

**WORLD'S BEST  
HOTELS**

**NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC**

# TRAVELER

## AMAZING ESCAPES

**50 DREAM DRIVES • 18 SAFARIS**

**ON THE COAST**

**BIG SUR**

**IN THE WILD**

**ZAMBIA**

**AROUND TOWN**

**NAPLES**

**FROM ABOVE**

**LONDON**

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the Wave in  
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**Plus: Switzerland, Dubai,  
Copenhagen & Detroit**

# BEST LIST

## 21 ICONIC HOTELS



► They're classic, even legendary, but these lodgings refuse to rest on their laurels



Some hotels are destinations in their own right. Their fabled reputations draw travelers seeking a place with personality, that X factor that makes the destination as much of a joyful discovery as the journey, a home base with heart.

Whether you're looking to rub shoulders with history at one of the world's grandes dames, seeking sublime vistas, or sniffing out delicious food and wine, these hotels are guaranteed to enrich any travel experience. —Annie Fitzsimmons and Carrie Miller

### Marrakech

**La Mamounia** (●): Like the heady city it inhabits, this Moroccan hotel oozes glamour and romance. Located on former royal gardens, the Moorish-meets-Art Deco gem has been a longtime favorite with A-listers, including Winston Churchill, who spent many winters here and declared it "the most lovely spot in the whole world."

Dining in traditional Moroccan splendor at La Mamounia



# BEST LIST ICONIC HOTELS



At Hôtel de Crillon, a private terrace overlooks Paris.

## Auchterarder

**Gleneagles** (●): At this grand hotel surrounded by a majestic, moody landscape, choose from pursuits like golf, falconry, and fishing, then refuel in the Michelin two-starred restaurant. Welcome to the ultimate Scottish escape—don't forget your kilt.

## Cusco

**Inkaterra La Casona** (●): Once the residence of Simón Bolívar, this 16th-century manor house in the historic district is now a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World with Peruvian-influenced cuisine and a luxe spa using local botanicals.

## Florence

**Hotel Lungarno** (●): Ever popular Florence attracts scores of visitors. This newly reopened property on the Arno River lives up to every Florentine dream—and provides a quiet respite within the bustling city. If you're traveling with kids, book one of the new family rooms, and enjoy an alfresco breakfast overlooking the river before heading out to see Michelangelo's "David" and search for the city's best gelato. Owned by the Ferragamo fashion family, the hotel itself houses an incredible art collection. The more than 400 pieces include works by Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau, and Mario Sironi.

## Jerusalem

**The American Colony Hotel** (●): A haven in an area often besieged with conflict, this 1902 hotel has long been a meeting place for journalists, spies, and politicians. It is said the outdoor Summer Bar is for optimists, while the Cellar Bar is for the realists.

## Lake Placid

**Lake Placid Lodge** (●): Channeling the gilded age, this New York retreat is designed for relaxing and socializing, both indoors and outside. Hiking trails, lake activities, and ski slopes beckon, as do sites from the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics.

## Lausanne

**Beau-Rivage Palace** (●): With a jaw-dropping facade and historic interiors, this hotel on the banks of Switzerland's Lake Geneva offers a bountiful breakfast buffet and a top dining room by famed French restaurateur Anne-Sophie Pic.

## London

**Brown's Hotel** (●): Occupying a prime Mayfair address since 1837, Brown's has helped define London hospitality. Past famous residents include Alexander Graham Bell, Rudyard Kipling, and Agatha Christie (her book *At Bertram's Hotel* is based on Brown's). Today it's a destination for travelers looking for apartment-style sophistication. A tea sommelier helms the famous afternoon tea, while the Donovan Bar celebrates British photographer Terence Donovan with 50 of his black-and-white prints. The hotel also can arrange for the services of Savile Row tailors and fashion stylists.

## Melbourne

**Mansion Hotel & Spa at Werribee Park** (●): Take an 1870 mansion and a 1923 seminary on 10 acres of English garden, and the result is an instant classic. With its indoor lap pool, spa, and expansive wine cellar, this spot is celebrated for its world-away feel.

## Mumbai

**The Taj Mahal Palace** (●): Its iconic dome has guided vessels into the city's harbor since 1903. Don't miss the Sea Lounge's afternoon tea or the historian-led Heritage Walk through the 550-room property, complete with rich tales from the past.

## Munich

**Hotel Bayerischer Hof** (●): This historic spot (formerly a Bavarian palace) now captures the city's modern side after a renovation that added an Axel Vervoordt-designed wing with 28 rooms and a penthouse suite, plus a roof garden.

## New York City

**The Lowell** (●): Obama White House decorator Michael S. Smith recently put his stylish touch on the classy hotel, and new hot spot Majorelle draws diners to coveted seats next to the fireplace in a glass-enclosed garden.

## Paris

**Hôtel de Crillon** (●): *La vie est belle*—and nowhere more so than at this Rosewood hotel, reopened after a four-year refurbishment. Showstopper suites—two by Karl Lagerfeld and one where Marie Antoinette took piano lessons—face Place de la Concorde.

## Scottsdale

**The Boulders** (●): Those seeking Arizona's restorative vibes will find them at this Sonoran Desert resort that features a large organic garden and a 33,000-square-foot spa offering Native American-inspired treatments.

## Shanghai

**Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund** (●): A melding of the 1920s Shanghai Club and the new Waldorf Tower, this hotel is a glittering mix of the city's past and present. Cocktails at the Long Bar—serving up stories, wishes, and regrets since 1911—are a must.

## St. Helena

**Las Alcobas Napa Valley** (●): From renowned hotelier Samuel Leizorek, this California retreat is destined to become a valley icon with its location next to Beringer Vineyards, lending new meaning to "vineyard views." Historic Acacia House, completely renovated, serves as the heart of the resort, which features design by Yabu Pushelberg, a new 3,500-square-foot spa, and a restaurant where chef Chris Cosentino dishes up seasonal bounty. Fans of its popular sister property in Mexico City, rejoice.

## Taupo

**Huka Lodge** (●): Queen Elizabeth II, Sir Edmund Hillary, and Pink Floyd have all sneaked away to enjoy this secluded New Zealand riverside lodge with gourmet cuisine and endless adventure opportunities, including a 3 Volcanoes Before Breakfast heli tour.

## Tetiaroa

**The Brando** (●): Originally owned by Marlon Brando, this French Polynesian eco-paradise and National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World draws big names like Pippa Middleton and Barack Obama, who penned his presidential memoirs here.

## Victoria

**The Fairmont Empress Hotel** (●): A \$60 million renovation brought a design inspired by the natural beauty of Canada's Vancouver Island. But afternoon tea, a century-old tradition in the Lobby Lounge, is still de rigueur.

## Victoria Falls

**The Victoria Falls Hotel** (●): With the spray of the mighty falls visible from the broad veranda, warthogs grazing on the lawn, and mosquito-netted four-poster beds, the recently renovated 1904 hotel is a top Zimbabwe spot.

## Yangon

**The Strand Yangon** (●): Called "the finest hostelry East of the Suez" by a 1911 guidebook, this Myanmar hotel has its original teak, marble, and lacquerware, plus a new spa. Enjoy a whiskey at the bar, a favorite of Rudyard Kipling.



Soak in elegance at the Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund.

HOTEL DE CRILLON: PREVIOUS PAGE: ALAN KEOHANE/LA MAMOUNIA (HOTEL); TAMER KOSELI (ILLUSTRATION)

WALDORF ASTORIA SHANGHAI