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INTRODUCTION



Once upon a time we went on vacation to treat ourselves – to indulge in food and drink, tour sights and maybe partake in a little retail therapy. But recently there has been a shift in the reasons many of us go away. More and more of us are seeking a new kind of break – one far from the stresses and chaos of modern-day life, where we can focus on our health and wellbeing. Wellness tourism has become a booming industry, with retreats opening faster than a high-intensity yoga vinyasa.

For this book we asked wellness experts and travel writers from around the globe to tell us about their favourite wellness holiday spots. We soon discovered that ‘wellness’ means different things to different people – while some want to slow down and concentrate on sleep and nutrition, others want to be energised by creative endeavours. Our book covers the full array of wellness escape, from yoga retreats in India and hot spring resorts in Australia to Buddhist meditation temples in Korea and writers’ retreats in Paris.

Don’t know where to start? Our five chapters will help you navigate the vast choice of retreat out there. Each corresponds to how you may want to feel: Active, Calm, Healthy, Indulged or Inspired. Within each chapter, the profiles are labelled with the main wellness features you can enjoy while at the retreat – be they outdoor adventure, spa treatments, nutrition or others. The practicalities panel gives you an indication of the price and type of food served at the retreat, while the On Your Doorstep feature lets you know what there is to explore in the region beyond the retreat itself.

We hope that this book will inspire you to start planning the ‘new you’. To book a trip that will help improve your health and wellbeing, and make changes that should last long after your holiday is over.



WANDERLUST

VARIOUS LOCATIONS // Wanderlust holds mindful triathlons that feature yoga, meditation and a 3-mile (5km) run in 25 city parks from Santiago, Chile to Calgary, Canada. Need more? It adds mountain biking, paddle boarding and DJs to the mix at its multi-day fests in adventure towns. // WWW.WANDERLUST.COM

FITNESS ON THE ROCKS

USA // Some 10,000 people fill Colorado's famed Red Rocks Amphitheatre for this day-long, mountain-surrounded fitness fest. Participants stretch in yoga classes, dance in Zumba classes and kick in martial arts classes, while DJs stoke the sweat and tears. Cool-down is via an epic water gun fight. // WWW.FITNESSONTHEROCKSCOLORADO.COM

BHAKTI FEST

USA // The otherworldly landscape of Joshua Tree, California, sets the scene for six days of hardcore yoga, meditation and devotional music. Workshops cover tantric practices, the contemplation of existence and personal growth. World-renowned teachers pack the schedule. // WWW.BHAKTIFEST.COM

BALI SPIRIT FESTIVAL

INDONESIA // Over 6000 wellness seekers descend on Ubud for a week of health and wellbeing workshops. There are yoga classes across all traditions, sitar-led meditations, dharma talks and trippy concerts featuring everything from gamelan music to bamboo flutes and tribal rock. // WWW.BALISPIRITFESTIVAL.COM



SOUL CIRCUS

UK // Buzzy wellness trends meet hip music fest at this three-day bash in England's Cotswolds region. By day festival goers join in blindfolded yoga, aerial classes, gong baths and reggae meditation. By night they dance to funky bands and DJ-fuelled after-parties in the woods. // WWW.SOULCIRCUS.YOGA

LOVEFIT

UK // LoveFit materialises for three days at a genteel estate in Kent, England. Think of it as a gym in the forest, offering yoga, spin classes, trail runs and dodgeball games amid the trees. It morphs into a glowy electronic dance music festival in the evenings. // WWW.LOVEFITFESTIVAL.COM

WELLNESS FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

ENVISION FESTIVAL

COSTA RICA // Set in a humble Costa Rican village where the rainforest meets the beach, Envision is all about consciousness-raising and transformation. It's a four-day extravaganza of fire dancers, performance artists, yoga classes, astrologers, environmental workshops and dreamy beats from international musicians. // WWW.ENVISIONFESTIVAL.COM



INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL

INDIA // Held in Rishikesh, India – the birthplace of yoga – this week-long festival draws yogis from around the globe. They come for lectures and training, to flow in enormous group classes, to bliss out to chanting and tabla drums, and to meet yoga's spiritual masters. // WWW.INTERNATIONALYOGAFESTIVAL.ORG



SPIRITFEST

SOUTH AFRICA // A bucolic farm in South Africa's Western Cape welcomes all who want to nourish the self. This alcohol- and smoking-free five-day event features lots of yoga, camping and even shamanic dance if you so desire it. // WWW.SPIRITFEST.CO.ZA

GROOVE FESTIVAL

VARIOUS LOCATIONS // Groove puts on intimate, weekend-long gatherings that offer plenty of yoga, ambient music, creative play, sound baths and community-building workshops. Events take place in Canada and Germany, but also pop up in other countries, such as Croatia and India. // WWW.THEGROOVEFESTIVAL.COM





Active



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● Outdoor Adventure ● Fitness Classes

AUSTRALIA GOLDEN DOOR

- Restorative yoga and mindfulness classes
- A range of fitness classes for all levels in scenic surrounds

If you are looking for the perfect all-inclusive health retreat package, book into one of the 74 luxury villas at Golden Door's Elysia Health Retreat and Spa in the stunning Hunter Valley. Enjoy sweeping views across neighbouring mountain ranges and vineyards as you work towards your wellness goals.

While Elysia offers indulgent and pampering treatments, the retreat is about far more than a good massage. Visitors can enjoy a range of activities, from qigong, t'ai chi and yoga to Pilates and even high-intensity cardio activities, such as boxing and water polo. If you like your exercise outdoors, embark on one of the many guided walks, a hike through the Hunter Valley or an outdoor military-style boot camp.

The retreat hopes to inspire a lifetime of healthy living and also offers a daily workshop or seminar on topics ranging from work-life balance to nutrition. For those wanting to learn more about anything from kung fu to swimming-stroke correction, book in for a private session at the Elysia Wellness Centre. Let an expert in nutrition, movement or restoration provide tailored tutoring to help you reach your goals.

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Just 2½ hours from Sydney, Elysia is nestled in the scenic Hunter Valley, one of Australia's oldest wine regions. Visit a farmers market, float above it all in a hot-air balloon or enjoy the scenery on a hike.

\$ 1-week program in a one-bedroom villa single AU\$4395
100 Delicious healthy vegetarian meals

☛ Pokolbin, Hunter Valley, NSW
+61 2 4993 8500
www.goldendoor.com.au

● Yoga ● Outdoor Adventure

active 11

COOK ISLANDS

WORKOUT ON WATER SUPYOGA RETREAT

- Mastering yoga poses on a stand-up paddleboard while tropical fish dart through colourful coral beneath you
- Cross-island hikes



Real-life Moana Charlotte Piho is known for singing tunes from the movie as she paddles out on to the lagoon with guests. And she knows all the words.

This former Sydney-sider has a background firmly planted in the Cooks – you'll meet her dad Tuhe on the retreat – but her previous city existence gives her an insight into what her clients are looking for when they arrive, and what they are escaping from.

Rarotonga is a magical place and during the week-long retreats Piho showcases the best of the island. She takes guests out to the prettiest parts of the lagoon where she teaches yoga classes that challenge just a little bit. If you've never done a headstand while floating over a coral reef, now is your chance. Piho has also incorporated into her retreats a hand-picked selection of adventures from around Rarotonga including cross-island hikes and local dance lessons.

The accommodation – in a beachside house – is basic but the food is abundant; the volcanic soil produces the delicious organic fruits and vegetables that you'll feast on and the waters provide fresh fish dinners. Enjoy rehydration from coconut water (direct from coconuts you might have husked yourself). As well as soaking up the rays, you'll soak up a bit of the Moana feel just by hanging with Piho.

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Climb the island's mountain, hop on a bicycle or scooter and do a loop around the island (approx 18 miles; 30km), or catch the round-island bus. Enjoy the bustle of the Saturday morning market in Avarua.

\$ 6-night retreat AU\$1450
100 Chia, quinoa, fresh fish, fruits and coconuts are all on the menu

☛ Rarotonga, Cook Islands
www.workoutonwater.com

"No SUPYoga class is the same: you might be joined by a school of birds, butterflies, flying fish or a stunning rainbow. The water beneath you, the fresh air, sky and nature surrounding you...it provides a spiritual enlightenment which I really can't put into words."

Charlotte Piho, master SUPYoga teacher and internationally certified yoga teacher

COSTA RICA

SAMASATI RETREAT & RAINFOREST SANCTUARY

- Week-long retreats with stand-up paddleboard yoga, acro yoga and qigong
- Rainforest enclave with waterfall bathing, guided hikes and bird watching



The canopy resonates with the call of howler monkeys.

Three-toed sloths swing in the trees. There is the rare green glint of the resplendent quetzal, or the turquoise flash of a blue morpho butterfly. Just over 250 acres (100 hectares) of pristine rainforest, containing some of Central America's most sought-after birds and animals for wildlife watching, unfolds before you at an altitude of 4593ft (1400m), distantly rimmed by the Caribbean Sea. Namaste to the Samasati Retreat, one of Costa Rica's foremost yoga getaways.

In two beautiful hexagon-shaped buildings – one for yoga and one for meditation – surrounded by thick jungle, guests can take part in courses ranging from acro yoga to t'ai chi and qigong (the Chinese system of breathing, meditation and coordinated movement).

Yoga retreats, among the continent's best and quite possibly conducted within the continent's most spectacular setting, typically embrace the stunning nature that begins within stretching distance of your mat. Visits to the Caribbean coast, and trips into the jungle, hiking and wildlife watching, are included in most packages. Amongst the more singular yoga experiences is stand-up paddleboard yoga, carried out on a nearby stretch of photogenic shoreline. It is all good, peaceful fun. You can also try unwinding in the resort's outdoor

jacuzzi, soaking up the sights and sounds of the jungle, or swinging from a hammock outside your ecologically friendly casita.

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Puerto Viejo, with its top-rated surfing, is 4 miles (7km) away. Also close is a tempting swath of coastline containing many of Costa Rica's best beaches. The Parque Nacional Cahuita, an important sea turtle nesting ground with superb coral reefs, is just north.

\$ Week-long yoga retreat from US\$1040

101 Caribbean/
Central American/
Mediterranean fusion

By Puerto Viejo de
Talamanca, Limon
+506 8428 3918
www.samasati.com



COSTA RICA, GREECE, SPAIN, ZANZIBAR

WILDFITNESS

- Back-to-basics outdoor workouts
- Multiple locations, with sessions tailored to each environment



The brainchild of Kenya-born Tara Wood, Wildfitness is a back-to-basics bootcamp that teaches movement, intra-personal skills and nutrition all in the context of the great outdoors. Wood takes inspiration from our hunter-gatherer ancestors in her belief that nature is our best teacher, and that our bodies are our most useful tool. Each Wildfitness retreat focuses on teaching attendees to move with purpose, to interact with their surroundings creatively and collaborate with each other playfully and joyfully.

Retreats are held in locations with wildly different climates and environments, from the jungles of Costa Rica to the beaches of Zanzibar and the mountains of Crete. Immersed in each landscape you will learn to climb mountain peaks, explore gorges, surf, canoe and swim across glorious coral gardens. Just as each retreat is completely different so, too, is each day, with physical

activities broken up with bite-sized lectures on the Wildfitness philosophy. Coaches are dedicated and great fun, specialising in fields as varied as dance, free diving and bushcraft.

While the physical activities are challenging, the group bonding and bonhomie are inspiring and the variety keeps you pushing through. Dirty, hungry and tired at day's end, guests are rewarded with an on-site sauna, stretching yoga sessions, massages and a fireside dinner.

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Each retreat allows time for off-site eco-adventures and cultural experiences. Cookery lessons are also a constant feature and allow you to get to grips with local recipes.

\$ 7-night retreats from £1300pp

101 Menus feature lean meat, fish and vegetables

+7415 884 312
www.wildfitness.com



FIJI

MATANIVUSI

- Surf the world-famous Frigates
- Daily yoga classes held overlooking the lush rainforest



Swaying coconut palms, colourful tropical flowers, pawpaw trees, a soundtrack of calming rainforest sounds and a pristine coastline – it’s hard to imagine anyone can be bothered doing any physical activity in surrounds like this. But this boutique eco-resort, situated on Fiji’s Coral Coast, is one of the best places to combine relaxation with some hardcore surfing. There is surf year-round but two distinct seasons: from April to October surfers can expect consistent ground swells up to around 8–10ft (2.5–3m), while December to April brings more tropical conditions with shorter duration swells of one to three days. The big draw is the world-famous Frigates, a long peeling left-hander 12 miles (20 km) offshore. The surf breaks are all over coral reef and conditions are best for experienced and confident surfers. Matanivusi offers two-hour surf lessons to get you up on your feet.

Designed by an Australian architect and surfer, the resort features accommodation bures (traditional straw-and-wood huts) with large decks that are perfect for taking in views of the ocean and rainforest. There is also a cocktail bar and heated spa. Everything has been designed to have minimal interruption with the natural environment.

If you need to stretch out your muscles after pounding the waves, daily yoga classes are

held in a stunning studio built on an elevated wooden deck overlooking the lush rainforest.

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Surrounded by the turquoise waters of the Coral Coast, there are endless water activities to keep you going here: snorkel among clown fish and sea turtles, dive with schools of barracuda or jump in a kayak for an evening paddle.

\$ All-inclusive per night for a couple FJ\$1075
100% Fijian and Indian cuisine
.....
✦ **Coral Coast,**
+679 992 3230
<http://surfingfiji.com>



