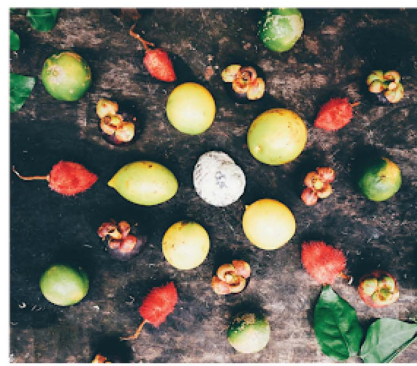


Welcome to  
Punta Mona!







## Welcome to our home!

Punta Mona is an off-the-grid permaculture farm and educational retreat center. We're located right here on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. We launched in 1997 and are now one of the most bio-diverse permaculture farms in Central America. Here you'll find over 300 varieties of perennial tropical fruit and nut trees, abundant root crops, vegetables, and annuals, as well as over 150 medicinal plants.

### Early history

Punta Mona was named by Christopher Columbus on his final voyage to the Americas in 1502. The original inhabitants of the Talamanca mountain region were the Bribri people. In the late 18th century, people of African descent came from Bocas del Toro. They followed the migration of the Green and Hawksbill sea turtles and set up provision sites along the coast. With the planting of yuca, plantains, papaya, bananas, and other staple foods, homesteads were developed. By 1915, many established population centers with 30 families each existed in Cahuita, Old Harbor, Punta Uva and Punta Mona.

Throughout the early 20th century, Punta Mona had many families. At one time it was on its way to being a larger town than Puerto Viejo. The Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge was established in 1985. At that time, 65 families — almost 200 people — lived here. There was a dance hall and soccer field, and most of the people lived on the beach. The beach has since been taken by the rising sea.

### Last man standing

Roads failed to make it here and the population started moving away to the nearby towns of Manzanillo, Cahuita, Puerto Viejo, and Bocas del Toro.

Blastell Martinez, better known as Padi, was the lifelong and final Afro-Caribbean resident of Punta Mona. Born on February 3, 1929, Padi would proudly state that his “cord was burried der in de yard!” Padi worked for the railroad and spent time in Panama during his younger years. As he aged he returned to Punta Mona where he lived alone in the old ways, fishing and selling coconuts.

## The beginning of Punta Mona Center

Stephen Brooks, the founder of Punta Mona, started Costa Rican Adventures in 1995. This was one of the original eco-tour companies that brought students from the United States and Canada to Costa Rica. Stephen wanted to show them the beauty and the tragedy of the rainforest. As well as expose young people to indigenous cultural heritage and its decimation. While students and teachers were hungry for the experience, Stephen kept thinking, "What's the next step?"

In 1996, Stephen and his father, Norman, were out fishing off the coast. A storm rolled in, which brought them up on the beach to the home of Padi. With fish drying on the line and nets hung to be mended, Padi's first words to Stephen were, "Wappin Soul." Stephen knew right away that this was the way. A simpler life, living with the land and sea. He immediately connected with Padi and started bringing the eco-tour students to camp at Punta Mona.

Stephen discovered that the land next to Padi was for sale and bought it a year later. Punta Mona Center for Sustainable Living and Education was founded! This place was run by the staff of Costa Rican Adventures for many years. They received students while Stephen guided them around Costa Rica. Volunteers, travelers, and students who wanted to live with and from the land started showing up, and so the center kept growing.

## Chaya and permaculture

In 1997 Stephen also met Silvio Bonomelli, an eccentric Italian expat living in Puerto Viejo. Silvio gave him chaya, his first edible green that he planted at Punta Mona. Stephen had been eating rice, yuca, fish and plantains prepared every way possible until then. With the introduction to chaya, and its dramatic nutritional and culinary impact, Stephen became obsessed with edible plants. He started to explore and plant a myriad of different tropical fruit trees and plants on the land.

Since the early years Punta Mona has been a mecca for environmental studies students, permaculture designers, organic gardeners, healers and alternative chefs. We have gone through many stages of transformation. From a regular rotating volunteer farm to the organized educational retreat center, experiential guest house, and thriving permaculture farm.

## Community living

Now we're an intentional community living here year-round. We're on a mission to practice and teach a simpler, regenerative way of living that nourishes mind, body, spirit and Mother Earth.

The permanent community of staff and workers keeps Punta Mona alive. We tend the farm, the chickens, our buildings, our kitchen and food, and the health of our people. The amount of people that live on land fluctuates with the season.

We're roughly 20 people working here. 10 of us are expats living here on-site, and the other 10 are locals living in Gandoca, the neighboring village. We always welcome volunteers and guests for overnight stays, tours, and educational retreats.





## Facilities



### Toilets and humanure

We have 12 dry composting toilets throughout the property. They create gorgeous nutrient-rich soil from our human output.

After 6 to 9 months of decomposition, the healthy soil is ready to use in the garden. This becomes an important input that feeds our fruit trees.

Dry composting toilets not only save gallons and gallons of water each day. They also bring our human-cycle back in balance with the natural ecosystem that supports us. It may take some getting used to, but after a few days at Punta Mona you'll never want to go back to flushing toilets. Our human "waste" is too valuable to wash away - it's a vital resource for our plants!

### Showers

Our community shares solar-heated fresh-water showers. Please use only biodegradable products, since the water is recycled back to the Earth.

Keep your showers as brief as possible. Turn the water off while soaping up, and to conserve our precious supply of water.



## Solar energy

All of our electrical energy comes from the sun! Solar powers the lights in all our structures, our internet, charging stations, and heated communal showers. Solar power is a precious resource here in the jungle. Tropical rain is frequent and unpredictable, so we use electricity sparingly. We limit our internet time and rely on soft candle lighting as much as possible.



## Internet

We have solar-powered satellite internet. This is a valuable luxury resource, quite costly and completely dependent on sunshine. It's available in the main house between breakfast and after dinner. We might switch off the internet from time to time. This is either to save energy or to free up bandwidth for doing administrative tasks.

We encourage people to reach out to their loved ones to let them know you are safe and sound. But we also encourage limited use of the internet and social media while you're here. There's so much to see around you!



## Charging and electronic outlets

Our main community house is equipped with electrical outlets where you can charge your devices. Charging is limited to daytime hours when the sun is out. Don't charge on cloudy days or after dark.

## Massage therapy

If you need a massage while you're here, we have massage therapists on-site. We'll be happy to schedule an appointment for you.

## Cleaning

All structures are cleaned weekly. Please keep your bed tidy and confined to your personal space so we can clean and maintain our space. A well-made bed discourages insects from making their home in your bed.

## Laundry

Sheets and pillowcases are changed once a week.

You can send your personal laundry to Gandoca to get it washed and dried. One load is usually around 6000 colones or 10 dollars. It usually takes two days, depending on the weather. Contact one of the community members if you need help to arrange this.

You're also welcome to hand wash your own laundry in the lavanderia behind the kitchen. Please use your own biodegradable soap.

We recommend washing clothes when it's sunny. Our hanging racks by the bungalows are open-air without a roof. And textiles don't dry here when there's high humidity at night or rain.

## Smoking

Our smoking areas are around the fire pit outside the main house, and by the beach. You can throw your buds in the fire by the kitchen or take them with you if you're smoking cigarettes.

Please don't smoke inside any of the buildings or under roofs.

## Trash

We constantly try to produce little to no waste. It's a permaculture principle we take seriously, but some things are inevitable. We do our best to reuse and recycle our waste. We sort waste

like plastic wrappers, bottles, containers, paper and tea bags. We either re-purpose this in compost, for fire kindling, food storage, medicine making, decoration or bottle-bricks.

We ask you to pack out what you pack in. Take with you whatever plastic or packaging you brought with you when you leave.





## Kitchen and food

### Our food

Our jungle chefs will prepare you three community meals per day. We use as much produce from our farm as we can. We also supplement with veggies and fruit that doesn't grow well here. Our cuisine is local and organic whenever possible. It's infused with an abundance of superfoods, medicinal herbs, and a lot of love.



Once in a while we'll get fresh fish or chicken from Gandoca. There's always many vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options, so nobody goes hungry.



## Meal times

**Breakfast:** 7:30 AM

**Lunch:** 12:30 PM

**Dinner:** 6:30 PM

Our mealtimes might change whenever we host groups. Normally they don't change with more than half an hour, and we'll let you know well in advance if that's the case. Mealtimes are always announced with the sound of the conch, which you can hear from afar.

## Where to eat

We share all our meals. This is a great opportunity to connect with others, while enjoying the delicious food.

There are many nooks around Punta Mona to enjoy your meals or afternoon tea. We have dining tables on the first and second floor of the main house. One of our favorites is the picnic tables on the beach, overlooking the Caribbean.





If you're feeling tired and want to eat in peace, you're welcome to retreat to your room. Remember to bring your plate back and wash before kitchen clean up is over.

## Kitchen clean up

We expect you to wash your plate, cutlery, glasses and cups. Outside the kitchen you'll find a washing station, with instructions on how to wash your plates. When you're done washing your plate, you can put it in the drying rack.

We only have a limited number of plates and cups, so make sure to bring back whatever you've used after meals and before bedtime.

## Red zone

Our kitchen is the heart of Punta Muna, and always in use. Please don't enter the kitchen if you're not cooking, and use the sinks outside if you need water. If there's no fresh drinking water or hot water, let our kitchen crew know.

If you would like to help with meal preparation, let us know in advance. Don't take food or cook in the kitchen without permission.



## Dietary restrictions

We're able to accommodate most dietary restrictions. Most of our food is vegan and gluten-free, but we do use eggs, milk, soy sauce, and flour in some of the dishes. Please let us know in advance so that we can plan our meals.

## Water

We have two wells and a rain catchment system. The water in the kitchen goes through a slow sand filter. Our drinking water goes through an extra UV-filter to kill microbes. You can fill up your water bottle with the water from the black tank by the kitchen.





## Explore the land

Make use of our communal spaces, where you're welcome to hang out and relax throughout the days and nights.

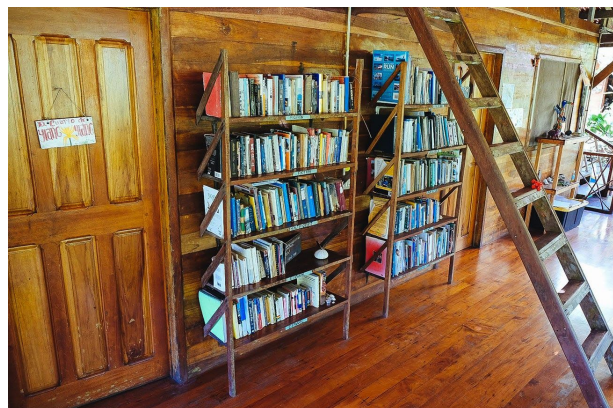


## Yoga shala

In the shala we have yoga mats and blocks for use. We have many yoga teachers living here, and usually there's several classes every week. Classes are announced during dinner circle.

## Main community house

Here you'll find tables, couches, bean bags and hammocks to chill in. We also have a permaculture and herbalism library with many different books in both English and Spanish. Feel free to take them to your room, and remember to bring them back.





## Mandala garden

Take a walk in the mandala garden to discover an array of different plants, medicinal herbs and fruit we have growing here. If you need help identifying any of them, you can always ask a community member for help. We also recommend taking a farm tour to get a full overview of all our gardens and plants.

## Mud bath

Going to the river and taking a mud bath is the perfect way to cool down on hot and sunny days. The river is a 10 minutes walk away, either on the beach or through the jungle beyond the yoga shala. The river is red due to the high mineral content, and you'll find the mud under the tree roots in the river. Get muddy and go to the beach to dry, before you jump in the sea. If you're lucky, you might even see the cayman in the river.



## Ocean

Don't forget to go swimming as often as possible! If it's not been raining for a couple of days, the visibility is often good enough to go snorkeling. Usually the best months for this are September and October.

## Volleyball

We play volleyball as often as we can. You're more than welcome to join us, or play a game of your own. We usually play after work before the sun goes down, around 4:00-4:30 PM.

## Treehouse

If you're not afraid of heights, climb up to the tree house and you'll find the best view. Before you go, make sure that the ladder is properly attached. If you're unsure, please us before you climb up.





## Staff spaces

We have some spaces that are designated for the staff.

### Office and kitchen deck

This is a place where we do administrative work and also a chill-out area for staff. Please don't occupy this space, or leave your things there.

### Dry deck

This space next to the office is used for storing our housekeeping equipment and is not a place to hang your wet clothes here. You can use the drying racks by the bungalows.



## Tours and workshops



### Farm tour

We highly recommend that you go for a farm tour. You'll get an in-depth knowledge of the farm, our systems and the plants that grow here. The tour gives you an overview of food forest design, native tropical plants and medicinal herbs, natural building, humanure composting, and community living. You'll be able to name, taste and smell the different plants and fruits that grow here.

**Price:** 25 USD per person



## Herbalism tour



This tour will give you an overview of the herbal medicine that grows here. We'll show you the entire process of medicine-making from harvest to treatment. We'll start in the garden to talk about all the abundant medicinal plants we have here, like Gotu Kola, Blue Vervain, Patchouli, Turmeric, Moringa, Tulsi, and Ylang Ylang to name a few. Then we'll head to our Alchemy Lab, where we process and produce our own jungle medicines. We'll end the tour in our apothecary, where you'll see what we keep stocked for everyday use on the farm. You'll also get some tips on how you can begin incorporating herbalism into your life at home.

**Price:** 25 USD per person

### Day trips

If you're staying for a while and want to explore the area around Punta Mona, we can help you arrange a day tour with the help of our friends. Some of the options include dolphin watching, fishing or hiking along the beach to Gandoca to have lunch and boat on the lagoon. Just check in with us during your stay, and we'll help you figure out what to do.

We can arrange a tour or trips with notice a day in advance. Please note that some courses are not available at all times.



## Permaculture farm

Punta Mona is roughly 85 acres. 35 of them are cultivated and contain our living spaces and infrastructure. The rest is national forest habitat reservation. The land was designed and divided into permaculture zones. This was to suit the placement of the energy systems and crops for frequency of human use and the need for caretaking and maintenance.



### Zone 0

The self; this can be seen as the internal thought process or the body.

### Zone 1

The “heart center” of a property that receives daily attention many times each day. Our Zone 1 is the kitchen, living spaces, energy monitoring systems, herb, and perennial salad gardens and greenhouse.



## Zone 2

This includes many of our favorite fruit trees we visit frequently throughout the week, vegetable gardens and chicken coop.

## Zone 3

Our fruit trees that need less care, our woodshop, outdoor classrooms, camping spaces, nearby backup water systems and some of our favorite medicinal plants and roots like ginger and turmeric.

## Zone 4

Our areas for harvesting water and solar. It also includes fruit trees that do not produce as frequently, such as bamboo, and our high-quantity production root crops and milpa.

## Zone 5

The conservation and primary rainforest jungle that we get to explore and forage for wild mushrooms and other exotic treats from the land.



## Health and safety

### Dangerous animals

There are several different types of snakes here in the jungle. Some of them are venomous. Use a flashlight whenever you're walking outside after dark, and don't go into the jungle after dusk. If you see a snake, don't approach it, but walk away and inform a community member. We've only had one snakebite from a non-venomous snake so far. There's no need to be afraid as long as you take the necessary precautions.



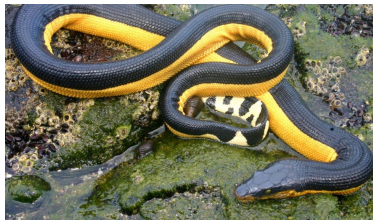
Fer-de-lance (Terciopelo)

**Highly venomous.** Irritable, unpredictable, and has a temper. It doesn't mind roaming near people or buildings. If you shine a light directly on its head, it will approach the light source.



Coral Snake

**Highly venomous.** Prefer to stay underground, in rock crevices, hollow logs or under rotting leaves. More active at night.



Sea Snakes

Venomous, but will not bite unless you provoke it. Yellow-bellied and black-backed with an oarlike tail.



Vine Snakes

Venom is mild and may cause some temporary blistering or swelling, but no permanent damage.



## Size matters

Younger and smaller snakes are more dangerous as they have not yet learned to control their venom output, and may deliver all of their venom in one bite.

## Preventative Measures

- Be cautious if you're putting your hands into crevices and holes.
- Don't turn rocks or walk through low, dense vegetation.
- Be aware if you're picking fruit or handling tree branches.
- If you see a snake, simply back away. Don't try to touch or antagonize it.
- Be mindful of each step, especially while in areas close to a water source with loose foliage and puddles.

## Storms and rain

This is the Caribbean, and even though we're sheltered from the hurricane season, it can get stormy. Usually, we see the most rain during the winter months. There's no need to be worried if you hear thunder during the night. It will pass, and the lightning rarely strikes near us.

Storms can reduce the accessibility to get to and from Punta Mona. If the sea is high and choppy, the boat can't access us and it might also be difficult to hike a muddy trail. Luckily this is quite rare, and we'll let you know if this might affect your arrival or departure.

## Medical conditions

Let us know of any allergies or pre-existing conditions that might affect your stay. We'll do our best to accommodate and make you feel safe in the jungle.

## Herbal and medical care

We have a first-aid apothecary stocked with allergy medication, painkillers, band-aids. This is for any minor injury during your stay. Treat any rash, cut or wound as soon as possible. In this tropical climate a small cut can get infected if not tended for. Ask one of the community members if you need anything from our apothecary.

We grow over 150 medicinal plants. Our rainforest is full of wild medicinal mushrooms, such as Turkey Tail, Reishi, and Artist Conk. Nature gives us an abundance of medicine that our herbalists regularly harvest and process. We make tinctures, teas, tonics, salves and infusions to keep us all healthy and happy.

When you are here, one of our herbal witches can give you a tour of our fully-stocked apothecary, our alchemy lab, and our jungle garden. We will be happy to care for you should you need any natural remedies during your stay. Unless it's an emergency, please let us enjoy





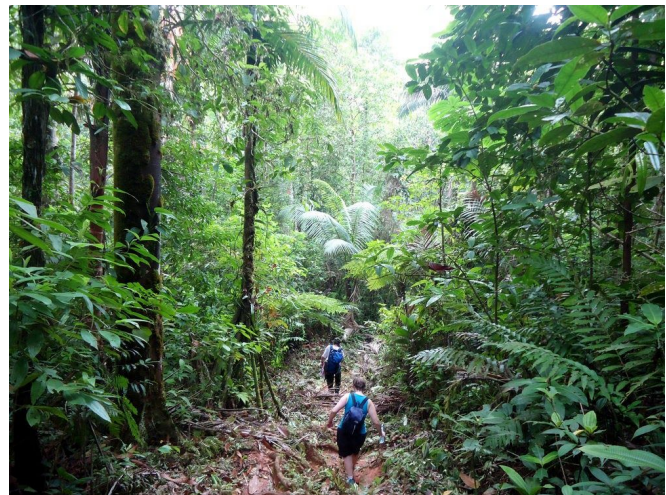


# Transportation

## Boat

We can help you schedule a boat from or to Manzanillo between 8 am and 4 pm. You'll be riding with our boat captains Baco and Jose, that knows every reef and wave. Depending on the weather, the sea can be quite choppy, but you will be in excellent hands.

Contact one of the community members if you need a boat. Let us know at least a day in advance. The boat costs \$50 per trip for up to 5 people. That means that if you're the only one you will be charged \$50, and if you're two it's \$25 per person. If there are 5 people or more in the boat, they charge \$10 per person.



## Hiking

You can also hike to and from Punta Mona through the jungle. The trail is 8 kilometers long, and goes through the primary rainforest. The hike takes approximately 2 hours, depending on the condition of the trail. This is the rainforest, and the trail can be quite muddy. We recommend sneakers, boots, or hiking sandals — not flip flops.

We recommend that you hike with a guide or use a downloaded offline map of Costa Rica on the app Maps.Me. The cost range for a guide ranges from \$60 for a couple to \$260 for a group of 15 or more, always consider the tip. A guide will give you an introductory lesson on the Caribbean jungle ecosystem and environmental issues affecting our area. This is also a great day trip, if you're already here. Let us know if you want us to get you in touch with a guide.



# Payment

## Cash

We accept Costa Rican Colones and US Dollars. We don't take cards, so make sure you have enough cash if this is your preferred payment method.

## PayPal

We also accept PayPal transfers to [puntamona@hotmail.com](mailto:puntamona@hotmail.com). Please add an extra 5% service fee for each transfer.

If you have any questions about the price or payment method, please talk to one of our community members.





## Shop

In our little shop, we sell products made here or by local friends. The inventory changes throughout the year, but here's a short list of what you can expect to find.



### Tinctures

Our tinctures contain ethically wildcrafted mushrooms and plants, as well as the medicinal herbs we grow here. They're made with local moonshine and filtered rainwater.

### Balms

Our balms are made with organic and locally sourced beeswax and coconut oil.

### Infused honey

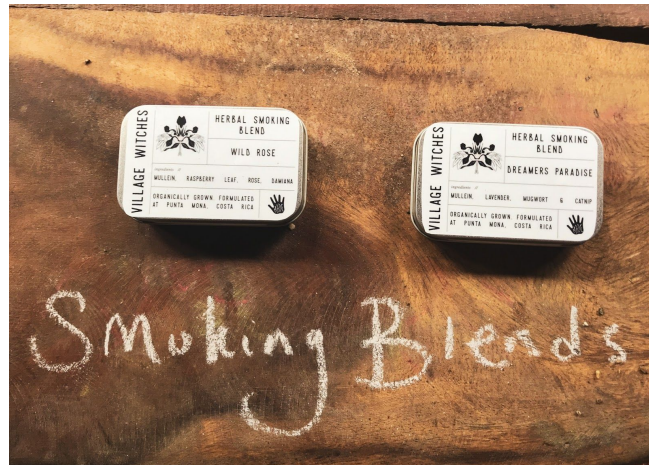
We infuse our honey with flowers and herbs that grow here. The honey is sourced from Gandoca, our neighbouring village.

## Smoking blends

We make different types of smoking blends, which you can smoke alone or mix with tobacco. Based on the herbs that we have available at the moment, we can also make you a custom blend!

## Clothing

Luna May good friends that make beautiful locally-designed clothing! They make comfortable dresses, shirts and pants that look good both in the jungle and the city. If you can't find what you're looking for here, they also have three stores in Puerto Viejo.





## Jewelry

Dennis from Gandoca makes beautiful jewelry with cow bone, wood, shells and other natural materials. We have a small collection of his work in our shop, and he usually stops by once a month.

From time to time we also have other artists stop that sells their unique style of jewelry too.