



*Welcome to
Sunseed*

EVS INFO-KIT

WELCOME!

Welcome to Erasmus, welcome to Spain and a warm welcome to Sunseed! The following information serves to answer any questions you may have about Sunseed, and the adventure you are about to embark on as an EVS. We hope this will help you in the initial stages and throughout of experience. We look forward for meeting you soon!

SUNSEED DESERT TECHNOLOGY

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A photograph of a lush, shaded outdoor area. A dirt path leads through a dense canopy of green trees and foliage. On the left, there's a rustic wooden structure with a thatched roof. In the foreground, a yellow and black metal chair is visible. On the right, a white building with blue shutters and a balcony is partially visible. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

SUNSEED DESERT TECHNOLOGY

The project that you are about to join is an environmental education project and a hands-on practical centre for sustainable living situated in Andalusia, south of Spain. It has been a project since 1986 and its goal is to help develop, communicate and disseminate a sustainable and resilient way of life in our environmental conditions, a semi-arid region and the only desert in Europe.

We are a self-managed and dynamic community of volunteers, living and learning together. We use the sun for energy, the river for water, the gardens and landscape for food and we share cooking and cleaning to make our community a comfortable place. We support each other in taking personal responsibility for our impact on the environment, feeling empowered in the knowledge that changes really can be made, especially as part of a strong and focused team.



ABOUT THE PLACE

Sunseed is located in Los Molinos del Rio Aguas, an off-grid village populated by a lively international community that took over the place after its decline in the late 60s, due to the generalized rural exodus that affected the European countryside at that time. The river (that names the place) is the only one in the whole province to flow all year round, it carves a narrow valley where natural pools host unique species of flora and fauna, a real oasis in the desert. The village hosts other projects related to sustainability, creativity and deep ecology, but lacks communitarian facilities such as shops or bars. Sunseed is the only communitarian project located here.

The nearest town is Sorbas, around 7km away, and can be accessed by walking (1,5hrs) or by bicycle (30min). There are shops, bars, a church, supermarkets, a post office, a theatre, a sports complex, a petrol station, a hairdresser, a hardware shop, and a hospital.



OUR ACTIVITIES

We have 9 departments at Sunseed: Organic Gardens, Sustainable Living, Drylands Management, Eco-Construction, Appropriate Technology, Maintenance, Facilitation, Education and Communication. During your stay you will have the chance to observe them all and after some weeks you will be encouraged to be more actively involved in one of them in order to get a deeper knowledge of the tools and techniques that are developed there.

As an EVS you will have the chance to develop a personal project related to one or more of these departments, with the supervision of the department's coordinator. We welcome your ideas and proposals, and we encourage you to choose between different projects that interest you the most.

From Monday to Friday, every morning after breakfast, we have a Morning Circle in which each coordinator announces what he or she is going to do on that morning. Volunteers then join one of the departments, with the intention of finding a balance between personal interests and continuity of work. After lunch you will have time to develop your personal project and even develop your Spanish. Saturdays and Sundays is when you have your free time. The night becomes quiet at 11pm on weekdays and whenever you like on weekends.

WHAT IS EVS IN THE EYES OF...



... THE EU

The EVS is part of a large European project called “Erasmus+”. This program finances actions of education, formation and sport. It answers to many youthful challenges (such as discrimination, youth unemployment, exclusion...) and develops further European citizenship for the new generations.

EVS is a learning process based on non-formal and informal education though involvement in a civic project. It is a way to develop new personal and professional skills and to be able to acquire a position of active learning. You will hear more about it in your “on-arrival training” organized by the national agency.

... SUNSEED

After many years welcoming international volunteers, we only started to host EVS in 2015 and we are very excited about your arrival!

We enrolled in the EVS program to give to more people the opportunity to join our activities, because we believe that the project is becoming more valuable and effective with the involvement of different people with different backgrounds. Every new way of seeing the project, every new skill and new motivation brought into the project leads it further.

We define the role of a volunteer in Sunseed as a proactive participation in our current activities and by an involvement in the project. As part from the normal communal activities, you will be asked to shape your personal project and to participate in our weekly meeting, where we define the project's everyday life from A to Z, so please feel free to use our facilities, to think out of the box and to get out of your comfort zone!

... YOU

To take part in an EVS is like playing with clay: the shape it can take is your choice. This means that your EVS is a learning process that you yourself will lead, depending on your own objectives and interests. The first days can be very challenging for many, as you will be living in a very large community with limited resources, and this could lead sometimes to stress and conflicts. On the long run you will naturally find your balance and learn a lot about your abilities, limits and values, such as self-initiative and tolerance. Always feel free to talk with us about anything on your mind and feel free to use our available resources in order to fully enjoy this opportunity to make it yours!

From our experience as mentors, tutors and ex-volunteers, we can assure you that EVS is a very fruitful human experience: in other words, it is fun, joyful and full of emotions! Volunteering is an opportunity to gain from new ideas, cultures, friendships and ways of living, in a team and project. It will enable you to experience a more open way of learning that will hopefully stay with you always.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation at Sunseed is basic, and in the winter it can be cold as not all the rooms are heated. The nature of the local habitat (semi-arid) means that there is a lot of dust around and it can be difficult to stay clean. Our dorms are mixed gender so privacy is limited.

We have urinals and shower block by the main house, and a compost toilet in the gardens. We use fresh river water for washing, which is solar heated, so you should be aware that in winter hot water is often limited and in bad weather the water can be quite chilly!

FOOD

We have a vegetarian diet, based on vegetables from our garden or purchased from another local gardener from a nearby village. We try our best to integrate it with fresh local eggs and dairy products when they are available. We bake our bread two times a week in our oven. We do not eat meat or fish and do not encourage them on site.

We all take turns in the kitchen to cook and clean for breakfast, morning break, lunch and dinner from Monday to Friday, for breakfast on Saturday and dinner on Sunday. For dinner on Saturdays and breakfast and lunch on Sundays you are allowed to cook for yourself using ingredients from our food store, but we encourage you to organize together with others to optimize energy consumption. If you have any special requirements/allergies please let us know before your arrival.





HOLIDAYS

You'll have 2 days of holidays per month that you can save from one month to another, if you want to take longer holidays. We encourage you to use them to travel and to get to know some nice places in Spain (we would be happy to advise you). We are generally flexible with holidays, as long as you communicate your plans to the group at least as many days in advance as you are taking off.

You could also have friends or family visit during your stay. They can stay at Sunseed for a maximum of two weeks, paying a contribution for the common expenses. Our personal guest rate is 10€/night in the low season and 13€ night in the high season. If you wish there is other possible accommodation in Los Molinos and we will be more than happy to advise you.

CHEMICAL-FREE POLICY

No toxic or chemical ingredients must enter Sunseed's wastewater system, as this water is filtered and returned to the river and it is imperative that we protect the local environment. Please make sure that any product you bring is listed as being eco-friendly, as well as ethical and not tested on animals. This also applies to any toothpaste, body lotion, sun lotion, etc. as that will likely wash off when you're taking a shower or swimming in the river. We can supply eco-friendly toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner.

POCKET MONEY

You will receive 52,5€ every second week as pocket money. There are ATMs in Sorbas if you need more cash.

LANGUAGES

Due to its international nature, the operational language of our project is English. We welcome volunteers from many European countries and beyond. This means there are generally plenty of opportunities to also practice speaking French, Spanish, German, Italian and many other languages. You will have the opportunity to have an on-line Spanish course and to join our Spanish classes led by volunteers.

HEALTH

On arrival you will be asked to sign our Health and Safety policy. Your own health and the general health of our community is vital, please look out for yourself and others. Your EVS insurance is providing you with very good cover. You will receive more information about this on your arrival training. Please don't forget to bring your European Health Insurance Card or equivalent!

INTERNET AND TELEPHONE

We have limited wireless Internet access in one of the buildings here. Please note that we have a limited supply of laptops, and work and research use always takes priority over personal use. You may bring your own electronic device for personal use if you like, however, due to our limited clean electricity supplies, charging may not always be available. Sunseed has good mobile coverage, but battery charging is likely to be restricted on days with less sunshine. There is also a payphone in the office and you can purchase a Spanish sim card for your stay.

WEATHER AND CLOTHES

It's very hot and dry from mid April to end of September, especially during June, July and August. You will be working outside, sometimes in direct sunlight, though we do have a siesta during the hottest part of the day. Between October and April it is usually coldest, and night-time temperatures in winter can drop, occasionally below freezing. The coldest and rainiest period is usually between December and February.

Please bring strong boots or shoes and durable garden gloves for safe outdoor working otherwise you will not be able to work in certain departments. We have plenty of gloves to lend, and some boots, in varying sizes.

In addition, during summer you'll also need: long-sleeved lightweight shirts and light clothing, high-factor eco-friendly sunscreen, sunglasses and sun hat, eco-insect repellent.

In spring, autumn and winter you'll also need: waterproofs boots and clothing, warm clothing and layers for warmth (hat, gloves, jumpers, warm coat, thermals, etc.).

Don't forget to bring a torch and your sleeping bag

