

THINK FIRST: ADOPT A DOG

By Megan and Imogen

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When most people decide they want a dog, they choose to buy a puppy from a breeder. Little do they know that they could save a dog's life (and a lot of money) by adopting dogs from local rescue centres. These dogs have been abandoned, abused or are simply not wanted. Rescue centres work hard to ensure that dogs are safe and happy and have a place in the world. Furthermore, when dogs are taken into some pounds, they have a few days to be collected. If they are not collected during this time, they are killed. This is called euthanasia.

One of the key countries that house stray dogs is Costa Rica. Thousands of dogs are abandoned in the streets. However, there is a place called the Territorio de Zaguates (or Land of the Strays) in Costa Rica. They have over 900 dogs who are looked after, and the public are free to pay for tours. You can walk and play with the dogs, and eventually even adopt one.

We sent an email to a few people at Territorio de Zaguates asking them the following questions:

- How many dogs do you house?
- What's the most common breed of dog you house?
- Do many people adopt the dogs?
- Do you think more dogs should be adopted than bought?

We unfortunately never got a reply, but we found some information from other news sources online.

According to the 'BarkPost' "Territorio de Zaguates (or Land of the Strays) is a privately funded, volunteer run organization in Costa Rica". Every dog at the shelter is available for adoption and each is given a name and a personal "breed" based on their characteristics. Territorio de Zaguates attempt to dispel the myth that pure breeds are more valuable and celebrate each dogs traits. The volunteers take the dogs on hikes and adopters are free to join so they can interact and get to know the dogs. The dogs live in an open and sunny environment, but also have access to a indoor facility.