

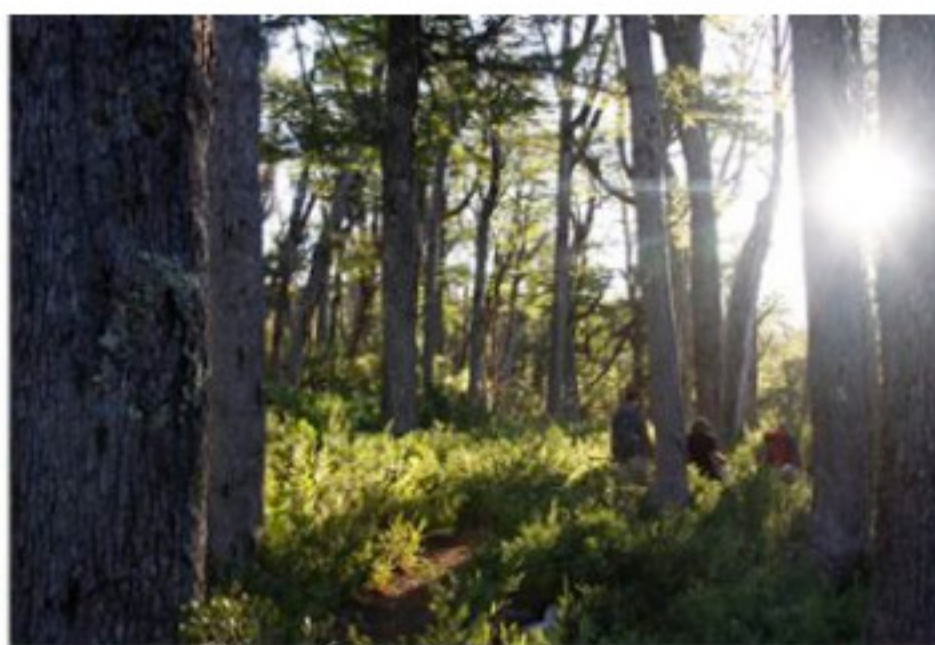
THE RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX DIFFERENCE



Imagine yourself in an idyllic setting, enjoying fresh air and a new sense of wonderment. Now, pair that with renowned cuisine that combines flavors rich in cultural influences, local ingredients, and trend-setting techniques. This experience is what the Relais & Châteaux fellowship calls the “Art of Living.”

On my most recent trip to Chile I spent time exploring a few different regions where I was fortunate enough to stay at two Relais & Châteaux properties. These lodges – Awasi Atacama, located in the driest non-polar desert in the world and Hotel Vira Vira situated in the lush, temperate climate of Pucón, Chile – went above and beyond in two categories. First, their attention to detail was on another level, whether it be prepping us for an excursion or explaining the wine pairing that evening. Second, the combination of locally-sourced ingredients and world-recognized chefs, each with their own unique flavor and creative technique, made for some of the most memorable (and delicious) dishes of my life.

Below are a few photos from our time at Hotel Vira Vira, including a float down the Liucura River, a fantastic hike through the forest, and two shots from the property tour we took on our last day.



It was really fascinating to see many of the ingredients we were enjoying each day growing in a garden just steps away from the main lodge. One of the unique features of several dishes at Hotel Vira Vira was the integration of edible flowers, of course plucked daily from the garden just outside of the hotel.

As our property tour continued, we were able to take a look at the main house (where the owners of Hotel Vira Vira stay), an unassuming home that carries their vision and values throughout. We walked through a wonderful kitchen filled with the smell of freshly cooked food and, just like the hotel rooms and common areas, their home had a unique yet thoughtful design that perfectly combined the owners’ heritage with the culture, environment and traditions of the area.

Later, we made our way to the property’s on-site creamery (as you can see in the photos above) where they make and perfect cheese only to be enjoyed at their restaurant and a few local homes.

Throughout the property tour, and during our entire stay, I kept noticing how authentic this experience felt. No one was doing this to capitalize on the “farm-to-table” marketing boom or putting on a show for us, each staff member was truly interested in the region, excited about sharing their knowledge and passionate about their work.

Working in harmony with their environment, exuding a genuine interest in their guests, and sparing no detail, to me, is the Relais & Châteaux difference.

RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX HISTORY



The [Relais & Châteaux](#) fellowship was founded in France in 1954 with the mission to “spread its unique *art de vivre* (art of living) across the globe by selecting outstanding properties with a truly unique character.” They have a rigorous selection process and focus on choosing properties with four distinctive characteristics. Their properties must:

- Be a **local anchor** or, “the living expression of a place, its history, environment and culture.”
- Show a deep respect for the **human aspect**. “The Relais & Châteaux spirit lies not only in the respect shown toward one’s hosts and colleagues, but also toward the men and women who evolve around our properties and embody the places and culture they are a part of.”
- Every Maître de Maison must have the ability to **share** and convey his or her passion to their customers.
- And lastly, show a **commitment** to helping enrich the history of cuisine and hospitality.

Today, there are 530 Relais & Châteaux properties throughout the world and 26 properties in Central and South America.

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX PROPERTIES IN SOUTH AMERICA



If you are interested in planning a trip that includes a stay at one of these Relais & Châteaux properties, call a Knowmad Trip Specialist at 612-315-2894, or send an email to travel@knowmadadventures.com today! For more information about Knowmad and our trip planning process take a look at the [Knowmad Adventures](#) website.

CAVAS WINE LODGE | LUJAN DE CUYO, ARGENTINA A 22-hectare estate at the foot of the Andes located in Mendoza.

AWASI ATACAMA | SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA, CHILE A small, boutique hotel located in the most arid place on earth. You may interested in this [Relais & Châteaux deal that includes a stay at Awasi Atacama...](#)

AWASI PATAGONIA | PATAGONIA, CHILE A collection of independent villas located in a private reserve with stunning views of Sarmiento Lake and Torres del Paine National park. [Read more about Awasi Patagonia...](#)

HOTEL VIRA VIRA | PUCÓN, CHILE This property is situated on the shores of the Liucara river and features a large garden and in-house creamery. You may be interested in this [Relais & Châteaux deal that includes a stay at Hotel Vira Vira...](#)

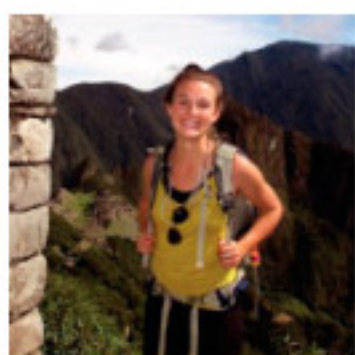
LAPOSTOLLE RESIDENCE | SANTA CRUZ, CHILE Nestled in the hills overlooking Chile's spectacular Apalta Vineyards in the Colchagua Valley. You may interested in this [Relais & Châteaux deal that includes a stay at Lapostolle Residence...](#)

INKATERRA LA CASONA | CUSCO, PERU This hotel and restaurant calls one of the first Spanish buildings of Cusco its home, located just steps away from the main square.

SOL Y LUNA | URUBAMBA, PERU Located in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, it is a perfect combination of contemporary and traditional Peru. You may be interested in this [itinerary that includes a stay at Sol y Luna...](#)

TITILAKA | PUNO, PERU Situated on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. You may interested in this [itinerary that includes a stay at Titilaka...](#)

Nos Vemos, Lisa



Lisa is the Media Manager at Knowmad Adventures, a company dedicated to creating [unique, private and custom trips in South America](#). She studied abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2012 and is continually planning her next adventure. Read [Lisa's biography and more about the Knowmad team](#).