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Top 10 most fabulous National Geographic lodges in the world

June 8, 2020 4

Monday newsletters always feature top 10 travel lists to inspire.

Today (June 8, 2020): Top 10 best National Geographic lodges in the world.

The National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World is a collection of lodges that invite guests to discover some of the planet's most treasured places, while helping to protect those places for generations to come. These properties – each handpicked by National Geographic – share a strong commitment to sustainable practices and to protecting natural and cultural heritage. They embody the values that National Geographic holds close: authenticity, enrichment, and a dedication to preserving our planet's diversity. The guest experience they offer is intimate and exceptional, inspiring guests to connect with their destination in a meaningful way – and to play a part in safeguarding it for the future. Here's my pick of the 10 most luxurious hotels in the National Geographic collection.

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There is more info below the slide show. Think I missed one? Take **my poll** below or leave a **comment**.



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10. MASHPI LODGE, ECUADOR

Nature meets luxury at Mashpi, a breathtaking creation of steel and glass deep in the cloud forests of Ecuadorian Chocó – one of the planet's biodiversity hotspots. With floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall windows throughout, nothing competes with the wild here. You might catch sight of a howler monkey while soaking in the indoor Jacuzzi, or wake up to the flitting of a velvet-purple coronet just outside your room. Mashpi is a true wilderness retreat, set on 3,200 acres of cloud forest, 80% of which is primary growth. Guests don boots and get muddy exploring by day, and then return in the evening to a relaxing and sophisticated setting – a place where accommodations are simple yet stylish, the dining room soars two stories through the canopy, and you're surrounded yet removed from the life of the jungle.

- **Hotel website:** [Mashpi Lodge](#)
- **Other accolades:** Mashpi Lodge also features in my top 10 lists of the [world's best wilderness hotels](#) and the [world's best rainforest lodges](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, daily breakfast, early check-in, late

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6. &BEYOND BENGUERRA ISLAND, MOZAMBIQUE

Each day at low tide in the Bazaruto Archipelago, the waters of the Mozambique Channel recede just enough to reveal sandy shoals that stretch far into the ocean, blurring the boundary between land and sea. The thatched beachfront cottages of &Beyond Benguerra Island look out over this inviting swirl of pearl and turquoise, which is bordered by Bazaruto National Park—Mozambique’s only marine reserve. While the sparkling waters always beckon on this tropical isle, inland excursions reveal an unexpected paradise – one of towering sand dunes, flamingo-filled lakes, and traditional fishing villages dotted with beached dhows. During downtime at the lodge, the program is all ocean dips and hammock naps, capped off with lantern-lit meals at the water’s edge.

- **Hotel website:** [&Beyond Buenguerra Island](#)
- **Other accolades:** &Beyond Benguerra Island also features in my top 10 list of the [best beach resorts in Africa](#).



Tweets by @LuxTravelExpe



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Tomorrow, I will publish a clip on my YouTube channel featuring my Business Class flight onboard an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 787 Dreamliner from Belgium’s capital Brussels to Ethiopia’s capital Addis Ababa! Stay tuned!

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9. ASHFORD CASTLE, IRELAND

When Arthur Guinness of stout-brewing fame inherited Ashford Castle in 1868, he set out to turn the medieval stronghold into a home – and ended up transforming it into the festive heart of the community. He refurbished the oldest part of the castle, planted inviting gardens, and meticulously maintained the surrounding woodlands. Now, after more than a decade of neglect, a top-to-bottom restoration has brought the castle vibrantly back to its 19th-century heyday. Guests sleep like royalty in rooms adorned with silks and antiques, and wake for a morning walk with Garvan and Cronan, the resident Irish wolfhounds. Whether you're taking afternoon tea or sampling wines with the sommelier in a secret passageway, the staff and the ambience are warm and welcoming. Ashford Castle is, once again, a joyous fairytale castle—and a majestic gateway to the delights of the Ireland's fabled west.

- **Hotel website:** [Ashford Castle](#)
- **Other accolades:** Ashford Castle also features in my top 10 lists of the [world's most magnificent castle hotels](#) and the [world's best historic hotels](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, early check-in, late check-out, daily breakfast, and \$100 USD food & beverage credit).

5. NIMMO BAY WILDERNESS RESORT, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Nimmo Bay Wilderness Resort is the very definition of a secret hideaway: nestled into the old-growth spruce of the Great Bear Rainforest, poised over sparkling waterways, and accessible only by helicopter or floatplane. One of the world's first ecolodges, Nimmo Bay has built a stellar reputation for offering a high-end wilderness experience amid British Columbia's most remote fjords and secluded beaches. Spend your days exploring from sea level to 7,000 feet – kayaking among orcas and sea lions and then soaring high into the mountains in a helicopter to hike landscapes where few have ventured. Unwind in the evenings with fresh coastal cuisine, a soak in a hot tub beneath a splashing waterfall, and plenty of music and laughter around the fire on the floating dock. This is nature as it should be experienced.

- **Hotel website:** [Nimmo Bay](#)
- **Other accolades:** Nimmo Bay also features in my top 10 lists of the [best luxury hotels in Canada](#) and the [world's most remotely located luxury hotels](#).



4. LIZARD ISLAND, GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

Lizard Island is first a National Park, framed by the corals of the Great Barrier Reef and fringed with idyllic beaches and mangroves. Set upon a white-sand stretch of coast amid 2,500 pristine acres, Lizard Island resort is the only development on the island, accessible exclusively by plane. It is cut off from the world by gentle turquoise waters, promising coveted seclusion at the edge of one of the planet's most important natural treasures. The property, which recently underwent a stunning and comprehensive refurbishment, is at once

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Review: Shinta Mani Wild – Bensley Collection (Cambodia)

Top 10 most fabulous National Geographic lodges in the world

Travel contests & sweepstakes: win luxury holidays & travel later!

a breathtaking encounter with nature, and a quiet, restorative retreat, making it a perfect fit for National Geographic Lodges' collection. A remote swath of the largest reef system in the world is just off shore, ready to be explored by snorkel or scuba, by kayak or glass-bottomed boat. Helicopter tours give offer an astonishing overview of wonders marine and terrestrial, and relaxed beachside dining and a state-of-the-art spa play counterpoint to all the exhilaration.

- **Hotel website:** [Lizard Island](#)
- **Other accolades:** Lizard Island also features in my top 10 list of the [world's most remotely located luxury hotels](#).



3. TIERRA PATAGONIA HOTEL & SPA, CHILE

Perched on a bluff on the edge of Chile's Lake Sarmiento, Tierra Patagonia celebrates all that is majestic about its surroundings, while offering a space where comfort reigns. With enormous windows everywhere, the lakes and peaks of Torres del Paine National Park are a constant and awe-inspiring backdrop. Exploring the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve site just outside the front door is a priority at Tierra Patagonia, but so is finding the space and serenity to relax and enjoy your surroundings. A wide variety of excursions, led by mostly Chilean guides, allows guests to discover the beauty and diversity of Patagonia, visit huasos on their ranches, and explore the surrounding grasslands. You can spend the day hiking to spectacular mountain vistas, return for a swim or a massage in the spa, and end the day with a fantastic meal and a glass of Chilean wine as the sun sets on the rocky pinnacles of the Torres del Paine. Tierra's sister hotels in [Atacama](#) and [Chiloé](#) are also selected as National Geographic Lodges.

- **Hotel website:** [Tierra Patagonia](#)
- **Other accolades:** Tierra Patagonia also features in my top 10 lists of the [best hotels in South America](#), the [world's most amazing hotel lobbies](#), the [world's most amazing indoor hotel pools](#), and [swimming pools with stunning views](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, daily breakfast for two, early check-in, late check-out, and \$100 USD spa credit).



2. BENSLEY COLLECTION – SHINTA MANI WILD, CAMBODIA

At Shinta Mani Wild, the adventure begins with a zoom across a zip-line, strung high above a rushing waterfall in the Cambodian rainforest. It's not the only way to arrive at the lodge, but it certainly sets the most appropriate tone for your stay. Here, the jungle feels like your own personal playground, with each part of the property providing unique amusements. Riverfront boulders form soothing spa "rooms;" natural rock pools double as champagne chillers during tailgate time; and the forest is both nature park and kitchen pantry, host to foragers, trekkers, and kayakers alike. According to lodge architect Bill Bensley, this is the sort of safari Jackie Kennedy-Onassis would have wanted; and so, he designed each lavish guest tent to match the experience, combining a quirky ambiance with rainforest accents and blurring the line between wild and style.

- **Hotel website:** [Shinta Mani Wild](#)
- **Other accolades:** Shinta Mani Wild also features in my top 10 lists of the [best hotels in Cambodia](#) and the [world's best glamping sites](#).
- **Review:** read my review of Shinta Mani Wild [here](#).



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Which one is your favorite National Geographic

- &Beyond Benguerra Island, Mozambique
- &Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, Tanzania
- Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve, South Africa
- Duba Plains Camp, Botswana
- Fregate Island Private, Seychelles
- Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, South Africa
- Jaci's Lodges, South Africa
- Kasbah Du Toubkal, Morocco
- Mara Plains Camp, Kenya
- ol Donyo Lodge, Kenya
- Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, South Africa
- Sarara Camp, Kenya
- Sundy Praia, Sao Tome & Principes
- The Bushcamp Company, Zambia



8. LAPA RIOS LODGE, OSA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

Costa Rica's pristine Osa Peninsula is blanketed by some of the last remaining lowland tropical rainforest in Central America and edged by beaches rich with marine life. At its tip is Lapa Rios, a remarkable lodge surrounded by a 1,000-acre reserve, which helps to buffer the Osa Peninsula's Corcovado National Park – home to 2.5% of the world's biodiversity and a regular feature on National Geographic's awesome nature documentaries. It would be hard to find a more authentic rainforest experience than this. You awaken to the mesmerizing sounds of the jungle, watch scarlet macaws glide by from your private outdoor shower, and set off into the trees to explore with local guides whose knowledge of the area's ecosystems runs deep. And yet the experience is relaxing too – there are secluded beaches at the end of many a jungle path, delightful meals served al fresco, and a luxurious bungalow awaiting you at the end of the day.

- **Hotel website:** [Lapa Rios](#)
- **Other accolades:** Lapa Rios also features in my top 10 lists of the [world's best wilderness hotels](#) and the [world's best rainforest lodges](#).

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7. FOGO ISLAND INN, NEW FOUNDLAND, CANADA

Fogo Island Inn is a great feat of contemporary architecture, all stilts, angles, and vertical lines that contrast with the rough slabs of ancient granite surrounding it. But as much as it stands out against its setting – “far away from far away,” as they like to say, on an island off the coast of Newfoundland – the lodge is integrally part of Fogo Island and a National Geographic favorite. Designed as a modern take on Atlantic Canadian outport architecture, this soulful lodge is filled with the handiwork of the local people: traditional outport furniture, handcrafted quilts, and woven rugs—once-disappearing arts now given new life and purpose. You are a guest of the whole island here, and whether you spend your days hiking amid stunningly stark coastal scenery or sketching it with a local artist, the experience is enhanced by the vibrant culture the lodge was built to protect.

- **Hotel website:** [Fogo Island Inn](#)
- **Other accolades:** Fogo Island Inn also features in my top 10 list of the [world's most remotely located luxury hotels](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, daily breakfast, early check-in, late check-out, and \$100 USD resort credit).

Asia's most luxurious glamping resort: Shinta Ma



1. FREGATE ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

Over 100 million years ago, what is now India broke away from the Gondwanaland supercontinent, beginning its slow drift across the Indian Ocean and leaving the isles of the Seychelles in its wake. Left to evolve in isolation until the 18th century, the archipelago flourished into a virtual Eden of prehistoric forests, exotic birds, and powder-white sands. This primordial paradise lives on at Fregate Island, the most stunning lodge in National Geographic's collection. The lodge owners have worked diligently to restore the island's native habitats following the country's plantation era, and thanks to their efforts, unique and endangered wildlife have returned to the indigenous forests and picturesque beaches. The lodge's thatched villas – spacious and luxurious as they are – seem hidden away amid the island's coastal gardens and granite cliffs. Inland, a network of nature paths beckons jungle explorers, and just beyond the shoreline, sapphire seas seduce kayakers, snorkelers, and swimmers.

- **Hotel website:** [Fregate Island Private](#)
- **Other accolades:** Fregate Island also features in my top 10 lists of the [best luxury hotels in the Seychelles](#) and the [best beach resorts in Africa](#).
- **Tip:** enjoy complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, early check-in, late check-out, daily breakfast, one hour sunset cruise, and \$100 USD spa credit).