

My last vacation was in January 2020. I visited **EL FUERTE Valley** and **REYES Thermal Waters** with my friends, relatives and a couple of acquaintances. We boarded a Dodge van from the **GENERAL ARIAS** bus station. It was a long overnight<sup>1</sup> journey of 12 hours.

The best part of the trip was our stay at **REYES Thermal Waters**. Situated amidst hills and located next to the major river of the **REYES Valley**, the travel service we had booked was indeed a sight to behold. The weather was chilly and refreshing.

Cherry on top: There were a pair of cute dogs at our stay. Their names were **BLANCA** and **NEGRO**. I snapped a pic which disturbed the sleeping ball of cuteness.

When we went for a trek after having some rest, they accompanied us. They finished the trek with us and while returning, we lost them (which made me anxious).

When we reached our hotel, we found them sitting at the gate waiting for us. I looked at their posture while I was losing my mind worrying about their whereabouts.

There were hardly any tourists there. The place seemed quite unexplored. We didn't find any plastic bottles or mindless littering<sup>2</sup>. We were looking for an untouched pristine escape and **REYES Thermal Waters** didn't disappoint us. At all.

Our next stop was **YALA Seven Lakes**. One can observe a whole range of flora and fauna at their tranquil untraceable tiny waterfalls: Just try to imagine seven calm lagoons located at different levels, all at the foot of thousands of waterfalls that, due to the melting ice from the heights, drain from the thaw<sup>3</sup> through the cracks of endless cliffs. Done? I bet now you understand me.

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<sup>1</sup> durante la noche

<sup>2</sup> tirar basura sin sentido

<sup>3</sup> deshielo

We loved the delicious meal our travel service offered. What's better than BUÑUELOS soaked with cane honey and a cup of coffee while you're gazing at the dramatic snowcapped mountains raising beyond nearby hills?

But mere sight sighting wasn't our target. We went for **EL FUERTE Valley** trek the next day. This was set to be the main course of the whole meal: hiking in the hills nearby **EL FUERTE Town**. The three-hour long trek was not an easy one, especially for the beginners like me (I got cramps in my legs) but the snow-kiss mountains along the way were worth the pain. I closed my eyes and tried to absorb all positivity this serene (snowy at the distance) landscape had to offer.

Commercialization hasn't hit this beauty yet and therefore there are limited options for stay, food and local transportation (which wasn't a challenge for us, anyway). We hung out the sleepy village in search of tasting regional dishes, but not for long: The thing is that we only did run a trip seizing a long weekend (at that moment, I deeply wished it had been a longer stay).

Clear skies, chilly winds, gushing<sup>4</sup> rivers, exotic treks and what not. Overwhelmed and rejuvenated, we bid<sup>5</sup> goodbye to this lovely place. This was one hell of a trip<sup>6</sup> before this pandemic spoiled my travelling plans for God knows how long.

My recommendation? What can I say? If your idea is not so much of a time plenty of relaxation but rather a real break of the madness in which the world has unavoidable sunk, you should seriously consider a place like this. Especially the village at EL FUERTE Valley, which is not, at all, a place that leaves you isolated and in solitude. It's rather a terrace from which you hear in the distance, like rumors brought by the breeze, those things of what you need to get away from if you want a couple of days off at least once in your whole tiny sorry life.

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<sup>4</sup> brotante

<sup>5</sup> nos despedimos de este hermoso lugar

<sup>6</sup> este fue un viaje increíble