

# BETWEEN THE SEA AND THE SKY

An eco-friendly stay in the rainforest, a glamping tent by a volcano or a hideaway on the beach? Costa Rica offers them all, says *Ginny Weeks*



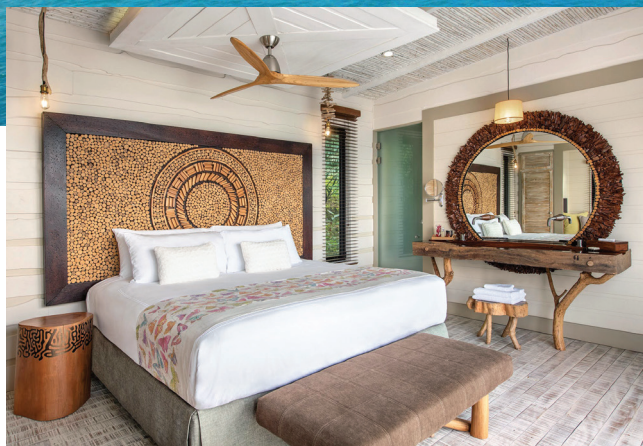
Conchal beach in Guanacaste, Costa Rica

## 1 ORIGINS LODGE, *Alajuela*

**BEST FOR: ROMANCE**

A truly unique setting awaits guests at this luxury eco-retreat set in Costa Rica's remote northern rainforest. The 111-acre estate is blissfully secluded and romantic, with six enchanting lodges set into the hillside, surrounded by jungle gardens and topped with living roofs. There's also a three-bedroom villa suspended among the treetops that's great for groups. Whichever lodge you stay in, you'll be treated to sensational views over lush valley jungle and further out to Lake Nicaragua. Inside, the rooms have luxurious canopy beds, open-air en suite bathrooms and gourmet snacks. Outside, you'll find an outdoor shower and a private, hot, plunge pool on the wrap-around terrace – a dreamy spot for a drink at sunset. The grounds teem with life at every turn and there are plenty of activities to enjoy. Try lake fishing, go hiking or sample the spa. As it rains a lot in this region, you'll have lots of time to chill in the restaurant (complete with board games and pool table). Mealtimes are a special occasion here with excellent organic food and some of the best margaritas I've tasted.

**BOOK IT:** Lodges from £503 B&B, plus tax. [originslodge.com](http://originslodge.com)



## 2 AGUAS CLARAS, *Limon*

**BEST FOR: BOUTIQUE CHARM**

Just outside the vibrant town of Puerto Viejo stands this handsome collection of Victorian-style houses and bungalows. Brought to life by a mother-daughter team, the charming, art-filled hotel is the ideal retreat on this untamed part of the Caribbean coast. A short walk from two of the best beaches in the area, it has maze-like tropical



gardens, an inviting pool, a yoga pavilion, six stilted bungalows and six standard rooms set in a colonial-style house. Each room is decorated in white with pops of colour from bright artwork or vintage furniture. The hotel's DaLime Beach Club is a great spot for smoothies and snacks, but it's the restaurant Papaya that's the real food highlight here and one of the best places to eat in the region. Its fresh, tropical design is totally unique in Costa Rica with bold coral furniture, statement lighting and a relaxed, trendy vibe. The mouth-watering menu includes healthy breakfast options such as banana oatmeal and omelettes as well as tasty cocktails, ceviche, Caribbean curries, and home-made coconut ice cream.

**BOOK IT:** Doubles from £235 B&B, including tax. [hotelaguasclaras.com](http://hotelaguasclaras.com)

### 3 KASIYA, Guanacaste

**BEST FOR: LUXURY ESCAPE**

Kasiya is a truly unique eco-escape hidden away in a remote bay on Costa Rica's Guanacaste Pacific coast. The hotel's name means 'find your pace' in Swahili and it's all about connecting guests to the natural surroundings. Seven award-winning safari-style tented cabins are dotted on the beach and clifftop. With Kasiya being off-grid, everything is powered by solar energy and the tents were constructed without using cement or damaging any surrounding trees. Inside the rooms, the décor is all about clean white linen and smooth wood finishes. Some have huge, indulgent bathrooms with outdoor showers and copper bathtubs. Within the 123-acre grounds is a spa, where you can indulge in a restorative massage or healing treatment by resident healer Yamuna (who counts Brad Pitt as one of his clients). Alternatively, go for a nature walk with the resident biologist. Later, you can dine at the beach cabana where the chef prepares three-course meals with fresh, organic ingredients, or at the more formal, candlelit sunset lounge for fine dining, located on the hilltop with incredible vistas over the Pacific.

**BOOK IT:** Suites from £586 full board, plus tax. [kasiya.com](http://kasiya.com)



### 4 NAYARA TENTED CAMP, Arenal

**BEST FOR: VOLCANO VIEWS**

The breathtaking views from the recently opened Nayara Tented Camp are hard to beat in this area of Arenal national park, or anywhere actually. The rooms overlook the 'resting' Arenal volcano and are surrounded by verdant hotel grounds, which have been the subject of a recent reforestation project – over 40,000 indigenous trees have been replanted on the hillside that was once cleared for cattle pasture. It's now home to birds, sloths, coatis and monkeys. The 25 rooms are all set in glamorous tents raised high above the ground on stilts. Each has a hot spring-fed pool, an outdoor shower and large terrace decorated with hammocks and lounging areas, perfect for relaxing and taking in that view. Guests can use all the facilities and dine at one of the many excellent restaurants at sister properties Nayara Springs or Nayara Gardens next door. There's also a wine bar with a charming sommelier. Don't miss the terraced spring pools or the award-winning spa for total relaxation.

**BOOK IT:** From £520 B&B plus tax. [nayaratentedcamp.com](http://nayaratentedcamp.com) ■

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