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# Keeping kosher in Costa Rica

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SPECIAL TO THE CJN

**K**osher Jews can now travel the world without bringing their own pots and pans, thanks to the newly launched Kosher Casas, which offers travellers luxurious villas in Costa Rica, equipped with a kosher kitchen and a private pool.

Founded by Bryna Shuchat Landes and Eve Berman, Kosher Casas aims to give observant Jewish travellers the chance to experience exotic destinations without worrying about finding kosher food, or packing pots and pans to make their own food. The two experienced travellers and business professionals came up with the idea after experiencing first hand the difficulties of keeping kosher while travelling.

"I travel a lot with my family, and it's always been a difficulty, especially with kids, trying to go to interesting places and keeping everybody happy as far as food choices are concerned," said Landes.

"It's very limiting when you keep kosher – [we had to travel to places] where there are kosher restaurants or supermarkets with kosher products. We wanted to expand our horizons a bit, so we went to Costa Rica, ar-



One of the holiday homes available through Kosher Casas, photo supplied by Kosher Casas



ranged for a home with a chef, kosher meat and pots and pans, and it was a life-altering experience. When I came home everyone asked me how did we did it, and I realized I should really do this for people."

Since launching in August, they've seen a tremendous response from observant families who have always wanted to visit exotic destinations, as well as others looking to host destination weddings and bar mitzvahs.

Kosher Casas offers more than 90 homes available to rent to suit a variety of needs, from one-family villas to others that can fit up to 50 people, as well as condos, located in three different parts of Costa Rica.

The homes all have a private kitchen completely kashered prior to arrival under the supervision of the chief rabbi of Costa Rica,

and families can choose from an extensive menu of prepared and unprepared kosher foods, delivered to the villas prior to arrival. There is also maid service, concierge service to help plan activities and excursions, and a private pool (or a shared pool for the condominiums.) The villas can accommodate Chalav Israel needs, as well as be kosher for Passover.

"Costa Rica has so many wonderful things to do. It's an exotic destination that people who keep kosher don't normally get to [visit,]" said Landes.

Prices vary, but start at around \$3,000 for a private villa for one week, which covers the cost of the kashering, delivery of kosher food, maid and concierge service (but not the cost of the food itself.)

For travellers wishing to spend Shabbat



near a synagogue, Kosher Casas can arrange for them to stay in a hotel in San Jose, where the country's only synagogue is located, and then deliver them to their villa for the rest of the trip. Alternatively, groups of 10 or more can arrange to have a Torah sent to their villa under certain circumstances.

"We have been to every one of these homes. We didn't want to have a house on our website that we hadn't visited so we really offer personal service," said Landes.

"When people call us, they want advice. They explain their [circumstances] and want us to make recommendations for them. It gives them comfort because they haven't been and we know what it's like. We've been there and we can make suggestions."

They hope to expand to more destinations in the coming year, to offer kosher Jewish travellers the chance to travel the world without a suitcase of pots, pans, and cans of tuna.

"We'd love to have Kosher Casas located in numerous countries so people can have a whole option of destinations and be able to eat well," said Landes. ■

For more information, visit [www.koshercasas.com](http://www.koshercasas.com) or call 1-866-613-3618.



Introducing  
**Kosher Casas in Costa Rica**  
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