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Four South American Hotels To Stay In and Play In

by [globetrotting gourmet](#) on July 27, 2009 at 5:14 PM



Nothing can prepare travelers for the otherworldly natural beauty of South America. For outdoor adventurers who've outgrown backpacking and hostels, here are four recommended places to stay, paired with an activity to help soak up the very best each destination has to offer:

Climb a volcano

[Tierra Atacama Hotel & Spa](#) in [San Pedro de Atacama, Chile](#)

Nestled along the coast of Chile, the Atacama desert region is best explored from the home base of luxury lodge, [Tierra Atacama Hotel & Spa](#). Rooms are spacious with private terraces, indoor and outdoor showers and fantastic views of the gardens and of the Licancabur volcano.

Rates are inclusive of food, drink and full or half day excursions. Small group treks include climbing either Toco or Láscar volcano. Both excursions involve a 90-minute plus drive to altitudes exceeding 15,000 feet, where the walk to the peak begins. From the summit of Láscar (a live volcano), enjoy views of the Chilean altiplano, and nearby Pili, Simbad and Tumisia volcanos. Views from the Toco peak afford vistas of the Bolivian altiplano and the Atacama Salt Flat.

Rates start at \$695 for a two night, all-inclusive stay.

Hike the Inca Trail

[Inkaterra Machu Picchu](#) in Machu Picchu Pueblo, Peru

Touted as "the Garden of Eden" by *Condé Nast Traveller*, this cloud forest oasis of [Inkaterra Machu Picchu](#) has been widely lauded as one of the world's best boutique hotels. Just steps from the train station and a short half-hour bus ride from Machu Picchu, accommodations are luxe, tranquil and perfectly located for hiking the Incan Trail.

The hotel's one-day excursion leaves early in the morning, well before other campers descend upon the trail. The steady climb includes a visit to the archaeological remains of Wiñay Wayna, views photo-op views of Machu Picchu from Inti Punku, the Sun Gate, and a guided tour of the citadel, Intiwatana (the Sun Dial) and the Sacred Plaza.

Soothe sore post-Incan Trail muscles with a candlelit couples massage in the domed Andean sauna back at the hotel.

Rates start at \$471 per night for a superior room.

Snorkel crystal blue waters

[Ponta dos Ganchos in Santa Catarina, Brazil](#)

Its golden beaches will beckon you to laze in slow unplugged idyll, but the turquoise waters off of Ponta dos Ganchos, are perfect for snorkeling. Located on its own peninsula on the south coast of Santa Catarina, nestled between two fishing villages and surrounded on three sides by the sea of the Costa Esmeralda, honeymooners can take a speedboat to nearby Arvoredo, a biological marine reserve to learn about native species and what to expect once they strap on their eye mask and goggles.

Luxurious in every way, this slice of paradise best suits sun-worshippers seeking seclusion. Bungalows are immaculate, with a private Jacuzzi tub and hammock on the deck.

Bungalows start at \$795 per night, including all meals and non-alcoholic beverages.

Canoe through a mangrove

[La Selva Jungle Lodge in Quito, Ecuador](#)

Making this particular communion with nature can be a daunting task for some, but for those who persevere the short flight from Quito to Coca, followed by a 2-3 hour trip downriver, then a precarious 20 minute walk and a canoe ride across a lake will be rewarded with an incomparable Amazon jungle experience.

Guests are divided into small groups and assigned to a naturalist guide for an array of day trips of all difficulty levels, including a canoe ride through a freshwater mangrove swamp – the trees and shrubs that grow in coastal habitats. Learn about dozens of plant species, surrounded by bird's trill and howling monkeys.

Rates start at \$1042 for 6 day/5 night package for 2 people, exclusive of air ticket from Quito to Coca (\$130 per person), and entrance fee to the Yasuni National Park (\$25 per person).

Note: all rates are in USD and quoted for double occupancy.