

CLAIMING SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BEACHES IN THE WORLD, WITH NEARLY 300 PEPPERING ITS RUGGED COASTLINE, COSTA RICA IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO DETOX FROM THE STRESS OF MODERN LIVING, AND ENRICH YOUR SOUL WITH SIMPLICITY AND NATURAL BEAUTY.

LIVING LA PURA VIDA IN GUANACASTE, COSTA RICA

BY: Kelly Calagna



Rancho Humo Estancia
Photo: Kelly Calagna

The Costa Ricans live by the motto “pura vida,” which directly translates to “pure life.” The culture embraces “pura vida” as a mantra toward pursuing happiness and living a peaceful existence toward each other, and the environment. This military-free country is known as one of the most sustainable nations in the world, and has ranked second for the last three consecutive years in Environmental Sustainability by the World Energy Council. Costa Rica is truly the ultimate eco retreat destination.

Enjoy relaxation between palm trees, swaying in a hammock over the black sands below the Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort. The resort is dedicated to health and wellness, offering an extensive spa with facials, body scrubs and wraps, baths, and a wide variety of massages, which encompass aspects of the local culture. The massage suites are incredible, with an open air deck overlooking the serene peninsula and an outdoor shower to rinse off after the most tranquil treatment of your life.

The Andaz has a family swimming pool, an adult-only pool, a full gym, and offers a wide assortment of activities throughout the day, such as yoga, Zumba, stand up paddle-boarding, kayaking, dance lessons, Spanish lessons, forest walks, a snorkeling tour, and their Cambi Kids Club, which is open all day and night at the convenience of parents. The Kid’s Club also offers its services in the evening. You can refuel at one of the resort’s four open air restaurants and bars, where you can enjoy the best of local or international cuisine. There is no better way to end a day of activity than sipping a mojito, watching wild howler monkeys and kudamundi as they meander through the treetops against the turquoise backdrop of the peninsula.

The resort was created to be a complete emersion into the Costa Rican culture. Visually, it was built to be almost invisible from the opposite bank of the golf, as an effort to preserve the look of nature. Its structures are immersed into the hillside among the trees, with the exterior paneled in bamboo.

The Andaz is involved in several efforts to improve the community surrounding Papagayo. The resort has partnered with the Creciendo Juntos Association to support the education of local children by providing them teaching, and free transportation to and from school. Employees are also involved as volunteers, tutoring students. Additionally, to support local artisans, the resort hosts farmers market style expos for artists to come and sell their work to the guests inside the Andaz’s spacious ballroom.

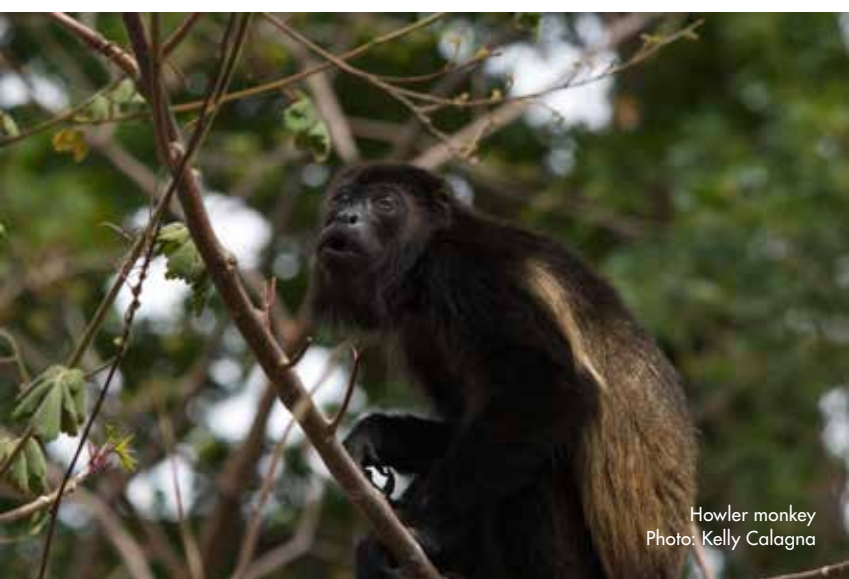
For those seeking something with a bit more of a pulse, the resort’s Shuttle Service happily provides a day trip to the forests at the base of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano. Travelers enjoy adventures such as zip lining, repelling, rock climbing, inner-tubing, horseback riding and hiking.



Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort



Rancho Humo Estancia



Howler monkey
Photo: Kelly Calagna



Andaz Peninsula
Papagayo Resort



Oxen
Photo: Kelly Calagna

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Only a forty-five minute drive from the Papagayo Peninsula, the Hotel Hacienda Guachipelin Adventure Park offers an all inclusive day pass, which provides a unique way to experience the natural beauty of Costa Rica’s forests. Not only can you see the depths of nature from the back of a horse, you can then dismount and inner-tube for 5km of gentle rapids lined with an array of flora and fauna. The hotel also offers access to natural hot springs, heated by the active volcano. After crossing the bridge through the lush forest, one can take a dip in one of four pools to open up the pores before caking on the mineral rich volcanic mud, which leaves the skin baby soft.

If you are looking to really get “off the grid,” you can retreat to an eco boutique hotel, visited by the likes of the Hemsworths and Miley Cyrus. Located in a Blue Zone with unusually high life expectancy rates, Rancho Humo Estancia is a renovated ranch hacienda, perched atop a hill overlooking the lush Costa Rican wetlands. It is a working cattle ranch, offering only a select number of rooms, and VIP treatment for every guest. They offer four-wheel mini car wetlands tours, hiking, yoga, boat rides and horseback riding. The activities immerse you in the natural beauty of the property, which teams with wildlife; from monkeys, to iguanas, to flocks of hundreds of vibrant migratory birds.

The hotel feels like a home away from home, with its elegant dining room at its heart. Surrounded by glass walls, overlooking the forest wetlands against the striking mountains, one has the choice of watching the mist roll in, or the cooks at work in the open-door kitchen—it is quite the treat to see the chefs preparing the creme brûlée! The beautifully plated, chic take on local cuisine is prepared by students at the local university, and ingredients are sourced from the farm’s own gardens.

From Costa Rica’s relaxed culture to its thriving eco system, it stands as one of the top places to lose yourself in nature, while still attaining an eco-lux experience. So when you consider your next escape from the real world, think pura vida! ●



Andaz Peninsula
Papagayo Resort

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