My last vacation was in January 2020. I visited EL FUERTE Valley and REYES Thermal Waters with some relatives and a couple of acquaintances. Our meeting point was the GENERAL ARIAS bus station. We boarded a Dodge van for a long overnight journey of 12 hours.

The first stop of the trip was our stay at the REYES Hotel. Serene yet bustling, situated amidst hills and located next to the stony river of the REYES Valley, the experience was indeed a sight to behold. The weather was rather chilly, sometimes refreshing.

There were hardly any tourists there. The place seemed quite unexplored. We didn't find any plastic bottles or mindless littering. We were looking for an untouched escape and REYES didn't disappoint us.

Our next stop was YALA Seven Lakes. One can observe a whole range of flora and fauna at their tranquil untraceable tiny waterfalls.

Waterfalls. Try to imagine seven calm lagoons located like terraces at different levels of altitude, all at the foot of thousands of really tiny waterfalls that, due to the melting ice from the heights, drain from the thaw through the cracks of endless cliffs.

We camped in front of a now abandoned military facility for enjoying the native meal we previously bought at TERMAS. 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 Village. The four-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 landscape had to offer.

Commercialization hasn't hit this beauty yet and therefore there are limited options for staying, food and local transportation (which anyway wasn't a challenge for us). 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 that I wished it had lasted a longer stay.

Clear skies, chilly winds, gushing rivers, exotic treks and what not. Overwhelmed and rejuvenated, we bid goodbye to this lovely place. This was one hell of a trip 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 you need to get away from.

But not everything can be flowers and rainbows. And it's not something I dislike about the place. It’s rather something that I can't stand regarding this existence: That this modern life, with that frantic chant of needing so much and all the time, wouldn't allow me to live there if I wanted to.