



Inside Travel GUIDE

Monteverde, Costa Rica

REVIVE

Created for you by Karen Gordon at Revive Healing Arts

This helpful resource contains hidden treasures for you to explore in Monteverde, Costa Rica.



It has been specifically crafted to allow you to dig in, and enjoy a rich experience in our mountain town. All recommendations are where we local folk bring friends and family when they come to visit our niche in the clouds. You won't find these gems of insight anywhere else!

Read on, to . . .

- delight in nourishing foods
- soulfully explore the natural wonders of Monteverde
- adventure to my favorite mountain nooks
- relax + replenish your mind, body + spirit

Taste Sensations

1. Dark Chocolate Truffles

Dark chocolate, created from cured-and-roasted-on-premises Costa Rican cacao + fresh passion fruit pulp transformed into the perfect truffle filling = round nuggets of heaven. Seriously.



Where: Caburé, the Argentine café located above the Bat Jungle.

Good to know: They also have great wifi and beautiful views. A fantastic place to enjoy a romantic lunch or sunset glass of wine. * swoon *

Insider's tip: Pair your chocolate choices with one of Susana's amazing, savory Argentinian empanadas. My two favorite lunchtime dishes are the potato curry wrap and the chicken mole.

2. Wild Jam

Getting your hands on an unlabeled, jewel-colored jar of guava-ginger jam or wild mountain berry marmalade is like searching for the good kind of contraband.



Where: Only to be found at Monteverde Whole Foods, Benito Guindon (one of our favorite artisan jam-and-marmalade-and-herbed-goat-cheese making neighbors, son of one Monteverde's original Quaker settlers) brings his good here.

Good to know: In order to walk away with some of Benito's fruity goodness you have to ASK for it, by name: "Do you have any of Benito's jams?" One of the nice MV Whole Foods workers will flash you a knowing smile, quietly walk into the back room and emerge with a jar or two of pure Monteverde-made deliciousness - whatever fruit is in season or flavor that is still in stock. The effort is worth it.

Insider tip: When you are back home in the north, brew some of our locally grown coffee (you purchased some, right?), toast some bread, and top it with Benito's jam. Poof! You'll be transported back to this hamlet in the clouds, even if just for a moment ☺

3. Authentic Costa Rican Food

I know, you love to eat and are looking for authentic Costa Rican food . . .

Where: All the way in the back of CASEM women's craft cooperative, beyond the embroidery, is a small entrance to *La Cuchara de Mi Abuela* (My Grandmother's Spoon). Sometimes there's a sign outside, usually there's not. Just keep walking, trust me. Here, you will find round tables cut from local tree-fall and chairs created from coffee-plant wood. This 100% traditional food is made with a Grandmother's love, you can TASTE it.

Good to know: My *plato favorito* is *tortilla con arracache* – a freshly-ground corn tortilla topped with a savory, native root vegetable and pork hash-sort-of-thingy. It is seriously addictive, amazing for breakfast, lunch or late afternoon snack. Pair it with our mountain-grown coffee, which is prepared by pouring boiling water from the wood stove through a coffee “sock”. Or, maybe you'd prefer a thirst-quenching, fresh blackberry, tamarind, starfruit, or other in-season juice combined with an off-menu item like bean, cheese, or chicken empanadas. Looking for a hearty veggie lunch? Ask for a vegetarian casado. Breakfast (gallo pinto!) is served all day, 8am-5pm.



Insider tip: The “Spoon” is typically PACKED at lunchtime with all of us locals, so peek in first. I'm there, a LOT, because Revive Healing Arts is only 20 steps away! If you aren't looking to wait for... (ahem) 30+ minutes... to eat, consider stopping by the *Cuchara* during late morning for some brunch-like action or mid-afternoon for a hearty snack. You'll be glad you did.

4. Clean and Green

Feeling fresh and inspired after your morning in our amazing forests and want to keep the green vibes rolling for the rest of the afternoon? We have a place to nourish that dream!

Where: Drishti Veggie Bar, Monteverde Centro. Open Tuesday-Saturday 11am-4pm

Good to know: Drishti is the local's go-to for clean and green eats in the heart of the Monteverde village. Eat inside at the bar, or outside on one of Monteverde Centro's picnic tables. Their entrance is across from La Cuchara de Mi Abuela.

Insider's tip: Vegan superfood brownies, in many varieties - just say yes. Pair one with a Golden Goddess shake for a mid-afternoon pick-me up. Or, if it's a chilly day, ask to pair your brownie Drishti's incredible chai tea made with coconut milk. Mmmm....in the clouds....



p.s. and if you have a hankering for a clean and green dinner, head to the Garden of Eden in Santa Elena – the veggie burger and vegan, coconut-milk based ice cream are INCREDIBLE. They are open until 7. Tell them Karen sent you!

5. Mountain-Grown Coffee

It's true, Monteverde has some of the best coffee in Costa Rica. Our local beans are grown, dried and roasted by our neighbors on their small family farms, many of which have their own labels.



Where: Monteverde Coffee Center – best coffee tasting room and café in town for the label Café de Monteverde. These families know how to grow coffee, and their baristas know their coffee stuff. Stop in for any variety of coffee drink you'd like . . . and if you have a special request or want to design your own drink – just go for it. This is the local's favorite morning work spot or afternoon hang-out place – dissertations have been created at these tables, and many a first date has happened here too :) This is where I ask most of my bodywork clients to meet me before their sessions, so they don't get lost trying to find my studio in the garden.

Good to know: The Monteverde Coffee Center also offers coffee tours, and you can buy bags of roasted or ground coffee to bring back home with you. Almost all locals purchase their coffee here - you'll be glad you did, too.

Insider's tip: Their vegan passionfruit pound cake is out of this world, so is their vegetarian potato pocket!

On the Path

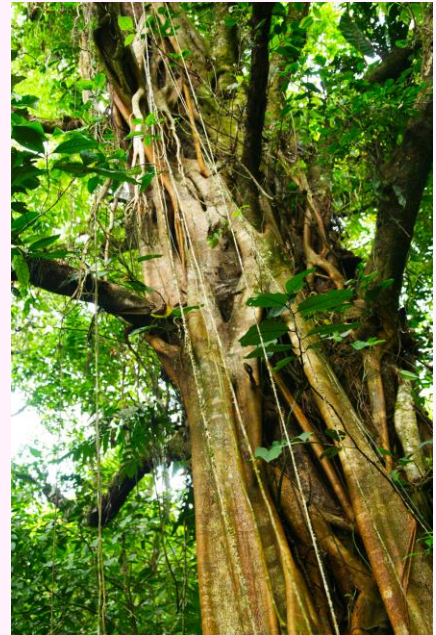
1. Forest Adventure

Monteverde is full of forest adventure. For some, that looks like zip-lines, tarzan swings, waterfall rappelling. If that's you - sweet, you can book any of those tours at every hotel in town, they're not "Insider". However.

Looking to move a little more slowly and soulfully? Use all of your senses to explore the forest, to really be immersed in pure nature for 3+ hours? Follow this trail...

Where: Curi Cancha is a gorgeous private reserve right up a rocky side road next to the Monteverde Cheese Factory.

Good to know: Did I mention it is GORGEOUS? Once a family farm, it boasts a mixed habitat of pasture-in-restoration-via reforestation, secondary forest and primary forest. Oh yes, and a delightful river, Quebrada Cuecha, that springs directly from the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. The incredibly well-maintained and marked trails will allow your meanderings to unfurl with ease as you walk deeper and deeper into beauty. The sizes and shapes of the strangler figs alone will dazzle you. I could tell you more, but I don't want to ruin it for you. Seriously, this is where you say Yes and just go. Ask Mauricio or whoever is working at the little welcome booth to help build a trail-itinerary for you, based on your time preference and how strenuous you want to get.



Insider tip: Only 40-60 people are allowed at one time in Curi-Cancha, which is one reason why it feels...surreal.

2. World-renowned, National Geographic-fame biological reserve

Explore this habitat, a vital ecosystem.



Where: Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Contiguous to the Curi-Cancha property, the Monteverde Biological Reserve is simply...stunning.

Good to know: Tens of thousands of hectares drape over both sides of the continental divide, providing protected habitat for innumerable species of plant and animal life, many endemic or threatened. Here, we sing to the tune of 3,200 species of plants, about 750 species of trees, 500 species of orchids, 450 species of birds. That we KNOW about. Honestly, when you walk deep into this primary forest you are walking into a sanctuary on this Earth's belt, one that exhales pure oxygen every day and births life-living waters from her crevices. *Sigh*

Insider tip: Talk with Miguel at the welcome booth and ask him to design a trail itinerary for you. Want to walk across a suspension bridge, high in the canopy? He can help you out. Never stood on the continental divide of Central America before? Here's your chance, on La Ventana trail. If you make it to the lookout platform on La Ventana and have visibility to the west, wave! That little town down below is San Luis, where I live.

3. Moonlight Magic

Both of the above reserves offer AMAZING, guided-only night walks. You thought the forest was alive during the day, it becomes even more magical at night . . .this is when you can hear these ancient forests breathe. Click on the links above to book your tours.

Before you embark on any nature escapade be sure to...

Supply Yourself:

Stop by Monteverde Whole Foods in Monteverde Centro and pack yourself some home-made bread, locally-made goat cheese, some veggies and fruit. If you're lucky you'll find some kombucha from our local CSA farm, La Querencia. Did you see the squares of chocolate or chocolate-covered coffee beans by the check-out counter? Just sayin' – you might need some extra energy food. Or, if you'd prefer to bring a ready-made meal, Stella's Bakery is across the road and can set you up with custom-built sandwiches, quiche, and baked goods.

Need a guide?

Nature enjoyment definitely falls on a spectrum . . . if you are on the serious birder, hardcore naturalist end of things, or if you are truly inspired to learn about our rare cloud forest habitat, you will want to consider hiring a professional guide. We truly have some of the very best in the nation, right here in Monteverde. A guide can be booked right through the reserves via the links above.



On the other hand, if you are simply interested in experiencing the forest and being quiet...go for it. No guide is necessary other than your internal compass. Enjoy the freedom and spaciousness to wander!

Inspiration Points

Places that need no words. They simply inspire wonder....

1. Sunset

Every day around 5:30 in dry season, an interesting migration takes place. North and southbound cars suddenly pull over. Students, biologists and hotel workers who are heading home from a long day linger . . . or gather. Photographers come armed with their equipment - some arrive early because they spotted the best sitting-rocks earlier in the day.



Insider tip: On an otherwise undistinguished stretch of road in Cerro Plano, across from CPI language school, Luna Azul boutique, and *La Bomba* (our gas station), right where our pavement meets dirt road, one of the best sunsets you'll ever see in the middle of a busy little town is about to blossom. Don't be shy, pull up to one of the benches and join in on the magic

Insider tip #2: If you are inspired to delight your inner gift-giver, head into **Luna Azul** pre-sunset! Almost everything in the store is hand-crafted by contemporary national artisans. THIS is where locals go to find gorgeous jewelry, fun and stylish clothes and gifts for our friends when WE travel abroad. Open until 6pm most days...and sunset watching is just a skip across the road!

2. La Trocha, San Luis

San Luis is a breathtaking valley town of 300 residents whose backdrop is literally the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. I feel fortunate to live there! *La Trocha* is the name of the road that brings you to San Luis, but many never venture all the way to the bottom. And that's ok, because halfway down this steep cement road (that was PAVED BY HAND by our little community) is one of the most stunning vistas you will see in all of Costa Rica.

Trust me - you'll know exactly where to pull over and park, or climb up with your backpack. Once you've found your spot, you'll see to the south (left), at the bottom of the valley, a series of family farms from the original European-descended settlers in this area. You'll probably see some cows grazing down



there too. Behind those farms, our majestic mountains stretch upward, decorated by thousands of hectares of protected forest - where the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and the Children's Eternal Rainforest come together. If you are lucky you might spot the San Luis Waterfall gushing from one of the mountain folds.

As your attention turns to the west, the rolling hills of the Bellbird Biological Corridor and its human communities stretch out to the sea. The Nicoya Peninsula rises in the distance, from the depths of the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Nicoya. Morning, noon, or sunset are amazing times to take some time-out on *La Trocha*, which is often graced with stellar rainbows in the late afternoon hours December through February.

Insider tip: To get there, follow the road as if you are going to the Monteverde Reserve. On the right, before the Hotel Villa Verde, a dirt road leads off to the right with signs to San Luis. Follow the road (you are passing by original Quaker farmland now) and keep going...it will drop steeply and become cement. You will come around a bend and ahhh . . . it's unmistakable . . . you have arrived. Ten minutes in car from Monteverde Centro, 30+ minutes by foot.

Peace and Quiet

After the long, bumpy road up the mountain or after much mountaintop adventure, you may be called to slow down and rest. Listen to that. It's an integral part of our life in the clouds.

1. Quaker Meeting

Where: Every Sunday at 10:30 since 1951, a peaceful hush descends within the heart of Monteverde, even though 30 to 130 people are gathered. The wind may blow, the rain may fall, the sunlight might dapple through the forest as the endangered bellbird calls. Something else is alive here, too, and you can feel it. Seated in concentric circles in a gorgeous newly-community-constructed timber frame building, 10:30 is the moment when Meeting begins.

Good to know: The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Friends or Quakers, worship in silence. The practice of sitting together in silence is often called "expectant waiting", a dedicated time to become inwardly still and clear aside the activities of mind and body that usually fill our attention in order to create an opportunity to experience Presence, a time for spiritual receptivity. It is a core practice of the Quaker life in Monteverde.

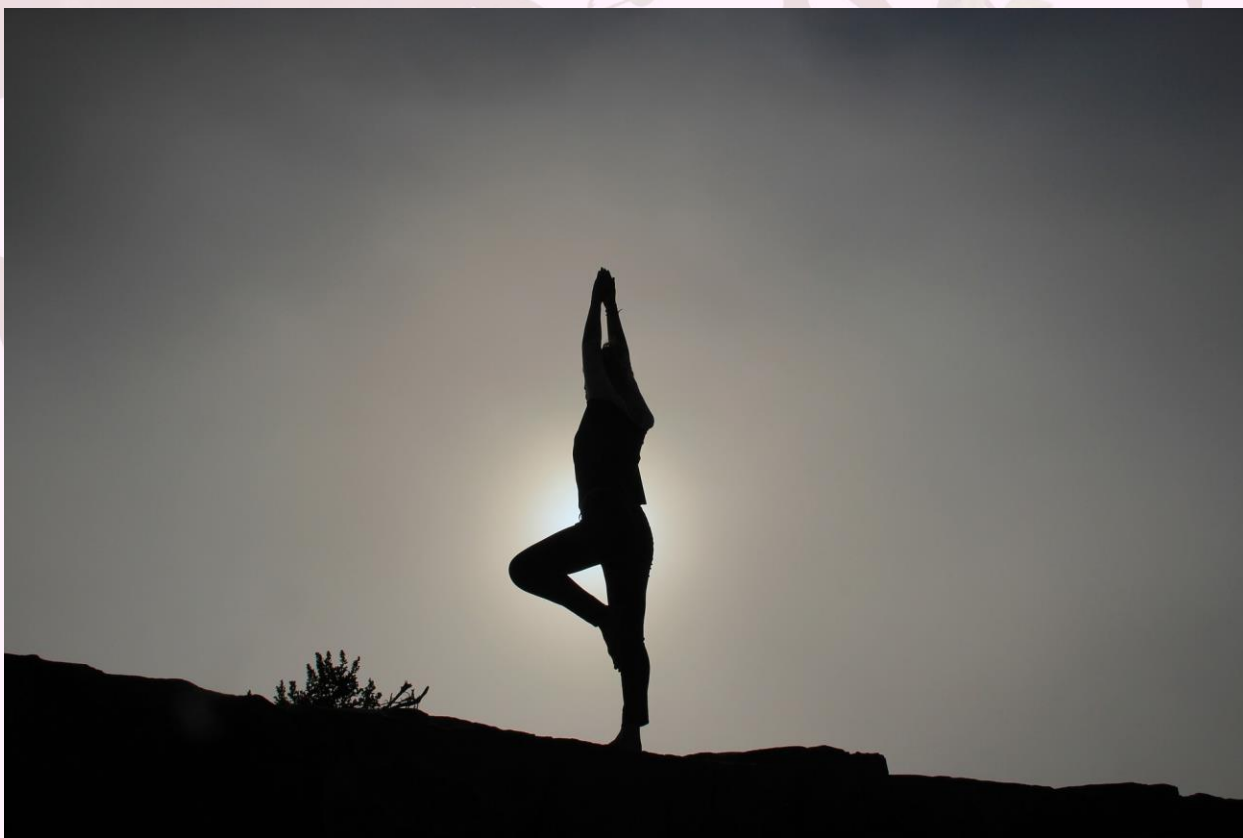
The early Quaker settlers arrived in Monteverde in 1951 and their values of peace and social and environmental justice have permeated our larger mountaintop community and culture. All visitors to the Monteverde zone are welcome to attend Meeting, which typically lasts one hour. It is not only a beautiful opportunity to purposefully sit in supported silence, it is also a unique opportunity to be in the presence of some of the earliest Quaker settlers, now in their 80's. While I do not identify myself as a Quaker, I definitely make attending meeting a few times a month a priority – a chance to slow down and simply...be. You will be glad you came.

Insider tip: If you attend Meeting the first Sunday of the month, a community potluck lunch immediately follows. You are MORE than welcome to stay, extra plates and cups abound. It's a wonderful hour or two of sitting on the benches, picnic tables or grass and meeting new people including other visitors like

yourself. Perhaps you'll have the chance to share a moment with one of the original Quaker settlers, like Wolf or Lucky Guindon. This is where your life and living history intersect. Just sayin'.

2. Yoga

Stretch your body, quiet your mind . . .



Where: The Chalet at the Hotel Belmar - or - Drishti - or - The Monteverde Friend's Meeting

Good to know: Monteverde's yoga teachers are experienced and inspired! Classes at the Hotel Belmar are offered daily at 9am and 4pm, except Sundays. One drop-in class costs \$10-15, packages of 5 classes are also available. Community yoga at the Meeting house is held on Mondays at 4pm. Classes here are offered by donation, all proceeds are currently going toward paying for the school's solar panels. If you stop in at Drishti's veggie bar for lunch, you can take a look at their weekly yoga class schedule (\$8, drop-in). Mats, blocks, and straps are provided in both locations.

3. Revive Healing Arts

Consider creating time in your schedule for you...to unwind, relax, and recalibrate. You'll be so glad you did.



Where: Monteverde Centro, in the “secret garden” behind Monteverde Whole Foods.

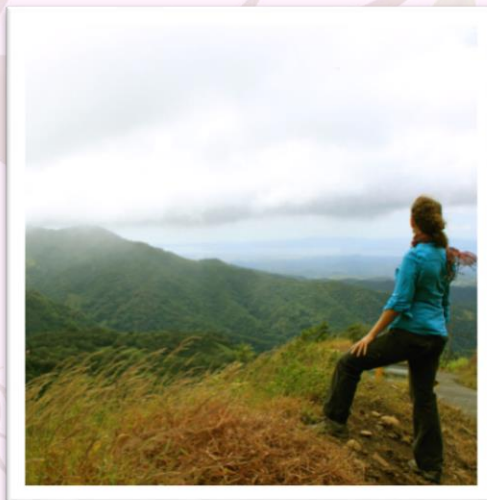
Good to know: Privileged to have remained as the #1 Activity in Monteverde by Trip Advisor within a year of opening its door in 2012, Revive Healing Arts has a variety of bodywork and personal retreat options just for you. Be sure to peruse my website! A bodywork session will allow you to really land here and open your senses to receive so that you are fully able to enjoy all of the Insider experience this mountaintop has to offer.

Insider Tip: It's definitely recommended to book a session ahead of time. I look forward to welcoming you to my piece of paradise in the clouds – and being part of your Insider's adventures in Monteverde.

About Karen

Meet **Karen Gordon**, founder of **Revive Healing Arts**, and creator of this unique guide.

Equal parts soul-filled scientist, inspired educator, integrative massage therapist and mountain medicine woman, my roots dive deep into an ever-evolving understanding of how bones and muscles, history and heart, energy and mystery work in concert within the habitat of the human form. My attention is drawn to the subtle spaces where mind, body and spirit intersect upon the unique landscape of our lives.



With a master's degree and a 20-year career as a field biologist, restoration ecologist, environmental educator and healing arts professional, my work has flowed from the fjords of the North Atlantic, across the reefs of the Caribbean Sea and up to Costa Rica's cloud-forested mountaintops.

There is no doubt that my authentic connection to the Earth, its systems and elements infuse my professional practice: the essence of who I am and how I work is woven into a unique, balanced blend of science, soul and spirit. It is a joy to share these gifts with my local community as well as clients and students from all around Costa Rica and the world. I welcome your arrival!

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