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Top 10 Romantic Hideaways

Californian wilderness & Burmese serenity

By Ethan Gelber

Intro | Ilha Grande (Brazil) & Prescott (Arizona) | Dalmatian Coast (Croatia) & Eureka (Arkansas) | Catalina Island (California) & Inle Lake (Myanmar) | Zanzibar (Tanzania) & Baxter State Park (Maine) | Cappadocia (Turkey) & Door County (Wisconsin) | Practicalities

Catalina Island, California

A one-hour boat ride is all it takes to land in the soft and nimble hands of the Catalina Island Conservancy, caretakers of this precious natural resource only 22 miles from downtown Los Angeles, yet a world away from the daily work grind. From the main town of Avalon (once home to Zane Grey), a determined duo would do best to secure a primitive boat-in campsite (and understand the rigorous Conservancy-set regulations), rent a kayak, and then make for the privacy of a hidden cove. By day, hike up into the surrounding hills and spy on the native bison or trek up to absorb the panoramic vista atop 2,069-foot Mount Orizaba. After a few days of easy roughing, hop a gas-powered golf cart (most other cars are restricted) to a cushy night in The Inn at Mount Ada. Looking down at the quiet lights of Two Harbors will smooth away any stubborn emotional wrinkles before your return to the mainland routine.



Room With a View: romantic lodgings, Catalina style. (EyeWire)

Inle Lake, Myanmar (formerly Burma)

From the busy mountain market town of Kalaw, a three-day, 25-mile meander crosses only one paved road on the way to Inle Lake, a shimmering paradise laced in by the hazy Shan Mountains. The gentle walk cuts through morning mists that mask unsigned local trails forged by the native Danu and Pa-O tribes. Travel with a guide—a chaperone if you like—who can share with you the rewarding simplicity of hearth-lit life in bamboo homes, your backcountry shelters on chilly nights at 3,500 feet. Select a more off-beat itinerary and you will feel like you are practically alone in these open lands, where small clusters of homes perch above fertile, contoured terraces of fruits and vegetables. When you emerge from the hills along the canal-cut shores of



Inle's mid-lake Buddhist sanctuary. (Ethan Gelber)

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Inle Lake, hire one of the longboat transports that cruise the water-girdled stilt-house communities of the Intha ("Sons of the Lake") people. Take a room in the main village of Nyaungshwe or in one of the stilt-built lake hotels and wile away an afternoon tryst watching the traditional "leg rower" fishermen, or pay a visit to floating farms, markets, and the mid-lake Buddhist monasteries and pagodas.

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Ethan Gelber, a freelance travel writer based in New York City, most appreciates the world from the saddle of his bicycle.

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