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How to Spend a Perfect Weekend in José Ignacio, Uruguay

Where to stay, eat and play in the country's go-to beach town



Jose Ignacio, Uruguay

Jake Emen

“José Ignacio is like a bubble,” says Mario Leite De Oliveira, hotel general manager with Vik Retreats. “Do not think that Jose Ignacio is like the rest of Uruguay.”

Too tiny to even be a microcosm, José Ignacio is a charming fishing village turned exclusive vacation hot spot catering to South America’s wealthiest clientele. In a country where a laid-back mindset seems intrinsic to life, the village takes leisure to the next level. Punta del Este is larger, louder and packed with denser crowds. You may have heard about it as the go-to beach getaway for Uruguay and Argentina alike. José Ignacio, perhaps, is what Punte del Este used to be, or maybe never was. Which mean that now is the time to get in on the fun amid Uruguay’s undisturbed natural beauty, and its bounty of excellent eats and delicious drinks.



Estancia Vik

Jake Emen

Where to Stay

Vik Retreats operates a triumvirate of resorts in José Ignacio, each of which has a distinctive personality that might appeal more to certain travelers than others, while the three join forces to offer guests a collective range of experiences across the portfolio.

The first to make its debut was Estancia Vik, in 2008, an estate which served as a family vacation home for its owners, the Vik clan. With 1,600 acres of ranch land, a stay at the estancia is a chance to get a taste of the gaucho lifestyle, albeit with a splash of luxury. The converted home has 12 spacious rooms and seems as if it's in a world of its own, though it's just a 15-minute ride from town.

The other two are both on the beach, located a short walk down the sand from one another. Bahia Vik is the most “proper” hotel of the three, with 48 rooms spread across one main building as well as a series of bungalows. Each room is a showcase of local artists, design and contemporary style. There's a series of small, sleek pools and direct beach access. Playa Vik offers 19 rooms housed within a striking architectural compound filled with eye-catching art installations and décor. The property features a showpiece infinity pool on the terrace of its main house. If you think the sunset view is particularly pinpoint, it's not the wine talking: the pool was designed to hit the perfect angles.