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# The Ka'ana Boutique Resort's Un-Belize-able Organic Garden

User Rating: ○○○○○ / 0  
 Poor ○○○○○ Best

Written by Melanie Waldman  
 Friday, 20 November 2009 03:08



While swanning around the sustainably cool Ka'ana Boutique Resort in the Cayo District of western central Belize last week, I all but stumbled upon my dream kitchen garden...but at least we can all visit.

In its second year, Ka'ana, the pride of Belizean owner Ian Lizzaraga, is thriving. This cozy-cool resort aims to create a real sense of place, leaving much of its landscape lush and wild and in its rooms, spa and beyond, showcasing Belizean products like mahogany, brown sugar and artisanal chocolate. At its signature restaurant, *La Ceiba* (named for an enormous Central American tree that was sacred to the Mayans), seasonal menus with creative spins on traditional dishes give the garden's produce an elegant place to shine.

Okra, a Caribbean staple, languorously drapes itself over a rough-hewn arbor, then becomes a steamed and buttery side dish with a spicy jerk chicken and cumin yogurt. The emerald green arugula is the sweetest I've ever tried, with nary a hint of bitterness; it graces salads and chewy wood-fired pizzas, but I wouldn't be shy about nibbling it by itself. Fed by iron-rich red soil, crunchy cauliflower grow as big as infants, bright lettuces fluff up next to spicy habañeros, and golden squashes are swelling *right now*.

These treasures are tended by local gardener, Don Oscar, who's often found field-side with the kitchen staff, pointing out the most perfect specimens at their peak. In my idea of a genius move in resort gardening (and a triumph for any vegetarian), you can arrange for the chef or a member of the garden team to tour you around the rows and then choose what you'd like to see later on your own plate.



Mid-morning is ideal for a garden visit, taking a minute to put on a courtesy pair of rubber boots; the thick mud can be pretty serious out here, and has a way of staying with your shoes well past its welcome. If you'd rather skip a tour, by late afternoon, the garden staff will be off enjoying a Belikin (Belize's national beer) and you'll have the loam all to yourself. Take a deep whiff of the basil that protects the main attractions from a slew of pests, bask in the scarlet glow of Belize's most famous indigenous flower, the red añaer, and enjoy some quiet

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time in a garden you'd love to have...but don't have to care for by yourself.

Read more about Melanie's adventures in Belize on her couple's travel blog, [Travels With Two](#).

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