



TRAVEL - EARTH DAY

50 places to stay if you care about the planet

Sustainable, spectacular, and engaged with local communities, these lodges are tucked into some of the planet's wildest places.

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ONE OF THE greatest luxuries of travel is to contribute to the preservation of the places you love to visit. This idea, which propels the sustainable tourism movement, is now transforming the global travel industry. Eco-lodges are helping to safeguard cultural and natural heritage, support environmentally friendly practices, and deliver economic and social benefits to local people.

Here are 50 of the world's most spectacular and sustainable places to stay in a few of the planet's wildest places. Many of them are National Geographic [Unique Lodges of the World](#), a collection of properties deeply rooted in their local communities and dedicated to protecting their surrounding ecosystems and cultures.

LAGUNA LODGE

Tucked along the shore of Lake Atitlán, [Guatemala](#), with its misty volcanoes and [Maya](#) villages, [Laguna's](#) six suites artfully blend adobe bricks, river stone, and brightly embroidered huipils and hand-loomed blankets. A hundred-acre nature reserve established by the lodge reaches from the shore up 1,305 feet. Old Maya trails wind through some of the last remaining primary tropical dry forest around the lake, home to belted flycatchers and other endemic birds. Adrenaline buffs can jump from high rock faces into the deep water.

SIX SENSES CON DAO

No shirt, no shoes, no problem could be the daily mantra at [this Six Senses haven](#) constructed from reclaimed teak, including over a thousand recycled antique wooden panels. The resort dangles on a slice of world-class beach in Con Dao National Park—a 45-minute flight from frenetic [Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam](#). Sustainability takes center stage, with initiatives including local and organic meals, no plastic water bottles, and nontoxic biodegradable cleaning products and amenities. Windsurfing, body boarding, and sailing start right outside the door. But for many guests, the activity of choice is simply immersion in the unspoiled nature that surrounds the private villas.

CHUMBE ISLAND CORAL PARK

It's hard to get more environmentally friendly than [Chumbe's](#) seven eco-bungalows on a sun-splashed coral island in the Zanzibar archipelago. Rainwater is collected for daily needs, the sun provides energy, and composting toilets keep the surrounding marine park pollution free. Guests can also explore Zanzibar's historic towns, don masks and fins to snorkel the healthy private reef, then retire at night to dine by lantern on [Tanzania's](#) traditional Swahili cuisine.

CREE VILLAGE ECOLODGE

Overlooking the subarctic waterways of the tidal Moose River in northern [Ontario](#), the [20-room lodge](#) is designed in the style of a Cree village **shabatwon**—a traditional long tepee with doors at each end. The soaring structure of pine, cedar, and hickory lets in the nearly 20 hours of summer light; stone fireplaces and warm guest rooms padded with thick carpets and blankets of natural wool keep winter's chill at bay. Guests can hike in Tidewater Provincial Park, take a boat to James Bay for seal- and whale-spotting led by local guides, or view the northern lights at night.

HACIENDA SANTA ROSA

This meticulously restored, family-owned plantation house is located 44 miles south of the colonial city of Mérida on the Yucatán Peninsula in [Mexico](#). [Santa Rosa](#) combines environmental stewardship with community projects such as directly supporting small-business development for local Maya women. Guests can spend time with village artisans; savor [Maya recipes](#) like chicken pibil, handed down through generations; swim in hidden cenotes; and sniff around an on-site botanic garden.

TOPAS ECOLODGE

[Topas Ecolodge](#)—a National Geographic Unique Lodge north of Hanoi, Vietnam—organizes treks into Hoang Lien National Park, a global biodiversity hotspot.

SIX SENSES ZIL PASYON

At [Six Senses Zil Pasyon](#) in the Seychelles, guests can kayak to Île Cocos Marine National Park.

SÁPMI NATURE CAMP

Reindeer herders share their wisdom about the Sami indigenous way of life at northern [Sweden's Sápmi Nature Camp](#).

CORAL CAYE

Director Francis Ford Coppola opened [Coral Caye](#) in [Belize](#) in 2016, on a private island surrounded by a rainbow of sea life.

LAPA RIOS

[Costa Rica's Lapa Rios](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge, has long been a conservation icon in this lowland tropical rainforest where visitors are sure to spot plenty of local wildlife.

THE BRANDO

[The Brando](#), located in French Polynesia, is late actor Marlon Brando's eco-dream brought to life. The private island is run on 100 percent renewable energy sources, including solar power and coconut oil.

DUBA EXPEDITION CAMP

The [Duba Expedition Camp](#), a partnership between Great Plains Conservation and the Okavango Community Trust in [Botswana](#), offers a front-row seat to Africa's majestic wildlife.

GROOTBOS PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE

Escape to the rare, stunning fynbos vegetation endemic to [South Africa](#) at [Grootbos](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge on the western cape. Don't skip the resort's [unique flower safari](#).

LIZARD ISLAND

Find yourself in a quiet escape on the only development on [Australia's Lizard Island](#). This National Geographic Unique Lodge provides access to your own slice of the world's largest reef system, the Great Barrier Reef.

TSARA KOMBA LODGE

[Madagascar's Tsara Komba Lodge](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge, is prime for spotting lemurs and chameleons.

PRINCE OF WALES'S GUESTHOUSE

Hear wolves howl at night while staying at the [Prince of Wales's Guesthouse](#) in rural Transylvania, [Romania](#).

ARISTI MOUNTAIN RESORT & VILLAS

Crystal rivers, deep gorges, and soaring peaks combine with Greek village life at [Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge.

THREE CAMEL LODGE

At the edge of a volcanic outcrop providing bright morning vistas across Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park in [Mongolia](#), [Three Camel Lodge](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge, looks like a herders' village with its 50 **gers** (yurts).

ESTANCIA LOS POTREROS

At [Estancia Los Potreros](#) in [Argentina](#), gauchos lead horseback trips to hidden waterfalls.

THE LODGE AT VALLE CHACABUCO

[The Lodge at Valle Chacabuco](#), in [Chile](#), sits in the heart of [Patagonia Park](#), a conservation initiative protecting nearly 200,000 acres.

&BEYOND BENGUERRA ISLAND

Take a trip to [&Beyond's](#) pristine island resort in the Indian Ocean. This National Geographic Unique Lodge overlooks Bazaruto National Park, the only marine reserve in [Mozambique](#).

IL NGWESI

Maasai warriors are your hosts at [Il Ngwesi](#), a community-owned safari lodge on the edge of [Kenya's](#) Northern Frontier district.

CONCORDIA ECO RESORT

Concordia's canvas solar cabins on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, were one of the early ecotourism landmarks.

MANAWA RIDGE

On a hilltop overlooking [New Zealand's](#) Coromandel Peninsula, [Manawa Ridge](#) merges eco-living with adventure outings.

CHALALAN ECOLODGE

Deep in [Bolivia's](#) Madidi National Park, indigenous guides welcome intrepid travelers to [Chalalan Ecolodge](#), an ideal base camp for jungle exploration.

ASHFORD CASTLE

Channel your inner royalty in the 800-year-old [Ashford Castle](#) in Mayo, [Ireland](#). Beyond the 20 miles of trail, gold course, and lake hikes, visitors can try falconry, archery, or horseback riding at this National Geographic Unique Lodge.

O'REILLY'S RAINFOREST RETREAT

Families flock to [O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat](#) on [Australia's](#) Gold Coast for activities such as a hike to one of 500 nearby waterfalls, complete with a pre-packed picnic, or a visit to the glowworm grotto.

JAKES

Rasta vibes thrive at [Jakes](#), a family-owned retreat in [Jamaica](#). They offer river tours and snorkeling, and even organize their own triathlon.

COPAL TREE LODGE

In the Toledo District—one of the most remote and diverse in [Belize](#)—visitors can enjoy a chocolate-making class or kayak the Rio Grande. Don't miss the "snorkel with the chef" experience at [Copal Tree Lodge](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge.

BUSHMANS KLOOF WILDERNESS RESERVE

Each September, the UNESCO-protected [Cape Floral Region](#) bursts into living color with some of the greatest concentrations of floral species in the world. National Geographic Unique Lodge [Bushmans Kloof](#), a century-old homestead turned nature reserve, cares for 18,532 acres of this rare habitat—home to endangered Cape mountain zebras and archaeological sites that include 10,000-year-old San rock paintings.

MISOOL ECO RESORT

This [eco-hideaway](#), consisting of 13 breezy bungalows handcrafted from salvaged driftwood isn't easy to reach. Located in [Indonesia's](#) Raja Ampat archipelago, at the center of Southeast Asia's famed Coral Triangle, Misool provides front-row access to an underwater world teeming with marine life—there are more kinds of fish and coral here than bird species in the Amazon.

INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL

The remote rain forest lodge [Inkaterra Machu Picchu](#) has supported over 20 years of ongoing scientific research. “[Peru](#) contains more than two-thirds of Earth's diverse ecological life zones, and we have a responsibility to help protect this biodiversity,” explains Peruvian José Koechlin, the National Geographic Unique Lodge's founder and president.

NIMMO BAY WILDERNESS RESORT

Tucked away in the Great Bear Rainforest, this [National Geographic Unique Lodge](#) in British Columbia has been operated by the Murray family since the 1980s.

GREAT OCEAN ECOLODGE

Located on the grounds of the [Conservation Ecology Centre](#) in [Australia](#), the [Great Ocean Ecolodge](#) also borders Great Otway National Park, which protects swaths of eucalyptus forests, thundering waterfalls, and windswept heathlands that end at dramatic cliffs above the churning ocean. Its five elegant rooms overlook grassy fields where wild kangaroos come to feed and play.

WINTERLAKE LODGE

Deep in the Alaskan wilderness, [Winterlake Lodge](#) houses and trains 20 sled dogs. The National Geographic Unique Lodge also offers miles of trails to explore and helicopter excursions to fly-fish or ski in remote areas.

MILIA MOUNTAIN RETREAT

In the 1980s, when many Greeks left their villages to ride the wave of tourism development along the coast, two local friends took to the mountains of Crete instead. Their vision: restore an abandoned medieval village and turn it into a retreat based on living in harmony with nature. Today, travelers flock to this [off-the-grid stone village](#) to hike on wild mountain trails, sleep in rustic cottages, and savor authentic Cretan dishes like roasted rabbit with **mizithra** goat cheese and spearmint, washed down with Milia's own organic wine.

SIERRA GRANDE LODGE

Ted Turner's [Sierra Grande Lodge](#) in [New Mexico](#) provides access to over half a million acres of private wilderness, part of the conservation crusader's efforts to rewild America.

HOTEL HÚSAFELL

At the end of Iceland's Borgarfjörður Valley, the enchanting [Hotel Húsafell](#) is set against a backdrop of rolling hills, glacial rivers, and ivory-capped mountains. At this National Geographic Unique Lodge, guests can relax in geothermal pools, go hiking, and see the northern lights during certain seasons.

JICARO ISLAND ECOLODGE

The timber used to start building this National Geographic Unique Lodge in [Nicaragua](#) came from timber pulled down by Hurricane Felix in 2007. [Jicaro](#) has since grown into a leading example of sustainability in the area.

ECO-FRONTIERS RANCH

[This is the place](#) for anyone who has pondered going back to the land and living a sustainable lifestyle. Located in the Carpathian Mountains on a wedge of [Poland](#) between the borders of [Slovakia](#) and [Ukraine](#), the cabin-like rooms sleep up to seven guests and are surrounded by some of Europe's most spectacular wilderness, where wolves, bears, and lynx still roam.

BULUNGULA LODGE

A bumpy ride down a long dirt track ends at [Bulungula](#) on [South Africa](#)'s "Wild Coast," where 10 whitewashed rondavels (traditional rounded thatched huts), co-owned and managed by Xhosa villagers, use the sun, wind, and rain to provide daily energy needs. Shoestring travelers are welcomed like family to this rustic lodge that also provides economic opportunities for the rural community. Breakfast? Down a fresh fruit smoothie, then join villagers in activities like brickmaking, beer brewing, and maize stamping.

FEYNAN ECOLODGE

The Dana Biosphere Reserve—a gold and crimson desert carved by ancient wadis—is the backdrop for [Feynan Ecolodge](#), owned by [Jordan's](#) Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. Bedouin hosts lead activities like making flatbread over an open fire and exploring 4,000-year-old copper mines that existed in the time of the Roman Empire.

CRISTALINO JUNGLE LODGE

A 28,167-acre rain forest reserve in southern Mato Grosso, [Brazil](#), envelops [Cristalino](#)'s wood-and-tile bungalows, designed to take advantage of cooling breezes and natural light. The languid Cristalino River provides plenty of opportunities for canoeing, swimming, nature walks, and wildlife viewing—from the rare giant otters playfully at home in the water to Brazil's endemic red-nosed bearded saki monkeys traversing the treetops.

PACUARE LODGE

Visitors come for the adventure and stay for the romance at [Pacuare](#), located on 25,000 protected acres of high-biodiversity rain forest in the Talamanca Mountains of [Costa Rica](#)—home to jaguars, ocelots, monkeys, and sloths. At this National Geographic Unique Lodge, candlelight dinners accompanied by fine wines are a hallmark of the owners, who are Costa Rican foodies. Afterward, sink into one of the big canopy beds, serenaded by nature's lullaby.

KABINI

Watching the sky radiate its sunset palette from the riverside tables of [Kabini's](#) open-air restaurant brings a tranquil end to active days. Visitors explore [India's](#) Nagarhole National Park in search of the elusive Bengal tiger and India's largest herds of Asian elephants, along with other flagship species (leopard and wild dog). The lodge supports the Kuruba heritage with interactive storytelling sessions, dance performances, and river outings in a handmade coracle.

SONEVA FUSHI

Tucked away in the lush Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, [Soneva Fushi](#) is a quiet getaway in the [Maldives](#). The property has its own vegetable garden, solar power plant, and recycling center.

TIERRA CHILOÉ HOTEL & SPA

Nestled on the shores of Chile's Chiloé island, the [Tierra Chiloé Hotel & Spa](#) is surrounded by dramatic sea cliffs and lush woodlands. This National Geographic Unique Lodge is the perfect location for hiking, horseback riding, and boating.

THALA BEACH NATURE RESERVE

In the rain forests of northern Australia, [Thala Beach Nature Reserve](#) is perfectly located between the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest. Guests at this National Geographic Unique Lodge can take guided walks through the forest, snorkel in wildlife-rich waters, and learn about Aboriginal legends from a local community member.

SUNDY PRAIA

On the island of Príncipe, the tented villas of [Sundy Praia](#), a National Geographic Unique Lodge, are sandwiched between emerald forest and sandy beaches. Visitors can see endangered sea turtles, spot tropical birds, and go sea kayaking.

MASHPI LODGE

In Ecuador's Chocó rain forest, [Mashpi Lodge](#) is located on 3,200 acres of cloud forest—a true biodiversity hotspot. At this National Geographic Lodge, guests can spot birds with a naturalist, see rare butterflies, and swim in natural pools.