

Thinking of travelling the world as a Gap Adventures Tour Leader?

Do you have amazing travel experiences to share with others?
Are you well organized, flexible, out-going, with a good sense of humour?
Is dealing with people enjoyable for you?

If you answered yes to the above questions, we may have the adventure job that you've been looking for!

What is required of a Gap Adventures Tour Leader?

1. A Love for Adventure Travel: We are adventure travel specialists and we only hire Leaders who have a genuine passion for travelling to vibrant, exciting areas of the world. Our Leaders may come from very diverse backgrounds but a passion for travel is one thing that they all have in common. *Previous experience living, travelling, studying or working abroad is an essential requirement for this position.*

2. Bilingualism and language skills: All Gap Adventures tours are operated in English; therefore, a good command of the English language is mandatory. Many of our destinations require that you speak the local language as well. South and Central America serve as good examples of this—tours leaders in Latin America must be able to speak fluent Spanish. This helps to ensure that Leaders maintain excellent relations on behalf of Gap Adventures with the people we meet and work with in the field and the clients that take our trips.

For other destinations such as Asia, Africa or Europe speaking and understanding more than one language is an asset. However, knowledge of all local languages is not mandatory



as you may pass through a number of countries where English is widely spoken and understood. We do look favourably on applicants who can offer our clients greater insight into local communities and cultures through knowledge of their local language.

3. Excellent Leadership and Communication Skills: We look for people who have experience in leadership roles, with a proven ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of contexts.

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4. Resourcefulness: We need Leaders who have a good head on their shoulders, who can remain calm and collected under unpredictable and stressful circumstances. Our Leaders need to be able to take decisive action to resolve problems as they arise. Leading can be quite challenging at times and we need people who are able to take charge and deal with local situations. For example, the not uncommon “How do we get around this landslide?”—type of problem and countless others we haven’t even thought of yet!

5. Awareness of and Commitment to Sustainable Tourism: Our Leaders need to be committed to environmentally and culturally responsible tourism, and serve as an inspiring example to their passengers.

6. Regional Commitment: Depending on the region, Gap Adventures sometimes requires future Tour Leaders to commit to an 18-month contract in one region where we operate (Central America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia). It takes time and effort to learn the skills that make a good Leader and, once you are ready, we want to have you around for a while!

7. Good Health and High Energy Level: It may seem obvious but we need Leaders who can always handle the daily stresses, both mental and physical, of long and tiring days. Be it a 13-hour bus ride, a long day’s trek with a difficult group of passengers or an included rafting adventure, you need to be the friendly, happy, helpful face of Gap Adventures—even when it’s raining and you’ve got diarrhea!



8. First Aid/CPR Certification: Leaders must be prepared to act in case of emergency. Standard First Aid Certification and CPR are required at the start of a contract to ensure your ability to assist with injuries, illness or emergency in remote locations. The costs for certification are the responsibility of the Leader.

9. Transportation to your training location: It is the Leader's responsibility to get him or herself to the starting point of the training trip. Depending upon your type of contract, Gap Adventures may reimburse you for this transportation cost upon completion of your contract.

10. The \$500 (USD) training deposit: We require our Leaders to provide a deposit of USD \$500 at the commencement of their training trip. This represents less than half of the costs associated with training a new Leader. Upon successful completion of your contract, this deposit is refunded.

11. Background in basic accounting/budgeting: Experience working with budgets or developing a personal budget is an asset.

12. Computer literacy: A working knowledge of the Internet, E-mail, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel is essential.

What Gap Adventures offers you

1. An experience of a lifetime: Gap Adventures has been an industry leader in small group adventure travel for over a decade. Throughout your time with Gap Adventures, you could find yourself rafting Class 4 rapids, climbing the world's highest active volcano, translating dream interpretations with a Shaman in the Ecuadorian jungle or searching for the 'Big Five' on the Masai Mara.

2. Opportunities for internal advancement: Gap Adventures maintains operational offices in San Jose (Costa Rica), Quito, Lima, Cusco, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Bangkok and Beijing. We also have sales staff in Western and Eastern Canada, the United States, the UK and Australia. The Toronto head office is divided into Sales, Marketing/E-commerce, Planeterra, Accounting, I.T. and Operations/Product. Many of the current staff, especially those in Operations, began their careers as Leaders for Gap Adventures in some corner of the globe.

3. Life skills: A great opportunity to develop decision-making skills, manage group dynamics, acquire strong organizational qualities and improve foreign language skills.

4. An opportunity to launch personal projects: Have you ever wanted to develop your hobby of photography? Drawing? Video/filmmaking? Travel writing? Reading the classics of Latin American literature? In your downtime between tours, you may find the time to dedicate to an interest that you've put on the backburner. As a creative person, you may even find a way to integrate your groups in your creative endeavors.

Tour Leader General Job Description

The purpose of this information sheet is to give potential hires a general outline of the job responsibilities and basic rate of pay for Tour Leaders.

During the contract, a Tour Leader will:

- Consistently deliver a high level of customer service and passenger satisfaction.
- Provide leadership for our travellers and be responsible for their well-being.
- Continually increase your knowledge about the visited country, its culture, religion, current affairs, environment, etc.
- Have detailed knowledge of hotels, sights, restaurants, transport, souvenirs, prices etc. and develop a series of information sources and contacts that can be of assistance when required.
- Maintain a valid passport and visa. It is the responsibility of the Leader to stay up to date on any travel restrictions based on his/her nationality.
- Keep vaccinations and preventive medication up to date.
- Be mindful of potential opportunities for Gap Adventures, such as new destinations, new Leaders, new markets or ways to improve itineraries.

On each departure, a Tour Leader will:

- Act as day-to-day guide, interpreter and manager of the group.
- Deal directly with passenger issues and concerns, ensuring that passenger satisfaction is effectively achieved.
- Maintain the established travel itinerary as closely as possible, making changes only when necessary.
- Make reservations for accommodation, transportation and activities as required.
- Assist and accompany travellers during optional activities and meals.

- Advise clients on suitable restaurants, additional transport requirements, purchase of souvenirs, etc.
- Maintain daily expenditure accounts, retain receipts and keep expenses within the trip budget provided.
- Provide a report for each trip in the requested format.
- Keep the Leader's notes updated in the standardized format.
- Train new Leaders as required, passing on as much trip-related information as possible.
- Provide assistance to the regional offices when requested by Managers or by the Toronto office.

IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND: The overall success of each Gap Adventures trip is largely determined by the Tour Leader! For most clients, the only Gap Adventures representative with whom they will have face-to-face contact with is the Tour Leader. It is therefore of the utmost importance that you meet the needs of each individual in the group. Your main responsibility as a Gap Adventures Leader is to ensure that your passengers have a fun, safe and memorable holiday.

Our passengers are people of diverse ages, interests and backgrounds and each have a different reason for embarking on their tour. You must ascertain the clients' needs early on in a trip in order ensure that they are satisfied with the quality of service that you provide and to avoid potential complaints in the future.

A practical explanation of what a Leader does:

Preparation

Prior to each trip, the Leader will receive a list of the clients on that departure. This list is used to make any necessary bookings or reservations for the trip and to obtain some prior knowledge about the passengers. The Leader is responsible for running the entire trip; this may include organizing, booking and paying for local transport, accommodation, local operators, guides, etc. Leaders must maintain detailed daily expense sheets to be submitted online at the end of the trip. Receipts and a hard copy of expense sheets must be mailed to the corresponding regional office.

The Trip—Day 1

At the commencement of the trip, passengers will be arriving at various times throughout the day, and perhaps over a number of days. The Leader has no direct responsibility for those who arrive early, but must make contact with the passengers at the first opportunity on Day 1 of the trip. This is an arrival day with no planned activities.

As early as practical (generally the evening of Day 1), the Leader holds a group meeting to give a general welcome to all the passengers and to discuss the details of the trip. If all passengers have arrived early enough on Day 1, this group meeting should be held before dinner on that day. The proper presentation of this meeting is one of the most important aspects of Leading—it sets the tone and expectations for the entire trip, as well as previews and forewarns passengers about their upcoming adventures.

The Trip—Duration

The trip soon gets underway. During the trip we include some organized activities, while at other times passengers have free time to spend as they wish. Leaders are expected to spend time with the group even when there are no structured activities.

It may mean that you assist with transportation or help them to organize optional activities. Leaders should eat with the group in the evening and have daily meetings to provide ongoing communication about the itinerary. You will find that trips run much more easily the more time you spend with the group.

While running the trip you will find that you can become very busy. As well as spending time with your passengers, you might be making arrangements with local guides, booking or confirming hotels, paying or signing for hotel bills, arranging transport, recording your expenses, etc. You need to be well organized! However, the mechanics of running the trip soon become second nature and somewhat automatic. This is important as it gives you the freedom to concentrate on the passengers and that great uncertainty—Group Dynamics.

Effectively managing Group Dynamics can be the most challenging area of Leading and is something that is difficult to describe. At times it might mean you have to be the sole entertainer of the group (can you juggle!?). At other times you will be a counselor for a passenger with a problem. You may be forced to deal with individuals who challenge your

authority by making ‘power plays’; you may be seen as a porter and at times a doctor. As a Leader, passengers will expect you to be a resource, a source of knowledge, a teacher of local customs and somebody who takes care of the details while passengers can enjoy themselves without hassle. Leaders teach travellers how to be more independent, educate them on ecotourism concerns and chastise travellers for unsuitable behavior, all the while being bearers of infinite wisdom concerning local matters.

This aspect of Leading is not generally picked up quickly, certainly not in one training trip. Managing group dynamics effectively involves your own personality and person-to-person communication skills as much as anything else. You cannot control everything that happens on tour—it is how you deal with unexpected situations and how you communicate with a group of potential strangers that spells success in this area.

The Trip—Completion

At the end of the trip the Leader does an online report, which includes a detailed account of the trip finances. We always love to hear about life in the field and our Leaders have provided us with many a memorable account of their trips. After this report is done, you will generally have a period of downtime during which you may spend doing whatever you like. This downtime is for you to revitalize yourself and generally relax without having to make a single decision or answer any questions.

During this downtime you must be available by telephone and be prepared to take over a tour if so required. On occasion, the regional manager or Toronto will ask that you assist in one of the field offices; for these days, you will be remunerated at your current rate of pay (see pay scale below).

Starting Points, Training & Mobility

New Leaders have an initial office-based training that covers policies & procedures, accounting, sustainable travel and how to run a trip from start to finish. You will then accompany your trainer or an experienced Leader on training trip that may or may not have passengers (real clients). The Training Trip focuses on the nuts and bolts of what it actually takes to effectively run a trip. It covers everything from transport/accommodation, welcome meetings, expense reporting and, most importantly, a range of situations typical in leading Gap Adventure tours. In many cases this will be the same trip that you then lead independently. Sometimes, you are trained on more than one itinerary.



In general, new Tour Leaders run the same one or two trips for their first few months. The more experienced you become, the better the feedback from your passengers and the better the accuracy/timeliness of your expense reporting, the greater the chance that you will be assigned a new trip in a new area. If this happens, you will be retrained on a specific new itinerary.

The reality is also that an individual schedule is very dynamic. Trips get cancelled, other Leaders occasionally get sick or have personal matters to attend to, extra departures may be added at the last minute. In short, all Tour Leaders can see their schedules altered unexpectedly. You may easily find yourself on a new trip within a few weeks of starting or be called on your days off to cover the trip of a sick Leader, or even being sent to a completely new region because you had travelled there prior to Gap Adventures. Flexibility and adaptability on your part is definitely a vital quality!

PAY SCALE

Our Leaders are paid a daily rate in US dollars (USD) while on tour (except in Europe). Wages are usually paid on a sliding scale, ie depending on the amount of time you have worked for the company, although the starting pay rate may vary from region to region and previous experience. The standard contract wage scale, laid out in the following schedule, should be used only as a guide:

Days from Standard Contract Start Wage

**1–91 days—25.00 USD per working day 92–182 days—28.00 USD per working day
183–365 days—30.00 USD per working day 366–548 days—33.00 USD per working
day—549 plus days—35.00 USD per working day**

In addition, Leaders are paid one or two ‘extra’ days, depending on the region, for each trip in recognition that you will be spending time before and after the tour in preparation/finalization of the trip. These are known as pre- and post-trip Admin days.

TIPS – this is a bonus you can expect from clients at the end of each successful trip. Tipping is completely optional, and the amount you receive usually depends on the overall quality of the service provided. We give our passengers a guideline of \$20-25 a week per person for the Leader.



LIVING EXPENSES WHILE ON TOUR AND DAYS OFF ALLOWANCE

Expenses—while leading a tour, all trip-related expenses are obviously covered. This includes accommodation, meals, communication, transportation and included activity costs (within a set budget). We also provide an allowance for some optional activities so you could sample activities chosen by your passengers and explain them to future groups.

Allowance—if you are on a standard contract, Gap Adventures will provide a living allowance during days off between trips. This amount varies by country due to cost of living. Using South America as an example, it is currently between 27–30 USD per day. This is meant to help cover your accommodation and food between trips (and to recognize your availability for other job responsibilities that may be required between trips). We also hire Freelance Tour Leaders who are contacted when work is available or a replacement leader is needed at short notice. The days off living allowance does not apply to Freelance Tour Leaders.

NOTE: While the pay rates may seem less than many other professional positions, most Tour Leaders find that they are able to actually save money while leading. This is because most have very few expenses while on the road (remember that your accommodation, meals and activities are all covered in the trip budget). However, your individual saving potential depends, of course, on your personal lifestyle. Gap Adventures offers you constant work (and days off allowance between trips) for the duration of your contract, provided your job performance meets our expectations and provided you remain available to work.

We openly detail our pay rates in order to give prospective Tour Leaders a clear idea of what they can expect to earn while working with us. We don't expect people who apply for a Tour Leading job just to make money. Rather, we prefer candidates whose motivation for leading is their passionate interest in travel, adventure, and experiencing new cultures and who believe that the rewards of this employment far exceed the value of any monetary compensation that could be obtained in a hum- drum job at home!

Hopefully, by now you've got a much better understanding of what's involved in being a Gap Adventures Tour Leader. Are you still interested? If you want to embark on this adventurous experience, please visit our website and complete the online application.





IMPORTANT: We do not accept CVs or resumes. The entire application process is conducted online in our format and it includes a simple questionnaire to help us find personality traits required by a strong candidate.

<http://www.gapadventures.com/careers/tour-guide-form>

***** We thank all candidates for their interest however only those selected for an interview will be contacted. *****

For inquiries, please contact: Global Tour Leader Supervisor
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