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ESCAPE

TOP TIPS

WISE WORDS

Our favourite writers' guide
to travel tricks and traps



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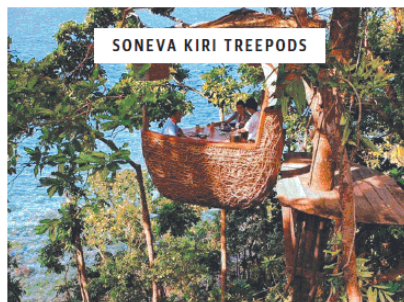
WISH LIST ♦ WOW DINING



ANDBEYOND NGORONGORO CRATER LODGE



ITHAA UNDERSEA RESTAURANT



SONEVA KIRI TREEPODS



HOTEL GROTTA PALAZZESE

1 ITHAA UNDERSEA RESTAURANT, MALDIVES
There's something a bit fishy about this restaurant – nothing to do with the chef. Dining doesn't come much more exotic than 5m below sea level, watching the reef life from the world's first glass undersea restaurant. The six-course set dinner menu aims to live up to the exquisite surrounds with dishes including caviar, lobster and spicy sea snails. Guests are advised to book well in advance at Ithaa Undersea Restaurant – but as one of 10 bars and restaurants at the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island resort, there are plenty of back-up options featuring impressive lagoon views.
HILTONMALDIVESRESORT.COM

2 ANANTARA MUI NE RESORT, VIETNAM
Forget fish and chips on the sand. These days, beach dining is more than a bit fancy. In Vietnam, the Anantara resort's table for two occupies a secluded stretch of one of Vietnam's best beaches, Mui Ne. As the sun sets, guests enjoy a candlelit dinner with an individually tailored menu prepared by a personal chef. Specialties include shovelnose lobster sourced offshore, chargrilled Phan Thiet scallops and traditional Mui Ne shrimp fresh rolls with local herbs. It's part of Anantara's Dining by Design offering, which includes unique experiences at resorts around the world.
MUI-NE.ANANTARA.COM

3 SONEVA KIRI TREEPOD DINING, THAILAND
If treetop dining isn't on your travel bucket list, it's probably only because you haven't yet seen the incredible treepods at eco-luxury resort Soneva Kiri. The experience involves settling into a bamboo pod before being hoisted into the tropical foliage of an ancient rainforest, where you can take in views out to sea. An acrobatic waiter then whizzes along a zip line to deliver your jungle-themed gourmet delights. The treepods are just one of the beautiful dining destinations at Soneva Kiri. The resort – on Thailand's least populated island, Koh Kood – also features a cliffside restaurant so spectacular it's simply called "The View".
SONEVA.COM/SONEVA-KIRI

4 CAVIAR IN THE SURF, SEABOURN CRUISES
Fine dining experiences and cruises go hand-in-hand but Seabourn takes it to another level with its Caviar in the Surf party. The luxury cruise line extends its on-board service to gorgeous island beach locations, with staff wading through the water to deliver champagne and caviar. Guests are treated to drinks at a surfboard bar, followed by a lavish beach barbecue (think lobster and fine china). The experience is offered on various Seabourn cruises, with backdrops for the event having included Koh Kood Island in Thailand, Isla Catalina in the Dominican Republic and Prickly Pear Island in the British Virgin Islands.
SEABOURN.COM

5 HOTEL GROTTA PALAZZESE, ITALY
Watching the waves crash 20m below as you gaze out from a cave carved into the cliff-face would be a tourist drawcard in itself – but throw in white tablecloths, candlelight and fine dining, and you've got yourself an absolute must-do. The remarkable restaurant at Hotel Grotta Palazese – carved into the limestone cliff beneath the hotel itself – dates back centuries, since local nobility hosted banquets there in the 1700s. Those lucky enough to score a table are treated to dramatic views across the Adriatic Sea to complement the seafood-focused menu.
GROTTAPALAZESE.IT

WISH LIST ♦ WOW DINING



ANANTARA MUI NE

PICTURES: SUPPLIED



ENCHANTED FIG TREE



360° RESTAURANT



SIERRA MAR

6 ANDBEYOND NGORONGORO CRATER LODGE, TANZANIA
 The view from the rim of Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater is special in itself, but add a carpet of rose petals leading to a dining table with a butler ready to serve a feast ... wow. Food and views are inseparable at andBeyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, where the dining rooms feature carefully positioned mirrors so each guest can gaze at crater vistas throughout their meal. On special occasions, dancing and singing warriors form a Maasai guard of honour to escort guests to the dining room. There's an option to take a next-level picnic - a banquet on the crater floor, to immerse yourself in the wildlife haven.
ANDBEYOND.COM/NGORONGORO-CRATER-LODGE

7 THE ENCHANTED FIG TREE, KANGAROO ISLAND
 The evolution of Kangaroo Island into a gourmet destination has been something of a fairytale, so it seems only fitting the island has its own magical "dining room". A fig tree planted by the early settlers in the dunes at Snellings Beach provides the unique setting, and the menu is a captivating blend of local fare and global influences, such as Thai-style Kangaroo Island pork, local sashimi and lamb with seaside-foraged pickles. The Enchanted Fig Tree opens from December to mid-April, but during the winter months, visitors can enjoy the same hospitality at the property's 150-year old shearing shed.
HANNAFORDANDSACHS.COM.AU

8 AYANA RESORT AND SPA, BALI
 Resorts around the world are turning up the romance with their exclusive dinner-for-two options, and Ayana, together with sister resort Rimba Jimbaran, is among the masters. Between the two, there are 17 restaurants, cafes and bars to choose from, but if you really want to impress your partner, opt for one of the exclusive dining experiences on offer. You can float on a pond, have your table set up in a field of twinkling candles, enjoy a private Balinese dance performance or head to the resort's private jetty for a meal with your special someone.
AYANA.COM

9 360° RESTAURANT PIZ GLORIA, SWITZERLAND
 Almost 50 years since the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* featured scenes there, the revolving restaurant at the summit of Switzerland's Schilthorn is still, ahem, dining out on it. A 30-minute cableway ride takes visitors to the 2970m-high restaurant, which features "James Bond Brunch" and menu items including a "007 Burger" to accompany the alpine panorama. The restaurant takes 45 minutes to complete the circuit, gliding past more than 200 mountains including the Elger, Monch and Jungfrau peaks. Still got an appetite for all things Bond? There's also a Bond World exhibition and 007 Walk of Fame.
SCHILTHORN.CH

10 SIERRA MAR, CALIFORNIA, US
 Drinking in the striking views may already have you feeling light-headed - and then there are the 14,000 bottles of wine to choose from. The Sierra Mar restaurant, part of the luxury Post Ranch Inn resort, sits atop a 360m cliff alongside the Pacific Ocean just off California's Highway One at Big Sur. Its wine selection is among the largest in North America, but don't worry if you can't choose - the nine-course tasting menu comes with paired wines. Spread over 40ha, the whole resort is designed to harmonise with its magnificent surrounds, and the restaurant reflects that philosophy by featuring produce grown in the resort's organic garden.
POSTRANCHINN.COM