

FINCA CHACULÁ

Tucked away in the extreme northwest near the Mexico border in a zone that straddles subtropical forest and chaparral, the Huistas region has rushing rivers and turquoise cenotes, with community-run lodging in an old hacienda.

RÍO AZUL

Once a key point in the booming cacao trade, this little-visited Maya site features some vividly painted tombs and carvings of ritual execution scenes.

ESTACIÓN BIOLÓGICA LAS GUACAMAYAS

Volunteer or just tag along as researchers study macaws and butterflies in this research station based in the Parque Nacional Laguna del Tigre.

TODOS SANTOS CUCHUMATÁN

Offering great trekking opportunities, a raucous annual horse race, and good accommodations this deeply traditional town is a great place to explore the highlands.

CHANCOL

High up in the Cuchumatanes mountains near the Mexican border, this landscape of turquoise lagoons, gnarled trees and surreally shaped boulders, is best visited on horseback from a local ranch-turned-rural guesthouse.

LAGUNITA SALVADOR

Located in the Biotopo Chocón Machacas manatee reserve, this tiny Q'eqchi' village offers sweet accommodations, tours of the wildlife reserve and a chance to experience traditional Q'eqchi' life.

SANTA LUCÍA COTZUMALGUAPA

On the sweltering Pacific coast, but not on the beach, there would be no reason to come here if not for the multitude of fascinating sculptures left behind by the mysterious Pipil culture.

TILAPITA

Arguably the Pacific coast's most laid-back beach town, this is a one-hotel, all-sand-roads affair. Don't come seeking luxury, but any time outside of Christmas and Easter this place is the epitome of *tranquilo*.

