



Food Travel: 12 Accommodations Offering Immersive Culinary Classes

B K A T I E F O O T E

O N O V 9 , 2 0 1 5

0 C O

If you enjoy this post, please [subscribe to Epicure & Culture by email](#), leave a comment below, and share on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#) and [Pinterest](#).

Thanks for visiting!

With the recent trend toward expanding our culinary consciousness, “farm-to-table” is becoming increasingly common; but what about experiences that allow you to participate in this process?

These food travel-focused accommodations around the world will delight foodies and [ethical travelers](#) alike because they allow you to participate in the preparation of your food, by harvesting ingredients on the property and offering culinary classes. Whether you’ve dreamed about hunting for truffles in Tuscany, picking olives in Greece, harvesting oysters in the Virginia Bay or turning your freshly picked fruit into Hawaiian cocktails, these lodges and inns won’t let you leave without letting you gain some hands on knowledge about where your food comes from.

International



B O S C H E N D A L H A S A L L Y O U N E E D F

1) Pack a Farm-Fresh Picnic At Boschendal Wine Farm (Stellenbosch, [South Africa](#))

Amidst Stellenbosch's dizzying array of famous South African wine farms, one stands out as an authentic way to embrace its history. Boschendal is home to 600 Angus cattle, and an on-site butcher can prepare charcuterie or organic beef burgers to enjoy in your cottage. You can supplement this with fresh bread from the bakery, artisanal jams and oils, or trout you catch yourself at the onsite dam. Guests can pick their own vegetables and herbs from the 3 hectare (7.4-acre) garden or enjoy a meal at the open kitchen Werf Restaurant, looking out at the place where their ingredients are grown. [Wine aficionados](#) can learn about the varietals while being guided through the vines to the highest point on the farm, enjoying a glass of wine paired with aerial valley views.

Prices start at around \$95 for a one-bedroom cottage. [Click here](#) for more information.



N I G H T A T E U M E L I A O L I V E F A

2) Participate In A Traditional Olive Harvest (Laconia, [Greece](#))

Take part in an authentic Greek olive harvest at Eumelia Organic Agrotourism Farm & Guesthouse in Laconia, [Greece](#). Eumelia means harmony in ancient Greek, and this 50-acre (20-hectare) working farm employs homeodynamic agriculture techniques that enable nature to replenish itself at its own pace. During November and December, you can learn how to hand-pick famous Kalamata olives from ancient perennial trees, cure olives with sea salt from the Mani region, taste wines with the on-site sommelier and choose from a variety of cooking classes. If gathering olives wasn't enough for you, you can even pick your own wild greens to make a traditional Greek pie.

The Organic Olive Harvest Package is available to book November 1 through December 31, 2015, starting at ~\$767 USD for two-nights based on double occupancy. [Click here](#) for more information.



E X T E R I O R O F I N K A T E R R A H A C I E N

3) Learn About Medicinal Plants (Sacred Valley, [Peru](#))

Stay at the new Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba and expand your mind with an Ecological Farm program in Peru's Sacred Valley of the Incas. You can learn about native crops, medicinal plants and ancient farming techniques on the hotel's 10-acre (4-hectare) garden. Bonus: the contemporary hacienda-style hotel spans approximately 100 acres (41 hectares) surrounded by a vast view of the surrounding mountains. At approximately 9,515 feet (2,900 meters) in altitude, guests can also experience one of the best climates in the Cuzco region.

Rates start at \$462 per night. [Click here](#) for more information.



E A T L I K E A G A U C H O A T E S T A N C I A

4) Experience Gaucho Lifestyle (Cordoba, [Argentina](#))

Experience the Argentina cowboy way of life before this unique tradition fades away. The gauchos at the beautiful Estancia Los Poteros want to share their customs and traditions with you. You can ride horseback through the ranch, rest and recover by the idyllic poolside or feast on a traditional Argentine *asado* (barbecue). You will stay on a working-cattle farm in a magical setting at the top of the Sierras Chicas.

Rates start at around \$115 per night. [Click here](#) for more information.



O R G A N I C F R E E R A N G E C H I C K E N F A

5) Harvest Your Own Breakfast (Yao Noi, Thailand)

Harvest your own breakfast — from collecting eggs to picking mushrooms — at Six Senses Yao Noi in Thailand. The resort recently launched an organic chicken farm to promote sustainability and respect for the environment. About a year ago, with the goal of producing eggs daily for their guests, they purchased 200 baby chicks and built a chicken house, complete with its own exercise yard with trees to peck on and 24 hours of jazz music to listen to. After three months, the chickens started to lay eggs and now their average daily yield is 150 organic, free range, zero carbon eggs. No chemicals are used or chicken feed purchased: the chickens eat fruit and vegetable trimmings from the kitchen, supplemented with rice husks from the local farms and a superfertilizer made from fermented pineapple skins or fish bones. By eating pure organic matter, chickens significantly reduce the overall waste of the resort. Furthermore, waste from the chickens is again recycled into compost for the property's organic fruit, vegetable and herb gardens.

You can visit the chicken house, collect your own eggs (still warm!) and bring them to the Chef at breakfast to be cooked as you wish. If you want an omelet, pick your own mushrooms from the property's mushroom hut and harvest your own greens and herbs from the organic garden. You can taste the difference when you eat these farm fresh eggs and reap the benefits of clean, healthy and low cholesterol eggs.

Starting rates at Six Senses Yao Noi are from \$917 per night. [Click here](#) for more information.



T A S T Y T R U F F L E B I T E S A T G A R

6) Experience A Tuscan Truffle Hunt (Florence, [Italy](#))

Just a stone's throw away from Florence city center, travel to the sloping hills of Fiesole where you'll find the Il Salviatino Italian villa. In the 15th century, the property was built as a humble farmhouse, but for centuries it served as a cultural hub for artists, performers and intellectuals. Over time, some of Florence's elite families over the years refurbished the place into a luxurious

Renaissance villa with stunning views of the Tuscan capital.

You can participate in one of the most famous activities of the area with a truffle hunt that explores the secret world surrounding one of the region's most valuable products. Join a certified truffle hunter and his dog for a hands-on truffle hunt, an introduction to cleaning and cooking techniques, followed by a truffle-filled lunch feast. You can try dishes like focaccia with truffle sauce, bean soup and even truffle ice cream. The experience can be arranged individually or as part of a package (call the hotel to arrange the tour).

The starting rate for Il Salviatino is \$322 per night including breakfast. [Click here](#) for more information.

Domestic



H A R V E S T I N G E G G S A T T H E H E N H

7) Chat With Chickens & Learn About The Secret Life Of Bees (Carmel Valley, [California](#))

Looking for a playful resort experience with an evolving farmstead on California's Central Coast? Thanks to a recent enhancement, Carmel Valley Ranch offers dozens of activities to allow foodies to learn about the source of their food and help out on the farm. You can check out the Hen House near the organic garden with weekly Chicken Chats. You can suit up and enter the apiary with an interactive Beekeeping Experience to learn about the secret life of bees then taste fresh [honey](#) afterward, or visit Bob "the Salt Guy" at the Salt House to learn about how he harvests nutrient-rich sea salt from the nearby Monterey Bay. You can attend wine classes at the resort's pinot noir vineyard and learn how to Sip Like a Sommelier in the Valley Kitchen restaurant, just up the hill from the resort's four-acre pinot noir vineyard.

Whatever your area of interest, Carmel Valley Ranch will allow you to explore an assortment of agricultural activities that helps you understand where your food comes from.

Rates start at \$275 per night. [Click here](#) for more information.



R U S T I C A D V E N T U R E S A T B U T T E R M

8) Family Style Forest To Feast (Charlottesville, Virginia)

Fancy a Forage & Feast adventure for the entire family? Clifton Hotel in [Charlottesville](#), Virginia invites you to fish, forge, cook and dine with their resident chef in a stunning natural setting. Guests will find their own wild and cultivated ingredients, get a quick culinary lesson then enjoy the “fruits” of their labor. Your ingredients might come from fishing at the private fully stocked lake or from foraging for wild grown herbs, mushrooms and berries or from the plentiful produce at the seasonal vegetable and herb gardens.

This package requires a 2-night and 6-guest minimum so prices start at \$4,000 and includes Chef & Garden property tours and foraging sessions, hands-on cooking classes, culinary tips including sharpening knives and fresh fish preparation and a welcome gift of locally sourced goodies. [Click here](#) for more information.



9) Help Out With A Bay-to-Table Oyster Harvest (Irvington, Virginia)

Join Virginia Oyster Academy for a memorable bay-to-table experience as you learn about the oyster's fight for survival and the aquacultural advancements protecting its delicate ecosystem. You will board a boat with an authentic working Virginia waterman to learn about the reef and see how the fisherman tonge and dredge the areas. Then you will jump into the Tides Inn kitchen to learn how to buy, prepare and shuck oysters before creating delicious seafood meals. He will teach you culinary tricks to enhance your oyster eating experience, including how to prepare sauces and dishes and how to pair oysters with wine.

This Oyster Experience is offered at Tides Inn on Fridays and Saturdays in October and November for \$155 per person. Accommodation can be arranged for an additional fee. [Click here](#) for more information.



R U S T I C A D V E N T U R E S A T B U T T E R M

10) Indulge in a Soil to Spa Massage Treatment (Hudson Valley, [New York](#))

Less than two hours from Manhattan, find a complete Hudson Valley retreat on 75 acres (30 hectares) of verdant farmland and lush gardens alongside the Hudson River. The property's restaurant, Henry's at the Farm, which draws right from the property's own 40-acre (16-hectare) Millstone Farm with a menu that features fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices and fresh eggs courtesy of heritage chickens. The eco-focused spa really distinguishes this property. In addition to being powered by solar and geothermal sources, is it now utilizing many of the ingredients grown on property for a soil-to-spa movement. Herbs are harvested from the property's Millstone Farm to be dried for use in treatments. Tip: try a lavender and honey (produced on the farm's hives) massage or a lavender and turbinado (natural, unrefined) sugar scrub. A series of homemade oils from such herbs as rosemary and thyme are used in aromatherapy.

When not at the spa, interact with a stable of alpacas, llamas, goats, peacocks and other furry friends running around the property, or tour the farm with the head gardener, Dawn, and go into the chicken coup to collect eggs and pick berries when nobody's looking. Henry's also offers cooking classes seasonally on various themes.

Rates start at \$300 per night. [Click here](#) for more information.



F R U I T P I C K I N G A T H O T E L W A I

11) Pick Your Own Fruits For A Mixology Class (Maui, [Hawaii](#))

Do you think your relationship could benefit from sunshine, a tropical escape and farm fresh meals featuring Maui-grown ingredients? Head to Hotel Wailea, Maui's only luxury hotel designed exclusively for couples. You and your honey can tour the property's organic farm and orchard of mango and avocado trees, picking fruit along the way and learning how to turn them into [cocktails](#) — shaken and stirred the Maui way. If you want to work up an appetite for a meal sourced from on-property organic ingredients, the resort offers a variety of opportunities for island adventure including a private safari to Maui's hidden beaches in a reproduction 1957 Porsche 356 Speedster convertible, exploring the ocean in an outrigger canoe, or taking on the North Shore with a lesson from the resort's own kite-boarding school.

Winter rates start at \$499. [Click here](#) for more information.



L E A R N I N G T O M I L K G O A T S . P H

12) Goat Milking & Cheese Making (Salida,

Colorado)

Have a craving for Swiss cheese but don't want to book an international flight? Mountain Goat Lodge in Salida, Colorado has you covered. Their herd of Oberhasli Alpine goats from Switzerland provide a creamy sweet milk that creates incredible [cheese](#) and yogurt and they will happily teach you how. Start with a milking demonstration in the barn before sampling fresh cheese yourself. From there it's your turn to whip up a batch, maybe making mozzarella, feta, chevre, ricotta, paneer and yogurt.

Rates are \$65 per class and accommodation starts at \$117 per night (which includes a farm-to-table breakfast for two). [Click here](#) for more information.

By [Katie Foote](#)