Off the Beaten Track: Costa Rica

**BOCA TAPADA AREA**
Travel through a Tico heartland of pineapple plantations to discover the pristine rainforest of Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Mixto Maquenque.

**PARISMINA**
This far-flung spit of sand between canal and Caribbean Sea has only the barest bones of tourist-oriented infrastructure and not a lot of action besides turtle conservation and kayaking the local canals.

**SELVA BANANITO**
One of the country's most secluded and delightful ecolodges offers wildlife encounters, delicious meals and comfy cabins made from recycled hardwood atop Caribbean-style stilts.

**LA GAVILANA HERBS & ART**
This bake shop and gallery offers two-day 'extreme hikes' between El Castillo and San Gerardo (near Santa Elena) that traverse old-growth forests and raging rivers.

**PLAYA PALO SECO**
A dirt road through palm plantations winds up at a 6km finger of isolated black-sand beach, and nearby mangroves to explore by boat.

**MATAPALO**
Not far off the Costanera Sur, but surprisingly lightly trodden, Matapalo doesn't have much more than kilometers of gray-sand beach and wild waves for the more experienced surfing set.

**LUNA LODGE**
Up a winding road into the mountains, this remote ecolodge borders Parque Nacional Corcovado and is run by an infectiously passionate conservationist.