

UNDISCOVERED BEACHES

*THESE FIVE HIDEAWAYS, FROM BRAZIL TO THE
PHILIPPINES, ARE UNDERSTATED, UNEXPECTED, AND—AT LEAST FOR NOW—
UNDER THE RADAR. PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVE LAURIDSEN*





A private patio at Pousada Patacho, in Porto de Pedras, in northeastern Brazil. Opposite: Beachside at Kenoa - Exclusive Beach Spa & Resort, in Barra de São Miguel, also in Alagoas.



ALAGOAS Brazil

Brazil may be blessed with more than 4,600 miles of coastline—but finding untouched sands is harder than it seems. Yet a few rustic beach towns in the northeastern state of Alagoas remain relatively unknown. Once considered a backwater and long overshadowed by Bahia to the south, this small, laid-back region is finally on the map.

In Barra de São Miguel, **Kenoa - Exclusive Beach Spa & Resort** (55-82/3272-1285; kenoaresort.com; doubles from \$617) is a high-design retreat that blends seamlessly into the landscape. Portuguese owner Pedro Marques brought his eco-conscious vision to life by enlisting the help of local architect Osvaldo Tenório. Rooms are adorned with contemporary art; faucets are refashioned from old iron pipes; and recycled railway trestles are used as coffee tables. You may just want to gaze at the turquoise sea from your villa's floor-to-ceiling windows, but there's plenty to keep you busy, from sampling Portuguese *cataplanas* (rich seafood stews served in traditional copper pots) at the hotel's restaurant to visiting the nearby oyster-farming community of Vila Palateia, where you can try bivalves plucked straight from the mangrove lagoon.

Seventy miles to the north, the white-sand beaches around São Miguel dos Milagres are just as secluded and are dotted with crystalline tide pools. A handful of forward-thinking pousada

A thatched-roof cottage at Ananyana Beach Resort & Spa, on Panglao Island, in the Philippines, above left. Right: Kenoa Resort's beachfront pool. Opposite: The lobby of the rustic-chic Pousada do Toque, in São Miguel dos Milagres.

owners invested here over the past decade—and sophisticated travelers are finally taking notice. At the stylish **Pousada do Toque** (*Povoado do Toque*; 55-82/3295-1127; pousadadotoque.com.br; doubles from \$375), imbuia-wood chairs from Brazilian Modernist Sergio Rodrigues and daybeds by Carlos Motta help set the scene in the spacious lounge, while the 17 bungalows have bathrooms with Japanese-style tubs looking out onto private gardens.

In nearby Porto de Pedras, the light-filled **GREAT VALUE Pousada Patacho** (*Praia do Patacho*; 55-82/3298-1253; pousadapatacho.com.br; doubles from \$190) has five intimate, white-washed rooms surrounded by towering coconut palms and vine-draped terraces. —KEVIN RAUB

PYLA-SUR-MER France

Across the bay from buzzy Cap Ferret, on the southern Côte d'Argent, stands the 350-foot Dune of Pyla, a draw for avid hikers and beach lovers. Now there's another reason to go: Philippe Starck's **La Co(o)rniche** (46 Ave. Louis Gaume; 33-5/56-22-72-11; lacoorniche-pyla.com; doubles from \$345), a renovated hunting lodge with 12 white-on-white rooms, all but one of which face the ocean. At night, crowds gather on the hotel's breezy restaurant terrace for seafood dishes such as cod in a coconut-and-lime emulsion and scallops with glazed beets; there's also a







lively bar that whips up Catalan-inspired tapas and mango mojitos. If you prefer oyster platters and heaping plates of *moules frites*, take the ferry to **Chez Hortense** (Ave. Sémaphore; 33-5/56-60-62-56), in the historic Quartier Ostréicole on the southern end of Cap Ferret.—ALEXANDRA MARSHALL

CAYUCOS California

Locals call this tiny surf town 210 miles north of Los Angeles Cayucos-by-the-Sea. It's a refreshingly underdeveloped beach retreat dotted with 19th-century Western buildings, vintage shops selling Americana and folk art, and a pier that stretches nearly 1,000 feet into the ocean. Check in to the restored 1867 **GREAT VALUE Cass House Inn & Restaurant** (222 N. Ocean Ave.; 805/995-3669; casshouseinn.com; doubles from \$165), with views of the Pacific and a stellar farm-to-table restaurant serving four-course dinners. For something humbler, there's the fish fry at no-frills **Sea Shanty** (296 S. Ocean Ave.; 805/995-3272; lunch for two \$25), just a short walk away. Antiques lovers can stroll Ocean Avenue, chockablock with treasure-filled boutiques such as **Rich Man Poor Man** (146 N. Ocean Ave.; 805/995-3631) and **Remember When** (152 N. Ocean Ave.; 805/995-1232), then grab a bourbon shortbread cookie at **Brown Butter Cookie Company** (250 N. Ocean Ave.; 805/995-2076; cookies for two \$2.40).

Cayucos is the perfect jumping-off point for

those looking to explore the Central Coast, including the nearby wine region of Paso Robles, Hearst Castle, and the artsy village of Cambria, a 20-minute car trip up the shore.—DAVID A. KEEPS

PANGLAO ISLAND Philippines

An hour-long flight from Manila to Bohol Island followed by a 25-minute drive across a 19th-century causeway brings you to this secluded Central Visayas isle, where the petite **GREAT VALUE Ananyana Beach Resort & Spa** (Doljo Beach; 63-38/502-8101; ananyana.com; doubles from \$220) occupies a prime spot on a mile-long stretch of sand. The 12 luxe thatched-roof huts have bamboo-framed king-size beds; the alfresco restaurant turns out Filipino-Mediterranean dishes such as penne with pork adobo; and the lounge is outfitted with regionally made rattan and abaca furniture. Hop a resort boat for dolphin watching, diving amid the drop-offs of Balicasag Island, or, for the ultimate castaway fantasy, a sunset dinner on deserted Puntod Island.

Another option is to visit the **Bohol Bee Farm** (Dao, Dauis, Panglao Island; 63-38/502-2288; lunch for two \$35), which serves dishes with organic ingredients grown on site. The treat of choice: house-made *ube* (purple yam) ice cream. You can also head back to Bohol Island to check out the Chocolate Hills—a surreal (Continued on page 129)

The sandbank off Puntod Island, a 15-minute boat ride from Ananyana Beach Resort & Spa, above left. Right: Kenoa Resort's Jacobi Villa. Opposite: Pousada Patacho at dusk.

Beach Escapes

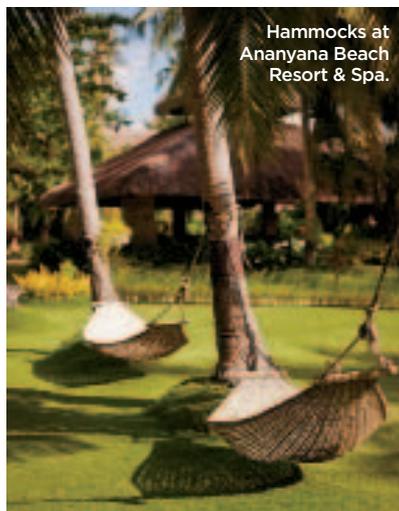
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natural wonder of 1,776 dome-shaped hills formed from limestone covered in grass. —LARA DAY

LORD HOWE ISLAND Australia

A close-kept secret among Sydney cognoscenti, this tiny Pacific Ocean island—where tourists are capped at 400, streetlights are a rarity, and most people get around on bicycles—is an easy two-hour flight from the city. Born from a volcanic eruption 7 million years ago, the verdant UNESCO World Heritage site is home to brooding basalt-stack mountains that plunge directly into the sea; guide Jack Shick (lordhoweislandtours.net) leads challenging climbs up the 2,870-foot Mount Gower for jaw-dropping views. Down below, snorkelers have the run of a long and vibrant coral-reef lagoon. At Ned's Beach, you can hand-feed kingfish—the Lord Howe specialty—while at Old Settlement Beach, turtles are known to laze on the sand.

Book a room at the chic, nine-room **Capella Lodge** (61-2/9918-4355; *doubles from \$670 per person, all-inclusive*), which sits atop Lover's Bay. Owned by James and Hayley Baillie, whose other property is Kangaroo Island's celebrated Southern Ocean Lodge, it's known for its spa. For a room with a bit of history, check in to the low-key **Pinetrees Lodge** (61-2/9262-6585; pinetrees.com.au; *from \$300 per person, all-inclusive*), which has been run by the same family since 1848. —SUE GOUGH HENLY



Hammocks at Ananyana Beach Resort & Spa.

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