

# Green Journeys

Tread lightly on the magnificent Earth by choosing resorts and hotels that share your environmental values

By Debra Bokur



Nature's dramatic setting provides the perfect ambiance for many of the world's eco-resorts. From left: Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa is adjacent to the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge; the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere surrounding Clayoquot

Wilderness Resorts & the Healing Grounds Spa in British Columbia, Canada, boasts the largest temperate rainforest on the planet.



One of the many stunning features at Jungle Bay Resort & Spa in Dominica is the natural volcanic rock pool.

Distant lands and ports of call have always exerted an intoxicating pull on the human imagination, and travel is one of the more powerful ways we can engage in the amazing beauty and diversity of our planet. By selecting hotels, lodges, and resorts that take steps to protect the Earth through sustainable operating practices, we can help to safeguard the planet for future generations of dreamers and explorers. Some countries, such as the Commonwealth of Dominica, have adopted green tourism certification programs that encourage economic development through ecotourism, helping bring this important topic further into the public eye. Other resorts have embraced policies that encourage the use of renewable energy, organic and locally produced sources of food, indigenous products, reclaimed and recycled building materials, and educational programs that teach guests about the ecosystem they've chosen to visit, and its vital importance within a much larger, interdependent environment. Here, we showcase properties that offer spa and wellness



facilities, while also making an effort to create a greener world.

Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa has mineral springs on-property for soaking that are naturally heated by the nearby, and still active, volcano

many



Ancient sea muds, mineral salts, and native botanicals are some of the indigenous ingredients featured in treatments at Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve

Mayan healing rituals



EcoTulum's Maya Spa features indigenous ingredients and authentic

## Conservation & Learning

Becoming educated about the many environmental issues and challenges around the world is a huge step toward helping find viable solutions. Some lodges are located near—or even within—ecologically sensitive regions. While this may seem contradictory to an environmental preservation mission, allowing controlled access to such areas helps create awareness and a sense of stewardship through personal experience.

Costa Rica's [Samasati Nature Retreat](#) offers guests opportunities to learn about the surrounding environment as well as how it fits into a larger ecosystem. The property is surrounded by 250 acres of rainforest, and daily guided excursions are offered into Samasati Biological Reserve, Cahuita National Park, Black Beach Botanical Garden, and Kekoldi Indigenous Reserve. On the African continent, the rare Cape Mountain Zebra, elegant eland, and Black Wildebeest once again roam the veldts and plains around [Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve & Retreat](#), thanks to the resort's Rebirth Program. Nearer to home at [Papoose Creek Lodge](#) in Montana, guests are able to trek with ecologists knowledgeable about the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the inseparable relationship between such diverse species as wolves, willow trees, beavers, and bears. Located at the base of Costa Rica's dramatic Arenal Volcano, [Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa](#) is adjacent to the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge. Guests can take guided tours through the tropical rainforest canopy while learning about the diverse species that dwell here. Programs at [Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa](#) in Australia include bird watching excursions to view the 430 species of birds within the Daintree rainforest, including the rare Wompoo Fruit Dove that are attracted to the ylang ylang trees native to this region. Clayoquot Sound Biosphere surrounding [Clayoquot Wilderness Resorts & the Healing Grounds Spa](#) in British Columbia, Canada, boasts the largest temperate rainforest on the planet. Guests are invited to participate in the many conservation programs, which range from bear mapping and whale migration studies, to salmon habitat restoration and raptor rehabilitation and release—all part of the resort's Environmental Legacy Program.

## Good Food

Problems relating to food supply, ranging from added hormones and pesticide use to the presence of genetically modified organisms, have prompted responsible lodge operators to explore healthy sources of sustainably produced and organically grown foods. Besides ensuring purity, such practices support small family farms and local economies.

At [Devil's Thumb Ranch](#) in Colorado, organic and locally produced fruits, meats, and vegetables are transformed into gourmet dishes inspired by the surrounding Rocky Mountain landscape. The extensive organic gardens at Arizona's [Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center](#) supply the property with pure foods and also provide a setting for classes in spiritual gardening and conscious eating. Likewise, organic food gardens are an important feature at [Rainforest Edge & Spa](#) in Sri Lanka, where menus celebrate traditional Sri Lankan recipes. Cape heritage cooking is featured at [Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve](#), where organically grown farm produce comes fresh-picked from the property's walled vegetable, fruit, and herb gardens. Organically produced local foods are served overlooking a natural volcanic rock pool at [Jungle Bay Resort & Spa](#) in Dominica. All meals at [EcoTulum's Amilik & Maya Spa](#) in

Patagonia are prepared using fresh fruits and vegetables from onsite organic gardens and greenhouses, and the property is home to chickens and other animals that produce the resort's eggs and dairy products. At [Papoose Creek Lodge](#), chef Jeff Miller makes it a policy to serve locally grown and sustainably produced foods.



Mayan treatments administered by local healers are a highlight at [EcoTulum's Amilik & Maya Spa](#), where herbal therapies include the use of native Chilean plants



One of [Tabacon's](#) naturally heated mineral hot springs

[Bushmans Kloof's](#) include ancient muds and such soothing herbs as



specialty treatments chamomile

### Community Service

### & Economic Development

Two essential principles of ecotourism include promoting respect for local and cultural traditions, while providing support of local schools and businesses is integral to a healthy, self-sufficient society, and further serves to create goodwill, feelings of strong sense of community.

former Peace Corps volunteers, [Lapa Rios Ecolodge](#) funds area projects and employs local people, while supporting and sponsoring the local Carbonera School in educating native children who live in this remote area of Costa Rica. Built by local farmers, [Jungle Bay Resort & Spa](#) exclusively employs people from surrounding communities and buys goods and services from local farmers and craftspeople—helping to create an autonomous island economy. Very recently, Jungle Bay paid all tuition fees for high school students in the Carib Territory, which is home to the Caribbean's remaining indigenous Carib Indian peoples. The Aboriginal guides employed by [Daintree Ecolodge & Spa](#) share insight and wisdom about native flora and fauna, and teach art and cultural workshops to visitors. [Rainforest Edge & Spa](#) purchases local goods and commodities for use throughout the property, and 90 percent of the employees here are local people.

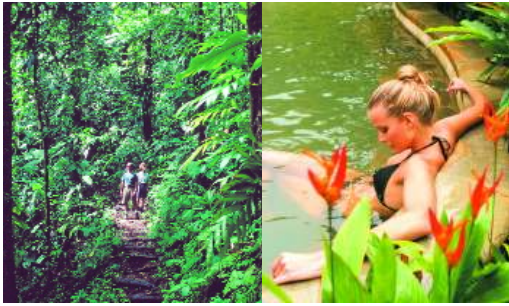
awareness of and building economic benefits to local to a healthy, self-sufficient empowerment, and a

Developed by two projects and employs local

### Clean Energy

The use of alternative and renewable energy sources says a lot about the environmental commitment of a property's owner or operator. While some lodges are located in remote areas where being off the grid is the norm, others are speaking out against global warming and the use of fossil energies by embracing such clean, renewable sources of power as solar, wind, and geothermal energy.

Both [Rainforest Edge & Spa](#) and [Lapa Rios Ecolodge](#) provide guests with solar-heated water, while geo-thermal radiant energy is used to heat the buildings and pools at [Devil's Thumb Ranch](#). In addition, a water-sand filtration system was recently installed at Devil's Thumb to purify its spring-fed water supply. Natural spring water is recycled through a gray water system at [Samasati Nature Retreat](#); [Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center](#) makes use of the abundant solar energy available in Arizona; and [Clayoquot Wilderness Resorts & The Healing Grounds Spa](#) harnesses wind power to generate electricity. Wind powers the turbine generators at [EcoTulum's Amilik & Maya Spa](#), which also makes use of solar panels for power.



The natural setting at both Jungle Bay Resort & Spa and Tabacon Hot Springs provides for both exhilarating and soothing experiences.

### Sustainable Construction

The use of sustainable construction practices involves many facets, and includes a demonstrated concern about the world's resources and how they are collected. When it comes to establishing the sustainability of any building material, it's essential that its complete life cycle be taken into consideration. The term "embodied energy" refers to the overall amount of energy consumed from locating a material, removing it from its point of origin, and delivering it to the site where it will be used. Embodied energy also takes into account any manufacturing process used to alter the material, such as mining, cutting, or harvesting as well as the amount of energy used to install and maintain it during its lifespan. Because of this, the most sustainable practice sometimes involves the use of reclaimed and recycled building materials found nearby.

Structures at [Devil's Thumb Ranch](#), including the new spa center, were built from reclaimed and recycled woods and other materials taken from the surrounding region. At [Lapa Rios Ecolodge](#), commitment to conservation includes the use of native, sustainably harvested woods; Lapa Rios also employs building designs that integrate into the surrounding environment with the least amount of impact. Straw bale construction was used to create [Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center](#), and the property also boasts the indoor use of hemp fabrics and organic materials. Instead of choosing materials that had to be shipped from distant areas (and contributing to transport issues such as the use of fossil fuels), reclaimed stone and wood were used to construct [Jungle Bay Resort & Spa](#), helping to keep the overall construction footprint low. Low impact is also a theme at both [EcoTulum's Amilik & Maya Spa](#) and [Clayoquot Wilderness Resorts & the Healing Grounds Spa](#), where accommodations are luxury tents built on wooden platforms.

### Natural Therapies

From seaweed and clay to aloe and native plants, the world is rich in indigenous botanicals and natural elements that possess proven health benefits. Choosing an ecolodge doesn't mean foregoing luxury amenities or spa treatments; it may even provide an opportunity to sample a culturally inspired treatment or a product made from local ingredients.

Mayan treatments administered by local healers are a highlight at [EcoTulum's Amilik & Maya Spa](#), where herbal therapies include the use of native Chilean plants. At [Rainforest Edge & Spa](#), India's age-old healing system of ayurveda provides the inspiration for massages and spa therapies. Ancient sea muds, mineral salts, and native botanicals including Cape chamomile and geranium are used in treatments at [Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve](#). As suggested by its name, [Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa](#) has mineral springs on-property for soaking that are naturally heated by the nearby, and still active, volcano. The fragrant ylang ylang trees found around [Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa](#) provide fresh ingredients for treatments. In addition, yoga classes and, in some cases, retreats are regularly offered at [Jungle Bay Resort & Spa](#), [Devil's Thumb Ranch](#), [Lapa Rios Ecolodge](#), [Samasati Nature Retreat](#), [Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center](#), [Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa](#), [Clayoquot Wilderness Resorts](#), and [Papoose Creek Lodge](#).

## Address Book

[Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve](#)

Africa

[www.bushmanskloof.co.za/home.html](http://www.bushmanskloof.co.za/home.html)

[Clayoquot Wilderness Resorts & The Healing Grounds Spa](#)

British Columbia, Canada

(250) 726-8235; [www.wildretreat.com](http://www.wildretreat.com)

#### Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa

Daintree, Australia

[www.daintree-ecolodge.com.au](http://www.daintree-ecolodge.com.au)

#### Devil's Thumb Resort & Ranch Creek Spa

Tabernash, Colorado

(800) 833-4339; [www.devilsthumbranch.com](http://www.devilsthumbranch.com)

#### Jungle Bay Resort & Spa

Point Mulatre, Dominica

[www.junglebaydominica.com](http://www.junglebaydominica.com)

#### EcoTulum's Amilik

Patagonia, South America

[www.amilik.com](http://www.amilik.com)

#### Lapa Rios Ecolodge

Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica

011-506-735-5130; [www.laparios.com](http://www.laparios.com)

#### Papoose Creek Lodge

Cameron, Montana

(888) 674-3030; [www.papoosecreek.com](http://www.papoosecreek.com)

#### Rainforest Edge & Spa

Waddagala, Sri Lanka

94 11 5373305 - 07; [www.srilanka.com/travel/traveldetail/TL00308](http://www.srilanka.com/travel/traveldetail/TL00308)

#### Samasati Nature Retreat

Talamanca, Costa Rica

(800) 563-9643; [www.samasati.com](http://www.samasati.com)

#### Tabacon Hot Springs Resort & Spa

Costa Rica

[www.tabacon.com](http://www.tabacon.com)

#### Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center

Patagonia, Arizona

(520) 394-2520; [www.treeoflife.nu](http://www.treeoflife.nu)

## *Eco Travel Resources*

*There are a number of options for locating vacation destinations that honor and protect the environment. The following resources can help you determine the best choices based on your personal needs and desired*

*destinations around the world. If you don't require a full-service spa, your choices are considerably expanded.*

**The International Ecotourism Society**

(202) 347-9203; [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)

**The Rainforest Alliance**

(212) 677-1900; [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)

**Sustainable Travel International**

(also the publishers of The Green Gear Guide)

(720) 273-2975; [www.sustainabletravel.com](http://www.sustainabletravel.com)

**The Earth Council**

(416) 498-3150; [www.ecouncil.ac.cr](http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr)

**International Council of Monuments and Sites**

[www.international.icomos.org/home.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/home.htm)

**The Nature Conservancy**

(703) 841-5300; [www.natureconservancy.org](http://www.natureconservancy.org)

**UNESCO World Heritage Centre**

+33 1 45 68 1571; <http://whc.unesco.org>

**World Travel and Tourism Council**

+44 (0) 870 727 9882; [www.wttc.org](http://www.wttc.org)

**World Wildlife Fund**

(202) 293-4800; [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)