

30 spa holidays for a happier, healthier new year



Banish that work-from-home back: Four Seasons Resort at Landaa Giraavaru CREDIT: DON RIDDLE IMAGES/DON RIDDLE

- [Suzanne Duckett](#), SPA EXPERT

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After nearly a year of being grounded, trips taken from here on have to count on so many levels – personally, professionally, psychologically and ecologically. Whether you admit it or not, the enforced slow down and more time spent with yourself, your partner or your family has unearthed some home truths.

Lack of routine has led, for many, to comfort eating, sporadic exercise, wine being cracked open most evenings and an increased dependency on digital technology. This will be the year to reset and redress the meaning of “well-travelled” in every sense when the world finally reopens to us.

The options to reset, reflect and restore are endless and deeply personal. What floats one person’s boat (fasting and detoxing to lighten the load?) creates a sinking feeling in others (who might prefer a retreat in Mexico to mend a broken heart). Some seek a retreat on their own, others – when rules allow – want to take the whole brood for a reboot. Though the children haven’t left their sight for more than a few school hours during the past year,

they have never felt more disconnected from them. Then there are fitness breaks, from Spain to the Caribbean, which may spark a new love of exercise; and retreats ensconced in nature that might just change your life altogether.

Wellness travel and traditional travel are not separate; they are one and the same. Wellness will slowly return to the stature it held way before the coronavirus crisis – as an opportunity to learn about the world we live in, the people, the practices and the ways of being, returning improved with a renewed sense of purpose, consciousness, community and the realisation that we are all part of something bigger. If that isn't travelling well, I don't know what is.

IMMUNITY

Euphoria Retreat, Greece

After a cancer diagnosis, Marina Efraimoglou, the former chairman of a Greek bank, embarked on a personal healing journey that resulted in her retraining in traditional Chinese medicine. She opened Euphoria Retreat, built into a mountainside on the edge of the 13th-century town of Mystras in the Peloponnese. It has fast become one of the hottest new wellness havens in the world. Staff there fuse Greek and Taoist philosophies and three new programmes focus on supporting immunity as well as emotional and mental well-being. The design is all Byzantine domes and elegant curves, including a womblike indoor pool.

Three-day Balance and Restart programme from £1,243pp full-board (two sharing). euphoriaretreat.com

- Read the full review: [Euphoria Retreat](#)



The womb-like pool at the trend-setting Euphoria Retreat in Greece

Original FX Mayr, Austria

The Mayr cure is one of the most effective digestive cleansing programmes available, built on the belief that good health starts in the gut. Seven days is the minimum stay, but many book in for the full Mayr monty, a 21-day purge to clear body and mind of toxins (think massages, lymph drainage, vitamin drips, acupuncture and more time on the loo than you could imagine). The Immunity Boost programme works alongside your cure, and includes therapies such as nasal reflexology.

One-week Immunity Boost programme from £3,270pp, including the basic cure. original-mayr.com



Come to FX Mayr for one of the best digestive programmes available - and add on a new immunity booster CREDIT: ALL RIGHTS RESERVED/SIMONE ATTISANI

Lanserhof Tegernsee, Germany

In the foothills of the Bavarian Alps above Lake Tegern is this striking silo to state-of-the-art detoxing. The wood-and-glass architecture will declutter manic minds on arrival. The Lanserhof concept combines results-driven traditional naturopathy, advanced medicine and diagnostic tests (and the Mayr cure, see above). Intestinal cleansing and flushing toxins from the stomach is key to well-being here, which is based on the three pillars of rest, detoxification and training (such as chewing thoroughly to help your body process food better). Programmes focusing on Covid-19 include the full artillery of modern diagnostic tests.

Seven-night Lanserhof Med concept from approximately £5,279pp. lanserhof.com



Lanserhof Tegernsee architecture is just as memorable as its wide range of treatments

The Alpina Gstaad, Switzerland

This family-owned Alpine hideaway focuses on sustainability, charity and social impact as much as wellness and luxury. The Six Senses Spa is vast for a hotel this size (56 rooms and suites), and combines world-class Asian traditions with Swiss swish (local salts and milks in beauty treatments, for example). The choice of treatments is astonishing. A new retreat, called Detox and Boost Your Immune System, is a softer approach to cleansing your system and boosting natural immunity. It combines customised face and body treatments and nutritional supplements using special biomarker analyses.

Double rooms from CHF950 (£796), B&B. thealpinagstaad.ch



The Alpina Gstaad has a world-class Six Senses Spa CREDIT: THE ALPINA GSTAAD;/THE ALPINA GSTAAD

SHA Wellness Clinic, Spain

This cutting-edge clinic near Alicante merges ancient philosophies with the latest advances in Western medicine, offering every health check-up under the sun. Preventive medicine and genetic screening plot personalised programmes (some of which are developed in partnership with Nasa and Harvard) to help with all manner of problems from weight gain to depression, cancer and addictions. The clinic's new immunology booster can now be added to the Rebalance programme. It stimulates the body's natural immunity with an arsenal of treatments from immunotherapy and lymph and viral analysis to stem cell therapy, vitamin C megadoses, and stress management.

Seven-day Rebalance programme, with immunology booster, from €4,000pp (£3,630). shawellnessclinic.com



SHA Wellness Clinic has pretty much every health check-up under the sun available - and now they have a new immunology booster to boot CREDIT: ANTONIO TERRON

- The world's most remote hotels

WEIGHT LOSS & FASTING

Dharana Wellness at Shillim, India

This holistic haven is set in 2,000 acres of lush gardens, forest, paddy fields and bamboo plantations. On one side you have a pizza trattoria, bars and an infinity pool; on the other Dharana Wellness, a child-free (and mobile-free) zone where rejuvenation of mind, body and soul follows ancient Ayurvedic principles (especially the food, most of which is grown organically on site – expect plant-based thalis and soups). Weight loss here tackles the spiritual and physical, melding meditation and pranayama, and panchakarma, an intense Ayurvedic detox that works wonders.

Healing Holidays offers a seven-night Weight Management programme from £3,455pp, including flights and transfers. healingholidays.com; dharanaretreat.com

- [Mending mind and soul in the mountains: How I mastered the art of detox on an Ayurvedic retreat in the Western Ghats](#)



Dharana Wellness at Shillim is a holistic haven in the Western Ghats of India

Hotel Post Bezau, Austria

The glow of your skin from the mountain air isn't all your friends will notice on your return from this family-run spa hotel, deep in one of Austria's finest valleys. It will be the leaner jawline and waistline, the result of a programme of guided hikes, lymphatic drainage and myofascial massages that break down fat cells and remove toxins and excess fluids from your tissues. The farm-to-table menus are built around daily freshwater catch, lean meat and organic vegetables plucked from the rows outside the restaurant window.

Single rooms from €210 for two nights. Four-day Detox Retreat with doctor from €1,460. hotelpostbezau.com/en



The glow of your skin from the mountain air isn't all your friends will notice on your return from Post Bezau

Park Igls Mayr, Austria

This medi-spa offers a mighty MOT with an emphasis on psychologists and coaches to deal with your mindset – a key part of fasting. Resilience After Crisis is its latest programme – a week of therapeutic conversations, exercise, treatments and mountain air to bolster your resolve. Walk through pine forests, sweat it out in the sauna, or loll around in a robe in the white-marble spa. While chew-chew-chewing your delicious (but minuscule) portions at supper, heed the advice of head honcho Dr Gartner: “Finish your mouthful first and, if you can still remember what you wanted to say, perhaps it is worth saying.”

Week-long packages from €3,247pp (excluding Mayr medication). park-igls.at



Park Igls is a mighty medi-spa, with a great fasting programme set amid the mountains

Buchinger Wilhelmi at Lake Constance, Germany

There is more to fasting than weight loss, as Dr Otto Buchinger – who devised his method here more than a century ago to cure his rheumatoid arthritis – knew well. Steel yourself: it's a diet of vegetable broths, juices and herbal teas, the only “solid” being a laxative. The team comprises eight doctors who span specialisms, as well as massage therapists, counsellors, nutritionists and personal trainers. They like you to commit to 10 days for a lasting difference.

Ten-day programmes from £2,340pp, including two consultations with a doctor, daily check-ups with a nurse, food/drink and activities. buchinger-wilhelmi.com

- How I beat the January health hysteria at Germany's ultimate wellness retreat



Brace yourself for the liquid diet at Buchinger Wilhelmi CREDIT: WINFRIED HEINZE

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TECH ISSUES

Palacio Estoril Wellness Centre, Portugal

If your back is in a work-from-home C-curve position, head to this grande dame 20 minutes from Lisbon. It has some of the best back and joint healers money can buy, applying the seven-night Physical Rehabilitation programme. Dr Isabel Tomaz will pinpoint issues and remedy them (she will likely give you a lesson in belly breathing too, key for back and neck health).

Seven-night Physical Rehabilitation programme from £1,470pp, B&B (two sharing). palacioestorilhotel.com



Reverse that WFH spine at Palacio Estoril, which specialises in the back and joints

Mandarin Oriental, London, UK

This elegant spa in London offers the Digital Wellness Escape (phones must be left in lockers). The Vitality pool softens you up before a massage of the head, eyes, neck, shoulders and hands, using sound and craniosacral therapy to ease strain from computer use.

Doubles from £760 per night. Digital Wellness Escape £195. mandarinoriental.com

- Read the full review: [Mandarin Oriental, London](#)



Those email notifications will be banished to the locker on checking into Mandarin Oriental London's spa

- [The best spa hotels in London](#)

Villa Stephanie at Brenners Park Hotel & Spa, Germany

If you are spending more time online than off, book an art deco bedroom at Villa Stéphanie, with walls containing metal mesh that blocks high-frequency signals to disable Wi-Fi. There are also 25,000 acres of Black Forest National Park to bring you back to earth, plus some top-notch medical treatments.

Double rooms from €495, room only. Four-day Health & Beauty programme (excluding accommodation) costs €1,980pp. oetkercollection.com

- Read the full review: [Villa Stephanie at Brenners Park Hotel & Spa](#)



Those looking for a total digital detox should book a room at Villa Stephanie, whose rooms have the option to disable Wi-Fi

Chiva-Som, Thailand

The ultimate tropical spa, “The Som” is two hours from Bangkok – and its crack team knows all about rehabilitating old joints. Not only are they expert at rebuilding those advancing in years, but the spa itself had an £18 million makeover last year. Its Re-functional Studio has equipment to measure muscles and mobility, while Gyrokinesis (to increase range of motion and strength), personal training, Pilates, yoga and exercise rehab will have you practically skipping out the door.

Five-night, full-board retreat from £3,086pp in low season (Jun-Sept). chivasom.com

- Read the full review: [Chiva Som](#)



Chiva Som continues to be the best in business, especially for those looking to enhance mobility in older age CREDIT: ABOUTFOTO.COM/KIATTIPONG PANCHEE

- [Spa and Stay: A new Bangkok resort that follows the science](#)

NATURE

Lefay Resort & Spa, Italy

Lefay, above Lake Garda, is a pioneer in environmental protection with its carbon emission reduction programme. A balance of Chinese medicine and Western science goes beyond the indoor thermal suite (ice pool, olive tree sauna) to five new wellness trails that include meditation stations where practices such as Qi Gong and Tai Chi occur.

Double rooms from €260 per night. Wellness trails, with activities and a massage, from €320. lefoyresorts.com/en



Lake Garda is the setting for the eco-friendly Lefay

The Newt, UK

Country house hotels lure us in with fantasies of days spent in muddy Hunters. But too often, we remain by the fire, nursing a glass of something. The Newt's spectacular gardens constantly beckon, however. The residents-only spa connects with nature through an apothecary-inspired medicinal garden whose ingredients feature in treatments. Another way to embody nature is to try the homemade cider. It is Somerset after all.

Double rooms from £285 per night, B&B. thenewtinsomerset.com

- Read the full review: [The Newt](#)



Closer to home: The Newt is the coolest country house to have opened in recent years, and has a wonderful garden and spa

- [The best spa hotels in the UK](#)

Four Seasons Resort at Landaa Giraavaru, Maldives

The only Maldives hotel set in a Unesco Biosphere Reserve has a new concept, AyurMa, designed to cultivate a more meaningful connection with yourself, others, the oceans and the planet. Your programme could include panchakarma to outdoor moonlit massages and baths, and aerial yoga among the jungle trees.

Doubles from \$1,350 B&B. Treatments from \$120. fourseasons.com/maldiveslg

- Read the full review: [Four Seasons Resort at Landaa Giraavaru](#)



Four Seasons Resort at Landaa Giraavaru is the only Maldives hotel set in a Unesco Biosphere Reserve

Rudding Park Hotel, UK

This country house hotel, outside the spa town of Harrogate, is immersed in 300 acres of landscaped gardens with an award-winning spa. One of Harrogate's natural springs feeds directly into the rooftop spa, where you can hop between the indoor-outdoor hydrotherapy pools and sweat it out in the garden sauna (they even have their own aufguss master here, a spectacle of towel flicking to increase and circulate heat). Book the Garden of England Massage (£105), which uses a rose, camelina and poppy seed oil leaving skin super hydrated.

Double rooms from £228, room only. ruddingpark.co.uk

- Read the full review: [Rudding Park](#)



Yorkshire's Ridding Park Hotel is within 300 acres of landscaped gardens and has access to Harrogate's natural springs

- [20 bucket list hotels for 2021](#)

FAMILY

Beaverbrook, UK

The new “house party” package affords a household an entire building of their own. While the kids are engaging in woodland activities, hot foot it to the Coach House Spa and book a thermal suite to yourself. Opt for a naturopathy session, a holistic blend of natural medicine to balance and heal, with a hit of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (breathing inside a hyperbaric chamber to raise oxygen levels), said to repair cells, feed our brains, calm our nerves and fuel the body’s defences against viruses.

Family rooms from £980. Naturopathy from £225, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy from £75. beaverbrook.co.uk

- Read the full review: [Beaverbrook](#)



While the kids play, head to Beaverbrook's spa, which has a Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy chamber (said to repair cells and calm nerves)

Andronis Arcadia, Greece

You might miss the deceptively large Evexia Spa, hidden away seductively at sea level, at this five-star newbie to Santorini. It's minimal design, maximum relaxation, with an Indian-inspired menu that uses Ila Beyond Organic products. There are gentle treatments adapted for young spa-goers, while family yoga classes are a great way to bond if the cooking classes get too competitive. After a lymphatic drainage massage and hot/cold Kneipp pool Water Path leg therapy, parents' pins will be light enough to glide back up the steep hill to Oia village, where Lolita's ice cream parlour will have a flavour for everyone.

Rooms from £450 per night B&B. Massages from €180. andronisarcadia.com

- Read the full review: [Andronis Arcadia](#)



Andronis Arcadia is a five-star newbie to Santorini, and has plenty of family offerings (including spa treatments for youngsters) CREDIT: HOTEL ART PHOTOGRAPHY TRYFON GEORGOPOULOS/TRYFONGEORGOPOULOS

Schloss Elmau, Germany

Despite a reputation for hosting world leaders, Schloss Elmau can feel like a luxury kids' resort. Multi-generational families can play seasonally at skiing, biking, archery, canyoning, ice hockey, drumming and trampolining. But, if less adrenalised pursuits appeal to your children, there is also jewellery design, a science lab, literature and chess workshops, and even a designated kids' spa and outdoor riverside sauna. While your teens calm their hormone-amplified emotions at age-group yoga (a speciality here) you'll have a chance to float around in one of the many spa pools in peace.

Rooms from €300pppn half-board, including some activities. schloss-elmau.de

- Read the full review: [Schloss Elmau](#)



Schloss Elmau is the place for a multigenerational spa trip, with a veritable menu of activities

Joali, Maldives

After months of on/off homeschooling and isolation, Joali's new Joy in Family Time programme appeals. Located in the unspoilt Raa Atoll 45 minutes from Malé by private seaplane, this retreat aims to help families bond offline (remember that?) and improve overall well-being. It includes daily physical activities, from aerial yoga to a boot camp, meditation, BoxFit or a group spin class. Group dinners are set up in locations around the island before you head back to your private villa.

Abercrombie & Kent offers a seven-night package from £12,495 for a family of four, including international flights and seaplane transfers. abercrombiekent.co.uk; joali.com

- Read the full review: [Joali](#)



Joali's new Joy in Family Time aims to help families reconnect in an Indian Ocean setting CREDIT: FIRAT MERIC

Dormy House, UK

The main ingredients for a perfect Cotswolds rural recipe feature here: old stone building, log fires and a spa with the best massages going. Then there is the 400 acres to explore and the infinity pool. The secret place to disappear to is the House Spa's flotation tank. This pod, filled with body-temperature salt water and calming music, is designed so you can wallow weightlessly while escaping gravity, mental tensions and, for an hour at least, your family.

Double rooms from £269 per night, B&B. Flotation Experience from £50. dormyhouse.co.uk

- Read the full review: [Dormy House](#)



Dormy House, the Cotswolds' top spa, now offers sessions in a flotation tank

- [50 fabulous UK country hotels for all ages](#)

FITNESS AND MOVEMENT

Rosa Alpina, Italy

The view from your breakfast table, of a kids' climbing wall built into the courtyard garden of this 170-year-old hotel, tells you how much emphasis Rosa Alpina puts on fitness. The skiing area (750 miles for all abilities) spans a Unesco World Heritage Site accessed by a cable car moments from the wood-panelled lobby. Escape from the crowds with the Mindful Skiing programme, where your lessons will have you skiing in “flow”, aware of your movements and surroundings. Après-ski continues the theme, with daily yoga and access to the “piccolo” world-class Aman spa that will smooth away any physical ruffles.

Three-night Mindful Skiing package from €1,250pp, B&B, including ski and yoga lessons. rosalpina.it



Rosa Alpina offers mindful skiing amid its Unesco-listed skiing area CREDIT: STEFANO@STEFANOSCATA.COM/STEFANO SCATÀ

The BodyHoliday, St Lucia

This all-inclusive, sun-drenched, five-star resort has a swanky spa, an indoor/outdoor fitness centre, and all treatments and activities factored in (because no one needs the stress of unforeseen extras on a bill at checkout, do they?). Choose from as many as 40 activities, a daily 50-minute treatment, or time spent sweating it out on the 17-station fitness trail and in the treetop spinning studio. The Fusion Fitness programme combines beach workouts with T'ai Chi, bike rides and meditation, while yoga and Pilates programmes focus on getting to the core of post-lockdown tum.

Health and Fitness Travel offers a seven-night all-inclusive programme from £1,815pp including transfers. healthandfitnesstravel.com; thebodyholiday.com

- Read the full review: [The BodyHoliday](#)



The BodyHoliday offers 40 activities and a daily treatment, all included within the price

Artah Retreats, Spain

What do you get when a former Canadian national swimmer and a Psycle London founder open a retreat in a 100-acre estate in the foothills of the Pyrenees? You get Artah, a dreamy sanctuary (far less intense than the Psycle London workout studios), where you can escalate, in a matter of days, to a level of health you hadn't thought possible. Yes there are vigorous moments, such as three-hour hikes, deep tissue and detox massages (steel yourself) and plant-based dishes, balanced with facials, yoga, cooking demos, the peaceful pool, monastic decor and heart-stirring views of rolling hills.

From £400pp per night including all food, fitness and activities. artah.co



Artah Retreats, which focuses on rebooting health and fitness, was founded by a former Canadian national swimmer and the founder of Psyche London

Marbella Club, Spain

You wouldn't rank Marbella as a wellness destination – but often, in spa land, it is the practitioners not the place that brings the results. Naturopathic support and personalised programmes tackle the big issues – stress, sleep, weight loss, fitness, post-natal and ageing, with a dedicated chef devising meals. The Pilates instructor and PTs are top drawer. It's all about the new retreats, in particular Body Balance, which features a blend of fitness sessions (from yin yoga to Pilates), hiking, cycling and cookery. Take the brood, as there is a host of childcare options.

Four-night retreats from €3,000 full-board, including all activities. marbellaclub.com

- Read the full review: [Marbella Club](#)



Marbella Club is a classy hotel which has an excellent wellness offering - and decent childcare options means you can bring the whole family

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Borgo Egnazia, Italy

Not for the sceptical: the Vair spa team includes therapist-artists, musicians and local dancers who encourage progressive, personal transformation. The new Happiness Break focuses on hormonal balance, beginning with an individual virtual session at home. Once at the bougainvillea-draped Puglian-style village, treatments are personally tailored, combining a healthy diet, spa treatments, physical activity and a consultation with aromatherapy expert and psychologist Luca Fontana. There are even sessions with a new laughter teacher. I kid you not.

Three-night Happiness Break from €850pp. Rooms from €289 per night. borgoegnazia.com



You couldn't be happier: Borgo Egnazia offers some left-field treatments in its spa

Chablé Yucatán, Mexico

A holiday is a good start to mending a broken heart but Chablé takes it to another level. Its new You Are the Love Story programme is designed for those following a split, and focuses on renewing self-worth. Sunrise and sunset yoga sessions take place in the jungle, there are seaweed body wraps and massages in the spa, and there's even a Temazcal Ceremony – a ritual performed in a steam house where physical, mental and spiritual levels are said to converge.

Casitas from \$1,106 (£820) per night, B&B, with Journey Latin America. The You Are the Love Story retreat costs an additional £1,650pp. journeylatinamerica.co.uk; chablehotels.com

- Read the full review: [Chable Yucatan](#)



Chablé Yucatan: no better place to mend a broken heart

Preidlhof Luxury DolceVita Resort, South Tyrol, Italy

One of Italy's leading spas, Preidlhof is famous for its integrative mind-body approach. Glowing Flow is a new retreat by master therapist Stefano Battaglia. Featuring therapeutic work and holistic health treatments amid lush valleys surrounded by snow-capped mountains, it aims to increase creativity, calm the mind and lighten the heart. Battaglia's treatments include Trauma Touch Skills, which "listen" to the body to explore emotional memories, find hidden traumas and dissolve tensions.

Healing Holidays offers five-day Glowing Flow retreat from £2,850pp, full-board, with flights and transfers. healingholidays.com; preidlhof.it



Preidlhof offers therapeutic work and holistic health treatments amid South Tyrol's lush valleys

Vana, India

Even the architecture here is soothing, with modern, vegetation-clad buildings that morph into the landscape. Sure, the treatments are sublime – from Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine to Western wonders – but it's the phone-free spaces, cotton kurta pyjamas and world-class teachings in mindfulness, yoga, chanting and meditation that create the deep shifts. All this, plus morning mountain treks and an excursion to Rishikesh to see the holy Aarti ceremony that pays tribute to the River Ganges, will spark a renewed appreciation for life.

Healing Holidays offers seven nights from £2,272pp full-board, including flights, transfers and a tailored programme. healingholidays.com; vana.co.in



Vana offers everything from Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine to Western wonders