

Lesser-known Beach Retreats

BY MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY

In my years of traveling, I have seen a lot of beaches, yet my love for them has not waned. Beaches evoke escape and serenity and romance and childhood's happiest moments—so many things of beauty but they can also disappoint with crowds or overdevelopment. I have been lucky enough to sample beaches on six continents, and as everyone does, I have my favorites that I return to and also the blow-me-away ones that I probably won't see again but will never forget. I was recently asked to name a dozen fabulous and lesser known beach retreats.

José Ignacio

Uruguay



Courtesy Bahia Vik

The beach town of [José Ignacio](#) has been called the Hamptons of South America or been compared to Montauk or St. Barth's of twenty years ago—with a boost of Latin flair. It has long been on the radar of Brazilians and Argentinians, but the Vik family (who live between Greenwich and Monaco but have Uruguayan roots) created three five-star hotels that have brought the region to the attention of choosy travelers. There is [Estancia Vik](#), [Playa Vik](#) (lodging/playa-vik) and art-centric property, [Bahia Vik](#), which has a hot-spot restaurant and some of the best beachfront bungalows in town.

Getting There: With no time change between the east coast and José Ignacio, guests arrive from an overnight flight without any jet lag. Flights arrive into either Punta del Este (via [Buenos Aires](#)) or Montevideo (via [Miami](#)). José Ignacio is a forty- or ninety-minute drive away, respectively.

Who Should Go to This Beach Retreat: Chic travelers and families who appreciate elevated design but a low-key, barefoot beach vibe.