

TRAVEL WEEKLY

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DISPATCH

Dispatch, Costa Rica: Reacquainting myself with the exotic

By [Jeri Clausing](#) | Apr 19, 2021



As I was lounging in bed early one morning, enjoying a cool mountain breeze through my open windows and listening to the howler monkeys howl loudly about whatever howler monkeys howl about, I realized what a perfect setting Costa Rica offers for easing back into international travel.

Although I had managed to squeeze in two beach trips -- one to Mexico and another to Aruba -- over the past year, like most travel lovers, I had been desperately craving something more exotic and authentic.

To be honest, I wasn't expecting to find it in Costa Rica, which I had come to associate more with mass market beach tourism and ziplines. Yes, I know there are also a number of ecolodges and adventure options across the country. But my only other trip there had been to an all-inclusive beach resort.

Lucky for me, my introduction to the other side of Costa Rica was on a long weekend hosted by **Origins Luxury Lodge**, one of the country's most exclusive properties and the first Americas member of Mantis Group, which primarily operates safari lodges in Africa.

Indeed, the association is fitting, as the small lodge set on 111 acres of rainforest in the Bijagua region about an hour and half from the Liberia airport felt a lot like a luxe safari camp, complete with a like-minded focus on sustainability and the area's indigenous culture, nature and wildlife.

Combine that with Origins' wellness and soft adventure offerings, healthy but delicious Michelin-chef prepared menus and lots of room for luxurious, open-air isolation, and it checked all the boxes for a relaxing, safe and [relatively] easy-to-get to pandemic escape.

Dispatches from Costa Rica: Origins Luxury Lodge



Origins Luxury Lodge Costa Rica features an infinity pool with sweeping views of the valley and, on a clear day, Lake Nicaragua.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



The main lodge at Origins Luxury Lodge serves as an open-air restaurant, pool deck and gathering place.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



The villas at Origins Luxury Lodge all have private, wood-fire heated outdoor soaking tubs.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



Origins Luxury Lodge has an open-air spa set that is set up to accommodate singles or couples.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



In addition to six villas, Origins Luxury Lodge has one three-bedroom house.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



Hand-carved canopy beds are the center piece of the round villas at Origins Luxury Lodge Costa Rica.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



Like the villas, the roof of the horse stable at Origins is covered with living plants.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



Activities at Origins Luxury Lodge include horseback riding.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing



Travel Weekly's Jeri Clausing saddled up for some horseback riding at Origins Luxury Lodge.



One of Origins' guides, Carlos, shows how to get rubber from a rubber tree.
Photo Credit: TW photo by Jeri Clausing

The lodge has just six villas and one three-bedroom house, all well-spaced across the sprawling property for maximum privacy. There is no air conditioning, and none is needed as the lodge sits on a mountainside in the rainforest.

The walls of the spacious round rooms, whose circular design was inspired by the region's pre-Colombian architecture, are mostly screened with wooden louvers that can be adjusted for maximum views, breezes and -- if you really think you need it (you don't) -- privacy. In the center is a hand-carved canopy bed with a built-in couch on one side and a comfortable chair and desk area on the other.

The villas, whose cone-shaped roofs are covered with living plants, also have large decks with small pools that are heated by an adjacent wood fireplace. There are comfortable Adirondack-style chairs as well as a large, hand-crafted couch that doubles as a comfortable day bed. And, of course, the large bathroom has both indoor and outdoor showers.

The main public area, like the rooms, is a large, open-air space that abuts an infinity pool. There are several different areas where families, friends or couples can gather for meals or socializing. There's also a pool table and a selection of wildlife and nature books as well as board games.



Travel Weekly's Jeri Clausing saddled up for some horseback riding at Origins Luxury Lodge in Costa Rica.

While the lodge can arrange just about any on- or off-property activity a guest might want, there is plenty to do without leaving or making any special requests. On my first morning, I had a private yoga session in an open air palapa overlooking the countryside and Lake Nicaragua. Later in the day, I wandered the property's walking and hiking trails, then had a relaxing massage in the spa, which is set up to accommodate singles or couples.

The next day, a guide took me on a 45-minute hike to a waterfall. We were then met at the top with horses for a leisurely ride back to the lodge. The guide then showed me around the property's organic

gardens, where much of resort's food is grown, as well as its fishing ponds, horse stables, chicken and quail pens and langostino pool.

I missed the night wildlife tour because of rain, but a fellow guest said it's must-do, especially for reptile lovers (which I am not). I did get to see plenty of gorgeous birds, howler monkeys – even an alligator – just wandering the paths on the property.

While I enjoyed exploring the rainforest and staying active in between delicious meals, most of all, I loved the solitude. I could literally have spent my entire three days alone in my villa and private pool soaking in the magical natural surroundings.