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Travel Destinations for *Game of Thrones* Superfans Who Love Design

By [Juliet Izon](#)



An aerial view of King's Landing, which is largely shot on location in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

AD's spotlight on the most notable hotels, sites, and, of course, filming locations from Iceland to Morocco HBO's *Game of Thrones* is certainly superlative in a number of areas, as any die-hard "thronie" can attest. Apart from having one of the largest production budgets of any TV show in history—each episode of the final season is rumored to clock in at around \$15 million—the show is also notable for its breadth of filming locations, many of which shot simultaneously during the show's eight-season run. Westeros, the fictional continent that *GoT* characters inhabit, has climates ranging from the freezing and barren terrain home to The Wall, to the sunny and temperate Free City of Pentos. For verisimilitude, this meant filming in locations ranging from Iceland to Morocco.

With the premiere of the final season approaching on April 14, now is the perfect time to plan the ultimate *Game of Thrones* vacation: a mix of these countries' most notable hotels, sites, and, of course, filming locations. Read on for four trips around the world that are ideal for anyone looking to channel their inner Targaryen, Stark, or Lannister.

Croatia



The Jesuit Stairs in Dubrovnik's Old City—one of the city's best-preserved examples of Baroque architecture—as seen in the show.

As home to King's Landing, the capital of Westeros, the city of Dubrovnik may get more screen time than any other locale. Its Old City is packed with tourists—many of them there specifically to see the show's filming locations—but it rewards visitors with charming, narrow streets and diverse architecture. Stradun, the area's main thoroughfare, may be the most infamous of any shooting location: It was here that Cersei Lannister suffered her naked penance walk through screaming crowds. Those interested in delving deeper into the architecture of Dubrovnik and Croatia as a whole should book [On Foot Holiday's](#) 7-night journey. The self-guided walking route allows travelers to go at their own pace while they explore everything from the ancient city walls to sun-soaked Elafiti islands like Lopud and Sipan.



Dubrovnik's Hotel Excelsior.

In Dubrovnik, however, there's one hotel that's a must-stay for any fervent fan. Adriatic Luxury Hotels' [Hotel Excelsior](#) is where the crew stayed while filming the final season, and the recently renovated 1913 royal villa is one of the city's crown jewels. Guests there are in good company: In addition to stars of the series, Queen Elizabeth II and Elizabeth Taylor were also guests in years past.

Iceland



Iceland's beautiful, barren landscape serves as the backdrop for both the Eyrie on *Game of Thrones* and scenes involving the Night's Watch and wildlings.

No country has seen as sharp an uptick in tourism from what *The Telegraph* calls the “Game of Thrones effect” like Iceland. Visitors to this small island nation increased a whopping 340 percent from 2010 to 2018, due in no small part to rabid fans of the show. It’s now easier to find tour operators who weave *GoT* sites into their itineraries, like [CIE Tours’](#) Taste of Iceland. The six-day trip visits both Thingvellir National Park, home of the Eyrie on the show, as well as the wintry Skaftafell National Park and its tongue-twisting glacier Svínafellsjökull, where scenes of the Night’s Watch and wildlings were filmed.



Svartifoss waterfall, Skaftafell, in Vatnajökull National Park.

Rugged national park trekking calls for an equal amount of pampering, and no hotel does it more beautifully than [ION Adventure Hotel](#), located near the famed Golden Circle route and Thingvellir. Savvy guests book a room during the kaleidoscopic northern lights season, but travelers year-round can take advantage of the property’s natural spa with sauna and an outdoor hot pool.

Morocco



Ait Ben Haddou, near Marrakech, serves as Yunkai in the show.

The sunny climes of this North African country have often stood in for Westeros's more southern points. One of the most notable is UNESCO World Heritage site Ait Ben Haddou, a 17-century grouping of adobe kasbahs near Marrakech. The impressive rust-colored structures were used as Yunkai, a Slaver's Bay city-state that Daenerys Targaryen liberates with the help of her Unsullied army. The area is also a popular spot for Hollywood films: Both *The Mummy* and *Gladiator* were shot here as well. Outfits like [Naya Traveler](#) can organize private journeys to the area, providing guests with luxury perks like a hot-air balloon flight over the site, or an on-the-ground tour with an architecture expert.



Inside the L'Heure Bleue Palais hotel in Morocco.

A few hours further west is the azure-hued coastal town of Essaouira, whose name means “little picture” in Arabic. Unsurprisingly, then, it is also a featured location in the show, serving as the city of Astapor in Slaver's Bay, where Daenerys meets her army of the Unsullied. Luckily, real-world travelers are treated to much better conditions than what Daenerys encountered: The luxury Relais & Châteaux property [L'Heure Bleue Palais](#) is a swank riad with four restaurants, cooking classes, and a hammam and spa.

Northern Ireland



The Dark Hedges, in the misty climes of Northern Ireland.

Home to the show's headquarters at Paint Hall Studios, the verdant countryside of Northern Ireland is also host to nearly two dozen filming locations (and counting). One of the most picturesque is the Dark Hedges, a beautiful grouping of mature beech trees that line a road near Stranocum in County Antrim. On the show, it stands in for the Kingsroad, notably during a scene when young Arya Stark escapes from King's Landing.

Those looking to delve even deeper into the country's *GoT* history should book a tour through bespoke itinerary company [Original Travel](#). Their four-day trip introduces guests to everyone from the official *Game of Thrones* weapon master to a family-owned jewelry shop that produced many of the show's custom pieces.



The historic façade of Belfast's Merchant Hotel.

And while urban Belfast is certainly not a stand-in for any part of Westeros, no trip would be complete without a stay in this vibrant city. Design-minded travelers should make a beeline for [The Merchant Hotel](#), where the luxe rooms are either Art Deco- or Victorian-themed.

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