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Green Vacations Off The Beaten Track

Imagine being secluded in the middle of NOWHERE – by choice. Deep down in every sun-seeker lies a Castaway that dreams of a vacation on their own private island or remote natural habitat far from the maddening crowds, sans cell phones, laptops or worries. Two such spots, one in the jungles of Belize, the other in Nature's Florida, fit the bill.

Belize, a Central American country just south of Mexico's Yucatan and east of Guatemala is home to Belize Lodges' Moho Cay, a self-sustaining eco-lodge that proves you can live like Robinson Crusoe in complete comfort, leaving minimal carbon footprints along the way. Moho Cay and Belize Lodges are perfect for those who visited locations around the world that offer sand and surf, because this isn't just another resort on the beach. If you've wanted it all – this is the perfect solution – your own island in the Caribbean with staff to cook your meals and look after your needs. Moho Cay Lodge is a jewel in the spectacular Port Honduras Marine Reserve, powered by the sun, because staying green and preserving nature is what they're all about. A 30 minute boat ride into the reserve will take you to a tiny island of warm white sand surrounded by the turquoise waters of the Caribbean. Warm showers in Moho Cay's thatched safari tents are heated and powered by solar energy, proving you can live in luxury and still live environmentally friendly.

Moho Cay is part of Belize Lodge's 12-mile circuit of four luxury lodges, creating an easy trans-habitat expedition - where you can travel in style through rainforest, down jungle rivers to emerge in the azure Caribbean waters surrounding the world's second longest barrier reef. It is the country's first and only wildlife circuit located in the heart of almost 1.2 million acres of protected wilderness, teeming with spider monkeys and jaguars.

Belize is a short 2 hr. flight from Miami, so it's much closer to home, more convenient and economical than say a safari in Africa. In fact, right now Belize Lodge is offering some amazing package deals like the 6 day 5 nights Moho Castaway package that will see you stay at three lodges: Indian Creek, Jungle Camp and Moho Cay Lodge for just \$1,745 USD. Book quickly and you could get in on a unique BONUS offer that will see your \$245 domestic flight between Belize City and Belize Lodge covered – that's a \$245 per person savings. This package is good for travel from July 1st to December 15 2008. Visit www.belizeLodge.com for more details.

Stuwannee, oh how I love you, how I love you . . . tucked away in a remote part of Northeast Florida is a slice of nostalgia - Steinhatchee Landing (pronounced STEEN-HATCH-EE). A perfect spot to rent a cottage, and "green" before it was considered fashionable, fifty Florida cracker-style tin-roofed cottages dot the 36 acres of sabal palms and Spanish moss draped oak trees along a river habitat three miles from the Gulf of Mexico. "Cracker" refers to the early settlers, cowboys who cracked long whips to herd cattle. All 1-4 bedroom cottages feature kitchens, laundry, telephones, TV-DVD and charcoal grills; some cottages offer Jacuzzi tubs and fireplaces perfect for honeymooners. You can relax on your porch's rocking chair, enjoying the melodic sound of chirping birds or crickets. Each day begins with complimentary continental breakfast, which can be followed by a dip in the 55-ft. swimming pool, a soak in the outdoor or indoor whirlpool spa, a fitness work-out, bicycling the dirt trails, archery, badminton, volleyball or tennis – or doing nothing at all. Time seems to stand still as you lazily canoe or kayak on the Steinhatchee River. State Parks and nature preserves dominate this unspoiled area of Florida, where hiking, picnics, scalloping, fishing, and excursions to underwater rivers and caves nearby are among some of the activities also available. Known as "Florida's Scallop Capital," the pure river and Gulf waters make an ideal habitat for these deliciously sweet shellfish. Scalloping season opens July 1 and ends September 10 each year. Pet-friendly – your well-mannered, under 28 pound pouch can chase squirrels and swim in the river on his vacation. Steinhatchee is accessible by air through Gainesville, Jacksonville or Tallahassee, renting a car, then driving along interstate and country roads through towns with rarely a store or traffic light in sight. Located in the good ole US of A, Steinhatchee is close, yet feels so far away. Rates start at around \$230/night during the summer, making this a perfect setting for a multi-generational family vacation or couple get-a-way. Visit www.steinhatcheelanding.com.



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