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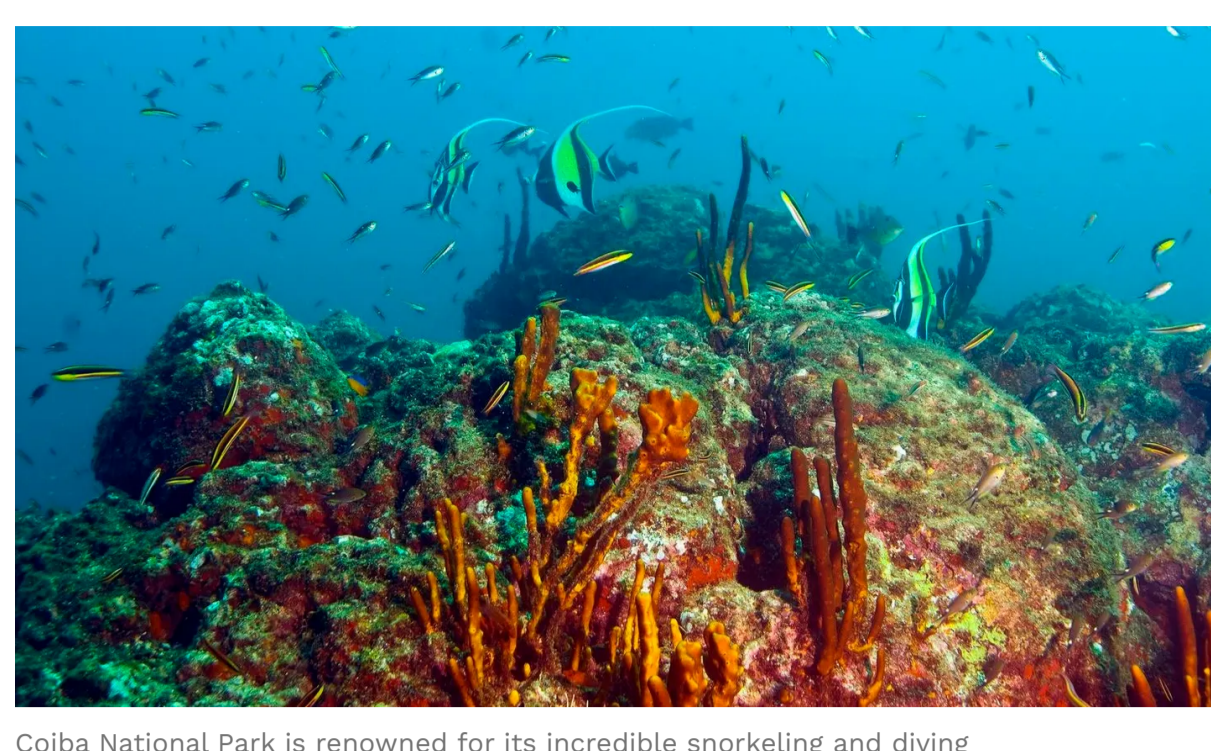
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Exploring Veraguas Province, Panama's Verdant Paradise For Ecotourism

Jared Ranahan Contributor [Follow](#)
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Coiba National Park is renowned for its incredible snorkeling and diving opportunities. GETTY

Equipped with vast swathes of tangled rainforest and both a Pacific and Caribbean coast, the Central American nation of Panama is rife with spectacular natural beauty all across its borders—and the province of Veraguas is no exception. Spanning from the western reaches of the Azuero Peninsula up to the nation's northern shore, this sprawling region offers a wide array of dazzling attractions for visitors to enjoy. As you plan your next trip to Panama City, be sure to save some room on the itinerary for a trip to Veraguas, a gorgeous region that's rife with top-tier attractions for nature lovers.

Immerse Yourself in the Splendor of Isla Coiba



Coiba National Park became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005. GETTY

Located in the westernmost reaches of the province, the massive Isla Coiba stands out as the crown jewel for Veraguas island ecotourism. Designated a national park in 1992, this sprawling natural feature serves as the largest island in all of Central America—and all of that wide open space leaves plenty of room for wildlife to flourish. Upon arrival, visitors can tackle the Sendero Cerro Gambute—a short, steep trail that offers gorgeous views of the surrounding water and its many tiny islands, with potential wildlife sightings spanning from magnificent frigatebirds to capuchin monkeys to the agouti, a small rodent that's related to the guinea pig.

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For those wishing to explore the spectacular beauty of Coiba National Park, few tour operators offer the level of expertise exhibited by [Pacific Adventures](#). Established more than a decade ago, this Veraguas-based tour company comes equipped with a diverse array of expeditions focusing on sport fishing, snorkeling whale watching and other aquatic activities. For those hoping to come face-to-face with native reef fish, the Cebaco Island, Beach & Snorkeling Day Tour is a top choice, while visiting gastronomes should be sure to spring for the Seafood Lunch In Leones Island And Gulf Of Montijo tour, an excursion that invites guests to sample fresh seafood on the pristine shores of Isla Leones.

Discover the Lush Beauty of the Azuero Coast



Leatherbacks are one of several sea turtle species that nest along the Azuero Peninsula. GETTY

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Massive, pristine, and brimming with native Panamanian flora and fauna, the Azuero Peninsula is an essential stop for any nature lovers paying a visit to Veraguas Province—and for those seeking cozy accommodations on the peninsula's shore, there's no beating [Morrillo Beach Eco Resort](#). Perched high above the pristine Playa Morrillo, this idyllic lodge serves as the perfect base for exploring the surrounding region, with six spacious rooms complete with private balconies and locally-made health and beauty products. During a stay, guests can snag a paddleboard or kayak and explore the surrounding mangroves, while the on-property dining program showcases fresh produce and protein sourced from local farms and producers—and to sweeten the deal, Morrillo Beach Eco Resort has mastered the art of Azuero ecotourism as well.

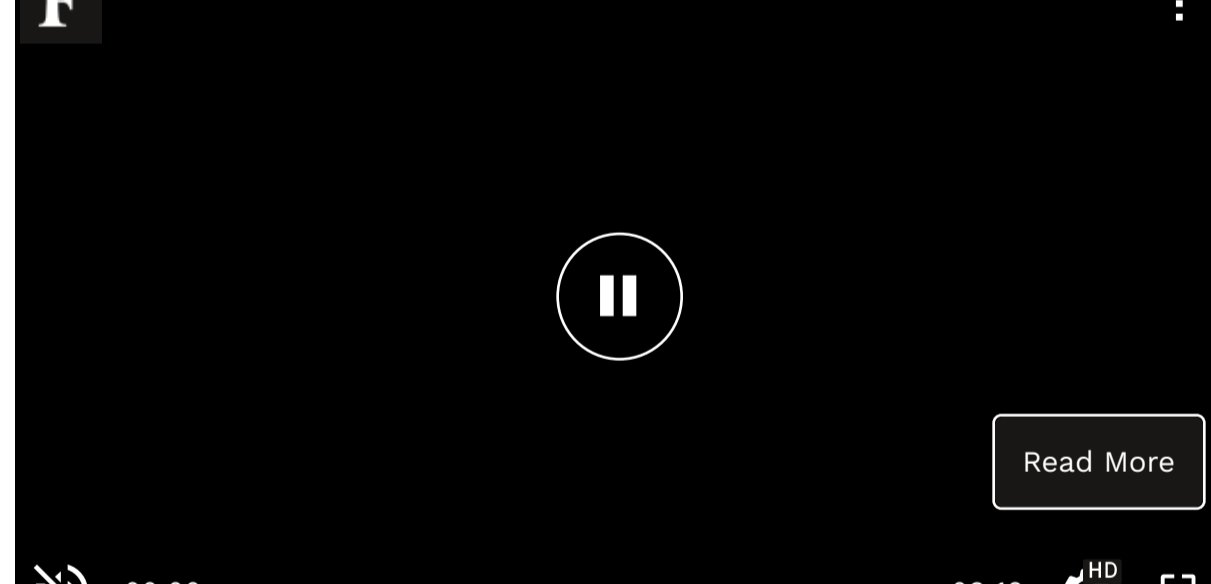
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Each year, the region's native sea turtles make their way back to the sandy shores of the peninsula to lay their eggs, and for anyone dreaming of watching this time-honored process in person, Morrillo Beach Eco Resort has curated the perfect excursion. Working in tandem with the neighboring [Fundación de Agua y Tierra](#), guests can take to the scenic shores of Playa Mata Oscura in the late hours of night in search of an egg-laying female, with an experienced guide offering ample insight into the elaborate lives of Panama's sea turtles. Meanwhile, those who prefer to stick close to the resort can marvel at the local population of Azuero howlers, a critically-endangered subspecies of howler monkey that's found great success across the Morrillo Beach region.



Take a Dip Along the Santa Catalina Shore



Veraguas Province is the sole Panamanian province with both a Pacific and Atlantic shoreline. GETTY

Just west of the Azuero Peninsula, the coastal town of Santa Catalina has transformed from a sleepy fishing village to a beloved tourist destination thanks to its stellar surfing and diving opportunities. In between excursions, visitors can spend their time perusing the local shops in search of handcrafted souvenirs, while the village's vibrant dining scene springs to life in the early afternoon. The downtown restaurante Mamá Nivia is a top spot for sea bass and red snapper, while those in search of classic Panamanian cuisine can make their way to [Pescao](#), an longstanding restaurant that prides itself on serving fresh seafood—and of course, there's no shortage of charming accommodations to explore during a visit as well.

Just a few steps away from the Santa Catalina shore, the vibrant [Nativo Boutique Hotel](#) serves as a particularly idyllic base for visitors to make use of. During morning hours, guests can take advantage of the property's personalized yoga classes or sign up for a surfing lesson, while the property's outdoor infinity pool offers a stellar view of the Central American sunset—and as an added bonus, the hotel bar comes complete with a wealth of high-end options, providing guests with an opportunity to sip a margarita, caipirinha or local Panamanian craft beer as the sun dips below the horizon.

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For the first few decades of my life, my exposure to the world outside of Massachusetts was limited, sparking a desire to experience life... [Read More](#)

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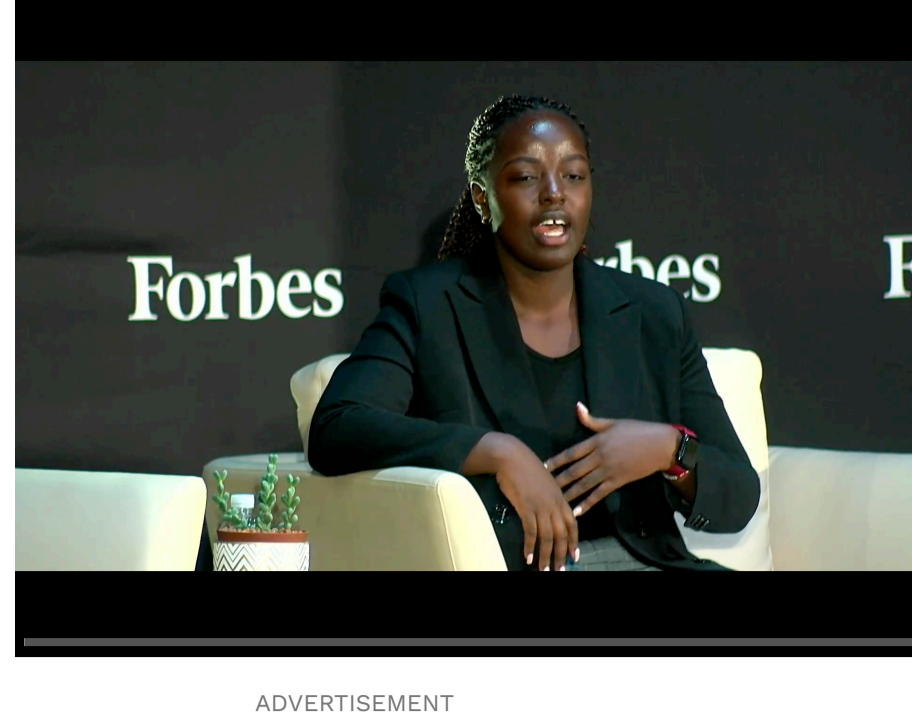
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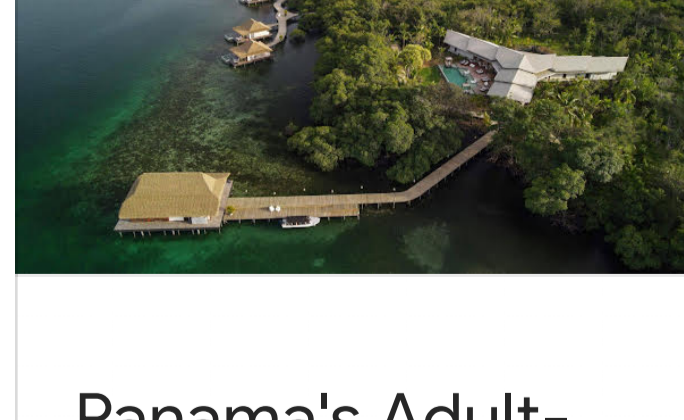


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