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Bucket List Travel: The World's Most Outrageous Villas



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ForbesWomen

Transformative Travel: I look at how travel can change lives.

Throughout the past year, many travelers have been hunkering down and [dreaming about future bucket-list trips](#). But there are travel lists and then there are the real-deal *bucket lists*, the kind of places that mere mortals can only fantasize about—places that attract the truly rich and famous. Lucky for the uber-wealthy, many countries around the world are open—and that's where the demand for ultra-private experiences comes in. Billionaire travelers are turning to hotels that offer the privacy of self-contained villas with all the access to the amenities and top-notch services of a luxury hotel. As you can imagine, many of these villas are exceptionally over the top.

Here, we look at six destinations around the world where Americans can travel right now and some of the most outrageous places to stay in each place. And even if these swank pads are beyond your budget, this list still provides some enticing eye-candy that you'll want to put on your own bucket list.

Note: The following destinations were open to U.S. travelers as of press time. Should you decide to plan a trip anywhere during the coronavirus pandemic, you should check local travel restrictions for the destination you are hoping to visit and consider warnings from the [State Department](#) and [CDC](#). Travelers should also consider risk factors like age and existing health issues before going on a trip and take precautions to keep themselves and others safe.



The pool at the St. Regis Bora Bora's Royal Estate. ST. REGIS BORA BORA

The Destination: [Bora Bora](#)

Bucket List Stay: [The St. Regis Bora Bora's Royal Estate](#)

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Why: If the St. Regis Bora Bora is good enough for [Nicole Kidman](#), [Keith Urban](#) and [Justin Bieber](#), it's good enough for you. Especially the resort's Royal Estate—which is one of the most exclusive addresses in the South Pacific, if not the world. This 13,000 square-foot compound has its own private beach with views of Bora Bora's idyllic tropical island lagoon. The villa includes three bedrooms (one is a pavilion with a private sauna, whirlpool and steam room), a professional kitchen, a spacious outdoor terrace with living and dining areas, a solarium, a pool and—not that you'll be doing any work here—an office. As if that weren't enough, you'll also be attended to by the renowned St. Regis butlers and—if you want—your own private chef.



Four-Bedroom Water Reserve at Soneva Jani in the Maldives. SONEVA JANI

The Destination: [Maldives](#)

Bucket List Stay: [Four-Bedroom Water Reserve at Soneva Jani](#)

Why: Ever dreamed of staying in an overwater villa? The eco-chic Soneva Jani—made up of just 24 overwater villas—raises the bar in the Maldives. Check out the sprawling Four-Bedroom Water Reserve, a mind-blowing villa hovering over the Indian Ocean with indoor-outdoor living areas, its own private pool and catamaran-style nets for lounging above the sea. Want to check out the reef fish in the lagoon? The villa has its own waterslide that drops you directly into the water. Need anything? There are barefoot butlers on-call, plus you'll get access to all of the resort's five-star facilities, including unlimited spa treatments in the overwater spa, planet viewing with the resident astronomer at the Observatory and movies under the stars at the overwater Cinema Paradiso.



Belize's Coral Caye, a private-island escape from the Family Coppola Hideaway group. FAMILY COPPOLA HIDEAWAY

The Destination: [Belize](#)

Bucket List Stay: [Coral Caye](#)

Why: Want to get a taste of what it is like to be a castaway? At Coral Caye, an intimate island off the coast of Belize, your only neighbors are exotic birds. Coral Caye is a luxurious escape from the Family Coppola Hideaway group (think Francis Ford Coppola) and is located just a short 25-minute boat ride from the docks of its sister property, the [Turtle Inn](#) resort. Combining the exclusivity of a private island retreat with the amenities of a full-fledged resort, Coral Caye has an on-call caretaker who will provide meals and help see guests off on the day's excursions, plus optional butlers and dedicated chefs if you want to keep your vacation decidedly luxe. The island's two cottages can sleep up to 12, and the central Great House features indoor/outdoor living spaces.



The view from one of the villas at Le Sereno on St. Bart's. CHRISTIAN OTH STUDIO

The Destination: [St. Bart's](#)

Bucket List Stay: The Villas at [Le Sereno](#)

Why: For the ultimate St. Bart's getaway, feast your eyes on the three spectacular villas at Le Sereno. These 7,000 square-foot sanctuaries were designed by Christian Liaigre and overlook the shimmering waters of Grand Cul de Sac. Each villa has four bedrooms, a private pool, its own chefs and exclusive butler service. (Villa guests also get to enjoy all of the hotel's amenities, including the open-air Ristorante Al Mare, led by a Michelin-starred culinary team.) This season, the resort has teamed up with private jet operator Tradewind Aviation to offer a new Ultimate Private Jet Experience, which includes a "wing-to-wing" seamless transfer to St. Bart's on a Tradewind Pilatus PC-12, plus—for guests booking a villa—an exclusive half-day trip on a 47-foot catamaran.



A villa in the jungle at Costa Rica's Nayara Tented Camp. NAYARA TENTED CAMP

The Destination: [Costa Rica](#)

Bucket List Stay: [Nayara Tented Camp](#)

Why: One of the first luxury glamping hotels in Central America, Nayara Tented Camp takes its design inspiration from safari tents in Africa. Only here, guests are immersed in the surrounding rainforest with unobstructed views of Arenal Volcano. Each villa has its own private plunge pool fed by natural mineral hot springs, plus barefoot-luxe touches like double-head outdoor showers. When guests feel like emerging from their eco-chic hideaway, they can visit the hotel's sloth sanctuary, go on early morning bird-watching walks with Nayara's expert nature guide or soak in one of the seven private hot springs hidden in the rainforest at the peak of the mountain.



The rooftop of a private riad at Marrakesh's Royal Mansour. ROYAL MANSOUR

The Destination: [Morocco](#)

Bucket List Stay: [Royal Mansour](#)

Why: For travelers who want the best of the best, there's nothing like Marrakesh's Royal Mansour, built by King Mohammed VI, who spared no expense in creating this lavish property. Guests here live like royalty, staying in private riads—traditional multistory Moroccan houses. Each stunning riad has its own butler who will cater to your every need, preparing sprawling breakfast spreads in your private dining room, romantic dinners on the palm-shaded roof and just about anything else you can dream up. The best amenity of all: your own private rooftop swimming pool, where the butler will make sure that you're well equipped with everything from inflatable pool toys to chic straw hats, even sunscreen.

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