

# Condé Nast Traveller

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RESORTS

THE WORLD'S BEST FAMILY HOLIDAYS

RIDING • SURFING • FORAGING • ROAD TRIPPING • TREKKING • BEACH BREAKS • CITY HITS





# SKILL SETS

LOOK SHARP AND TOOL UP WITH FRESH TALENTS

9-10  
Red Russian  
Red Russian  
Radish  
Vates Kale  
Arugula  
Vates Kale  
Arugula  
Vates Kale  
Arugula

CASPIAN BASINGA  
PINK





## THE SKILL: GARDENING

## BABYLONSTOREN, SOUTH AFRICA

There can be few places where the farm-to-table journey is explained in such a bucolic way. Babylonstoren is one of the best preserved *werfs* (farmyards) in the Cape. All of the 300 varieties of plants in the garden are grown for eating, from lemon cucumbers and Chantenay Karoo carrots to nuts and berries. There's a mulberry orchard and a bee garden as well as hedgehogs, ducks and chickens to help everything from snail control to pollination. Owned by ex-magazine editor Karen Roos and her media-mogul husband Koos Bekker, this delightful farmstay marries an historic Cape Dutch homestead with a contemporary aesthetic. Take the original manor house as a whole, or there are one- and two-bedroom cottages with Dutch-style gables, open fireplaces and kitchens in glass-walled extensions. Early morning walkabouts can be booked with the gardeners so parents get a lie-in as their green-fingered brood help collect fruit, vegetables and eggs for the two restaurants, before feeding the resident (and very vocal) donkeys. There are giant man-made birds' nests in the bamboo garden big enough to sit in. The Spekboom labyrinth is another favourite with kids who soon learn how to activate the secret water spouts by way of hidden pebbles. And when the South African sun gets too much, a pedal-powered ice-cream van can be hunted down.

**INSIDER TIP** The owners are tinkering away on a similar project at the Grade II-listed Hadspen House in Somerset, which should open in 2018.

**BOOK IT** Africa Travel offers four nights from £5,295 for two adults and one child, including flights, breakfast, guided garden tour, farm walk, cycling, canoeing and car hire. +44 20 7843 3591; [africatravel.com](http://africatravel.com)

## THE SKILL: MUSIC

## SCHLOSS ELMAU, BAVARIA

With jagged mountain peaks, blankets of deep-green forest and distant high pastures, this dramatic setting is just an 80-minute flight from London. It's quicker to get to than Norfolk on a Friday night. There are roaring fires, gin and tonics on tap, and charcoal-linen Patricia Urquiola armchairs to climb into. And yet a scrabble of six-year-olds has just steamed through and a toddler bounces on the Andrew Martin fabric-covered sofa, while in the lobby, teens are sizing up which bicycles to take out for a spin. This may be an elegant grown-up retreat but kids are king. There are mini 'yogi-tainment' sessions, swings and seesaws in the clearings, ping-pong tables among the pine trees, and an exemplary family spa with saunas and steam rooms. The year-round, happy-making weather – snowy winter, blue skies and sunshine in July and August, balmy spring and autumn – makes the schloss suitable for all three half-terms, and is an excellent summer holiday too. The typical guest is an educated one, so here is the largest independent hotel bookshop in the world, with a delicious gathering of hardbacks, mostly in German; writers such as Ian McEwan and TC Boyle visit regularly for seminars and readings.

The arts programme runs a blockbuster timetable that sees 225 concerts across the year from world-class pianists, jazz musicians and even Bill Murray, who is appearing in July for an evening of comic chatter and music. Budding musicians will love the activities on offer – from choral classes to making and learning to play instruments such as the ukulele. There are drama courses, chess weeks that sell out instantly and all manner of sport, plus a kids' club open until 9pm so parents can enjoy dinner in the Michelin-starred restaurant, Luce d'Oro. This is a place that just totally gets it.

**INSIDER TIP** Stay in The Retreat rather than the main house. It has an outdoor pool that is steaming warm in winter and joyfully cool in summer.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays offers four nights from £1,119 per adult and £199 per child, based on two adults and one sharing, half board, including flights and transfers. +44 207 843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk](http://healingholidays.co.uk)

