

Indagare®

Indagare's Ultimate Bucket List Hotels: The 55 Most Luxurious Hotels in the World



Sunset by the pool at Royal Malewane, South Africa. Courtesy Royal Malewane

There are select hotels that are so spectacular that they have become destinations in and of themselves. These are the properties that we dream of on rainy days and flag for future celebrations. They are coveted for their exceptional level of service, beautiful architecture and interiors, enchanting history, pampering amenities and the unparalleled access that they provide to out-of-this-world adventures, untouched landscapes or monumental works of man. These are our Indagare staff's top 55 bucket list hotels, to help inspire your next epic getaway.

Contact Indagare to book a stay at one of the most luxurious hotels in the world, with special amenities and behind-the-scenes access arranged by our expert team.

Europe



Viewing the Northern Lights from the pool at Deplar Farm, Iceland

Deplar Farm, Iceland: Owned by pioneering adventure travel company Eleven Experience, the 13-room Deplar Farm has access to some of the world's best heli-skiing and fly-fishing—and guides. Don't miss a dip in the swimming pool, which has a swim-up bar and built-in lounge chairs and is the ideal place to view the Northern Lights.

Storfjord Hotel, Alesund, Norway: Tucked amid 88 bucolic acres, the rustic-chic Storfjord Hotel stands out for its access to the surrounding fjords, luxe but not overly styled décor and culinary program that highlights seasonal produce. Treat yourself to some time in the wooden sauna and massage rooms, both of which are great places to unwind after a day hiking, kayaking or biking.

Schloss Elmau, Bavarian Alps, Germany: The drive through the nature reserve in the snow-peaked Bavarian Alps that leads to Schloss Elmau is straight out of a fairy tale. Rolling hills, forests and sheep-dotted meadows give way to Elmau, which sits, like Sleeping Beauty's castle, in a valley. Unlike so many European castle hotels that are trapped in another time, however, Elmau's owning family has done an admirable job of turning the historic property into a contemporary showstopper, with a strong focus on 21st-century pampering, wellness and culture.

La Réserve Paris, France: Housed in a Haussmannian mansion on a quiet street overlooking the tree-lined Elysée gardens, this elegant Jacques Garcia-designed retreat has just 40 rooms (26 of which are suites) and delivers understated elegance in traditional Belle Époque style.

Le Bristol Paris, France: With its superb location close to the art galleries and shopping of the 8th and 1st *arrondissements*, Le Bristol is one of the top palace properties in Paris. From the uniformed valets who greet you to the delicate china upon which breakfast is served, Le Bristol is a model of Old World service and sophistication.



The waterfront location of Villa Feltrinelli in Lake Garda, Italy

Villa La Coste, Provence, France: A modern art wonderland in a blissfully remote corner of Provence, Villa La Coste is a boutique hotel and open-air museum that packs a punch with sleek, sophisticated rooms, an on-property vineyard and hundreds of acres studded with works of art by the likes of Tadao Ando and Renzo Piano.

Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Antibes, South of France: Part of the Oetker Collection, the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc is one of two of the French Riviera's most iconic properties (the Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat is the other). We especially love the pool, lounge area and two restaurants, all of which offer direct sea views.

Aman Venice, Venice, Italy: Situated behind an unmarked doorway and surrounded by a private garden, the Aman Venice is one of the city's most discreet properties (it's a favorite for under-the-radar celebrities). The former Palazzo Papadopoli has been transformed into a hideaway with 24 rooms that showcase the brand's signature Asian-inspired aesthetic, with open floor plans, a subdued color scheme and dark-wood furnishings. But it's the museum-worthy common spaces that remain in a guest's imagination: the former ballroom-now-sitting-room, with soaring ceilings and gargantuan mirrors, chandeliers, Cesare Rotta frescoes and Marmorino stucco, thick as freshly swirled frosting; the Neo-Baroque library, with lacquered leather wallpaper from Córdoba, Spain. Somehow, the historic opulence works stylishly with the Aman's contemporary touches and terrific service. And pleasures like breakfast in the garden overlooking the Grand Canal are simply timeless.

Rosa Alpina, Italian Dolomites, Italy: Rosa Alpina is a family-owned hideaway where tasteful design and heartfelt hospitality combine to create a place that feels like a stylish friend's home, rather than a hotel. Come here in the summer and fall for excellent hiking and in the winter for one of Europe's top ski scenes—plus, a wonderful spa and a three-*Michelin*-starred restaurant.

Grand Hotel a Villa Feltrinelli, Lake Garda, Italy: Set on eight acres on the edge of Lake Garda, Villa Feltrinelli was originally built in 1892 as an extravagant family palazzo, and it was lavishly restored and transformed into a jewel of hotel in 2001. The property's romantic atmosphere and attentive staff are unmatched.



A romantic bedroom catches a breeze at Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco in Tuscany, Italy.

Rosewood Castiglion del Bosco, Montalcino, Tuscany, Italy: This serene Tuscan escape in the rolling hillside of the Montalcino wine region is owned and designed by the Ferragamo family. It offers romantic villa accommodations, a golf course, stables, vineyard access and hiking trails for the ultimate indulgent retreat.

J.K. Place Capri, Italy: When J.K. Place opened in 2007 in a mansion perched on a cliff above the Marina Grande, it was immediately the talk of the island; soon after, it earned international buzz. Set away from the crowds in the town center, the hotel has just 22 beautifully appointed rooms and is now one of the most coveted addresses in Capri to book.

Amanzoe, Kranidi, Greece: Just over a two-hour drive from Athens, Amanzoe commands a position atop a hill like a modern-day acropolis—a complex so striking it would impress Alexander the Great. Hills planted with olive groves lead up to the property, which is more in keeping with the Parthenon than a hotel. Spotless columns and arcades line a central agora that steps down to aqua pools and sun-soaked terraces—as well as the 38 pavilion rooms, 10 villas and private beach club. Here, one moment invites daydreams of Helen and Achilles, and the next skips to modern-day luxuries, including sunrise yoga and herb-forward cocktails around the perfectly circular fire pit. Amanzoe is well-located for day trips to some of the country's most significant ancient sites, as well as for exploring lesser-known gems, like the healing center of Asclepius. For a last-night splurge, reserve a private beach dinner besides a bonfire that concludes with fireworks, a dramatic spectacle worthy of ancient Greece.

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United Kingdom and Ireland



The sumptuous Gold Room at Ballyfin in County Laois, Ireland, is perfect for an afternoon cup of tea (or Champagne) and a good book.

Heckfield Place, Hampshire, England: An immaculate 18th-century estate-turned-countryside hotel in Hampshire (only a 45-minute drive from London), the sophisticated Heckfield Place is a pastoral haven and a true passion project for owner Gerald Chan. We especially love the Scandinavian-inspired culinary program and room décor (with perfectly appointed bathrooms).

Ballyfin Demesne, County Laois, Ireland: There might not be a more luxurious stay in Ireland than at Ballyfin (just a 90-minute drive from Dublin). This ultimate country house is rich in personality and history, and it sits on a lush and peaceful 610-acre property. Each of the 20 lavish bedrooms are unique and foster a distinct feeling of traveling back to a more civilized era.

North Africa and the Middle East



A quiet spot poolside at Dar Ahlam in Morocco

La Mamounia, Marrakech, Morocco: For decades, La Mamounia was where all the luminaries stayed. Winston Churchill roamed the orange groves, and Catherine Deneuve lounged by the pool. Then the landmark grew tired—until designer Jacques Garcia was given *carte blanche* to create what is now a truly couture palace. Almost every inch of the vast property was handcrafted and feels distinctly Moroccan. Don't miss the 27,000-square-foot spa or the magical gardens.

Dar Ahlam, Ouarzazate, Morocco: Tucked away in a remote oasis in southern Morocco, Dar Ahlam (the “House of Dreams”) is an exquisite hideaway. Highlights of a stay range from lying by the pool and dining on some of the best gourmet food in Morocco, to visiting a remote region inhabited by Berbers and Bedouin and exploring a traditional side of the country.

Six Senses Ziggy Bay, Oman: This eco-resort blends seamlessly into the rugged surrounding mountains, with views over the ocean. Its 82 villas offer private plunge pools and butler service—but guests can venture out for snorkeling, diving, mountain biking, paragliding and 4×4 tours. Plus, the mountaintop fine-dining restaurant has been called the best in the Middle East.

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East Africa



Left: A lion cub seen on a game drive at Singita Sasakwa Lodge in Tanzania; right: a colorful bedroom at Bisate Lodge in Rwanda.

Bisate Lodge, Rwanda: Wilderness Safaris, the Botswana-based, pioneering conservation/tourism company, has brought a new level of luxury to gorilla-viewing with its first lodge in Rwanda, a high-design property that opened in 2017 on a stunning hillside near Volcanoes National Park.

Segera Retreat, Kenya: Located on a 50,000-acre conservancy on Kenya's Laikipia plateau, Segera Retreat is a ranch-turned-design-focused hotel that offers incredible conservation activities. Here, you can find works from emerging contemporary artists alongside antique pieces, including safari artifacts like a letter from Ernest Hemingway.

Singita Sasakwa Lodge, Tanzania: Of the three camp options on the Grumeti Reserves, Sasakwa commands the highest perch and price, overlooking the Serengeti plains. Most guests, no matter how well traveled, will be struck virtually dumb at the setting and the splendor of this opulent manor house, which offers unparalleled pampering and game-viewing, in the midst of 350,000 acres of pristine natural reserve.

Mwiba Lodge, Tanzania: Mwiba's location on the border of Ngorongoro Conservation

Area commands a prime spot for seeing the Great Migration in the southern Serengeti—and because the lodge is on a private concession, guests have this wilderness all to themselves. Mwiba combines the best of camping (isolation, intimacy and proximity to nature) with modern comforts like an infinity swimming pool, a beautiful spa and gym and contemporary suites.

Chem Chem Lodge, Tanzania: Chem Chem's northern Tanzanian lodge offers eight luxurious tented suites and a main house outfitted with a gourmet restaurant and chic bar. Just beyond lies a deck and pool with Lake Manyara in the distance. Activities thrust guests into a real African experience, with the option to track animals on foot or go for a jog with a Maasai warrior.

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Southern Africa



Spectacular pool views at Singita Pamushana in Zimbabwe

Singita Pamushana, Zimbabwe: Undisputedly one of the most luxurious safari lodges in Africa, Singita Pamushana sits in the Malilangwe Reserve, which is home to lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo and both black and white rhinos. It has become a model for its conservation and community programs—and yet, it remains somewhat of a hidden

secret because of its remote location in a country where tourism is not yet as booming as it is in neighbors like South Africa.

Mombo Camp, Okavango Delta, Botswana: Mombo Camp occupies space on Chief's Island, a concession so rich in wildlife (both variety and sheer number) that it was at one time reserved as a private hunting area for the great chiefs of Botswana. Renovations in 2018 have created a space that feels luxurious without sacrificing the coziness of home.

La Residence, South Africa Winelands: Originally designed as the private home of Phil and Liz Biden (a South African power couple and hotel royalty), La Residence is centered on a Provençal courtyard, with ochre stucco walls and a pool surrounded by wildflowers. There are just 11 highly personalized guest rooms, each unique and over-the-top fabulous.



A whimsical bedroom designed by Liz Biden at Royal Malewane in South Africa

Royal Malewane, South Africa: Liz Biden's über-stylish bush camp is more like a luxurious six-star hotel than a safari lodge. The property is located in Thornybush, a private 11,500-acre game reserve on the southwest edge of Kruger National Park, and is made up of a main lodge and a private six-bedroom villa. Don't miss the award-winning spa.

Time + Tide Miavana, Nosy Ankao, Madagascar: Designed by the masterminds behind the Seychelles' North Island, Time + Tide Miavana presents the peak of luxury in Madagascar. The 14 sprawling, open-air villas have direct beach access on the private island of Nosy Ankao—where guests can trek to see endangered lemurs or go deep sea fishing, scuba diving and ATV driving.

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Asia



The palatial Oberoi Udaivilas in Udaipur, India

Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, India: Tempted to sleep in a former maharani's bedroom? It's possible at this historic property, which was for many years the residence of Jaipur's most recent ruling family. Converted into a luxury hotel in the 1950s, the property retains the history and glamour from the days of the Raj.

Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur: Set on 30 acres of wildlife conservancy overlooking Lake Pichola, the Udaivilas brings to life the splendor of the Indian subcontinent. Inspired by the traditional palaces of Rajasthan, the Udaivilas is a feast for the senses, with sprawling courtyards and gardens, where wild peacocks preen atop exotic trees. The interiors, embellished with marble, hammered gold, hand-painted frescoes and intricate

mosaics, create an ambience fit for royalty.

Gangtey Lodge, Bhutan: This homey, farmhouse-style lodge was designed by Mary Lou Thompson and is located at the northern edge of the vast Phobjikha Valley, near the largest school of Buddhism in Bhutan. A special experience is to wake up early to visit the monastery, where you can witness the monks chanting mantras and practicing their meditation.

Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle, Chiang Rai, Thailand: Scattered across expansive grounds along the Thailand-Myanmar border, with views of Laos, this wonderland camp has 15 roomy tented suites, designed by architect Bill Bensley, that are ultra-private and luxe, plus a two-bedroom Explorer's Lodge with its own private pool. The main attraction here is the chance to meet the resident elephants on-property.



A tropical, private plunge pool at the Capella Ubud in Bali, Indonesia

Aman Tokyo Hotel, Tokyo, Japan: The December 2014 opening of the Aman Tokyo was a much-awaited affair—and it did not disappoint. Aman Tokyo not only raises the bar, but it is one of the world's best hotels. The architecture alone is some of the most visually striking in all of Tokyo. Built above the Otemachi Tower on floors 33 to 38, the Aman has the height one wants from a stay in this densely-packed metropolis—and it capitalizes on its Mt. Fuji view with glass windows at every turn. Overall, the hotel

exudes a light, Zen quality that can be described as both Aman and Japanese—a minimalist marriage of true luxury.

Cheval Blanc Randheli, Maldives: Set in the Noonu Atoll, the 46-villa Cheval Blanc Randheli is an intimate and contemporary haven. LVMH Hotel Management developed the property in harmony with the island's lush surroundings and lagoon views. In addition to water sports like diving, snorkeling, dolphin cruises and yacht trips, don't miss the tennis courts and the Cheval Blanc Spa—with exclusive treatments from Guerlain—both on their own islands.

Capella Ubud, Bali, Indonesia: The Bill Bensley-designed Capella Ubud opened in 2019 and offers a luxurious take on what it would have felt like to be an explorer at the turn of the last century in Bali, transporting guests in stilted tents (some of which sit 200 feet above the ground and have hanging rope walkways) filled with antiques and equipped with plunge pools.

Nihi Sumba, Sumba Island, Indonesia: The only resort on an undeveloped island, Nihi Sumba sits on 560 acres of unspoiled land, with 1.5 miles of private beach. Originally built for surfers seeking Sumba's exclusive wave break, the property was transformed under the helm of Chris Burch into a villa-style resort with exciting beach activities and a deep connection to the local community, with chances for cultural immersion that cannot be found elsewhere.

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Oceania and Pacific



Unparalleled ocean and jungle views at Laucala Island Resort in Fiji

The Brando, Tetiaroa Island, French Polynesia: Marlon Brando's private island paradise, just 33 miles from Tahiti, has been transformed into an eco-luxury resort, and every element of The Brando, from the sumptuous villas to the beautiful landscape and warm local staff, is top-notch.

COMO Laucala Island Resort, Fiji: COMO Laucala Island, formerly owned by Malcolm Forbes, has been turned into an über fantasy island—with total seclusion—by the founder of Red Bull, Dietrich Mateschitz. Activities here include playing an 18-hole golf course by David McLay Kidd, hiking, horseback riding, and a host of water sports providing access to the spectacular reefs ringing the island.

Four Seasons Resort Lanai, Hawaii: Located on a bluff overlooking gorgeous Hulopoe Bay, the Four Seasons Resort Lanai reopened in February 2016 to much fanfare. Golfers will be in heaven here, thanks to the signature, Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course that is open only to hotel guests and island residents.

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New Zealand



Heli-skiing is one of the most popular activities offered at Minaret Station in New Zealand.

The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand: The Farm at Cape Kidnappers is one of New Zealand's super-luxe lodges. Situated on a 6,000-acre sheep and cattle farm in Hawke's Bay, one of the country's top wine regions, it has 24 suites spread among several cottages and offers a top-rated golf course, in addition to a plethora of outdoor activities like sailing, paragliding, fly-fishing, bird watching and hiking.

Minaret Station, Wanaka, New Zealand: One of New Zealand's most epic wilderness experiences is set on 65,000 acres of private farmland in the remote Fiordland and is accessible only by helicopter. Visitors can stay in one of four alpine-style chalets and explore by foot, boat, helicopter, ski or ATV.

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South and Central America



Color abounds at Cuixmala Resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (photo by Michael Gilbreath).

Estancia Vik, José Ignacio, Uruguay: Situated on 4,000 acres of farmland in Jose Ignacio, Estancia Vik is a Spanish colonial ranch with exquisite interiors crafted by local Uruguayan artists, providing prime access to the chic beach town of José Ignacio.

Hotel Sol y Luna, Machu Picchu, Peru: Sol y Luna, which was recently welcomed to the Relais & Chateaux collection, has blossomed into the luxury property the Sacred Valley needs as Peru continues to rise to the top of travel wish lists. For sophisticated travelers traversing the Inca Trail, Sol y Luna is the definitive choice—plus, the ranch-meets-resort has enough activity to hold a traveler’s attention for days, without ever mentioning Machu Picchu.

Cuixmala Resort, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico: The late billionaire Sir James Goldsmith bought the 25,000-acre parcel of pristine Pacific Coast just to the south of Costa Careyes and fashioned his own private reserve (complete with zebras), which is now a lavish hotel, with whimsical rooms and villas for rent.

Caribbean



An aerial view of Richard Branson's Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands

Mandarin Oriental, Canouan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines: Mandarin Oriental took over this resort in the sprawling, 1,200-acre Canouan Estate in 2017, bringing its signature sensibilities to the 33-suite and villa property. Cutting edge contemporary in its design, it also has the perfect location on Canouan: a quiet curve of lush hillside that looks out over the pristine sands of Godahl Beach.

Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France, St. Barth's: Set on Flamands Beach—one of the most beautiful in the Caribbean—this Cheval Blanc property is reopening its doors after extensive renovations with 19 additional rooms and suites and a five-bedroom villa. Don't miss the wide range of tailor-made experiences for guests to explore on property, such as a poolside fashion show every Tuesday evening, Mini-Moke races through the heart of the island or private dinner on the beach.

Eden Rock-St Barths, St. Barth's: In its post-Hurricane Irma incarnation, this legendary resort, an Oetker Collection property, has been rebuilt by its owners, David and Jane Matthews (a.k.a. Pippa Middleton's in-laws), as a 21st-century retreat that's the place to come for an island scene within steps to sand and sea. A Jean-Georges Vongerichten restaurant and the British Colonial-style Rémy Bar—plus a spot for drinks on the beach—make it impossible to lack for food (or drink) for long. To be sure you're well attended through it all, Eden Rock villas on- and off-property come with VIP butlers

and access to many of the resort's amenities and beachside services.

Belmond Cap Juluca, Anguilla: Since opening in the 1980s, Cap Juluca has gained a steady following among well-heeled travelers who appreciate its authentically Anguillan feel. Situated on 179 acres of land, the 108-room Cap Juluca has one of the island's most beautiful beaches and a warm staff, some of whom have been on property for decades.

Necker Island, British Virgin Islands: The private estate of billionaire entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson, Necker Island is a famously exclusive hideaway in the British Virgin Islands. The 74-acre property, which can be rented as a takeover for up to 30 guests, includes multiple private beaches, exotic wildlife (including flamingos and ring-tailed lemurs), infinity pools, beachside hot tubs, tennis courts and a spa. The staff of 100 is top notch, including a private chef, a tennis pro, and kiteboarding instructors.

COMO Parrot Cay, Turks and Caicos: COMO Parrot Cay is exclusive (located on its own cay, a 35-minute boat ride from Provo) and expensive, but in design and ambience, the resort evokes the castaway beach feel more readily associated with resorts in the Maldives or Bali. COMO Parrot Cay is one of the most recognizable names in the Caribbean, with a loyal following of longtime guests including high-profile celebrities.

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United States and Canada



Left: The architectural marvel that is Fogo Island Inn in Newfoundland (photo by Alex Fradkin); right: a cozy tented suite at Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, Canada.

Sheldon Chalet, Denali National Park, Alaska: Accessible only by helicopter, this stylish five-bedroom chalet sits on the only privately-owned land in the mountains of Denali National Park and is a dream escape for active adventurers looking to unplug and connect with nature.

Amangiri Resort, Utah, United States: The Amangiri spa is close to the famous Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and blends seamlessly into its magnificent surroundings. Here, a serious 25,000 square-foot spa beckons, with a watsu pool offering water shiatsu, complimentary yoga and more.

The Ranch at Rock Creek, Big Sky, Montana, United States: Come here for 6,600 acres of pure Big Sky Montana: soaring mountain views, vast plains and pine forests that provide endless opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, shooting, skiing, fly-fishing and more. The Ranch's accommodations vary from plush rooms in the main lodge to seven freestanding one- to five-bedroom homes—making for a personalized interpretation of a Wild West adventure that is especially family-friendly.

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, Vancouver Island, Canada: Situated on 600 acres where the Bedwell River meets the Pacific Ocean and surrounded by 1.5 million acres of

UNESCO-protected wilderness, Clayoquot was founded in 2000 and can only be accessed by seaplane, boat or helicopter. It was a pioneer in the “glamping” movement and is still one of its very best practitioners, with 25 luxury tented suites.

Fogo Island Inn, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada: An architectural marvel, the Fogo Island Inn is über-remote—sitting on the edge of a bluff overlooking the North Atlantic Ocean—and offers guests an otherworldly experience. Activities range from hiking, stargazing and boating expeditions, to furniture-making workshops, cooking and foraging experiences and visits to the island’s art studios and galleries—plus there is seasonal viewing of iceberg movement.

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- Indagare on May 3, 2022

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