

8 Countries Where Your Dollar Goes Furthest

Have you been waiting for the right moment to book an international trip? These destinations deliver more for your money right now.



Photos by Unsplash/Kateryna Hliznitsova, Geoff Haggray; Design by Elizabeth See

If Afar's Where to Go in 2026 list is inspiring your trip planning, we have good news: The U.S. dollar is strong in a lot of our favorite destinations. In some places, that can make luxury hotels, guided treks, and other high-end experiences more accessible.

While seasonality and supply and demand affect a destination's rates (cherry blossom season in Japan will always be pricey), shoulder season can deliver better value. We tapped our team's expertise and asked a few

travel industry experts to weigh in on where travelers can get the most bang for their buck. Here are the seven destinations they recommend where the U.S. dollar goes furthest.

Peru

Machu Picchu is popular for a reason; it's one of the tourist attractions Afar editors love visiting. Photo by Lyndsey Matthews

"Now is a great time to consider visiting Peru," says Melissa Da Silva, deputy executive officer, TTC Tour Brands, a portfolio of six guided-travel companies, including Trafalgar and Insight Vacations. "Not only can travelers expect to spend around \$12 for a terrific meal, but its temperate climate and incredible marvels . . . make it a bucket-list destination." We'd add that while Machu Picchu is a must-see historical site, there's so much more to see in Peru than the ancient Inca ruins, including the food-forward city of Arequipa in southern Peru, a destination on this year's Where to Go in 2026 list.

Martín Romero is the general manager and partner at Explorandes, which focuses on treks and adventure tours through Peru that aim to be as sustainable as possible. "Traveling through Peru is a journey through breathtaking landscapes and living history, but it's in the country's more remote regions where the true magic reveals itself," he says. "Huaraz is an Andean city that sits between two mountain ranges and is the ideal jumping-off point for lesser-traveled paths in the Cordillera Huayhuash, Cordillera Blanca, and along the Great Inca Trail. Along with overall costs being lower [in Peru], these trails offer stunning natural beauty and, more impactfully, the chance to connect on a much deeper level with local culture."

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Plan a trip: Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

- **Book now:** inkaterra.com

The Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is a respite from the touristy Machu Picchu base town of Aguas Calientes and its slew of hostels. Its 83 rustic adobe casitas are set among 12 acres within a cloud forest next to the Vilcanota River, home to 214 bird species and even more varieties of native orchids—which you can spot with the help of daily guided walks.

Türkiye

Consider chartering a *gulet*, a traditional two- or three-masted wooden sailboat, to cruise around Türkiye's Aegean and Mediterranean seas. Photo by Engin Yapici/Unsplash

Start in Türkiye's capital Istanbul, a magnificent city that you can even visit for free on a stopover with Turkish Airlines. After tearing around town visiting Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace, and the Blue Mosque, relax onboard a sunset Bosphorous cruise (from about \$70), Europe on one side and Asia on the other. If you're traveling in summer, we recommend trying to cool off on Türkiye's Aegean or Mediterranean coasts. Get yourself to hidden, crowded beaches by hiring a boat: a four-night charter on a three-cabin *gulet* (a traditional wooden sailboat) will run you around \$1,400.

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Plan a trip: The Peninsula Istanbul

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In 2024, the Peninsula Istanbul was one of Afar's top hotel openings, and today this 177-room hotel on the buzzy Karaköy waterfront still entices with a distinct East-West sensibility that harmonizes with this ancient metropolis

that literally bridges Europe and Asia. The complex restored three protected heritage buildings, and the best local *ustas* (craftspeople) were enlisted to work their magic across marble, stained glass, and mother-of-pearl inlays called *sedef*.

North Macedonia

Still under the radar, North Macedonia blends historic charm and striking natural beauty, and a favorable exchange rate increases Americans' access to the country's top stays and experiences. Photo by ollirg/Shutterstock

North Macedonia is the kind of country travelers will soon be talking about everywhere, but for now, it flies under the radar as one of the destinations we think will take off in the next five years. That sense of discovery is paired with real value. The exchange rate—roughly 52 to 54 Macedonian denars to the U.S. dollar—means that a three-course meal at a high-end restaurant can cost about \$25. The country isn't saturated with true five-star luxury properties, but nightly rates at its top-tier hotels typically fall between \$120 and \$200. While Lake Ohrid (rightfully) draws much of the attention, a detour to Mavrovo National Park offers a quieter, more atmospheric experience, with alpine landscapes, traditional villages, and the haunting, half-submerged St. Nicholas Church.

Plan a trip: Skopje Marriott Hotel

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Skopje Marriott Hotel sits directly on Macedonia Square, placing you within easy walking distance of the Old Bazaar, the Stone Bridge, and the city's main museums. With a full-service spa, it's one of the closest experiences to a true luxury stay in North Macedonia.

Japan

Prices can be high in Japan, but with the dollar holding steady against a weaker yen, you'll be able to enjoy a great meal out in Tokyo's backstreets. Photo by Taisia Karaseva/Unsplash

If you've always dreamed of visiting Japan, the relatively weak yen makes this year an ideal time to go (as of this writing, US\$1 = 159 JPY). Whether you want to explore Tokyo's fish markets and record bars, visit the temples of Kyoto, or hike through majestic forests on the Kumano Kodo trail, plenty of deals are available.

Hiroshi Kawaguchi, general manager of self-guided and small-group tour operator Oku Japan, recommends spending time communing with nature. "Japan's rural regions, like the Tohoku region in northern Japan, hold a beauty and depth that often go unnoticed. Venturing beyond the cities offers exceptional value, and, even more importantly, it opens the door to genuine connections—with local people, centuries-old traditions, and landscapes that have shaped Japan's cultural soul."

Plan a trip: Hoshinoya Tokyo

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Inspired by Japanese ryokans—traditional inns often found in rural settings—Hoshinoya Tokyo is an 84-room property that offers a sanctuary in the heart of Tokyo's Otemachi financial district. Each floor is designed to feel like its own private *ryokan*, with a shared tea area stocked with Japanese teas and snacks. Hoshinoya is the only hotel in Tokyo with an onsen fed directly by hot springs, 5,000 feet beneath the hotel.

Mexico

With a strong dollar enhancing an already rich mix of culture, cuisine, and design-forward stays, Mexico delivers a more expansive travel experience right now. Photo by Daniel Garcia/Unsplash

Our southern neighbor, Mexico, always excites travelers who love history, art, food, or the beach (in other words, everyone). Mexico City is a vibrant capital with hotel options in a wide range of prices across many neighborhoods, such as Reforma, Roma, and Condesa—each populated with excellent street food and fine dining. Then there's the dynamic gastronomy scene in Guadalajara, a city that's poised to gain wider attention as a host city of the World Cup. Hannah Choat, Intrepid Travel's PR specialist for North America, suggests touring the Yucatán Peninsula for beaches and Maya historic sites or joining a food excursion to Oaxaca.

Plan a trip: Condesa DF, Mexico City

- **Book now:** condesadf.com

Stop by for a drink on the hotel's rooftop terrace to tap into Mexico City's swank party crowd, or stay in one of its 40 chic rooms in a 1928 French neoclassical mansion in the tree-lined Condesa neighborhood.

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Vietnam

Halong Bay is a beautiful natural wonder in northern Vietnam near the Chinese border. Photo by lonsdale_007/Shutterstock

Fresh off our Where to Go in 2026 list, Da Nang is about to draw even more attention as a gateway to Vietnam's mix of coastline, culture, and cuisine—and it also happens to be one of the most affordable places to experience it all. "If you're looking to travel on a budget," Choat says, "[Vietnam] is one of the best spots. The major travel essentials—accommodation, food, and public transport—are all fairly affordable, so you may even end up spending much less than you'd think." Whether you go hiking up north in Sapa or want to plop down on the beach at Ninh Van Bay, you'll eat very well.

Plan a trip: Six Senses Ninh Van Bay

- **Book now:** [sixsenses.com](https://www.sixsenses.com)

At this dreamy resort, 62 pool villas are scattered along the beachfront and hillside of Vietnam's coast, across the bay from Nha Trang.

Argentina

From Buenos Aires to Patagonia, Argentina offers sweeping landscapes and sophisticated stays, with a strong dollar adding an extra layer of ease to the experience. Photo by Diego Grandi/Shutterstock

In Argentina, the appeal is as much about the range of experiences as it is about value. One day may unfold in Buenos Aires, where grand European-style hotels and design-forward boutiques often land between \$200 and \$350 per night; another could take you to Mendoza, where vineyard stays pair sweeping Andes views with similarly approachable rates. Even in Patagonia—typically one of the country’s pricier regions—the strength of the dollar (at publication, \$1 equals 1,407 Argentine pesos) helps offset costs. For something less expected, venture to Esteros del Iberá, a vast wetland reserve where capybaras, caimans, and hundreds of bird species thrive, and crowds remain refreshingly sparse.

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Plan a trip: Casa de Uco

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Casa de Uco sits in the Uco Valley with uninterrupted views of the Andes, surrounded by its own working vineyard. The low-slung, brutalist-designed property blends concrete, glass, and natural materials, with rooms that open directly onto the landscape.

South Africa

In and around Johannesburg, South Africa pairs a dynamic cultural scene with nearby safari experiences, where favorable exchange rates elevate what's possible across an itinerary. Photo by elleon/Shutterstock

Johannesburg offers a different entry point into South Africa—one centered on culture, design, and a fast-evolving food scene—while still benefiting from an exchange rate that typically hovers around 16 to 17 rand to the U.S. dollar. That advantage is evident in the hotel scene, where high-end properties often range from \$250 to \$500 per night, frequently paired with standout service and locally rooted design. Beyond the city, travelers can easily pair a stay in Johannesburg with a nearby safari at Pilanesberg National Park, about a two- to three-hour drive away, or even closer at Dinokeng Game Reserve, where you can spot the Big Five without venturing far from the city.

Plan a trip: Park Hyatt Johannesburg

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Opened last summer, Park Hyatt Johannesburg is tucked into the leafy Rosebank neighborhood, within walking distance of galleries, restaurants, and the popular Rosebank Mall. The boutique-scale property centers around a quiet courtyard garden and a pool, giving it a more residential, retreat-like atmosphere as compared to many city hotels.

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