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WANDERLUST

Adventures in ECO-LUXURY

Revel in Costa Rica's stunning natural heritage at Nayara Tented Camp and the boutique Cayuga Collection

By Paul Rubio

PROPERTIES SUCH AS NAYARA TENTED CAMP (INSET) AND CAYUGA COLLECTION'S ARENAS DEL MAR (BELOW) EXEMPLIFY COSTA RICA'S ECOTOURISM ELITE.

BRICE FERRE STUDIO

When ecotourism solidified as a concept in the 1990s, Costa Rica emerged at its forefront. Spearheading a movement of environmentally conscious travel, the petite Central American country became the promised land for soft adventures in biodiversity. As the archetype evolved, it began incorporating elements of style and sophistication, proving that nature and luxury could successfully coexist. Today Costa Rica's top eco-minded properties span the full spectrum of luxe—from casual to ultra—and showcase the best of the country's wildlife-rich jungles and forest-fringed coastlines. Here, we present some of our favorites, from the dreamy Nayara Tented Camp near Arenal Volcano to a trio of Cayuga Collection hotels positioned in Costa Rica's most coveted coastal destinations.



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PAUL RUBIO



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NAYARA TENTED CAMP BOASTS SAFARI-CHIC ACCOMMODATIONS WITH LARGE TERRACES INCLUSIVE OF INFINITY POOLS AND VIEWS OF ARENAL VOLCANO. SPEND YOUR DAY IN ONE OF THE THERMAL HOT SPRING POOLS OR EMBARK ON A SLOTH-SPOTTING EXPEDITION.



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NAYARA TENTED CAMP

Draped in lush cloud forest and punctuated by skyscraping volcanoes, Costa Rica's mountainous interior is synonymous with dramatic natural beauty. Nowhere is this more visible than in the area around Arenal Volcano: a 5,400-foot-tall marvel flanked by mist-shrouded wilderness, waterfalls, and hot springs aplenty—as well as a sumptuous, safari-style lodge immersed therein.

True to its name, Nayara Tented Camp delivers canvas-topped glamping within Arenal Volcano National Park. In its Central American debut, design firm Luxury Frontiers, renowned for ultra-posh camps across Africa, combined safari glamour and a Costa Rican sense of place to create a 21-tent hillside retreat in direct view of Arenal. Design details abound in each of the 1,700-square-foot cliff-top tents, with tailor-made furnishings that blend vintage exploration with jungle chic. High points include a textured mural depicting rainforest flora along the back wall of a four-poster king bed, a foldable leather campaign chair, and a trunk-esque minibar. Step outside to swoon over a spacious terrace enveloped in foliage. Appointed

with a sleek dining table, hammock, day bed, and a hot spring-fed infinity pool, these accommodations are what eco-luxury dreams are made of.

In such an extraordinary setting, it's tempting to follow the plan: relax, room service, repeat. But this area is meant for exploring, even if kept just to the immediate grounds. Nayara Tented Camp lies in a collective reserve alongside two casita-dotted sibling properties, Nayara Springs and Nayara Gardens, lending to a multitude of shared amenities and experiences over vast acreage. Among the can't-miss are the short hiking trails, famed for excellent sloth sightings. There are also seven thermal hot spring pools tiered throughout the forest, each bubbling at a different temperature (with bar service available), and an open-air yoga pavilion, where daily complimentary classes are held. Recognizing that adrenaline-seeking guests may also want to discover more of Arenal Volcano National Park—it is Costa Rica's adventure capital, after all—Nayara offers numerous group tours and private excursions anchored by activities like zip lining, kayaking, canyoning, spelunking, monkey spotting, and white-water rafting.

Across three personality-driven restaurants, Nayara's gastronomy ranges from hyper-local to Latin-Asian fusion to pure Italian excellence. Fuel up on a traditional *casado* (black beans, plantains, salad, tortillas, plus a protein) and *ensalada palmito* (hearts of palm salad) at Amor Loco. Salivate over plantain-wrapped sushi rolls at Asia Luna and get excited for the house-made pastas at Mis Amores. And even if you aren't a breakfast person or an early riser, we suggest you become one while at Nayara Tented Camp. Indulging in a gorgeous morning spread on your terrace as hummingbirds zip by, toucans sing, and the sun rises over Arenal is the most satisfying food for the soul. (nayaratentedcamp.com)



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MIKE DELL



MIKE DELL



MIKE DELL

AT KURA (ABOVE AND LEFT) COSTA RICA'S COASTAL PLEASURES COMPLEMENT HILLTOP LIVING. ARENAS DEL MAR (BELOW AND TOP LEFT) ALSO PAIRS BEACHFRONT AND RAINFOREST WONDERS, COMPLETE WITH GRAND VISTAS AND WILDLIFE ACTIVITIES.



PAUL RUBIO

CAYUGA COLLECTION

Nestled between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean, Costa Rica boasts an impressive 800-plus miles of coastline, the best of which can be savored in style thanks to Cayuga Collection, a small but diverse portfolio of light-on-earth boutique hotels across Central America. The collection's three oceanside Costa Rican properties offer distinct experiences of rainforest-meets-ocean splendor, starting with the crown jewel of Cayuga, Kura Costa Rica. This eight-suite, adults-only spot hones in on the picturesque marriage of land and sea through design and location. Perched high in the forest atop the Pacific coastal town of Uvita, Kura is an exercise in tropical minimalism, defined by breathtaking panoramas and open-air spaces where nature is always present.

Also on the central Pacific coast is Arenas Del Mar, an eco-conscious resort in the popular surf town of Manuel Antonio. It spans both mountain and beach, with suites at higher elevation to maximize views of the palm-laced coastline and

amenities at sea level to optimize waterfront pursuits (which include highly Instagrammable tree swings). Though public, the beach here feels private thanks to cliffs and boulders that demarcate a generous swath. While topography helps to keep other humans out, Arenas Del Mar is trying to let more wildlife in. The resort has reforested the land above to create an 11-acre biological corridor with neighboring Manuel Antonio National Park, providing extended habitat for the white-faced monkeys, scarlet macaws, and sloths that call this land home. Get your steps in with daily rainforest hikes on trails within Arenas and the national park. Or, counter languid afternoons on your balcony or at the full-service beach club with morning runs on Manuel Antonio's miles-long main beach stretch.

Over at Puerto Viejo on the southern coast, Hotel Aguas Claras captures the essence of the region's infectious Caribbean feel. At this adorable collection of 12 bungalows and suites, the bold, colorful aesthetic skews classic Victorian-Caribbean, while the vibe slants toward



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tranquility and wellness. Keeping true to its sustainability ethos and the local flavor, each unit is adorned in eclectic upcycled materials, repurposed furniture, and found objects. A small walking trail leads to the coastline of Playa Chiquita, one of the country's most famed beaches (thanks to crystalline waters and a virgin appearance). Here, Aguas Claras houses a small toes-in-the-sand beach club featuring regional delicacies (hello: watermelon mojitos and tostones). Back



HOTEL AGUAS CLARAS EXUDES A MORE CARIBBEAN AURA, WITH CARIBBEAN-VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURAL FLOURISHES AND AN OPEN-AIR YOGA PAVILION.

on property, a sprawling yoga pavilion sets the tone, while house bikes allow guests to venture out and fully embrace the charming beach shacks, indie boutiques, and laid-back lifestyle that define this Caribbean coast.

Though Costa Rica may appear small on Google Maps, a short distance can take a long time thanks to rugged, single-lane highways (often packed with trucks), current limitations on internal flights, and requisite connections through the capital city of San José. Basically, one or more overnights in the capital is all but inevitable. Thankfully, Cayuga's Hotel Grano

de Oro makes the layover in this otherwise unappealing city pleasurable. An adaptive reuse of a turn-of-the-century Victorian mansion, Grano de Oro upholds Costa Rica's cultural heritage and presents an ideal base for seeing the city's key attractions, such as the Jade Museum, National Theater, and Pre-Columbian Gold Museum. You may not be waking up to the sights and soundtrack of the rainforest, but you will dabble in Costa Rica's history and culture—a fine complement to rewarding exploits at the country's trailblazing eco-luxury resorts. (cayugacollection.com) ◀◀



Kristie Wells Photography

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Promotion and Events

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF THE PALM BEACHES

Celebrating its 80th anniversary, the Junior League of the Palm Beaches (JLPB), with Honorary Chair Clare O'Keeffe, invite golfers to swing their clubs at the Third Annual Golf Invitational presented by the Esther B. O'Keeffe Charitable Trust. Hosted at Old Marsh Golf Club on April 26 at noon, players will enjoy a full round of golf, boxed lunch at the clubhouse, contest prizes, and an awards cocktail reception. The tournament supports JLPB's mission of developing the potential of women and improving the community through trained volunteers. A foursome is \$1,200. For more information, please contact golf@jlpb.org or 561-689-7590.

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Third Annual Junior League of the Palm Beaches Golf Invitational