



Laguna Lodge

Lake Atitlán, Guatemala

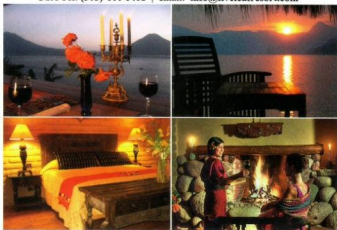
Flanked by volcanoes and colourful Mayan villages in Guatemala's highlands, Lake Atitlán is one of the most striking lakes in the world, and there are few better places to lap up the views than the luxurious Laguna Lodge eco-boutique resort. Hewn from a mixture of volcanic stone, wood and palm, the property is as much a showcase for indigenous craft as it is a sanctuary for conscientious globe-trotters. An eclectic collection of hand-carved antiques and local art adorn the adobe walls of its seven suites (priced from \$225 a night).

Conservation measures are laudably thorough: materials are derived from sustainable sources, vegetables are organically grown and solar power is used. The cuisine served in the Zotz restaurant is gourmet vegetarian — and inventive enough to appease the most ardent of carnivores, while the Lava Bar serves famous Guatemalan rum and organic coffee.

If that all sounds too earnest, it isn't really. Loafing is judiciously encouraged with a strategic scattering of hammocks, books and board games among the various sundecks and thatched-roof palapas (pavilions), and massages are ministered en suite. If you're feeling active, a cornucopia of outdoor pursuits and cultural jaunts to indigenous villages and coffee plantations await. The ace up Laguna's sleeve, however, is its own 100-acre (40 hectare) nature reserve, rising from the lake's edge up through large cliffs to ancient ceremonial rocks and tropical dry forest.

It is refreshing to find a romantic hideaway such as Laguna Lodge, where outstanding service, impeccable attention to detail and a world class location all combine to make for a truly memorable experience, it is pure Maya magic!

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