del Estero ecolodge has been built following the principles of “Sustainable Construction” and “Ecological Architecture” – use of local resources and materials, respect for the environment, efficient use of energy and water, use of renewable energy. It was designed by Professors of the University of Corrientes with the traditional “ Corrientes” local style.

The choice of materials and construction processes are intimately related to the landscape, the climate and local cultural traditions.

All these special features make the Ecoposada del Estero unique in the area. It is comfortable and bright, with adobe walls, wood on the roof and rustic gaucho decoration.

All these combined with the best and varied excursions organized by Ibera Expediciones. Ecotourism for us is not only fauna and flora, but also people. We aim to foster Ecotourism as an encounter between different cultures and not just a shallow visit.

Our commitment:

Jose and his wife, Estrella, have engaged in this project which has three strategic pillars we are profoundly proud of:

1. The Ecolodge: a tourist inn that offers full-service packages all year round in a sustainable and ecological way.

2. The Nature Reserve Estero Camba Trapo (together with the Azara Natural History Foundation) where flora and fauna are conserved. This includes pastures of native grasses for feeding our cattle (a program of Grassfed Beef with the Wildlife Foundation and Aves Argentinas).

3. A Social Responsibility Program promoting environmental education within the community with different activities throughout the year in Iberá and elsewhere. Join our solidarity campaign to reuse clothes and other items no longer in use. They will be taken to rural schools where they can make a difference. Your grain of sand is more than welcome. Thank you.



Service

The Ecolodge is located in the Ibera Marshlands, Colonia Carlos Pellegrini, Corrientes, Argentina. It is a Wildlife and Ecotourism lodge with a wonderful view of the marshes. It has a typical architecture made with adobe. It has been built above the ground so that it can provide a better view of the adjacent marshland. Rooms have been decorated in the traditional rustic style. Each module has two rooms for up to three or four passengers each. They have private bathroom, sommier beds, ceiling fan and electric heating and an individual wooden balcony with hanging hamacs which overlooks the marshland. There is also a room adapted for disabled guests.

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A 8x4 swimming pool with a deck solarium. An extended catwalk will take you into the marshes right up to a platform to drink “mate” at dawn. Our watchtower commands a magnificent view of the marshland and the lagoon besides the fauna and flora in the surroundings. The restaurant house has a cosy living room with a fireplace, satellital TV and DVD library on culture and nature. A varied library to be enjoyed by our guests and a wifi area. The open-air verandas and its comfortable hammocks invite you to have your meals outside in direct contact with nature where you can observe wildlife and listen to the sounds of the marsh. We also have table games, cards and chess.

Our menu consists of delicious home-made meals: desserts, pastas and handmade breads, sweets, and jams from seasonal fruits. We also offer delicious grilled meats, organic vegetables from local gardens and special menus for celiacs and vegetarians. On the hottest days you can taste exquisite regional cuisine on the patio of the restaurant, while enjoying the exceptional view of the marsh, native forest, the sunrise or the sunset. Ecoposada del estero lodge is hosted by its owners. Our main goals are to make you feel at home prioritizing simplicity and

flexibility and to help in the preservation and care of wild life spreading knowledge and love for nature.



Expeditions

Ibera Expediciones is part of the lodge. We have more than a decade of experience in organizing tours, excursions and expeditions in the Ibera Natural Reservation focusing on the needs of the guests. Among the activities you will find: guided horse-rides through the marsh and the palm forest; night walks; a visit to Cambá Trapo; boat trips on the lake; kayaks and trekking.

BOAT TRIPS and SAFARIS TO LAGOON IBERA

We invite you to make amazing boat trips navigating between streams and stretches of water in the lagoon Iberá where the incredible wildlife may be seen in its habitat. To the surprise of many visitors, the animals are within hand's reach and allow themselves to be seen from very close. You may spot marsh deer, otters, capybaras, black caimans, yellow anacondas and hundreds of birds, among others. Many of these species are in danger of extinction. All tours are guided by skilled naturalists and birdwatchers.

NIGHT 4x4 SAFARIS and NIGHT WALKS TO SPOT WILDLIFE

We want our tour participants to have great wildlife experiences, memories of which will last a lifetime. In these expeditions you can experience the amazing night sounds of the marshes and also discover the mysteries of the Iberá wetlands nights. You will be able to spot all those animals that get active during the night like: foxes, black armadillos, capybaras, skunks, raccoons, wild cats, caimans, brocket deer, marsh deer, weasels, and night birds, among others. Both activities are a unique and special experience, as in the 4X4 SAFARIS you are allow to drive a longer distance using a strong flash light to spot wildlife while in the NIGHT WALKS you can get really close to animals and spot them right in their own habitat (forests and jungle) with individual flash lights. To be silent is an indispensable condition in this tour.

TREKKING to CAMBA TRAPO MARSHLANDS Natural and cultural Expedition

This activity takes place in the Cambá Trapo Marshlands, 15km away from the Iberá Lagoon. It is the only excursion in the region that combines both wildlife and cultural aspects of the Iberá. It all begins with

a guided walk with José Martín a wildlife Interpreter and Ornithologist through a genuine Enchanted Forest, visiting three different natural provinces: the Chaco forest with its beautiful flooded palm groves, with the Misiones Jungle and the Entre Ríos forest. These three regions blend to create an exotic place of incomparable beauty, where the flora expresses itself in capricious shapes and colors, and the fauna: like foxes, raccoons, skunks, brocket deers, hundreds of birds, and others, leave their footprints at every step. There are excellent bird watching opportunities of endangered species like the yellow crested cardinal..

PHOTO SAFARIS and BIRDWATCHING

We offer to all bird lovers the best photo safaris in the Iberá Wetlands around three different natural provinces: the Chaco forest with its beautiful flooded palm groves, with the Misiones Jungle and the Entre Ríos forest. Where you can spot species in danger of extinction and all the specialties of every ecosystem.

The Iberá Wetlands are the home of the stunning Strange-tailed Tyrant, Sharp -tailed Tyrant, Sharp-Tailed Grass-Tyrant, Black and White Monjita, yellow-rumped Marshbird, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Streamer-tailed Tyrant, the magnificent Jabirus and the endangered Yellow cardinal. A number of rare seedeaters are also a possibility. The skilled naturalist and birdwatcher José Martín will accompany you in this expedition. He was born and bred in the Iberá marshlands and therefore knows better than anyone the bird's territories, their songs and movements.

We have many different trails and areas that you can choose depending on your special interests. Some of them are: Cambá Trapo Marshlands; Yuqui and Aguará Marshlands; Ovejuna Ratí Marshlands; Colonia Carlos Pellegrini surroundings and access roads; Spotting night birds.

HORSE RIDES THROUGH PALM FOREST and MARSHLANDS

Discover the amazing nature and learn about the "Gaúcho" ... by horse. Imagine yourself ... riding deep into the wetlands where the sunset catches you by surprise among the palm trees and the sound of the birds returning to their nests. The diversity of the Correntine scenery, quiet horses that are used to the marshes and skilled naturalist guides are the keys to the excellence of our horse treks. The Iberá is characterized by the immensity of its marshes, savannahs, forests and wild palm stands, places that can only be visited and admired on horseback. They are hidden corners that tell us of their native and creole past, and allow us to revisit the past with its interesting gaúcho traditions... history that helps us to understand the present of the Iberá marshes and its latent Gaúcho cultural heritage



GREEN ACTIONS

Some home steps we practice in Ecoposada

1. The Ecoposada del Estero lodge has been built following the principles of “Sustainable Construction” and “Ecological Architecture” – we used local resources and materials, respect for the environment, efficient use of energy and water, use of passive solar energy. It was designed by Professors of the University of Corrientes with the traditional “ Corrientes” local style. The choice of materials and construction processes are intimately related to the landscape, the climate and local cultural traditions.

2. Adobe construction and high roofs help keep rooms cold in summer and warm in winter.

3. Strategic landscaping. We are surrounded of abundant native trees, we consider native flora sacred and we are determined to preserve it as they provide us with the best cooling system ever and also food and refuge to all the local birds and other animals

4. The use of ceiling fans instead of air conditioners suffice. This is a very good way of cooling a room in an eco friendly way when temperatures are very high.

5. We take care of energy saving:

- Our appliances are all energy-efficient.
- We have already replaced our light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.
- We also turn off the lights when not in use. We carefully trained our staff to be aware of energy saving and putting off electric devices not in use.
- We always hang dry our Laundry. Dry our clothes naturally.

6. We use water in a very rational way.

- We don't use hot water when cold water will do.
- We trained our staff to take care of water and avoid wasting it. We recommend our guests to turn off the water when soaping hands and brushing teeth and to take shorter showers, five minutes or less.

7. We separate recyclables from organic waste and produce compost. Colonia Carlos Pellegrini has its own recycling plant.

8. We buy only what we need. The biggest problem our planet has is consumerism. Today we are extracting resources from 1 planet and a half.... Buy only what you really need. Help the Planet to survive.

- We buy in bulk to reduce packaging costs and resources needed to make products as well as packaging waste.
- We have a reuse program. We invite our guests to join our solidarity campaign to reuse clothes and other items that are no longer being used.

9. We are active.

- We work together with the local government in order to foster environmental campaigns. We consider education to be the key to save the planet.
- We give the community, local guides and schools environmental education through different workshops.
- We organize every year the ["Birds and Wildlife Fair"](#) in Colonia Carlos Pellegrini with the participation of the local, provincial and national Government.

Talks, workshops and activities for grownups and children are offered in order to raise awareness of the importance of nature involving the community and tourism.

- We also have our own non-formal environmental education school called " Ecotaller Timbo" to integrate the English language into the biological, ecological and environmental aspects related to tourism.



Ibera Wetlands

It is one of the most important fresh water reserves of the continent. There are 1.3 million hectares which increase in the rainy season and play a valuable role in regulating the amount of water that drains from the area into the Paraná river through the river Corrientes. This natural paradise is also the largest protected area in Argentina. In 1983 the provincial government decided that this area should be spared and it was declared a Provincial Nature Reserve. Lately it also has been incorporated as a Ramsar Site, thus stopping all hunting, trapping and casual logging in order to preserve such a fine unspoiled and amazing natural wonder for future generations. The whole area has a very small population living in several villages scattered here and there and in still surviving cattle ranches.

The Iberá Wetlands are in idyllic place set in the heart of Corrientes province, in the northeast of the country, because of its internationally recognized scenic beauty and the biodiversity of its ecosystems. This green expanse is made up of marshes and lagoons. This makes a refuge for a varied wildlife. It is the home to an important diversity of flora and fauna including various rare or threatened species or in danger of extinction. The maned wolf, the neotropical otter, the marsh deer, capibaras as well as both types of yacarés – the black and the broad-snouted and over 350 species of birds are few samples of the biodiversity you may enjoy. This endless list of possibilities makes this destination one of the most attractive of Argentina's Ecotourism circuits. To the surprise of many visitors, the animals are within hand's reach and allow themselves to be seen from very close. For Iberá Expeditions it is a privilege to go on unforgettable photo safaris where the birds can be seen wheeling overhead. The typical scenery of Colonia Carlos Pellegrini with its adobe houses, the Corrientes sunsets, together with the wonders of nature, enable unique shots to be taken. One can also enjoy guided night walks along the jungle paths under a star-spangled sky, spotting nocturnal animals like the tatú armadillo, weasels and foxes. The company of an expert guide is essential as they know the secrets of the lagoon and animals. Guided horse-rides and treks really must not be missed, riding deep into the wetlands where the sunset catches you by surprise among the palm trees and the sound of the birds returning to their nests.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION "Ecotaller Timbó"

Location

The Eco Taller is situated in the town of Colonia Carlos Pellegrini, just beside a gorgeous forest in the Ibera Marshlands reserve. This park is known for its abundant bird species, progressive wildlife conservation projects, and abundant natural beauty. Due to its isolation, the people in this small community are tasked with coming together for its protection and helping visitors to understand its one of a kind nature. The Eco Taller strives to educate the youth of this town to be leaders in the conservation of this beauty through education and awareness. The children that attend will more than likely grow up to work in the tourism industry as tour guides, park rangers, and advocates for the environment. As a result, an understanding of both the rich biodiversity and fragile ecosystems surrounding them is of immense importance to

their future careers. Additionally, as international travelers are common in this national gem, an understanding of the English language will help them to adequately convey this nature's richness and promote understanding in all those who come to visit.

We long to create bilingual students who are passionate about their surroundings and educated in its natural rhythms.

Future of the Eco Taller

The Eco Taller aims to continue moving forward with the teaching of biology and English in a unique and progressive way. Therefore, with this school we seek motivated and passionate individuals who can share a deep love for the aspects that make this setting so amazing. Additionally, we seek those who can share the English language with our students from a native level so as to increase their speaking proficiency and comfort. As the students grow in age, we want to bring in volunteers who adopt a positive approach and can continue in the bar we have set. We encourage self-starters and independent thinkers to reach out with creative ideas for the further development and forward progress of the Eco Taller.



El Ecotaller se encuentra en la Colonia Carlos Pellegrini, en un predio de bosque nativo y con un rancho típico que fue totalmente acondicionado a inicios del 2014. El lunes 3 de marzo (carnaval) inicio sus actividades. Daniza Tita Aldana es la directora y docente. En mayo del 2014 conversamos con Tita para conocer el presente y futuro de este proyecto.

"...vengo de Santa Bárbara en California. Mi mamá es chilena y por eso siempre hablé español en casa e inglés fuera. Teníamos una guardería en la casa y siempre quise estudiar y trabajar con niños. Hice varias experiencias en desarrollo social y cuando terminé mis estudios quería hacer una experiencia fuera. Me fui a una pequeña reserva en Ecuador. Fue una experiencia difícil, en un lugar muy aislado, en la cabaña no había luz. Me gustó mucho el contacto con la naturaleza pero extrañé muchísimo ser maestra. Así que a la vuelta busqué algún proyecto en Sudamérica para ser maestra de jardín. Encontré un requerimiento por 10 meses en la Estancia Rincón del Socorro, en Iberá (proyecto de la Conservation Land Trust). Llegué a la Argentina en febrero del 2013 y en abril ya había decidido quedarme acá. También quería estar en la Colonia Carlos Pellegrini en lugar de una estancia. Tengo mi novio en el pueblo. Así que, a fin del año 2013, empezamos a hablar del Ecotaller..."



Ecotaller: para conocer mejor la naturaleza



"...los niños están aprendiendo inglés, pero enfocado en la naturaleza. Hay diferentes temas cada mes. Empezamos con cosas básicas, números y colores, para que se sientan cómodos. Ya estudiamos sobre el suelo y ahora estamos con agua y plantas. Primero queremos ver como se adaptan a ir a la mañana a la escuela y a la tarde al taller. También a trabajar en grupo de diferentes edades, de 5 hasta 9 años, hoy tenemos 21 en total. Tenemos un horario de 2 a 5..." "No es una escuela tradicional. Queremos darles la experiencia de salir a caminar por los senderos, pero necesitan un período de práctica para caminar en grupo. Queremos que aprendan a apreciar el lugar. Muchos quieren matar cada bicho que ven y le decimos que tenemos que dejarlos. Cuando salimos a caminar dicen ya que caminamos por ese lugar, pero le decimos que cada día es diferente..."

"...un día vino Pablo, un alumno mío y me dijo: *este es mi amigo Ignacio. Ignacio me dice: quiero estudiar inglés para ayudarle a mi papa.* Ignacio tiene 9 años. Hay otros alumnos que también quieren venir pero me parece que es más de los papás. Algunos les cuentan a los hermanitos más chicos en la casa y ahora me cruzan algunos chicos en el pueblo y me dicen: así que vos enseñás inglés, yo sé contar hasta 5. Al principio había dicho que el límite era 12 chicos, luego 15, luego 18 y ahora 21. Pero es muy difícil decirle no a un chico que quiere aprender. Un problema es que algunos niños prefieren el taller a la escuela y tenemos que explicarles que es muy importante ir a la escuela y hacer las tareas. Con algunos les ayudamos en las tareas de la escuela. Los días de lluvia es muy gracioso porque llegan con los zapatos todos embarrados y los dejan afuera para no ensuciar. En el Ecotaller no tenemos feriados y algunos días llego a la una y media y ya hay chicos esperando en la puerta. Cuando llegan cada uno tiene que contar cosas, así aprenden a escuchar y a esperar su turno. Una semana casi no tuvieron clases en la escuela y venían con una energía que no los podía controlar. Por eso ahora estamos haciendo meditación. Vamos a la pasarela y nos sentamos. Les digo que tienen que cerrar los ojos y concentrarse. Nos quedamos así unos dos minutos y luego les pido que cuenten que sintieron. Y así se calman..."

"...a largo plazo me imagino que seremos más maestros. Hoy trabajamos de tarde con un grupo de la primaria y esperamos trabajar de mañana con un grupo de secundaria. Mi novio, Jorge, es guía del pueblo y hoy enseña aikido. El puede ser otro maestro. Me imagino disponer de computadoras y una huerta. No lo imagino como una escuela privada, sino como un lugar libre donde podemos hacer crecer a los chicos. Me veo más cerca de organizaciones no gubernamentales. Un aspecto importante es la financiación del lugar. Esperamos recibir donaciones y que alguno puedan apadrinar el estudio de alguno de los chicos que no pueden hacer aportes. En tanto la Ecoposada cubre muchos gastos"

