



The world's most exclusive hotels

Krisanne Fordham

(CNN) — There's a special breed of hotels that cater to the most discerning and tasteful of luxury travelers, so profoundly unforgettable and special you want to keep them all to yourself.

Set apart by their location, sheer luxury, history or venerability -- and in many cases, all of the above -- we've handpicked 25 of the world's most exclusive hotels where you can stay:

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan, Bali

Hidden amid jungles and rice paddies in Bali's lush central highlands, the Four Seasons Sayan feels like a secret tropical hideaway in Indonesia. Its 42 private villas, outfitted with plunge pools, lily ponds and meditation areas, have hosted the likes of Julia Roberts and even Barack and Michelle Obama.

Not surprisingly, there's a huge emphasis on wellness, with a holistic Sacred River spa, on site Balinese healers and hyperlocal, seasonal cuisine.

Even the cultural diversions are next level -- think water purification rituals with a Hindu high priestess, river rafting around UNESCO World Heritage sites and traditional Balinese massages on the shores of the Ayung River.

Rooms from \$569.

[Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan](#), Sayan, Ubud, Bali 80571; +62 361 977577

Hotel Bel-Air, the Dorchester Collection, Los Angeles

Tucked high in the canyons of Los Angeles' ritziest neighborhood and hidden among 12 acres of landscaped gardens, the Hotel Bel-Air is as exclusive as it gets.

The iconic hotel features 103 secluded rooms and suites, many of which have wood-burning fireplaces, patios and heated pools.

Thanks to its discreet location and secluded vibes, the hotel has been a longtime celebrity favorite, hosting legends like Robert Redford, Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly (who frequented the hotel so often she had a suite named after her).

Hotel highlights include a Wolfgang Puck restaurant, a cozy lounge with nightly live music, and a real-life Swan Lake -- filled with swans, naturally.

Rooms from \$545.

Hotel Bel-Air, 701 Stone Canyon Road, Los Angeles, CA 90077; +1 310 472 1211

Royal Mansour, Marrakech

Morocco's King Mohammed VI spared no expense when he commissioned the Royal Mansour to be built on the edge of the historic Medina, and it shows.

Each of the hotel's 53 two-story riads feature stained glass windows and handcrafted mosaic tiles as well as silk carpets, velvet brocade furniture and Venetian crystal statues.

Opulence aside, the hotel practically functions as its own walled city, with four restaurants, three bars, art gallery, library and hammam.

And thanks to a network of subterranean passages accessed only by staff, service is discreet (and flawless).

Rooms from \$1,336.

Royal Mansour, Rue Abou Abbas El Sebti, Marrakech 40000 Morocco; +212 52980 8080

The Brando Resort, Tahiti

When it comes to super exclusive, over-the-top, no expenses spared luxury experiences, The Brando rules supreme.

Built on a private island on the Tetiaroa atoll, the resort (named in honor of actor Marlon Brando, who purchased the island) features 35 upscale but eco-friendly villas, each with their own pool and direct beach access.

All-inclusive offerings include cuisine by a two-starred Michelin chef, spa treatments, and a seemingly unlimited menu of diversions, from scuba diving to cooking classes.

Not surprisingly, recent guests have included top-tier names like Leonardo DiCaprio, Ellen DeGeneres, Beyoncé and Barack Obama.

Rooms from \$3,700.

The Brando Resort, Onetahi, French Polynesia; +689 40 86 63 00

The Peninsula Manila

Opened in 1976, The Peninsula Manila is not just Manila's oldest and most venerable luxury hotel, but a landmark unto itself.

Its iconic, four-story neoclassical lobby -- with its 50-foot-high ceiling, marble staircases, towering palms and sun-shaped chandelier -- is the grandest in the city, and its rooms equally elegant and refined.

Hotel highlights include an award-winning spa, five restaurants and two cozy bars, which are perfect for people-watching and celebrity spotting.

The Peninsula regularly hosts the likes of Tony Bennett, Stevie Wonder, David Hasselhoff, Daniel Craig, Edward Norton and Rachel Weisz, among many others.

Rooms from \$205.

The Peninsula Manila, Corner of Ayala and Makati Avenues, 1226 Makati City, Metro Manila; +63 2 887 2888

Ashford Castle, Cong, Ireland

Flanked by lush woodlands and perched on the picturesque shores of Lough Corrib, Ashford Castle is straight out of a fairytale.

First built in 1228, the castle is unsurprisingly grandiose, decked out in Connemara marble and adorned with brocade silk, Donegal crystal chandeliers, antiques and original Irish artwork.

And with just 82 guest rooms -- individually furnished, many with four-poster beds, fireplaces and clawfoot tubs -- it's easy to feel like you've got the entire castle to yourself.

Rooms from \$488.

Ashford Castle, Cong, County Mayo, Ireland; +353 94 954 6003

Soho House Istanbul

Though you don't need to be a member to stay at the Soho House Istanbul, it retains the air of mystery and exclusivity that Soho House properties around the world are known for.

For starters, it's tucked away from the tourist crowds in the hip and edgy Beyoğlu district, and feels more like a (very stylish) friend's mansion than a typical luxury hotel.

Its 87 rooms boast an eclectic mix of Eastern and Western decor, with furnishings like bold kilim rugs, patterned throws, and ikat cushions handmade by local artisans.

Hotel highlights include a private cinema, two hammams, a nightclub and a rooftop pool.

Rooms from \$290.

Soho House Istanbul, Evliya Çelebi Mahallesi, 34430 Beyoğlu/Istanbul, Turkey; +90 212 377 71 00

Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, Switzerland

Built amid the mountains of Eastern Switzerland, this resort is worth visiting for its stunning alpine scenery alone.

It also happens to be one of Europe's leading health and wellness retreats, with its 140,000-square-foot spa and mineral-rich waters that flow in from nearby Tamina Gorge.

A Leading Hotel of the World, Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is comprised of two five-star hotels, the Mediterranean-inspired Grand Hotel Hof Ragaz and the opulent Grand Hotel Quellenhof, which features luxurious new spa suites with private saunas and thermal water on tap.

Rooms from \$505.

Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, Bernhard-Simonstrasse, 7310 Bad Ragaz, Switzerland; +41 81 303 30 30

Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara, Abu Dhabi

The ethereal Qasr Al Sarab, Arabic for "mirage palace," indeed rises from the desert like a mirage -- but thankfully, it's real.

Its 154 guestrooms are grand and spacious, decorated with Bedouin artifacts and Arabian-style furnishings. There are also 52 villas, which feature private plunge pools and sundecks.

Other highlights include a palm tree-flanked, oasis-like pool and a sumptuous Anantara Spa.

But the resort's standout feature is its location, perched on the edge of the Empty Quarter, the world's largest uninterrupted sand desert.

Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara, 1 Qasr al Sarab Road, Abu Dhabi; +971 2 886 2088

Fogo Island Inn, Newfoundland, Canada

Built on a cliff on a remote island off the coast of Newfoundland, this boutique hotel feels like it's sitting on the edge of the world.

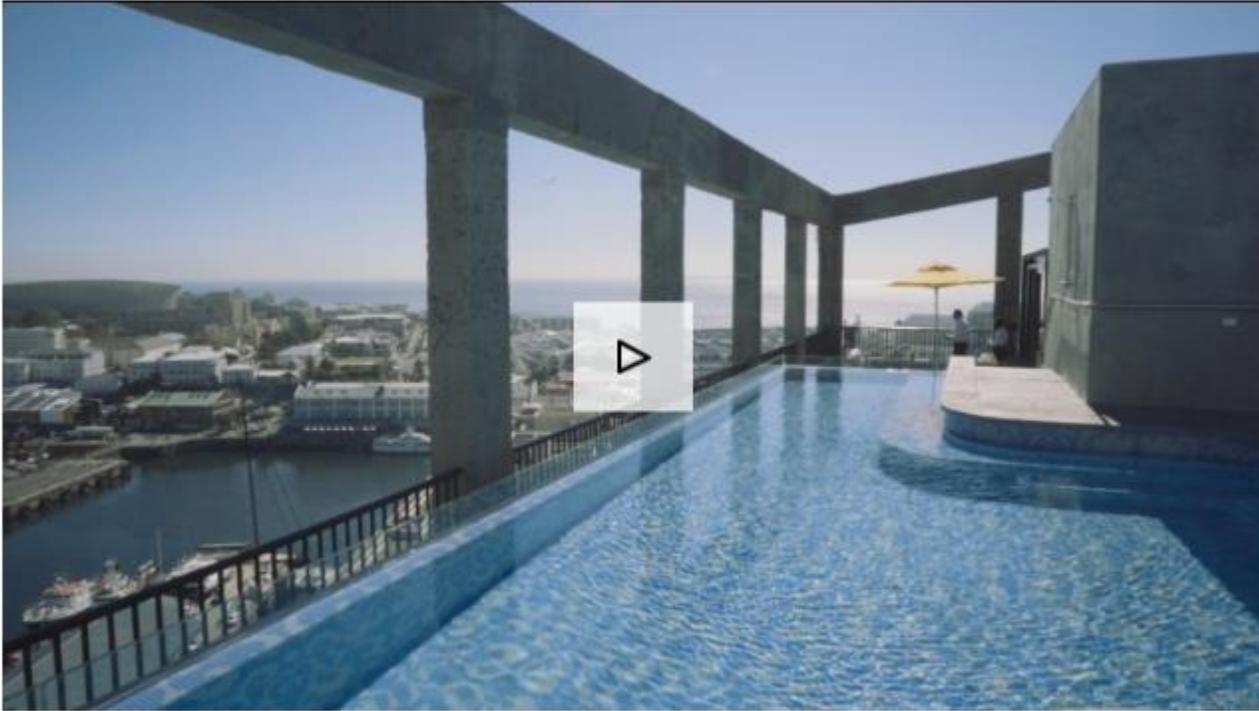
Made up of 29 suites, getting here takes two flights (three if you're coming from outside of Canada), a drive and a ferry ride, which drops you off seemingly in the middle of nowhere, but it's worth the trek.

Upon arrival, you're rewarded with a fireplace, hot tub and -- best of all -- floor-to-ceiling views of the iceberg-studded Northern Atlantic.

Rooms from \$1,329.

Fogo Island Inn, 210 Main Road, Joe Batt's Arm, Newfoundland, A0G 2X0; +1 709 658 3444

The Silo, Cape Town



Cape Town's The Silo Hotel -- named after the former grain silo complex in which it is housed -- opened its doors in March as an instant Cape Town landmark.

This new South African hotel impresses from the outset with its striking geodesic windows, which "billow" three feet out from the building's industrial chic facade.

Inside, you'll find 28 luxurious guest rooms, all individually decorated with Persian carpets, Egyptian crystal chandeliers and original African art.

But it's the pool, located on the rooftop, overlooking Table Mountain, the Victoria & Albert Waterfront and the Atlantic Ocean, that's the real show stopper.

Rooms from \$1,127.

[The Silo Hotel](#), Silo Square, V&A Waterfront 8001, Cape Town; +27 (0) 21 670 0500

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Scarabeo Stone Desert Camp, Marrakech

It may look like a basic tented camp from the outside, but don't be fooled, Scarabeo is one of the world's most glamorous and stylish desert hotels.

Its 15 tents are surprisingly plush and decorated beautifully with leather chairs, vintage lanterns, thick Berber carpets and Moroccan art.

There's even a communal lounge area strewn luxuriously with pillows and handwoven rugs, as well as a dining tent lit by candelabras.

Added bonus: though it feels impossibly remote, Scarabeo is conveniently located just 45 minutes' drive from Marrakech.

From \$270.

Scarabeo Stone Desert Camp, Désert Agafay □ Marrakech 40000, Morocco; +212 662 800823

The Resort at Pedregal, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

This dreamy Baja Peninsula resort is so exclusive that, to get there, you have to pass through enormous security gates before driving through a long chandelier-lit private tunnel that's carved into the base of a towering mountain.

Once you finally emerge from the darkness, you'll find yourself in a true hidden oasis, seemingly a million miles from Cabo -- or anywhere, really.

Adding to the secret hideaway feel are the ultra-private casitas, many of which have their own private plunge pools and open directly out onto the ocean.

One of the hotel's highlights is its signature restaurant, El Farallón, which is easily the prettiest restaurant in Cabo thanks to its dramatic cliff-top perch and divine sunset views.

Rooms from \$799.

The Resort at Pedregal, Camino del Mar 1, Pedregal, 23455 Cabo San Lucas, B.C.S., Mexico; +1 844 733 7342

Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, Oman

If you're looking for luxury paired with some serious middle-of-nowhere vibes, the Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar is the place for you.

Perched on the very edge of the Saiq Plateau of Jabal Akhdar (Green Mountain), this resort's backdrop is nothing short of show-stopping.

Villas are equally impressive, outfitted with sprawling outdoor decks and pools overlooking the rugged Hajar Mountains. There's also a sensational spa -- typical of all Anantara properties -- with a luxurious hammam, thermal suites and a Himalayan salt room.

Rooms from \$635.

Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, No 110, Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Nizwa 621, Oman; +968 25 218000

Giraffe Manor, Nairobi

It might be nestled within 140 acres of bushland, but this isn't your typical safari lodge.

This 12-room manor feels more like a country house with its grand fireplaces, sunny terraces, antique furnishings (and, quite refreshingly, not a single infinity pool in sight).

What you're here for, of course, are the giraffes, which not only graze outside the manor, but swoop their heads right inside the dining room to steal a bite of your breakfast -- an experience you might call priceless, if rooms weren't \$600 per night.

Rooms from \$565.

Giraffe Manor, Gogo Falls Road, Nairobi, Kenya; +254 725 675830

Mashpi Lodge, Mashpi Rainforest, Ecuador

Nature meets luxury at this stunningly futuristic, steel and glass hotel hidden deep within in the 3,200-acre Mashpi rainforest in northwest Ecuador.

Its 22 guest rooms are sleek and ultra modern, outfitted with deep soak Philippe Starck bathtubs and expansive windows that overlook the dense jungle below.

Beauty aside, Mashpi is also a leader in sustainable ecotourism, running on hydroelectricity, sourcing its water from local rivers, and implementing numerous green practices to keep the property's carbon footprint low.

Rooms from \$1,098.

Mashpi Lodge, Reserva Privada Mashpi, Mashpi 150150, Ecuador; +593 2400 8000

Soneva Kiri, Koh Kood, Thailand

Wedged between the jungle and the ocean on the lush island of Koh Kood, Soneva Kiri is one of Thailand's most exclusive beachfront escapes.

Accessed by a 70-minute private flight from Bangkok, the resort features just 36 thatched villas made out of sustainably sourced wood and recycled materials, that are outfitted with an infinity pool, sundeck and a lavish indoor and outdoor bathroom.

Thanks to its privacy and castaway-chic vibes, the resort is a favorite amongst many A-list celebrities (including a pre-split Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie.)

Rooms from \$970.

Soneva Kiri, 110 Moo 4, Koh Kood Sub-District, Koh Kood District, Trat 23000, Thailand; +66 (0) 82 208 888

ICEHOTEL, Jukkasjärvi, Sweden

Situated remotely in a tiny village in Northern Sweden, the ICEHOTEL is one of the world's most extraordinary and exclusive hotels.

As its name suggests, it's built from scratch every winter out of snow and ice, and features around 100 rooms - sculpted entirely out of blocks of ice -- which melt completely in the spring.

Even with the 2016 opening of ICEHOTEL 365, which offers cold and warm suites all year round, the hotel is so in-demand that it's often booked out a year in advance.

Rooms from \$180.

ICEHOTEL, Marknadsvägen 63, 981 91 Jukkasjärvi, Sweden; +46 980 668 00

Monastero Santa Rosa, Amalfi Coast, Italy

Set on a clifftop 1,000 feet above the ocean, Monastero Santa Rosa feels more like your dream Italian holiday house than an Amalfi Coast hotel.

The former 17th century monastery has just 20 luxurious suites, which feature soaring vaulted ceilings and huge bay windows offering spellbinding views over the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Monastero Santa Rosa's piece de resistance, however, is its infinity pool. Tucked at the base of cascading gardens, it sits at the edge of a cliff and boasts one of the most Instagram-worthy views of the entire Amalfi coast.

Rooms from \$480.

Monastero Santa Rosa, Via Roma, 2, 84010 Conca dei Marini, Italy; +39 089 832 1199

Jack's Camp, Makgadikgadi Pans, Botswana

Built in the 1960s on the edge of Botswana's Makgadikgadi salt pans, Jack's Camp remains one of the most legendary safari camps in Southern Africa.

Its 10 Bedouin-style tents -- decorated with plush Persian rugs, vintage lithographs and exquisite antiques -- are old-world safari glamor at its finest.

And though you're here for the wildlife and ethereal landscapes, you might find it difficult to leave: at camp, you'll find a swimming pool, a tea tent and a luxurious mess tent that doubles as a library, museum, games room and self-serve bar.

Rooms from \$1,290.

Jack's Camp, Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, Botswana; +1 (415) 814 6676

Las Alcobas, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Napa Valley

Though it's only been open since 2017, Las Alcobas has already secured its spot as one of the best luxury hotels in Napa Valley.

The only hotel to claim a place amongst them vines themselves -- it sits literally within the historic Beringer vineyards -- Las Alcobas' 68 rooms boast Instagram-worthy wine country views like no other.

Many suites boast private terraces outfitted with fire pits, some feature large outdoor tubs perfect for soaking in after a long day of wine tasting. Other highlights include the 3,500-square-foot Atrio spa -- where your own unique blend of essential oils are used for treatments -- and a seasonal restaurant run by Top Chef winner Chris Cosentino.

Rooms from \$695.

Las Alcobas, 1915 Main St, St Helena, CA 94574; +1 707-963-7000

Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

Reportedly the most expensive standalone resort ever built -- it cost \$5.5 billion to construct -- Marina Bay Sands is one for the bucket list.

It boasts a whopping 2,561 rooms, nine celebrity chef restaurants, 270 retail stores, a sprawling SkyPark and a \$10,000-a-night, 6,000-square-foot Chairman's Suite (which can be booked by invitation only.)

But what the resort is arguably most famous for is its 490-foot-long infinity swimming pool, from which you can soak in (quite literally) unparalleled views of the Singapore city skyline.

Rooms from \$343.

Marina Bay Sands, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956; +65 6688 8868

Helena Bay Lodge, North Island, New Zealand

With no more than 10 guests allowed on the property at a time, this North Island hotel is the definition of exclusivity.

Its five villas -- set upon three kilometers of private, windswept coastline -- are cozy but lavish, outfitted with real log-burning fireplaces and terraces overlooking tranquil Helena Bay.

Property highlights include a fine dining Italian restaurant with a 1,000-bottle wine cellar and a spa inspired by a traditional Russian banya (bath house.)

Villas from \$3,950.

Helena Bay Lodge, 1948 Russell Rd, RD4, Helena Bay 0184, New Zealand; +64 9-433 6006

The Gritti Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Venice

Built in 1475, this stunning palazzo remains one of Le Serenissima's grandest and most iconic hotels (and a one-time favorite of Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and Ernest Hemingway.)

Not surprisingly, rooms are downright decadent, furnished with priceless Venetian antiques, exquisite original artwork and rich brocade silks.

Best of all, they boast sublime Grand Canal views, looking out directly onto the magnificent Santa Maria della Salute church.

Rooms from \$726.

The Gritti Palace, Campo Santa Maria del Giglio, 30124 Venezia VE, Italy; +39 041 794611

Ponta dos Ganchos Exclusive Resort, Santa Catarina, Brazil

As its name suggests, this adults-only hideaway on Brazil's Emerald Coast is incredibly exclusive: so exclusive, in fact, that many guests arrive by private helicopter.

Its 25 bungalows, tucked between the rainforest and the ocean, are blissfully private and feature deep-soaking hot tubs, private saunas and infinity pools with panoramic sea views.

Even its dining is next level. In addition to the five-star seafood restaurant, guests can opt to dine alone on a torch-lit private island, connected to the resort by a sandbar.

Ponta dos Ganchos Exclusive Resort, Rua Eupídio Alves do Nascimento, 104 Gov. Celso Ramos, Santa Catarina, Brazil: +55 48 3953-7000

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