

Where to Stay

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If the phrase “eco-friendly lodging” makes you think of primitive huts and bathrooms that make you want to head home, it’s time to ditch that notion. Innovative and comfortable options, from remote beach resorts to urban boutique hotels, now exist on six continents. Here, we introduce you to ten of the newest ones.

Arenas del Mar Beach & Nature Resort

Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica

Hike through Carara National Park to scope scarlet macaws, or kayak through mangroves before a nap in a canopy bed cooled by the coastal breeze. The owners of this brand-new resort avoided using heavy equipment during construction, and built it with green materials like recycled plastic roof tiles. Rooms are outfitted with bamboo towels and solar hot-water heaters. Doubles from \$190

Gaia Napa Valley Hotel & Spa

American Canyon, California

California has taken the lead on climate-friendly hospitality by implementing a green-lodging incentive program, which may explain the gaggle of new green digs. One of the latest: Gaia Napa Valley Hotel & Spa, in the heart of wine country. Its space-age design was constructed of reclaimed corrugated metal and sustainably harvested wood. Solar light tubes reduce the need for electricity, and a high-tech, energy-efficient ventilation system recirculates air to reduce the need for heating and cooling. Cheers to the designers for their appealingly warm, light, and airy interior. Doubles from \$189

Fairmont Mayakoba

Mayakoba, Mexico

The touristy Mayan Riviera isn't a hot spot for eco-conscious travelers—that's why this luxury chain's initiatives are so noteworthy. In addition to reducing waste and conserving energy and water at all its properties, its Mayakoba location, which opened last year, hired biologists to minimize the impact during construction, and Audubon International has recognized its golf course for its water conservation and wildlife corridors. Doubles from \$279

Ulaa Patagonia

Biosfera Transfronteriza Andino Norpatagonia Reserve, Chile

By the time you make the three-plus-hour trip from the nearest airport to this secluded resort on the banks of Chilean Patagonia's Lago Puelo Inferior, its warmly lit cabins, Mayan sweat lodge, and peaceful orchards will make you feel like you've arrived on another planet. The menu boasts fresh ingredients from the onsite organic farm and greenhouse. From \$70 per person, including meals

Orchard Garden Hotel

San Francisco, California

The Orchard Garden Hotel, which opened last November three blocks from San Francisco's Union Square, is among a small group of American properties that prove planet-friendly accommodations can be chic. This sharp, 86-room boutique hotel has high-definition televisions, iPod docking stations, and open-air terraces. Its tony restaurant serves local and organic dishes; a key-card system reduces energy use in rooms; and housekeepers use biodegradable cleaning products. The hotel was built according to LEED standards, and building materials included recycled steel, glass and cement made from fly ash (a coal byproduct). Doubles from \$169

Crosswaters Ecolodge and Spa

Guangdong, China

The developers of China's first ecolodge (in the Nankun Shan Mountain Reserve) sought not only to protect the existing land, but to also enhance its health and embrace the local Keija community. A feng shui master helped design the 49-room lodge and spa that opened last year, to avoid disturbing the land. Construction relied heavily on indigenous bamboo, which grows quickly and thrives without the use of pesticides. The gardens boast lotuses, rice paddies, and organic vegetable patches, and the surrounding forest is home to owls, woodpeckers, and 176 species of butterflies. Doubles from about \$300; 011-86-0752-769-3666

AND COMING SOON...

Rosalie Bay Nature Resort

Rosalie, Dominica

Rosalie's beaches once attracted illicit turtle-egg hunters, but when this resort opens in December, tourists will watch the endangered reptiles lay eggs safely, with the help of a local conservation program. Fifteen guest rooms, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Morne Trois Piton National Park, will run on solar and wind energy and will feature a wetland wastewater treatment center.

San Gregorio Hotel & Spa

Santa Elena Barillas, Guatemala

Opening above Guatemala's Lake Amatitlán this November, San Gregorio Hotel will feature ten bungalows furnished with handmade Guatemalan artwork, a wine bar, juice bar, and spa. Organic cuisine, solar hot-water heaters, and drinking glasses made of recycled glass all attest to part of the resort's environmental ethos.

Hotel Terra

Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Extreme skier Rob DesLauriers's newest venture into the world of ski-in lodging—Hotel Terra—will open at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in December. It will feature 32 condos with Bose surround-sound systems and MP3 players typical of the swanky village. Not so typical: low VOC paints, double-paned windows, low-flow water fixtures, and renewable power.

El Silencio Lodge & Spa

Bajos del Toro, Costa Rica

The owners of renowned eco Hotel Punta Islita in Costa Rica are putting their environmental sensibilities to work again with El Silencio (below), to open in November in the country's central volcanic region. The 16 suites will run on small-scale, low-impact hydro energy, and sit on a small part of a 500-acre private forest reserve.

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