

Room with a View

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Given its lengthy history and varied cultures, Asia is full of heritage icons. Imperial citadels, moats, upturned eaves of massive but graceful roofs and even errant cannonballs; Asian landscapes are dotted with some of the most remarkable structures- both modern and historic. Give your feet some time off and ditch that guidebook this one time. Fortunately some places in Asia, offer **rooms with a picturesque view** so that you can stare at the icon in it's full flourish quite literally from your bed.

Imperial Palace Gardens from Palace Hotel, Tokyo



Aptly named the Palace Hotel Tokyo, you can get a spectacular view of black pines, so deliberately planted, upto the Imperial Palace Gardens while you dine on the outdoor terrace at Palace Hotel. Visible from nearly every room in the hotel, the Palace's Fujimi-yagura (Fuji-view Keep) is a lure to some of Tokyo's most hallowed ground. Though most of the palace's structures were lost to Allied bombing in May 1945, the grounds make for fascinating perambulation, from the Nijūbashi bridge to the Ninomaru Gardens to the aji-stone cased walls and ramparts evoke the romantic appeal of vanished Japan.

Taipei 101 from Grand Hyatt, Taipei



Of all the luxury hotels in Taiwan, Grand Hyatt Taipei is the closest to Taipei 101. Many of the hotel's 853 guest rooms and suites, offer striking, close-up views of its famous neighbor, which from 2004 to 2010 was the tallest building in the world. The iconic skyscraper's jade green facade pays homage to its Asian roots, as do the architectural flourishes that enhance the metaphor of a bamboo stalk. It is a treat to watch the fireworks from their roof on New year's Eve, only if you have Presidential suite access.

Galle Face Green from Galle Face Hotel, Colombo

The Galle Face Green has been a popular park for more than 150 years. In the 19th century the five-hectare plot had a number of incarnations – from a horse racing track to the site of the Royal Colombo Golf Club. In 1856 a seaside promenade was added so ladies could take a stroll. Today the path is bustling with street vendors, while the green patch hosts impromptu cricket games, children flying kites and family picnics. The Galle Face Hotel's North Wing has unobstructed views of Colombo's largest open space. In March every year the hotel hosts a Cannon Ball Run along the green. Diplomats race through the park following the path of an errant cannonball from 1845 that landed in the Dutch villa (at the site of the current hotel) and that is still on display in the hotel's museum.

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The Intha Fishermen in Inle Lake from Sanctum Inle Resort, Myanmar



Commanding the banks of one of Myanmar's most compelling tourist destinations, Inle Lake, Sanctum Inle Resort affords a window to the iconic Intha fishermen. As famous as the storied lake itself, spanning 120 square kilometers 800 meters above sea level, the fishermen expertly propel their teak boats across the water with a singular, one-legged rowing style and snare their catches with large, conical-framed nets made from bamboo. It's believed the extraordinary show of strength, balance and dexterity the fishermen learn as children evolved as early as the 12th Century. Their upright rowing stance has been handed down the generations as it allows them to better detect pockets of reeds, potentially harboring fish, and bubbles, a telltale sign of tilapia, snakehead or some other prized species of fish to later sell at the markets to support their families.

The Reverie Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City



Known to the colonial French as rue Catinat, today's Dong Khoi Street is the most intriguing thoroughfare in Vietnam. Bracketed at one end by the Saigon River, and at the other by the 1877-built Notre Dame Cathedral, Dong Khoi is a marvel of architecture and daily life. However attractive the old school French architecture maybe, Vietnamese shophouses and street life stands out – the soup vendors and shoeshine boys, the streams of upscale shoppers and the endless parade of Vietnamese traffic, from bicycles to Rolls Royce automobiles. From the Reverie's upper floors, another icon – the Saigon River – loops from the downtown over a plain that stretches all the way to the Mekong Delta.

Words and pictures contributed by By Bart Conley.

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