



10 Amazing Ranch Vacations You Can Book Right Now

Kelli Acciardo | *June 20, 2019*

It used to be that in order to sleep on a dude ranch, you had to actually visit the Wild West. Nowadays, modest farms, rural haciendas and ghost town holdouts have transformed into quaint hotels and luxury resorts offering ranch-style living. Think ample animal interaction, rustic settings and plenty of equestrian touches everywhere you turn. Hoteliers are even taking Western-inspired restaurants and amenities to the next level with game-centric menus, stable spas and the occasional general store. Ready to saddle up? Here are the ultimate American ranch vacations.

Calistoga Ranch, an Auberge Resort: Napa Valley, CA



While most Napa tourists can be found hopping around tasting rooms, smart travelers are at Calistoga Ranch living their best lives. Surrounded by lush greenery, bubbling creeks and rolling vineyards, it's a wilderness dream and the accommodations are top notch. Fifty secluded lodges are outfitted with al fresco rain showers—along with

soaking tubs and fireplaces—but the best part of your day will be selecting breakfast eggs from the chicken coop, right after saying hello to Olive and Pepper in the goat shed. Making new friends is a given here, as is relaxing in their award-winning spa, which boasts heated mineral pools made for forest bathing. Activities include hiking, horseback riding, hot air ballooning and even beekeeping, and The Lakehouse never disappoints with its locally sourced specialties and robust wine list.

The Horse Shoe Farm: Hendersonville, NC



Asheville-Henderson is causing quite the buzz these days thanks to a thriving culinary scene and its quirky personality, but a ranch-style sojourn in the Blue Ridge Mountains requires a stay at The Horse Shoe Farm. Located 20 minutes outside of town (and seven minutes from the airport), it's a haven for all things outdoorsy. Try your hand at skeet shooting, or dove and quail hunting (depending on the season), then embark on an introspective journey through their labyrinth or meditate in their silo perched high above the farm. They'll even arrange guided fly fishing trips in the surrounding private waters, as well as backcountry hiking in Pisgah National Forest and float trips down the French Broad River. HSF's compound of manor homes and cottages is perfect for large group gatherings and their stable-turned-spa couldn't be cuter. Decked in Navajo textiles with antler chandeliers, it promises restorative healing.

The Ranch at Rock Creek: Philipsburg, MT



If rodeo-themed campgrounds give you pause for concern, maybe you'll feel more comfortable vacationing at The Ranch at Rock Creek. This hideaway is situated on 6,600 acres of rugged Montana landscape and is somewhat of a legend, as the world's first ranch to earn the Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Award. As far as sleeping arrangements are concerned, they don't skimp. Choose from spacious suites in The Granite Lodge, authentic log cabins and historic barn accommodations, or chic canvas cabins along Rock Creek, ideal for roughing it in style. Not your average extracurriculars include the likes of clay shooting, geocaching and photography workshops, and come winter, horse-drawn sleigh rides and trips to Discovery Ski Area are typical—the alpine ski village is just 35 minutes away. At night, ranch guests congregate in the Silver Dollar Saloon to sip tipples on horse saddle stools and cheer on brave karaoke entertainers.

Mountain Horse Farms: Naples, NY



Nestled in the idyllic Finger Lakes region of central New York, Mountain Horse Farm is the quintessential wilderness getaway. A B&B, wellness retreat and horse farm sanctuary all rolled into one, it's exactly where you want to spend a few days away from it all either with friends, the fam and even solo. The background is picturesque thanks to the iconic red barn, and you have the option of staying in the modern Carriage House rooms (equipped with private hot tubs), the Lodge or in one of two handcrafted tipis. Spend your days cozied up by the lobby fireplace with a book from the library, vineyard hopping (there are wine, beer and cheese trails galore in these parts!) or participating in cow cuddling and equine therapy with their very lovable miniature horses. There's also a doggie hotel with 24/7 petsitting for your furry friend, while free breakfast, WiFi and self parking round out the list of perks.

Four Seasons Resort Rancho Encantado: Santa Fe, NM



It's called the Land of Enchantment for a reason and enchanted you will be, once the scent of burning piñon leads you up the road to the Four Seasons Resort Rancho Encantado. This luxurious New Mexico masterpiece is an all-season destination boasting an on-site Adventure Center, allowing guests to "choose their own adventure." Hit the slopes at the Santa Fe Ski Basin just 35 miles from the resort, go on a white water rafting, tubing or rappelling expedition, or catch dinner with the resort's fly-fishing experts later to be served as trout tacos prepared with the local delicacy—green chili. Guided hikes around Camino Encantado and Los Caminitos Canyon reveal colorful tales of how this popular "dude ranch," which came to life in the early 1900s, and has seen famous visitors such as John Wayne, Robert Duvall and even the Dalai Lama.

And of course, no Santa Fe holiday is complete without a tour of Georgia O'Keefe's Ghost Ranch.

Sorrel River Ranch Resort & Spa: Moab, UT



Relaxed luxury is the motto at Sorrel River Ranch Resort & Spa, a riverside oasis on the edge of Arches National Park in Moab. Surrounded by Utah's iconic arches and red rock mesas, it's pure magic and their never-ending list of amenities isn't too shabby, either. JJ's Mercantile (a nod to the general stores of yore), is their new locally-sourced mercantile market opening this summer. Stock up on goodies like old-fashioned candy, housemade granola bars, pre-made mess kit meals and even kombucha on tap. And let's not overlook the cornhole, badminton and bocce ball games. Meanwhile, kids will love the petting zoo, where they can mingle with chickens, pigs and ponies. (Night)life on the ranch consists of classic cowboy and cowgirl pastimes in the great outdoors: a rotating chef-driven garden dinner series followed by campfire s'mores and craft cocktails at Epic Bar inside the main lodge.

Tanque Verde Ranch: Tucson, AZ



When a digital detox calls, Tanque Verde Ranch is the answer. As one of the oldest and most well-known ranches in the U.S., it makes unplugging and unwinding the obvious move. And if you're traveling with little ones, you're in luck: This family-friendly destination offers day camps and a nature center for kids. With panoramic views of the Rincon Mountains and Saguaro National Park, it's sometimes hard to leave home base, but then you'd miss out on ranch activities and adventure rides, such as team penning or lope check. Near the main house you'll find pickle ball, tennis and an enticing resort-style pool, plus libations at Dog House Saloon. For those who wish to slumber under the stars, Under Canvas Tucson pops up on the ranch in the fall and delivers a one-of-a-kind glamping experience. Safari-inspired tents dot the craggy desert terrain and can hold up to seven people, but you needn't be weary of close quarters—each is furnished with Casper mattresses, high thread count linens and a wood-burning stove.

Carmel Valley Ranch: Carmel, CA



Consider Carmel Valley Ranch your adult playground headquarters. Situated on 500 vibrant acres in the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains, guests are treated to a 5-star farmstead experience. There's an organic garden for true farm-to-table feasts, a pinot noir vineyard, a salt house that harvests sea salt from nearby Monterey Bay, and a honeybee apiary, because why not? When you're not ogling the surrounding flora and fauna, test your skills at falconry and hatchet throwing, then continue your evening sampling the hyper-seasonal fare at Valley Kitchen. Afterward, retire to well-appointed suites featuring lantern-lit decks and soaking tubs for two. PS: Their 18-hole Pete Dye-designed course lures championship golfers from all over and their spa is anything but

the norm. Perched in a treetop alcove, it offers treatments inspired by four gardens: lavender, herb, alchemist, and Aiyana, the Cherokee word for “eternal blossom.”

Dunton Hot Springs: Dolores, CO



Dunton Hot Springs is a small, albeit exclusive, ranch resort nestled deep in Colorado’s San Juan Mountains. Although it can induce spooky vibes (it is a restored 19th-century ghost town after all), the scenic backdrop and hand-hewn log cabin accommodations will calm any nerves. Arrive to your rustic-meets-chic digs, unpack, then go for an immediate dip in the onsite natural hot springs. For centuries these seeps and springs—ranging in temps from 85°F to 106°F—have been curing tired limbs and make for an excellent daily ritual while visiting. As for other ways to pass the time, there’s cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, ice climbing frozen waterfalls (yes, really), sleigh rides pulled by Percheron stallions, followed by cozy dinners in the farmhouse. When the weather warms up, you can look forward to mountaineering, hiking or horseback riding, as you revel in the majestic beauty of the the Rockies from 14,000-foot peaks.