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Best costa rica beach resorts

Credit: Amanda Pratt Alvaro Ugalde, co-founder of Costa Rica's national park system. From the article The New Costa Rican Advertising Advertising Credit: Amanda Pratt Water Lilies at a nearby pond. From the article The New Costa Rica Credit: Amanda Pratt Along the path to the beach at the Harmony Hotel, Nosara, on the country's west coast. From the article The New Costa Rican Advertising Credit: Amanda Pratt Credit: Amanda Pratt The owner of a fishing-tour company in Tortuguero, on the Caribbean coast. From the article The New Costa Rica Credit: Amanda Pratt Advertising Advertising Credit: Amanda Pratt Credit: Amanda Pratt A giant sea turtle on the beach. From the article The New Costa Rica Credit: Amanda Pratt Advertising Credit: Amanda Pratt A pool at the Harmony Hotel. From the article The New Costa Rica Courtesy of Pacuare Lodge Costa Rica is the happiest country on the planet for a reason, well many. Sunny skies, epic swells and biodiverse terrain (sandy beaches, majestic mountains, green valleys and dense vegetation) make it a playground for outdoor recreation - not to mention a star in the ecotourism industry. It is also a wellness mecca with a vibrant culture and delicious dishes. In short: there is something for everyone in this tropical paradise. Fortunately, you don't have to be a resident enjoying the good vibes and year-round good weather. From surf lessons and organic farms to beachfront yoga and natural spa rituals, these spectacular properties invite visitors to experience the true meaning of pura vida. See more: Right Time, Right Place: The Best Honeymoon Destinations at month 01 of 06 Courtesy of Pacuare Lodge Couples looking to disconnect should consider Pacuare Lodge. This eco retreat is an off-the-grid honeymoon getaway, located deep within 25,000 acres of protected rainforest. Thatched bungalows, built in harmony with nature, are electric-free (our top pick is the Canopy Suite, accessible via a private suspension bridge), which means you'll spend less time checking emails and more time sipping guaro cocktails, swimming in your spring-fed pool and staring at the sweeping views. 02 of 06 Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica on Peninsula Papagayo Located within the splendor of the Peninsula Papagayo, this reimaged resort is a design-lover's dream. It's posh yet completely unpretentious. Indoor-outdoor living spaces seem to disappear into the idyllic countryside. Exclusive facilities, including a quiet spa with services inspired by local healing traditions, are complemented by fantastic food and an ultra-attentive staff. From cold towels and welcome coconuts on arrival to the hot send-off when you depart, the whole experience is barefoot luxury at its best. 03 of 06 Courtesy of Rancho Pacifico Rancho Pacifico is a sanctuary for serenity (read: no children allowed), seclusion and scenic beauty in the heart of Osa, a region known for its biological diversity. Whether you prefer action-packed or pampering pursuits, you'll want to 'em here. Nature buffs can go wild zip-lining, whale watching and snorkeling, or embark on an all-day trek to see 69 waterfalls up close. On the menu for relaxation-seekers? Bliss-inducing treatments at the award-winning spa. 04 of 06 Billed as the next Tulum, costa Rica beach town of Santa Teresa, has all the laid-back charm but far fewer crowds. The atmosphere is airy and the accommodation follows suit. Intimate and impossibly quaint, Florblanca is the ultimate easy-going getaway with wellness-oriented offerings galore. Start your day with seaside yoga or an early morning surf session. Enjoy fresh, healthy fare for lunch. Spend your afternoon basking in a crochet hammock. Take a sunset walk along the pristine coast. 05 of 06 Courtesy of Hacienda AltaGracia, an Auberge Resort Set amid the unbridled splendor of Pérez Zeledón, this off-the-beaten-path treasure is defined by its home-style hospitality, authentic activities and mesmerizing. The best way to see it all? Soar above cloud forests and emerald valleys on an ultralight flight or saddle up for a horseback ride. Do you prefer to keep your feet firmly on the ground? Join the chefs to pick up products directly from the hotel's organic farm. 06 of 06 Courtesy of Casa Chameleon at Las Catalinas Calling all couples! This adults-only boutique hotel is an adult holiday with a sustainable sensibility (you can book your stay through Kind Traveler). All 21 villas flaunt modern furniture, private terraces, and saltwater infinity plunge pools. The sun-drenched coast beckons with its white sand, turquoise waters and surf-worthy waves. Jungles and peaks are ripe for exploration - whether it's on foot, by bike or on horseback. Plus, this hilltop hideaway is just minutes from the charming town of Las Catalinas. Much of traditional Costa Rican food reflects the pura vida (clean life) attitude prevailing in this Central American country, balancing fresh produce, no-frills flavors, hearty staples, and sweet treats. Be prepared to eat a lot of beans, rice and corn as one or all of these ingredients are included in most meals. While there's plenty of international fare available all over the country, here are some popular and comida típica (typically, in this case, traditional) Costa Rican dishes to try. 01 of 10 DarioC2/Getty Images The name means spotted roost for the tainted appearance of the black beans with white rice. But you won't find any poultry in this dish. There are some onions, garlic, peppers, coriander and Lizano sauce. You'll see a big scoop of it served for breakfast along with eggs, sweet squeals, sour cream and corn tortillas, though some people eat it for lunch or dinner too. Gallo pinto is the national dish and not to be missed. You may notice small variations in different regions of the country. In Guanacaste, red beans can be used instead of black, and on the Caribbean coast, if you ask for rice and beans, you get a version made of black beans, beans, chiles and coconut milk. You can find gallo pinto on most local menus, but one of the best options to try is the Chilamate Rainforest Eco Retreat in Sarapiquí, where you start your day dining on locally sourced ingredients, including fresh organic fruits, in the outdoor jungle restaurant, often with a symphony of birdsong. 02 of 10 Fertng/Getty Images It's all in the name. Mostly. This popular dish is typically made from rice (arroz), chicken (pollo), and vegetables seasoned with Lizano, garlic, onions, coriander and achote (for the color) and often served with salad and french fries. It can be found at most soda-local, no-frills restaurants-and parties. If you're in San José, try arroz de la abuela (grandma's rice) at La Esquinita de JM on the corner of Calle 15 and Av. 11, where authentic fare is served in a homely setting reminiscent of a Costa Rican grandmother's house, right down to tin coffee cups and Christian-inspired art on the walls. Order arroz con pollo at The Harmony Hotel in Nosara, and you'll also get a side of patacones, crispy fried mashed pisang served with refried beans. 03 of 10 Christer Fredriksson/Getty Images A straightforward and traditional dish, casado usually includes rice, beans, lettuce, squeals, picadillo (vegetable hash), corn tortilla, and an optional meat, chicken or fish. The name means poison, and some say it derives from the lunches married men wore to work or the fact that men requested this type of meal typically cooked at home-in restaurants Others believe the term simply describes the marriage of ingredients to create a nutritious meal. Whatever the case may be, it's a satisfying dish for lunch or dinner. You'll find a casado and other Costa Rican dishes made with ingredients from local organic farms at Mi Cafecito's outdoor restaurant. Bonus: this restaurant is on the same property as an organic coffee tour, a lookout point and waterfall, so you can take a walk and have lunch in one place. 04 of 10 Courtesy of Sikwa Restaurant It is not common to find native dishes in Costa Rica restaurants. But you will find native Costa Rican cuisine in at least one in San José. After spending time with indigenous communities, chefs at Sikwa bring ancient recipes to Barrio Escalanté, one of the newly developed neighborhoods. Try the tasting menu, a six-course journey through the cocina ancestral (ancestral cuisine). The menu changes with the seasons and makes use of staples like corn, pork, potatoes and hearts of palm. Continue to 5 out of 10 below. 05 of 10 Arenas del Mar Beachfront & Rainforest Resort While Costa Rica can't claim ceviche, it's still a dish worth devouring while you're here, especially if you're going to spend time on both coasts. Raw fish is marinated in lime juice, salt, black pepper, onion, coriander and chopped pepper and served with fried tortilla or squeaky chips. It makes a tart and refreshing appetizer, or order a dish a meal out of it. Try today's sustainably sourced catch ceviche at Playitas Beachfront Restaurant in Arenas del Mar Resort in Manuel Antonio. 06 of 10 You can't imagine coffee can make a meal. But spend an evening at the Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort in the Central Valley, one of Costa Rica's coffee growing areas, and you'll be a believer. The hotel's restaurant, El Tigre Vestido, serves a Coffee Connoisseurs Menu. Each dish on this tasting menu incorporates the plantation's organic, shaded Costa Rican coffee, from tomato soup to the coffee-rubbed ribeye and the grand finale, an affogato espresso with ginger, coffee ice cream and coffee caramel sauce. Finca Rosa Blanca also offers guided plantation watches and coffee cups where you'll learn about the history and culture of this beloved crop. 07 of 10 WildSuit/Getty Images Named after chicharrones (fried pork skin) and frijoles (beans), this is a kind of Costa Rica fast food. Rice, beans, fried pork crusts, and pico de gallo are layered and served with tortilla chips and sometimes avocado. This treat is believed to have originated at corderos bar in San José more than 30 years ago, but is now found at most local restaurant and bar menus (and if it isn't, ask. Trademark problems can prevent them from using the name, but not serving the dish), and best enjoyed with a cold Costa Rican craft beer. 08 of 10 Yu-Hao Lee/Flickr/CC BY-NC 2.0 If you're looking for Costa Rican comfort food (or a local hangover cure), order a bowl of olla de carne. This hearty beef stew made with vegetables like cassava and taro is traditionally served on weekends. It is not always listed on the menu, but can be offered on Saturdays and Sundays, so call ahead or ask on arrival. One place you are sure to find olla de carne all day, every day is La Parada in La Fortuna. It is open 24 hours, seven days a week, and olla de carne is one of the permanent platos típicos (typical or traditional dishes) on the menu. Continue to 9 out of 10 below. 09 of 10 Courtesy of Nene's Restaurant This dessert is named after the three milks used: the cake is soaked in milk, evaporated milk, and sweetened condensed milk and then topped with heavy whipping cream. Tres Leches is not a Costa Rican creation version of it can be found in several countries in Latin America and even in places further afield like Turkey- but worth tasting if you have a sweet tooth. Nibble on a piece at Nene's Restaurant in La Fortuna or try a heaps help at Hotel Grano de Oro in San José. 10 of 10 Courtesy of La Sorbetera de Lolo Mora If you like the taste of eggnog, you'll love the sorbet at La Sorbetera de Lolo Mora in the central market. They've been using the same recipe since 1901, and after just one bite you'll know why: with notes of nutmeg, cinnamon and clove, it's perfect. Enjoy a small size like a palate of soap before sitting down on a nearby soda for lunch, or saddle up on a stool here and in a large bowl for dessert. The consistent flow of locals at the counter confirms that this is a place worth stopping. Stop.