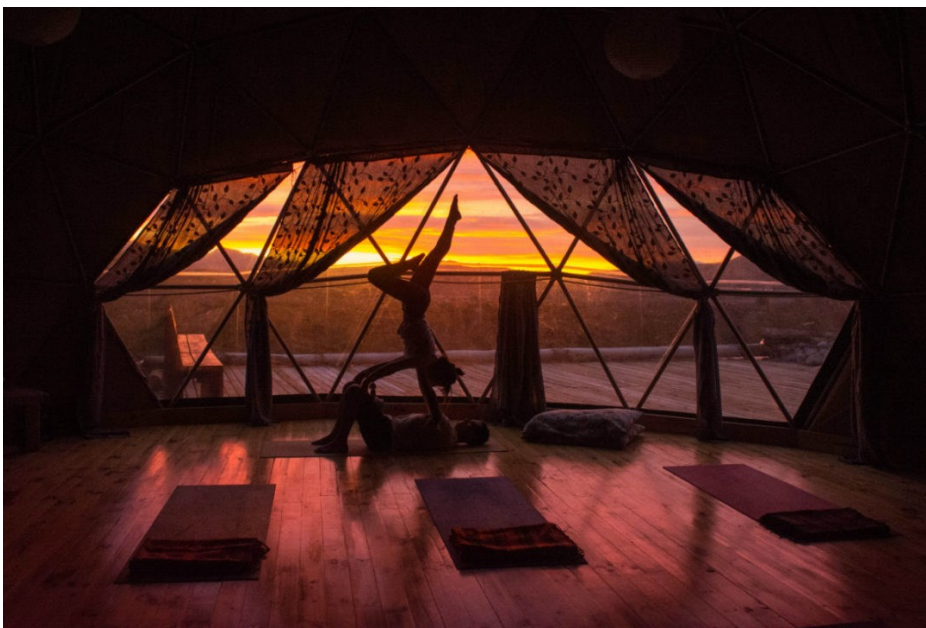


# ELUXE MAGAZINE

ADVENTURE TRAVEL

## LOVE ON THE ROCKS: THE BEST ECO HOTELS FOR HIKING



All reviews by Jody McCutcheon, Chere Di Boscio and Wendy Altschuler

It's that time of year again—in the northern hemisphere, at least—when the weather is warming up and you just want to spend every minute you can outside. There are loads of outdoor activities to help you move your butt whilst you enjoy immersing yourself in nature, but if you ask me, hiking is the best. It's perfect for people of all fitness levels; just choose a route that matches your ability, and enjoy the fresh scents of trees, flowers, and streams.

Want to raise the stakes? Try hiking unfamiliar trails. Sure, you could try that one in the conservation area you've always wanted to visit just outside the city. But wouldn't it be so much more adventurous to travel to a place you've never been and explore the trails there?

Here are some eco hotels for hiking that offer excellent trails, plus award-winning sustainable lodging with wonderful spas to help you relax and indulge after a long day on the rocks.

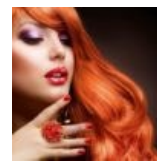
### 1. Naksel Boutique Hotel & Spa, Bhutan

Looking for a place where the architecture is just as exotic as the surrounding mountain scenery? You'll want to experience the [Naksel Boutique Hotel & Spa](#) in Ngoba Village, Bhutan. On sight, Naksel will wow you with its traditional Bhutanese architecture, from its hand-carved pillars and gorgeous stonework to the simple yet sturdy mud brick walls that insulate for sound and heat.

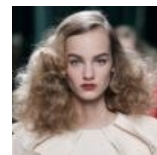
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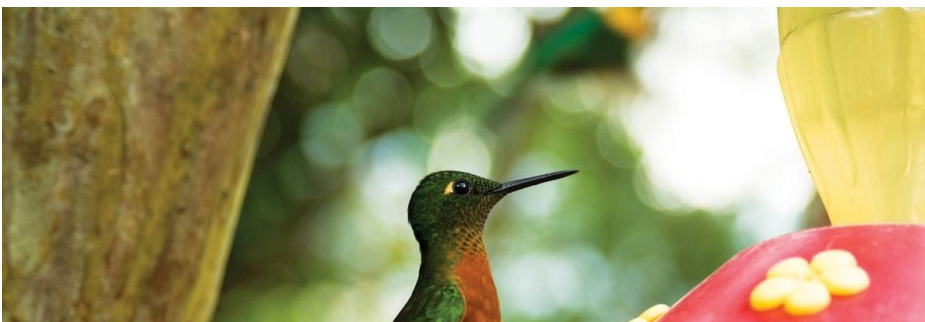
## 5. Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo, Peru

Set within the stunning surroundings of a thundering river and the mountains bordering Machu Picchu you'll find [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo](#). Whilst most people come here to do the ultimate hike – climbing the famous Inca Trail – there are plenty more paths to explore from this fabulous eco-hotel.

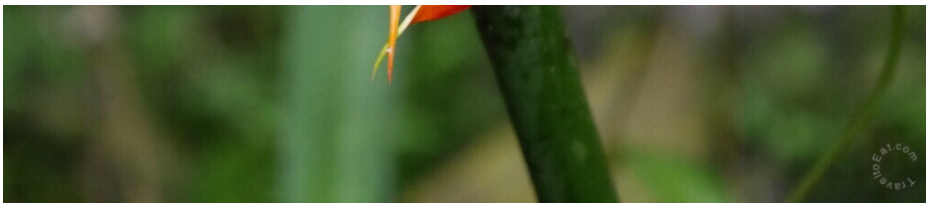
For example, their Eco Centre will send a guide to take you through their orchid forest, which houses well over 300 species of the exotic flower, most of which are quite difficult to encounter without an expert. If you prefer fauna to flora, you can also opt to be guided to their Spectacled Bear sanctuary, housing 5 animals rescued from circuses and abusive households.

A member of National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World, the property is also home to 214 rare bird species, including the golden-headed quetzal and the iconic Andean cock-of-the-rock, making it the ideal destination for ornithology buffs. Of course, you'll not want to miss a climb up Machu Picchu while you're here, but make sure you hire one of Inkaterra's expert guides to ensure you learn all about the ancient Incan mysteries surrounding this mystical place.

When you return, relax in your whitewashed adobe casita in front of a toasty fire; get your aching muscles relaxed by magical hands in the Intakerra spa, or chill out in the on-site hot pools and sauna.







## 6. EcoCamp Patagonia

**EcoCamp Patagonia** occupies the remote Torres del Paine National Park, at the southern tip of Chile's Andes Mountains. As **well-lauded** as the other hotels on this list, EcoCamp opened over a decade ago and offers the region's first fully sustainable accommodations. The idea behind it is to ensure "environmentally responsible travel to areas of fragile natural resources" by minimizing every visitor's eco-footprint.

The surrounding environment offers outdoor exercise aplenty. Spend your days on guided hikes or wildlife excursions, surrounded by ancient forests, glaciers, waterfalls, rivers and fjords – but take note: the really interesting thing about EcoCamp is the domed accommodations. Community Domes are for eating (all meals are included), sleeping, socializing and doing yoga, while the Sleep domes are for—you guessed it—snoring and sweet dreaming.

All domes have been designed to maximize wind protection and the use of natural light and heat, and were constructed using minimal excavation and erected on a raised platform to leave underlying vegetation undisturbed. The design comes from the **Kaweskars**, the indigenous people (now largely wiped out, thanks to Spanish colonisation), who arrived in Patagonia in the fifteenth century and whose idea of happiness resided not in material possessions, but in nomadic movement and treating nature with the respect it deserves. EcoCamp is essentially a tribute to how the Kaweskars lived in harmony with their natural environment.

EcoCamp owners Javier Lopez and Yerko Ivelic have executed their sustainability plan to perfection. Their low-impact design incorporates several facets: buying all food and supplies locally; meeting EcoCamp's electrical needs through off-grid hydro and solar power; initiating a rigorous waste management program to ensure all waste is properly disposed of (in fact, EcoCamp boasts the world's southern-most composting device, the first in Chilean and Patagonia hotel industry); and by achieving a carbon-neutral environment, with an eye on ultimately becoming carbon-free. All these efforts have resulted in EcoCamp's **certification** for high environmental standards.

