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10 Perfect Places To Chill Out


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 *Pura vida. Sprezzatura. Manaña.* These words all convey a chilled-out mindframe. Living a pure (uncomplicated) life. Moving with nonchalance. Or more clumsily translated, the art of doing nothing. Not rushing to do everything right this minute when it can in fact wait until tomorrow. We need these things more than ever today.

No wonder that these words have become almost marketing tag lines for destinations that excel in them. And within the Pura Vida of Costa Rica, the sprezzatura of the Italian countryside, and the manañas of much of the Latin world, there are certain small hotels that embody these goals even more deeply. (Disclosure: a number of them hosted me.) They're small, a bit off the grid—but not too arduous to reach—connected with nature and profoundly laid-back. They are places where there are many things to but where it's often best to do nothing at all.



The reception terrace at Monteverdi BERNARD TOUILLON

Monteverdi, Tuscany

“A retreat from the ordinary” is the tag line at this remote Tuscan hideout, and it could not be more apt. It has panoramic views of the Val d’Orcia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its scenic splendor. The six-year-old hotel is not confined within a single building but instead is dispersed throughout an idyllic, medieval village, with its 18 rooms and suites tucked in among authentic and fastidiously maintained properties. The spa, with its not-notch therapists, Italian beauty products and multiple thermal pools is a dreamy spot to do nothing.

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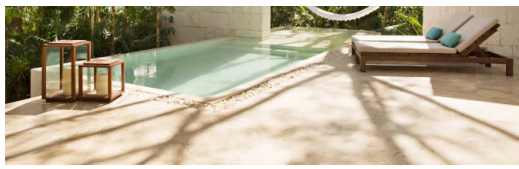
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A Villa at Chablé KARYN MILLET

Chablé, Mexico

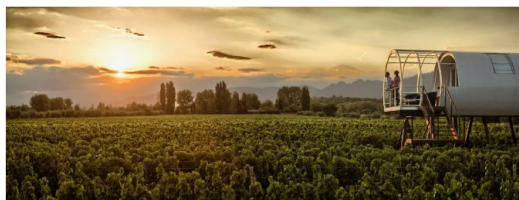
Wellness is a bit wily. We all want it we don't know what it is. Is it green juice and a vegan bento box? Is it sound therapy and shamanistic healing? HIIT and massages? A glass of fine mescal and a Cuban cigar? At this retreat in the Yucatán, wellness is whatever makes you feel good. Occupying the remains for a 19th-century *henequen* (sisal) plantation, the hotel pays homage to the history of the region while taking its own approach to well-being. The heart of Chablé is its massive spa, and the heart of the spa is a *cenoté*, or natural pool that is held sacred in Maya tradition. "Everything coming from it is powerful," says the spa director. "It nurtures everything."



Sunset over Lake Titicaca TITILAKA

Titilaka, Peru

I've never felt as close to the heavens as I did at Titilaka. That wasn't just because of the elevation—though the shores of Lake Titicaca are certainly up there, some 12,500 feet above sea level. It was also because the sky is a perfect blue that's decorated with cotton-ball cumulus clouds, the late-afternoon light is luminous, and the reflected sky in the mirror of the lake is entrancing. And because the design is uplifting and calming, with abundant glass that keeps the focus where it should be—outside. Since the intimate lakeside resort is built on a peninsula, all 18 rooms have close-up lake views, the kind that give the sensation of being on a cruise ship. Inside, the details are homey and handsome and true to their place: warm alpaca throws and colorful embroidered cushions. Even the bathtub—big enough for two—is positioned in a way that gives it a lake view.



A Vineyard Loft at Entre Cielos ENTRE CIELOS

Entre Cielos, Argentina

The "pod" guest room on stilts in a vineyard used to be the first thing people know about Entre Cielos. But there's no bedroom that's boring or bad. Undeniably comfortable, they drip with panache. One has giant, golden world map as an oversize headboard. They have terraces and vast views, most of which take in the hotel's exteriors, some of which are covered in a sort of outdoor "wallpaper" that's blown-up photographs of wine corks. But the appeal of Entre Cielos isn't just groovy good looks (or tasty food and wine, though it has that too). It's a profoundly relaxing place, a comfortable, aesthetically calming cocoon in which to escape the world—especially since it recently added eight more of these Vineyard Lofts.

