

The Best Hotels in the World



In the open: barefoot vibe at Jakes in Jamaica; the literary Book and Bed Asakusa hotel in Tokyo; the pool at LA's Hollywood Roosevelt, once frequented by Marilyn Monroe



Jamaica

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT

High up in the Blue Mountains, with wrap-around-veranda cottages and manicured lawns, **Strawberry Hill** reveals a different side to Jamaica. Drift from your wooden four-poster to the infinity pool overlooking Kingston, or go for a hike in the lush nearby hills. Keep your eyes peeled at breakfast: there's an on-site recording studio — you could spot the likes of Lily Allen there. Rooms sleeping three from £299, B&B; strawberryhillhotel.com.

THE SECRET BEACH SPOT

Barefoot vibes dominate at **Jakes**, a bohemian pad on a lick of beach in Jamaica's southwest. You're miles from airports and major beach resorts, which makes for quieter shores — and unlike at flash mega-resorts, you can get rooms from £92. If pockets allow, go for ocean views — candy-hued, sea-shell-bedecked oceanfront bungalows (from £320, room only) are the best. Doubles from £92, room only; jakeshotel.com.



And the best hotel in... BANGKOK

Slatted blinds and creamy walls ooze colonial nostalgia, but otherwise all's funky in boutique hotel **137 Pillars**. That includes a cool city-view roof pool and a location (Sukhumvit) very handy for hip, nocturnal Thonglor. Doubles from £504, B&B, with pre-dinner cocktails; 137pillars.com.

THE SEE-AND-BE-SEEN RESORT

Ian Fleming wrote his 007 tales in a cliffside house on the Jamaican north coast, now part of **GoldenEye**, a glam, low-key resort. Families come to laze in beach villas and to stand-up paddleboard around the lagoon; couples come to sink rum cocktails by stripped-back-chic, stilted beach huts overlooking lush hillside. Bring a crowd of 10 to hire Fleming's villa — it costs from £6,127 a night. Doubles from £434, room only; goldeneye.com.

Los Angeles

THE STARRY STAY

Unlike other historic LA hotels, the **Hollywood Roosevelt** radiates infamy and (hist)ory without looking tired. Its Spanish-casa style is as timeless as the palm-shaded pool terrace where Marilyn Monroe once idled (overlooked by the dazzling suite now named after her). Stake out a lounge before 10.30am — guests don't have priority. Doubles from £250, room only; thehollywoodroosevelt.com.

THE BUDGET BASE

At **Hotel Normandie**, the bones of a lovely '20s building are immaculately preserved, but cosy, hip touches (retro diner, chunky coffee mugs) make it homey. It's in trendy Koreatown, handy for delicious, cheap eats — and taxi-able to the sights. Hang around in the lobby at free-wine Happy Hour (4.30pm–6pm). Doubles from £120, room only; hotelnormandiela.com.

THE MODERN MOTEL

Across the Hollywood Hills from the Sunset Strip is the classic **Sportsmen's Lodge**. The location is the celeb-thronged Studio City. Its history embraces early Hollywood (Bette Davis and Clark Gable were regulars), then it was a faded motel. Now it's been resurrected as a retro hotel. Ask for a room away from the groups who often stay. Doubles from £149, room only; sportsmenslodge.com.

Tokyo

THE SKYSCRAPING STAY

Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo, by Shinjuku station, stretches across two towers, one rising a cloud-grazing 47 floors. Besides the many guest rooms, ranging from wallet-friendly to refurbished and spacious, there's a tea-ceremony space, reflexology salon and countless restaurants. Book a room on the Club floor (from £334, B&B) and from the free-food-filled lounge you'll see Mount Fuji. Doubles from £171, room only; keioplaza.com.

THE CAPSULE HOTEL

In historic Asakusa, **Book and Bed Asakusa** is one of the few capsule hotels selling doubles. Each pod — with a simple bed and curtain (by law, doors can't be locked) — is surrounded by bookcases. There's free wi-fi, earplugs and luggage storage. Doubles from £51, room only; bookandbedtokyo.com.

THE COSY RYOKAN

Set across several buildings in a sleepy neighbourhood north of museum-central Ueno, **Hanare** nails the ryokan aesthetic — tatami-mat floors, glass doors, neatly folded futons — and has its own *sentō* (public bath), free for guests. But — unusual for traditional inns — staff speak English and arrange local meals, bike hire and kimono-shopping. Doubles from £141, room only; hanare.hagiso.jp.