

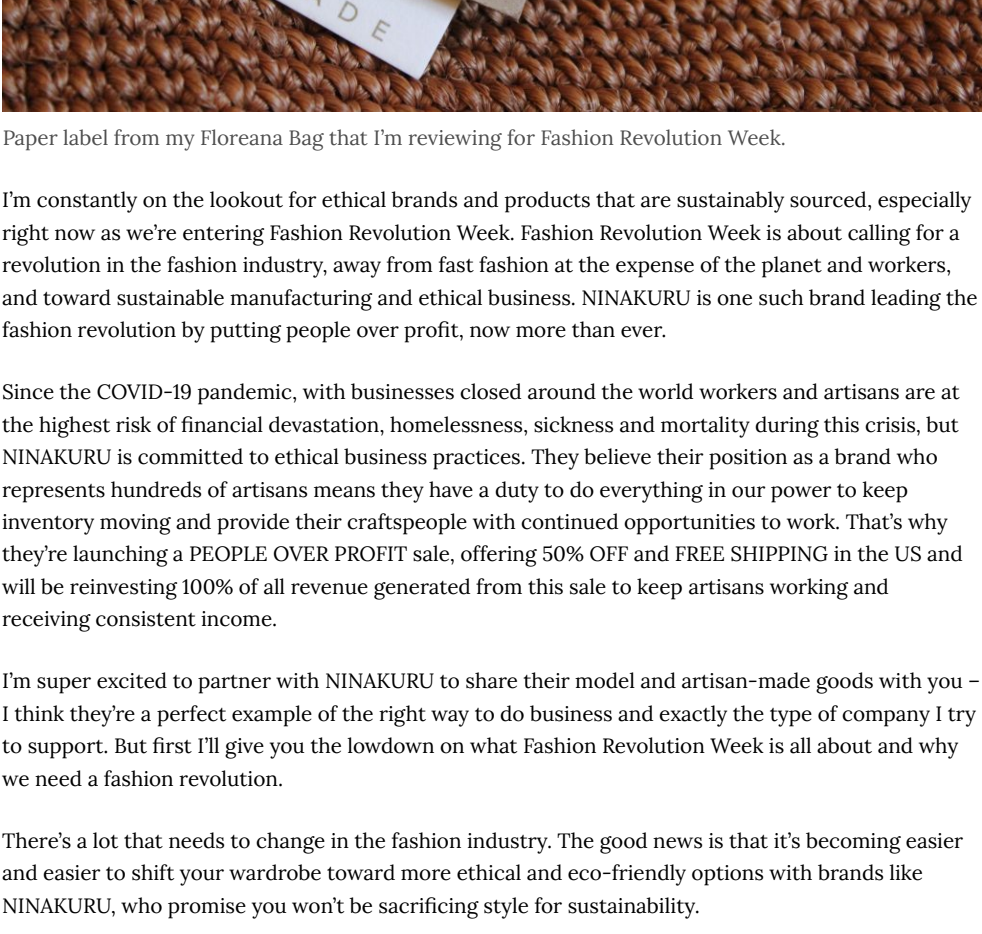
ALL POSTSPRODUCT RECSUSTAINABILITY

HOW BRANDS LIKE NINAKURU ARE LEADING THE FASHION REVOLUTION (+NINAKURU BAG REVIEW)

APRIL 20, 2020NO COMMENTS

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Paper label from my Floreana Bag that I'm reviewing for Fashion Revolution Week.

I'm constantly on the lookout for ethical brands and products that are sustainably sourced, especially right now as we're entering Fashion Revolution Week. Fashion Revolution Week is about calling for a revolution in the fashion industry, away from fast fashion at the expense of the planet and workers, and toward sustainable manufacturing and ethical business. NINAKURU is one such brand leading the fashion revolution by putting people over profit, now more than ever.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, with businesses closed around the world workers and artisans are at the highest risk of financial devastation, homelessness, sickness and mortality during this crisis, but NINAKURU is committed to ethical business practices. They believe their position as a brand who represents hundreds of artisans means they have a duty to do everything in our power to keep inventory moving and provide their craftspeople with continued opportunities to work. That's why they're launching a PEOPLE OVER PROFIT sale, offering 50% OFF and FREE SHIPPING in the US and will be reinvesting 100% of all revenue generated from this sale to keep artisans working and receiving consistent income.

I'm super excited to partner with NINAKURU to share their model and artisan-made goods with you – I think they're a perfect example of the right way to do business and exactly the type of company I try to support. But first I'll give you the lowdown on what Fashion Revolution Week is all about and why we need a fashion revolution.

There's a lot that needs to change in the fashion industry. The good news is that it's becoming easier and easier to shift your wardrobe toward more ethical and eco-friendly options with brands like NINAKURU, who promise you won't be sacrificing style for sustainability.

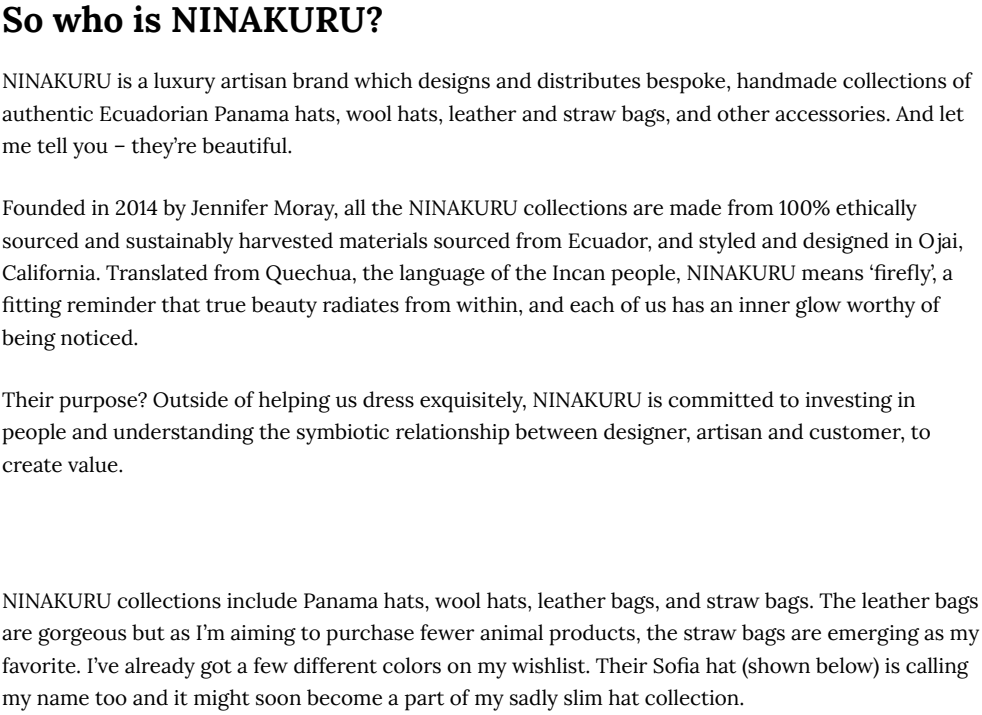
Disclosure: I did not receive any compensation for this post. I agreed to write about NINAKURU, and then became aware of a giveaway they were hosting on Instagram, where I ended up winning their gorgeous Floreana bag! I received the bag for free but all opinions are my own and I'm sharing only my honest thoughts about the brand and their products below.

What is Fashion Revolution Week?

Fashion Revolution Week is basically a campaign to highlight the aforementioned poor behavior of the general fashion industry and call for change. It's a time to call out the companies who've shown they have no interest in protecting their employees or our planet.

Fashion Revolution Week is a week to educate ourselves and our communities on how we can do better – both as producers and consumers of the fashion industry. Things like supporting local business, or shopping from stores which operate with fair trade principles.

Fashion Revolution Week is a week to celebrate the brands who are leading the way and doing business differently. A time to shout out our favorite companies and thank them for putting people over profit.



Why do we need a "fashion revolution"?

Let's start at the beginning. The fashion industry contributes to an enormous amount of wasted resources each year across the globe. The issue pretty much boils down to the fact that so many fashion companies, especially the ones we see in your average mall, are pumping out really poor-quality clothing en-masse. We're scooping it up, flooding our closets with the latest trends, and pitching items that quickly go out of style.

It takes a ton of resources to produce a garment. Water, energy, fabrics and dyes, transportation. Not to mention the workers. In companies like Forever 21, Zara, or Walmart where items are mass produced, the extremely low price tags often don't match an item's true cost. And workers who do the hard task of actually making the garment often receive extremely low wages while the corporations profit wildly.

These companies tend to use cheap materials knowing that the trendy item they're selling will soon be out of style and it won't matter if that dress is starting to lose shape or that sweater is beginning to slouch. If you decide to throw things away – even better for them! A chance to sell you something new to restock your closet. And so landfills end up packed with billions of pounds of clothing each year, many of which won't degrade for decades or longer.

Meanwhile, millions of fashion workers who produce the clothes we buy are barely making living wages and working in dangerous workplaces.

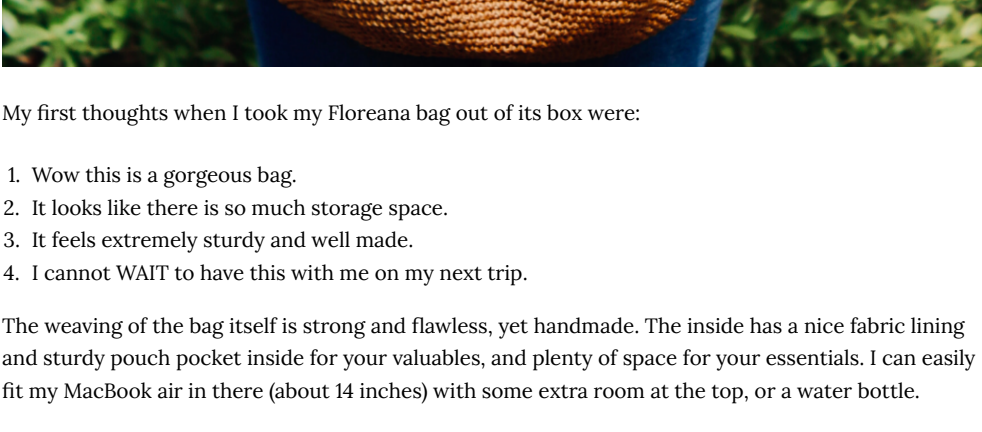
So who is NINAKURU?

NINAKURU is a luxury artisan brand which designs and distributes bespoke, handmade collections of authentic Ecuadorian Panama hats, wool hats, leather and straw bags, and other accessories. And let me tell you – they're beautiful.

Founded in 2014 by Jennifer Moray, all the NINAKURU collections are made from 100% ethically sourced and sustainably harvested materials sourced from Ecuador, and styled and designed in Ojai, California. Translated from Quechua, the language of the Incan people, NINAKURU means "firefly", a fitting reminder that true beauty radiates from within, and each of us has an inner glow worthy of being noticed.

Their purpose? Outside of helping us dress exquisitely, NINAKURU is committed to investing in people and understanding the symbiotic relationship between designer, artisan and customer, to create value.

NINAKURU collections include Panama hats, wool hats, leather bags, and straw bags. The leather bags are gorgeous but as I'm aiming to purchase fewer animal products, the straw bags are emerging as my favorite. I've already got a few different colors on my wishlist. Their Sofia hat (shown below) is calling my name too and it might soon become a part of my sadly slim hat collection.



NINAKURU products: Sofia hat, Pinta bag, and Suffolk hat.

The NINAKURU artisans and business model

During Fashion Revolution Week we're asking businesses to put people over profit but NINAKURU is already doing that. In fact, the company was developed to help preserve the livelihood of artisans in developing countries who rely on their trade to support the economic and educational development of their families.

The art of weaving an authentic Panama hat has long been a part of Ecuadorian culture, so much so that it was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Still, many talented artisans are abandoning their beloved craft and accepting jobs in the service sector, as demand for their goods decreases in favor of factory-made products. NINAKURU partners with talented individuals, helps their artisans acquire the quality materials which they might not otherwise be able to afford. This allows them to create higher quality products, increase the demand for their goods, and offer higher profit margins.

The materials for the hats and bags are sourced in Ecuador and produced by the expert artisans there but the finishing touches though don't happen until they reach the workshop in Ojai. This is the final step in production where one-of-a-kind details, like vintage grosgrain ribbons, are applied. Then the hats and bags are sent to the market in boutiques across South America and the US and picked up by fashion-forward shoppers like myself who love the ethos and designs of NINAKURU.

NINAKURU materials & sustainability

Their ethical business practices and products aren't the only thing they have going for them though. NINAKURU is also setting an example in sustainability. They're constantly working to improve operational efficiencies to minimize waste in resources and lower their carbon footprint.

As for the materials they're sourcing? Natural, whenever possible. Their hats are made of ethically sourced wool and toquilla (palm) straw – straw which never needs pesticides and grows everywhere in the coastal and forested regions of central Ecuador. Dyes come from natural botanicals from the rainforest like berries and saps, which are all organic, sustainably harvested, and renewable. NINAKURU agave bags, too, are handmade from locally sourced cabuya straw.

NINAKURU also promises to never source bleached straw, not only for environmental reasons but because bleached straw is susceptible to cracking, thus reducing the lifespan of their Panama hat.

My review of the Floreana bag



My first thoughts when I took my Floreana bag out of its box were:

1. Wow this is a gorgeous bag.
2. It looks like there is so much storage space.
3. It feels extremely sturdy and well made.
4. I cannot WAIT to have this with me on my next trip.

The weaving of the bag is strong and flawless, yet handmade. The inside has a nice fabric lining and sturdy pouch pocket inside for your valuables, and plenty of space for your essentials. I can easily fit my MacBook air in there (about 14 inches) with some extra room at the top, or a water bottle.



I feel like this bag is perfect for the pool, the farmers market, or a weekend brunch date. It's got all the room you need for your supplies on a day out but it's also luxurious and fashion-forward. Paired it with a sun dress, sandals, and sunnies, you've got an effortless but gorgeous look.

I'm a huge fan of the rich colors on this particular bag. That said, NINAKURU uses organic materials so all their products fall within a natural color scheme that will pair beautifully with wardrobes who have lots of other eco-friendly items. I can see this bag working great with jeans and an organic cotton blouse.

My official recommendation

NINAKURU is an eco-luxury brand so their bags and hats aren't cheap. But I think they're worth every dollar. The ethical business principles, incredible artisanship, and timeless designs will make a NINAKURU piece an essential in your wardrobe for the long run.

While many of NINAKURU accessories are not vegan based, they are happy to accommodate special requests to align with vegan requirements. They can have bags custom woven without leather finishes, and they have many hat finishes available which don't use leather, such as linens, cottons, jute and grosgrain. The designer, Jennifer, enjoys customizing accessories for individual needs.

I would absolutely recommend NINAKURU to anyone who is looking for luxury products that are sustainably and ethically created, who loves sleek design and handmade, one-of-a-kind goods, and for the beach bums and hat lovers among us. You'll have no shortage of options.

Where to find NINAKURU

During this pandemic while boutiques are closed, NINAKURU is going the extra mile to support their artisans by offering free shipping and 50% off your order. All revenue from the sales during this time are being reinvested in the artisans. This is a perfect time to support an amazing business and spice up your wardrobe with some amazing deals.

You can shop [online on their website](#), or follow them on [Instagram](#) for regular fashion inspiration and chances to win in future giveaways like I did. 10/10 would recommend them.

29 likes
ninakuru
A quiet moment with the Sofia Panama hat by NK [W](#)
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Sarah
Hey there! I - Sarah - am a 26-year-old marketing manager who loves to travel the world (if you haven't gathered that already). I'm also a proud cat mom, coffee-addict, and Harry Potter fanatic with an over reliance on list-making. I want to see as much of the world as I can but I know that can leave a huge footprint on Mother Earth so I'm on a mission to wander a little lighter. I created Suitcase Six as a resource to help busy people like you travel and live more sustainably too, whether at home or on the road. Let's add a little more "eco" to our adventure.

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