



Bab Ourika

Ourika Valley, Morocco

The best vibe in the Atlas mountains. It's new but looks like a 17th-century mud fort, clutching to its own gorgeous, orange, iron-oxide crag. It's a place to hang out, to relax by the pool, beyond a lavender garden and surrounded by bleached apricot trees. Or explore the rugged landscape with dashing Berber guides in their bright blue headdresses. The walks are spectacular, but mountainbiking is even better (it's unbelievably fun, both thrilling and terrifying). The hotel is built around two shady courtyards, and high-ceilinged rooms have the same stylish Forties look as Rick's Café in *Casablanca*. They're good-looking and big, with alcove sitting rooms and baths set high up in the walls commanding huge views of the surrounding stillness. Wake up to the distant bleat of black goats. **Website** babourika.com. **UK reservations** Black Tomato (tel: 020 7426 9888). **Rates** Double, from £140.

Fjällnäs

Tännadalen, Sweden

This last-post no-man's-land feels like *Doctor Zhivago* – but with central heating. They say there are eight seasons here (including eternal sun and black snow) simply because, perched beside a remote lake, one minute you'll be bathed in golden light, the next adrift on a tumultuous storm. Once a royal hunting lodge, with extensive skiing, tundra-chic Fjällnäs is something rich and strange and otherworldly. There's a spa – you get to wear cold pixie hats to keep you cool in the sauna – and then imperative leaping into exhilaratingly icy water. The food is excellent thanks to Jens, the handsome chef who also takes guests out dog sledding. **Website** fjallnasreserve.com. **UK reservations** Black Tomato (tel: 020 7426 9888). **Rates** Double, from £300, full board.



Amangiri

Utah, USA

Most people associate Aman with the East; with jungles and temples and rainforests. But actually its American properties rock: they manage to maximise the frontier wilderness, to frame it, suck it up and take you in. What a stunning place. This desert, where Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico converge, has a reputation for its cruelty. It's harsh, it's hot, a rose-gold wasteland of sand compressed over millions of years. So Aman's bare concrete Bauhaus vibe is MI5 perfect. Get on a bike, take helicopter tours, hike for a couple of hours and find a picnic laid out on a plateau at the top. There's nothing here. It's a retreat, quiet and elemental; from time to time there's a wind storm – dramatic and exotic. Sit in the middle of the big open windows in your room by your own fire and unhook. Impressive wilderness glamour. **Tel** 001 435 675 3999 **Website** amanresorts.com. **Rates** Double, from £495. ▷

