

UNPLUGGED IN STYLE

Leave Wi-Fi behind and find what you really want to connect to

Isolation Therapy was popular back in the 80s, when sensory deprivation tanks allowed people to float in soundproof pools of Epsom salts. The idea was to restrict the stimulation from the environment, and reset the nervous system. This was before hyperconnectivity took over, and the overload of information surpassed our capacities to be engaged in and out of the digital realm. The pressure is strong and there is almost no way to win. The fear of missing out when we have a beautiful meal in front of us works both ways: for missing out on tasting and enjoying it to the fullest, by being present in every bite; and for missing out on sharing and recommending this absolute pleasure to our community. Social media-driven anxieties often come from an excess of decision-making on the go, and the need to stay current and feel likable on a 24/7 loop of feedback. You don't need to be addicted to feel the benefits of disconnecting, nor get into a tank to feel peace. Purposely limited Wi-Fi, in spectacular settings and an architecture designed to encourage sensorial wandering, help

people recover from an excess of connectivity and find their happy middle ground. "We're so used to being connected to our phones, that it's a shock to our system when we can't rely on them. When I went to Patagonia, I'd



An ideal place to disconnect is the Tierra Patagonia hotel, in Chile, with breathtaking views of Lake Sarmiento and the beautiful peaks of Torres del Paine.

set up international roaming for my trip, but ended up having no service, which was a blessing," said Camilla Liou, 33, a successful finance professional in New York City. On her nine-day vacation, she traveled solo to Chile and decided to spend three days in Torres del Paine National Park, with the intention to find balance. "As much as living in NYC inspires me, there's something to be said about being completely surrounded by nature and seeing what amazing natural beauty there is in the world—something a run in Central Park can't compare to. After a while of living in NYC, you get used to the sounds and smells of the city. So when you get away, there's initially a sense of disorientation. But being disconnected allows you to commune with nature in such a special way—it's so quiet at night that you can hear the quiet," she added.

This digital detox comes with a different kind of overload. It is not about depriving or isolating you, it's about replacing what you connect to. If you

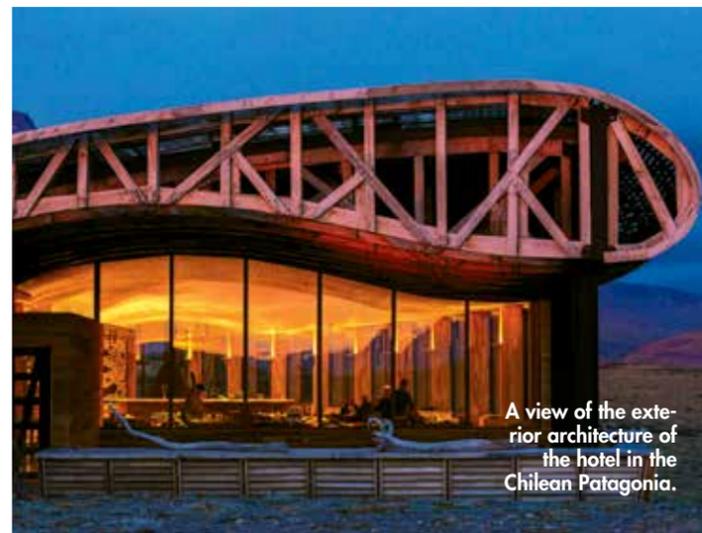
remember to connect in a less artificial way, it's easy to discover what you want to experience in specific circumstances.

Liou stayed in Tierra Patagonia Hotel & Spa, an award-winning, all-inclusive National Geographic Unique Lodge, in the outskirts of the Torres del Paine with breathtaking views of Lake Sarmiento and the beautiful peaks that give the park its name. With the philosophy of an "Adventure Spa," the lodge has limited cellphone service. Wi-Fi is available only in certain common areas and there are no TVs in the rooms.

"The first thing about Tierra is that you don't notice it at first, it blends perfectly into its surroundings. You notice guanacos and nandus [local animals] long before you see the hotel. The tour guides and treks were thoughtful, they were well informed and spotted animals (like four baby pumas) that our cellphone-strained eyes couldn't see at first. Every aspect of the stay was thought out so you could focus on enjoying the experience."

If you are looking to connect with nature, you can choose if you want to spend the day reading in a library constructed with sustainably harvested, local Lenga wood, with views of the mountain and the lake, or to actually hike the mountain, kayak the lake, or just sip a drink in the outdoor Jacuzzi and look at the sky.

"You're forced to look at your surroundings, and you realize your neck and shoulders start to relax a little because you're not staring down at your phone, and you get the sense that your eyesight probably benefits too. Although it feels as though you've escaped the real world, the purpose isn't to escape, but to become more attuned with yourself." Think of it as going back to nature in style. ■ —ANGELA LANG



A view of the exterior architecture of the hotel in the Chilean Patagonia.



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