

ADVANTAGE

Live Unconventionally

EMBRAER QUARTERLY
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The New Travel Club

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the discerning traveler

Shaping The Future

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Landscape Designers

Recalibrating our relationship
with the natural world

PURA VIDA

Home to more than 5% of the planet's biodiversity, Costa Rica is a champion of conservation and a mecca for exotic wildlife encounters

As a country that's been pioneering sustainability long before it was trendy, Costa Rica takes pride in being a poster child for ecotourism. Roughly the size of Denmark, this Central American territory may be small, but it's a powerhouse when it comes to biodiversity. From the tropical rainforests of Tortuguero and the Osa Peninsula to the cloud forest of Monteverde and the dry forest of Guanacaste, this slice of paradise is bursting with more than 500,000 wildlife species. Its landscape is also legendary. There are formidable volcanoes, flowing hot springs, fertile valleys, and miles of sun-kissed beaches fringing the Pacific and Caribbean coastlines.

Costa Rica's green-minded government prizes its natural assets and has protected more than 25% of its landmass in the form of 29 national parks and nature reserves. It continues to spearhead national conservation efforts with a standardized certification system for sustainable tourism, ambitious climate-change policies, and carbon offsetting programs that support its goal to become carbon-neutral by 2050. With a ceaseless commitment to sustainability, it's no surprise that in 2019 Costa Rica took home the Champions of the Earth award, the United Nation's highest environmental distinction. Some would argue the country's success is an outgrowth of its *pura vida* culture. The ubiquitous phrase, used both as a greeting and an expression, loosely translates to "the simple life." More than a sentiment, it's a lifestyle embodied by the warm character of the locals and their respect for family, wellness and Mother Nature.

Whatever your particular flavor of fun is, Costa Rica is sure to have it in spades. Sunbathers laze on castaway beaches strewn with swaying palms. Surfers ride big barrel waves. Thrill-seekers soar above forest canopies dangling from ziplines. Hikers trek through lush forests, spotting capuchin monkeys, giant sloths and wild tapirs. Birders scope scarlet macaws and keel-billed toucans. And divers swim among sea turtles, dolphin pods and manta rays.



WORDS Nora Walsh, IMAGE © Pucci / Kasiya Papagayo

Kasiya Papagayo's tented suites immerse guests in the primary jungle brimming with wildlife



The lodging landscape is just as compelling as the country's natural wonders. To tread lightly on the land, take your pick of treetop eco-suites. Kasiya Papagayo's seven upscale treehouses sculpted from recycled wood are camouflaged among 123 acres of wild jungle humming with exotic fauna. "We did not cut down a single tree to build the hotel," noted Owner Mehdi Rheljari. "In fact, Kasiya could be dismantled in a couple of days and you'd never know we were here." Its intimate size is perfect for guests who want to buy out the entire resort and use it as a basecamp for adventures with the on-site naturalist guide or hole up with the hotel's resident healer for chakra cleansings.

Nayara Tented Camp takes glamping to the next level with 29 elevated tents wrapped with roomy decks and hot-springs-fed plunge pools overlooking Arenal Volcano. The resort's owner, Leo Ghitis, is an ardent eco-warrior who reforested the land in which the camp sits by planting more than 40,000 indigenous trees, transforming a barren cattle field into a thriving rainforest and sloth sanctuary. "Lucky guests might spot Tony, one of our resident sloths, hanging in a guarumo tree around the property," said Ghitis.



EMBRAER TIP

Travel consciously with a non-stop flight from Miami to one of the most environmentally-friendly nations in the entry-level **Phenom 100EV**, the greenest twinjet in production in civilian aviation.

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In the high-valley jungle near Lake Nicaragua, Origins Lodge's seven circular villas draw on aboriginal architecture to blend into the surrounding primary forest. Its Michelin-starred chef forages for organic ingredients on property (think fresh tilapia from the lagoon and chestnuts from the trees) to dish up palatable fare that fuses Latin roots and French haute flair. Don't miss a hike to the property's Oro waterfall; it's a highlight.

The newly minted Residences at Prieta Bay, an exquisite enclave of multi-bedroom villas and estate homes from the Four Seasons Private Retreats collection, welcomes guests to the jaw-dropping beauty of Guanacaste's Peninsula Papagayo—a dramatic 1,400-acre swath of land along the Pacific Coast with towering bluffs, tropical forests and private beaches caressed by ocean waves. Designed by Costa Rica's celebrated architect Ronald Zurcher, the clifftop residences have a contemporary-organic aesthetic with green roofs and modern glass walls sliding open onto large poolside terraces with sea views. Guests have access to all the plush amenities at neighboring Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica (fresh from a top-to-bottom renovation), the Prieta Beach Club and a dedicated activities concierge. Long-stay visitors with time to kill can now call on experts to master the art of surfing, freediving and mountain biking thanks to Papagayo Explorer's new progressive skill learning program.



Left page
Designed by celebrated architect Ronald Zurcher, Prieta Bay has a contemporary-organic aesthetic with poolside terraces and sea views

Right page (top)
At Origins Lodge, the Michelin-starred chef crafts haute cuisine using fresh ingredients available on property

Right page (bottom)
At the very top of the hillside, the Nayara Tented Camp boasts enviable views of Arenal Volcano

“It is a privilege to take guests on adventures that not only support causes we care about but also give them once-in-a-lifetime memories to take home.”

Head to the foothills of the Talamanca Mountains to be one of the first to stay at Auberge’s Hacienda AltaGracia when it reopens later this year. The 865-acre former farm (serviced by a private airstrip) features 50 casitas, the largest spa in Central America and a stable of Andalusian horses that guests can ride along the property’s network of bucolic trails.

If you prefer to travel in the comfort of a private yacht, you’re in luck. Costa Rica just relaxed its maritime laws to welcome foreign vessels. “The main advantage of cruising the country by yacht is ease of access to ocean and land adventures without having to pack and unpack,” said Ofer Ketter, Co-founder of Origen Escapes, a conservation-minded travel outfitter that specializes in off-grid trips.

Origen Escapes often partners with environmental nonprofits across the country to create mind-blowing natural encounters that benefit both the traveler and the planet. Their clients can help biologists release sea turtle hatchlings back into the wild, tag hammerhead sharks to help prevent illegal fishing, and set camera traps in the cloud forest to protect endangered tapirs. Perhaps one of the most spectacular experiences is boarding a piloted submersible to explore deep sea life and collect data for university scientists working to further sustainability initiatives. “It is a privilege to take guests on adventures that not only support causes we care about but also give them once-in-a-lifetime memories to take home,” shared Ketter.

The reasons to visit Costa Rica are as abundant as its biodiversity. There’s so much to see and do, but also much to learn about the Earth and how to take care of it. When travelers immerse themselves in the country’s culture they’ll learn how to say *pura vida*, but more importantly, how to live it. ◀



Left page (top)
Costa Rica is known for its abundance of flora and fauna

Left page (bottom)
The red-eyed tree frog is one of Costa Rica’s 200 species of amphibians

Right page (top)
Origen Escapes creates mind-blowing natural encounters that benefit both the traveler and the planet

Right page (bottom)
With sun-kissed sands and turquoise waves, Costa Rican beaches epitomize the *pura vida* lifestyle



UNCHARTED COMPASS

Travel to Osa Peninsula to snorkel and scuba dive in the pristine waters of Golfo Dulce.

Hike through Arenal Volcano National Park for uninterrupted views of the mighty Arenal Volcano and soak in the natural hot springs.

Head off the beaten track on the Pacific Coast to find untouched beaches and tranquil wildlife reserves.

Relax on unspoiled beaches and embrace the rythm of Puerto Viejo’s laidback lifestyle.

Explore the nature reserve of Tortuguero by boat for a chance sighting of the elusive jaguar or a green macaw.

Experience nature up-close in the cloud forests, rainforests and coffee plantations.



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