



The 3,000 sqm lagoon at Sea Temple Port Douglas, Australia

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From urban rooftop pads to mountain retreats and infinity edges, try these top swimming spots

1 Perivolos, Santorini, Greece

Cool factor Most photographed pool

If you've seen a pool grace the cover of a travel magazine, it's likely it was shot here. Images of the pool, melting into the Med with volcanic Santorini's two lava islands in the background, have graced the covers of *Sunday Times Travel*, *Condé Nast Traveller* and many others.

Details B&B double studios from £355 a night; 00 30 2286 0 71308, perivolos.gr

2 Fullerton Hotel, Singapore

Cool factor Skyscraper setting

The Fullerton used to be a post office, but has been rather grandly revamped. In theory its pool should be nothing special — not that long or wide — but its location has a wow factor that few hotels can match. Doing lengths while staring at skyscrapers is the most jetlag-zapping experience we know.

Details Trailfinders can book the Fullerton from £206 per double per night (room only), based on four nights' stay; 0845 0505871, trailfinders.com

3 Gansevoort Park Avenue New York

Cool factor Great for urban posing

Opening in July, the rooftop playground on this 249-room hotel spreads over three levels with an indoor-outdoor pool, and is for urbanistas more into posing than paddling. It is hotel guests only during the day, but opens to the public at night. You can eat lobster rolls or peanut butter and jam-flavour ice cream sandwiches.

Details Room-only doubles from £280 a night; 00 1 877 426 7386, gansevoorthotelgroup.com

4 Sea Temple Port Douglas, Australia

Cool factor From room to water in a hop

At this resort in North Queensland, the pool, or rather the lagoon, is the centre of attention — all 3,000 sq m of it, weaving throughout the grounds and gardens, interspersed with bridges and waterfalls and lots of tropical foliage. On some ground-floor rooms you can jump into the pool from your veranda. There's a golf and country club, too.

Details Bridge & Wickers can book a two-bedroom Swimout Villa (sleeping four adults, room only) from £394 a night; 020-7483 6555, www.bridgeandwickers.co.uk

5 Axel Hotel, Barcelona

Cool factor Pink paradise

Being able to take a rooftop dip seems to be the in-thing in Barcelona. OK, so the pool at the Axel is small, but then so is much of the swimwear at this hotel that chases the pink pound (and euro and dollar) but describes itself as "hetero-friendly". Looking great is de rigueur. Weekend pool parties heat things up with killer cocktails and DJs spinning tunes.

Details Room-only doubles from £103; 00 34 93 323 9393, axelhotels.com

6 Copacabana Palace, Rio de Janeiro

Cool factor Great celeb-watching

The hip kids may have moved to Ipanema beach, but the Copacabana Palace still exudes an air of glamour — and that goes for the pool, where presidents and pop stars do lengths, too. Come the weekend a mix of American yummy moneys and young locals pose around the shallow end sipping cocktails. And those people who look gorgeous enough to be models? That's because they probably are.

Details Room-only doubles from £305; 0845 0772222, copacabanapalace.com

7 The Big Texan Steak Ranch and Motel Amarillo, US

Cool factor Swim across America's second-largest state

Is everything bigger in Texas? Not if you spend too much time in this pool shaped like the Lone Star state itself. Hungry? Well, there's a steakhouse alongside — if you can eat the 72oz (2kg) monster in less than an hour, it's yours free. This being Texas, you can stable your horse, too.

Details Room-only doubles from £49; 001 806 372 6000, bigtexan.com

8 Four Seasons Hotel, Hong Kong

Cool factor Rooftop retreat

It can get pretty steamy in Hong Kong, so if sightseeing gets a bit too much, retreat here to the rooftop pool — with music piped under water — where you can swim and sunbathe with stunning views across the harbour to Kowloon. There's a spa, too, free for hotel guests to enter (you pay for treatments, of course), and once a week there's a morning poolside t'ai chi class.

Details Room-only doubles from £397 a night; 00 800 6488 6488, fourseasons.com/hongkong

9 Cambrian Hotel Adelboden, Switzerland

Cool factor Alpine idyll

High on a hill, goatherds wouldn't be so lonely if they had whirlpool baths, spas and infinity pools. The outdoor pool here has a bubbling massage bed, but best of all is the view of the mountains. The hotel has 71 rooms, a spa and restaurant serving "new Alpine cuisine". It's a five-minute walk from lifts and cable cars.

Details B&B doubles from £185 a night; 00 41 33 673 8383, thecambrianadelboden.com

10 The Olsen Melbourne, Australia

Cool factor Glass bottom

This hotel claims to have the world's largest glass-bottomed pool, so be careful what you wear lest the shoppers on Chapel Street below start pointing. If you would rather explore the Victorian capital, the hotel rents bikes from £3 an hour.

Details Black Tomato books room-only doubles from £135; 020-7426 9888, blacktomato.co.uk

11 Huvaafen Fushi Maldives

Cool factor Night-time galaxy lighting

It might seem strange that pools feature in a place that has beaches on which Bounty Bars dream of retiring, but not everyone likes sand in their cossie. Each of the 44 bungalows and pavilions has its own plunge pool, but the star is the infinity pool (26m long). Lit with fibre optics at night, it also has tables and chairs for a unique dining experience.

Details Elegant Resorts can book seven nights' B&B in a beach bungalow from £2,282pp (two sharing), including flights from Gatwick and transfers; 01244 897881, elegantresorts.co.uk

12 Jongomero Tanzania

Cool factor Added wildlife

Not one to do laps in (too small), but, still, there aren't many pools where you can watch buffalo wander by. Situated in Ruaha National Park, the pool makes a welcome stop-off after a safari drive.

Details Expert Africa offers nine-day Tanzania safaris that include Jongomero from £3,226pp (two sharing) with Heathrow flights, transfers and most meals and activities; 020-8232 9777, expertafrica.com

13 Duinrell Wassenaar, Netherlands

Cool factor Ten waterslides

Waterparks are great for keeping children amused, but only the bravest will tackle the 70-degree slide at Tiki tropical waterpark.

Details A week's break for a family of two adults and up to four children in a two-bedroomed mobile home costs £1,084 with return Dover-Calais crossings; 0844 4060319, keycamp.co.uk

14 The Scarlet hotel, Mawgan Porth, North Cornwall

Cool factor Chemical-free zone

A living reed bed and plants act as a natural filtration system for the outdoor pool. The indoor pool is also chemical-free and looks out on Mawgan Porth beach.

Details B&B doubles from £270; 01637 861800, scarlethotel.co.uk

15 The Mardan Palace Antalya, Turkey

Cool factor Shark "infested"

Swim with sharks in safety (a clear acrylic divider keeps them at bay) in a 900sq m swim-reef filled with saltwater.

Details Four-night B&B stays from £1,550, including flights from various UK airports. 020-7722 2288, elixirholidays.com

16 Las Ventanas al Paraíso Los Cabos, Mexico **Cool factor** Pools in paradise A serpentine network of six pools winds its way through this super-luxury resort, finishing in a beachfront infinity pool. Sit back, grab a margarita and look out on the Pacific.

Details B&B doubles from £380; 00 52 6241 442 800, lasventanas.com

17 Jade Mountain, St Lucia

Cool factor Views to dive for

There's an infinity pool with every room here. As a quirky touch, the recycled tiles used on each of the infinity pools are iridescent, with fibre optics illuminating them at night. Each one has a shallow water lounging area and a swimming area.

Details A week's room-only stay is priced at £3,295pp with flights from Gatwick; 01306 747002, kuoni.co.uk

18 Verdura Golf & Spa Sicily

Cool factor Double-decker infinity pool

Overlooking the seafront, the two-tier infinity pool is 80m (262ft) long and 45m wide — said to be the largest in Europe. At night the lanterns that surround it are lit.

Details B&B doubles are from £590 a night; 00 800 7666 6667, roccofortecollection.com

19 CastaDiva Lake Como, Italy

Cool factor Poolside arias

This "floating pool" is suspended in the waters of Lake Como. By night it is covered up and becomes a platform for a fantastic show of lights, fountains and waterjets.

Details Four nights' B&B costs from £950pp, including flights from Heathrow; 01488 689700, baileyrobinson.com

20 Feversham Arms & Verbena Spa Helmsley, North Yorkshire

Cool factor Perfect outdoor winter pool

You don't come to Yorkshire for a tan so it's good to know the outdoor pool here is heated to 32C (90F) all year (and open all year round) and is south-facing, so perfect for catching the rays in the summer.

Details B&B doubles from £150; 01439 770766, fevershamarmshotel.com