

Seleccionar El Idioma



Laguna Lodge – Lake Atitlan, Guatemala

Laguna Lodge Dock, Lake Atitlan, Solola, Guatemala

Laguna Lodge Eco-Resort and Nature Reserve, on the shores of Lake Atitlan, proves you don't have to sacrifice comfort and luxury in order to offer a unique and environmentally sustainable experience.



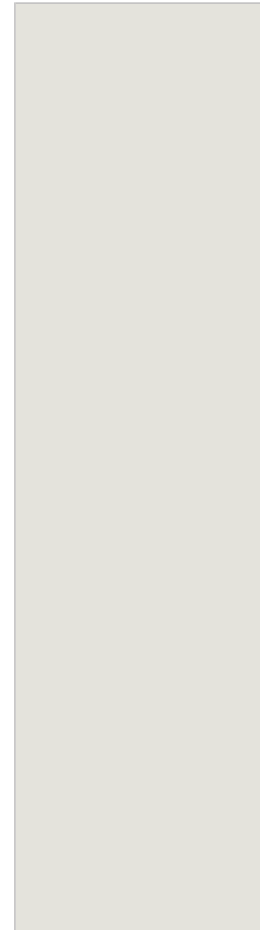
These days, being "green" is very much in vogue, so when luxury properties tout themselves in this way, I naturally approach it with a bit of suspicion. My recent stay at Lake Atitlan's Laguna Lodge, however, has me singing a different tune. It is indeed possible to combine luxury accommodations with environmentally friendly practices. The brainchild of Mayah and Jeffro Brandon, who hail from Australia and New Zealand, Laguna Lodge started as a much simpler operation in 1999. Originally envisioned as a hip backpackers' haven, the dream evolved and the end result is a fully luxurious eco-chic hotel.




As you approach the property from the lake by boat, the first thing you notice is how beautifully it melds with its surroundings. It's at once impressive and yet subdued, with its multi-level terraces covered by thatch roofs that look completely at home with the forested hillside all around it. The experience continues as you disembark at the lodge's private dock and make your way up the stone stairway to the

lodge's Zotz Restaurant and Lava Bar. It's easy to feel instantly at home here. The open-air windows look out to the lake and its outrageous views. Adobe walls, a fireplace, and that delightful thatch roof give the place a rustic charm found in few other places.

Found in even fewer places, and especially those touted as "green," is a gourmet vegetarian menu that can satiate even the hardest of carnivore's appetites. The ingredients for the food are bought locally or grown in the lodge's very own organic garden. Free-range eggs, local cheeses, and legumes provide the menu's staple items. The owners are committed to running their lodge in a sustainable manner, and this includes reducing their carbon footprint by specifically keeping meat off the menu. Other practices include the use of recycled materials or those



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derived from renewable resources, solar power for hot water, energy-saving light bulbs in the rooms, and support for local community projects.



The rooms themselves are made from materials that include volcanic stone, palm wood and adobe bricks made on site. Like the restaurant, they open up completely to the lake and enjoy wonderful views. At night, you can close the sliding glass doors for privacy. The king-size beds are festooned with Guatemalan textiles and the rooms also incorporate locally produced handicrafts. Low wattage, environmentally-friendly light bulbs embedded into skylights give the in-room lighting a somewhat patchy feel, which can be romantic and cozy or cave-like, depending on how you look at it.

In any case, there's little reason to spend much time in the room. At your doorstep is one of Guatemala's greatest natural wonders. There are kayaks for exploring the lake and the lodge's private 100-acre nature preserve sits out back. You can hike around the property or take a walk to the nearby village of Santa Cruz La Laguna. Among the property's thatch-roof pavilions are numerous lounging areas and a sun deck. Even if all nine rooms are occupied, you'll find it feels like you have the place all to yourself, as there's plenty of space to roam. Some of these lounging areas have beds and hammocks; others have couches.

Down by the lakeside, there's also a hot tub. Massage and spa treatments are available. If you must check in with work, wireless Internet access is gratis. However you choose to make use of your time, you'll find the staff attentive, professional and friendly.

The need for environmentally sustainable accommodations has been made abundantly clear with the recent proliferation of algal blooms on Guatemala's most beautiful lake. Caused by phosphates from untreated waste water and agricultural fertilizer running into the lake, the first appearance of Lake Atitlan's cyanobacteria dates to the 1970s but is only now getting the attention it deserves. Laguna Lodge is in many ways a forerunner in a new movement to enjoy this phenomenal natural attraction in a way that reduces visitor impact on the land—all without sacrificing comfort.

Web address: [www.lagunalodgeatitlan.com](http://www.lagunalodgeatitlan.com)  
Total number of rooms: 9  
Prices: \$225-290 BB

Review and photos by [AI Argueta](#).

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