

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Four Seasons Costa Rica places heritage, culture at its core

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A scene from The Four Seasons Hotels and Resort's "The Chortega Experience," promotional film. Image credit: The Four Seasons

By AMIAH TAYLOR

Hospitality brand Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo is highlighting Horotega indigenous heritage in celebration of 198 years of Anexion de Guanacaste.

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The Four Seasons Costa Rica is supporting indigenous artisans through the sale of special handmade pottery in its boutiques. The luxury hotel is imbuing guest experiences with Horotega indigenous heritage by offering an exclusive pottery painting class in partnership with Costa Rican artisan Jose Salomn Villafuerte Grijalba.

"What it means is that the traditional luxury sector is having to elevate its game if it wants to command rate premiums," said Doug Gollan, editor-in-chief of [Private Jet Card Comparisons](#), Miami.

"Part of the way they are doing that is to position themselves as travel designers, providing guests enriching experiences," he said. "In the case of Four Seasons Costa Rica, it includes local sourcing for things like tabletop, which in the past might have been via another global luxury brand."

"And then, they bring the artisan who creates the dishes you are admiring to the property to teach you his craft."

Mr. Gollan is not affiliated with Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Honoring indigenous history

In a new promotional film, Four Seasons Costa Rica unveils the verdant green mountainous terrain of the country, as well as farms and pastures. As soothing music plays, the luxury resort introduces the indigenous history of the region.

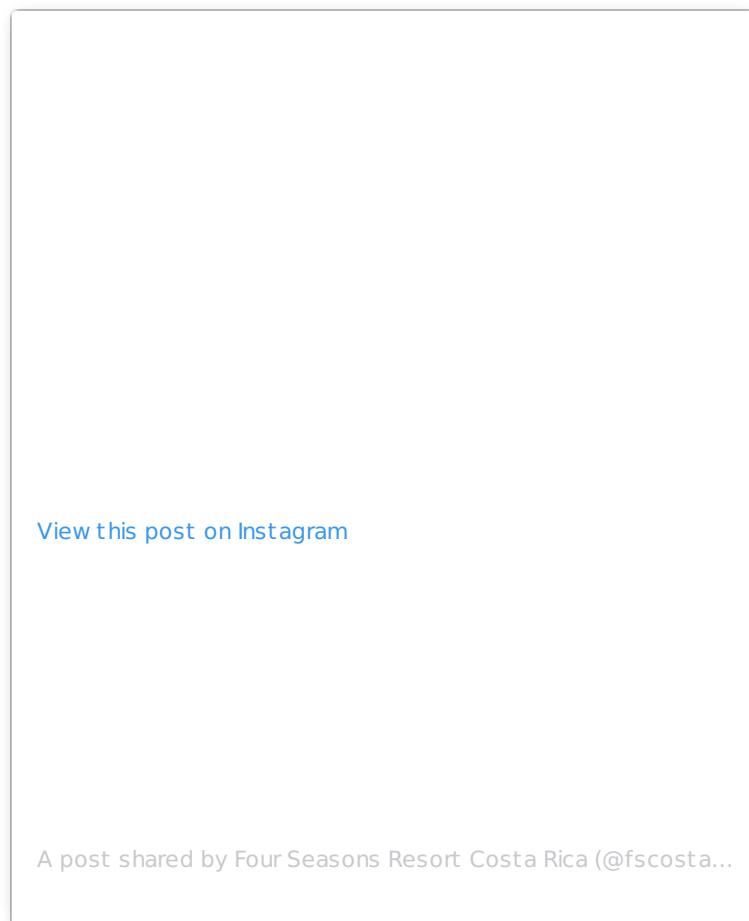
The Costa Rican region of Guanacaste is home to the ancestral Chorotega tribe, one of the most renowned indigenous groups in Central America. Crafting handmade pottery using natural clays and dyes is one of their last surviving cultural traditions.

The exclusive pottery painting class at Four Seasons Costa Rica, The Chorotega Experience, honors the legacy of the Chorotega tribe. Mr. Salomn shares his knowledge with guests, who will have the opportunity to take a small piece of

ceramic memorabilia home with them.

In the vignette, Chef Heberto Meja explains the inspiration behind his menu as he crushes spices with a stone mortar and pestle. In a palpable fusion of pottery and gastronomy, Mr. Meja collaborated with Mr. Salomn to create a novel fine dining option that includes one-of-a-kind earthenware and local flavors.

The resort further honors the legacy of ancestral Horotega culture by using traditional tribal ceramics as the official dinnerware for their restaurant, Bahia Grill.



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A post shared by Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica (@fscosta...)

A scene from "The Chortega Experience" promotional film.

"We celebrate our culture through each dish served in our restaurant," Mr. Meja said in the promotional film.

Authentic hotel experiences

Curating exotic and memorable guest experiences is not a new endeavor for the hospitality group Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Naviva, a Four Seasons resort, is an adult-only luxury tented resort in Mexico with individualized plunge pools ([see story](#)).

Novel travel experiences are en vogue for French luxury brands as well, with Dior recently launching a pop-up spa in Belmond's Splendido Mare Hotel ([see story](#)). With the expansion in mind, The Mandarin Oriental recently branched out its branded residences to the Caribbean ([see story](#)).

"If you go into any new Hilton, Marriott or Hyatt, four-star hotels today have marble bathrooms; lobbies are chic and there are trendy restaurants," Mr. Gollan said.

"Then you have the unbranded hotels like Marriott's Autograph Collection or Hyatt's Unbound Collection, where the properties are each unique and typically reflect their locales," he said. "Consumers want to understand what's beyond the gates of their luxury resort."