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# 10 Perfect Places To Chill Out



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**Travel** | *I know the difference between expensive travel and the truly luxurious*

f **Pura vida. Sprezzatura. Manaña.** These words all convey a chilled-out mindframe. Living a pure (uncomplicated) life. Moving with nonchalance. Or more clumsily translated, the art of doing nothing. Not rushing to do everything right this minute when it can in fact wait until tomorrow. We need these things more than ever today.

No wonder that these words have become almost marketing tag lines for destinations that excel in them. And within the Pura Vida of Costa Rica, the sprezzatura of the Italian countryside, and the manañas of much of the Latin world, there are certain small hotels that embody these goals even more deeply. (Disclosure: a number of them hosted me.) They're small, a bit off the grid—but not too arduous to reach—connected with nature and profoundly laid-back. They are places where there are many things to do but where it's often best to do nothing at all.

The reception terrace at Monteverdi  
BERNARD TOUILLON

[Monteverdi, Tuscany](#)

"A retreat from the ordinary" is the tag line at this remote Tuscan hideout, and it could not be more apt. It has panoramic views of the Val d'Orcia, a UNESCO

World Heritage Site known for its scenic splendor. The six-year-old hotel is not confined within a single building but instead is dispersed throughout an idyllic, medieval village, with its 18 rooms and suites tucked in among authentic and fastidiously maintained properties. The spa, with its not-notch therapists, Italian beauty products and multiple thermal pools is a dreamy spot to do nothing.

The main house at Craveiral

MARTIN KAUFMANN

## Craveiral, Portugal

I wanted to add *descansar* to my list, but sadly the Portuguese word isn't as widely known as I think it should be. It means, more or less, to make oneself untired. And Portuguese hospitality is really good at that. I could have chosen many hotels in the country, but Craveiral left a particularly strong impression. It's not particularly lavish or even all that put-together. The landscape is rugged. The 38 rooms are simple—what I might call farmhouse chic, with unvarnished woods, soft textures and lots of cork—though some also have quietly luxurious Hästens mattresses. Simplicity, nature, silence and wide-open spaces. These are the new luxuries. And at Craveiral they combine to create feelings of connection—to nature, to loved ones, to strangers who become friends—and belonging.

## Alavya, Turkey

Between Izmir and Bodrum, Alacati still has the innocence, charm—and incredible beauty—of a Turkish fishing village. It's the kind beach town that is begging to be Instagrammed—or better, simply taken in: bougainvillea, a restaurant façade, café tables on the sidewalk, the guy selling fresh mussels from a cart, cobblestone streets and colorful shutters, more bougainvillea. The heart, soul and substance in this town on the Cesme Peninsula becomes especially clear at Alavya. The name sounded exotic and Turkish to me until a friend in Istanbul explained that you're meant to pronounce it with an American drawl: Ah-luv-ya. And love it, you do.

## Chablé, Mexico

Wellness is a bit wily. We all want it we don't know what it is. Is it green juice and a vegan bento box? Is it sound therapy and shamanistic healing? HIIT and massages? A glass of fine mescal and a Cuban cigar? At this retreat in the Yucatán, wellness is whatever makes you feel good. Occupying the remains for a 19th-century *henequen* (sisal) plantation, the hotel pays homage to the history of the region while taking its own approach to well-being. The heart of Chablé is its massive spa, and the heart of the spa is a *cenoté*, or natural pool that is held sacred in Maya tradition. "Everything coming from it is powerful," says the spa director. "It nurtures everything."

Sunset over Lake Titicaca

TITILAKA

### Titilaka, Peru

I've never felt as close to the heavens as I did at Titilaka. That wasn't just because of the elevation—though the shores of Lake Titicaca are certainly up there, some 12,500 feet above sea level. It was also because the sky is a perfect blue that's decorated with cotton-ball cumulus clouds, the late-afternoon light is luminous, and the reflected sky in the mirror of the lake is entrancing. And because the design is uplifting and calming, with abundant glass that keeps the focus where it should be—outside. Since the intimate lakeside resort is built on a peninsula, all 18 rooms have close-up lake views, the kind that give the sensation of being on a cruise ship. Inside, the details are homey and handsome and true to their place: warm alpaca throws and colorful embroidered cushions. Even the bathtub—big enough for two—is positioned in a way that gives it a lake view.

A Vineyard Loft at Entre Cielos

ENTRE CIELOS

### Entre Cielos, Argentina

The “pod” guest room on stilts in a vineyard used to be the first thing people know about Entre Cielos. But there's no bedroom that's boring or bad. Undeniably comfortable, they drip with panache. One has giant, golden world map as an oversize headboard. They have terraces and vast views, most of which take in the hotel's exteriors, some of which are covered in a sort of outdoor “wallpaper” that's blown-up photographs of wine corks. But the appeal of Entre Cielos isn't just groovy good looks (or tasty food and wine, though it has that too). It's a profoundly relaxing place, a comfortable, aesthetically calming cocoon in which to escape the world—especially since it recently added eight more of these Vineyard

Lofts.

The oceanfront cottages at Nimmo Bay

NIMMO BAY

### Nimmo Bay, Canada

The tag line on the manager's emails tells you what you need to know about this improbable bastion of luxury in the British Columbian rain forest: "Nimmo Bay is a family of dreamers setting the stage for life's wild stories." In fact, it's not a lodge owned by a family. It *is* the family: their heart poured into a place that they loved enough to work hard at sharing the end-of-the-earth experience with others. Over the years, the place has grown to nine cabins—six facing the ocean and three facing the stream that creates the dramatic waterfall at the resort's center—at the base of the 5,000-foot Mount Stephens in the middle of the Great Bear Rainforest on Canada's wild, rugged, west coast. Don't expect to see the cabins in the pages of *Dwell*. But they're more than comfortable, and they all have easy access to outdoor hot tubs and a shower next to a roaring waterfall. While the packages include activities, these often involve sitting on boats and taking in the landscape and wildlife—what's more chilled-out than that?

The private pools and stunning views from the Puncak villa

NIHI

## Nihi Sumba, Indonesia

This much-celebrated resort is a luxury playground with a soul. Everything is the best it could possibly be, but nothing feels overblown. Tagged “the Edge of Wildness,” Nihi is the kind of place where no one wears shoes. Guests form fast friendships and connect with an island that owner Chris Burch likens to Bali before the throngs rushed in. There’s a trip-worthy surf break, an excellent equestrian program, a gorgeous yoga deck, several terrific restaurants and a swoon-worthy spa that can be booked for an entire day. Or there’s the deck or the pool of your villa.

Kachi Lodge  
AMAZING ESCAPES

## Kachi Lodge, Bolivia

Bolivia has lately become the Iceland of South America, with stunning nature and a high cool quotient. But until now, there was no comfortable place to stay beyond La Paz. That changed in February, with this opening of this luxury tented camp on the otherworldly Uyuni Salt Flats. The six domed tents have private bathrooms, plush and cozy bedding, stylish interiors and thrilling views.

## Kurà, Costa Rica

It was drug money behind this seductive, super-stylish resort high above the Pacific near the sleepy town of Uvita. At least that's how the Cayuga Collection, which manages Kura Design Villas and a handful of other sustainable-luxury hotels in Central America, put it in a blog post shortly after the hotel opened. But the drug money in question came from pharmaceuticals—a primary investor in the head of oncology research at the Roche Innovation Center in Zurich, a Costa Rican who is widely respected for his breakthrough cancer research. That history is nice, but what you really need to know about Kurà: It's closely tied to nature and to the sea, and downright sexy to boot. The six freestanding suites and villas are perched atop a bluff some 1,000 feet above the “whale's tail” of Uvita Beach. It's the kind of place you'll really want to go with someone you like very much, as the rooms have glass showers (double-headed and big enough for two) within their living areas, two light settings—dim and dimmer—and furniture that's more suited to lounging than to sitting upright to work or read. Given all that, it's awfully tempting to stay in and do—ahem—nothing.

*I spend half of my life in hotels. I know the difference between true luxury travel and what's merely overblown and expensive. Follow me on Instagram:*

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I've been a travel writer and editor for 15 years – including several as a senior editor at ForbesLife – and I've written about more than 600 luxury destinations and hot...

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