

STAY

The best wellness retreats for 2019

Nora Zelevansky, CNN • Updated 18th January 2019

(CNN) — Once, a simple hangover breakfast might have sufficed for a reset on January 1, but not today: The world is moving lightning fast and keeping up doesn't generally include taking a moment to breathe.

So, it's no surprise that the retreat trend continues to grow: According to the Global Wellness Institute, worldwide wellness was a \$4.2 trillion industry in 2017, with \$639 billion dedicated to "wellness tourism."

For 2019, people are once again turning to well-being retreats for a chance to escape, unplug, reset and start anew. And the definition of "wellness" continues to expand: "We have noticed a spike in travel requests that are spearheaded by a keen interest in wellness and spirituality," says Sarah Casewit, co-founder of Naya Traveler, an international, women-run company that specializes in custom itineraries.

"People's understanding of wellness goes well beyond a fancy spa and an infinity pool: [It's] a wholesome, all-encompassing theme that explores the healing elements of physical treatments, as well as spirituality, cuisine and art, within the cultural context."

Here, we've uncovered 11 holistic wellness retreat destinations around the world -- with offerings from TED-style talks to ancient shamanic rituals -- designed to help people relax, heal and get inspired:

Amanera



The Amanera in Playa Grande has just 25 casitas for maximum tranquility.

PENDING

Where: Playa Grande, Dominican Republic

When: Year-round

What: In 2015, lauded hotelier Aman made a trek into the Caribbean jungle.

The immaculate 25-casita, 2,170-acre property overlooks the ocean on one of the island's most picture-perfect golden sand beaches -- that's situated between the two small villages of Río San Juan and Cabrera.

Their brand new holistic "Surf + Sun" experience blows away the average surf retreat by incorporating complementary energy treatments (with ceremonial palo santo smudging and indigenous healing larimar stones for chakra-balancing), yoga (specifically targeting lower back muscles that contract while riding waves), nourishing snacks and clarifying meditation with 2.5 hours of expert lessons, each day.

Signature Lunar Journeys -- dictated by the position of the moon -- are also favored by retreaters: the New Moon encourages fresh beginnings, Waxing Moon supports creativity, Full Moon inspires enlightenment and Waning Moon focuses on purification.

Don't miss: Aman recently launched its own skincare line. Products from facial serums to smoked body balms are made with rare ingredients, sustainably sourced from their resort locales like pre- and post-monsoon jasmine from India and palo santo from D.R.

Amanera, Auto. 5 Carretera Rio San Juan - Cabrera, Rio San Juan, Republica Dominicana C.P. 33300, +1 (809) 589-2888

Cala De Mar

Where: Ixtapa Zihuatanejo, Mexico

When: Year-round; Scheduled 2019 retreats: January 22 to 24

What: This exquisite 59-room cliffside escape -- previously run by Capella -- is a family-owned passion project, evident in details from the warm, attentive staff to plush rooms (each with its own plunge pool and Pacific Ocean views for days).

The property is now all about wellness, emphasizing indigenous Mexican traditions, unique local rituals and current wellness techniques. At any time, guests can book personalized retreats, curated -- based on their desires -- with activities like daily meditation, sunset yoga (on a deck with an incredible setting), El Capricho Spa therapies and ancient cacao ceremonies led by a local shaman.

Each season, Cala hosts official wellness retreats too (no two alike), flying in notable experts in everything from qi gong to quantum healing -- often from Mexico City. January's Winter Wellness Retreat is focused on intention-setting and incorporates mind-body connection and dance.

Don't miss: A shamanic Aztec sweat lodge ceremony -- meant to cleanse the body -- at Cala's onsite authentic temazcal (with watermelon and cantaloupe agua frescas for cool down).

Cala de Mar, Paseo Punta Ixtapa s/n Zona Hotelera II, Ixtapa, Guerrero, C.P. 40880, Mexico, +1 ((877) 296-8889

Miraval Austin Resort & Spa



Floral facial at the Miraval Austin spa.
Miraval Austin

Where: Austin, Texas

When: Year-round

What: Opening this month, deep in Texas Hill Country, is a new 220-acre, 117-room wellness destination from one of the movement's pioneers: Miraval's first destination spa opened 20 years ago in Tucson, Arizona; this is the brand's second full-scale resort.

Its backdrop -- inside Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, overlooking Lake Travis -- sets the tone. On offer is the classic Miraval experience with "Live in Balance" programs, customized as guests arrive, encouraging mindfulness, imagination and ditching comfort zones for personal growth.

Visitors can come for personalized retreats or for "immersions" in everything from gratitude to literature.

But, here, the onsite 10-acre Cypress Creek Farm shapes the spirit. The restaurant, teaching kitchen, wellness workshops and spa (with new treatments inspired by Austin's heritage like a Wild Harvest intention-setting and massage) all incorporate harvested ingredients.

Don't miss: The equine experience allows people to work with the intuitive nature of horses to help identify communication patterns that create "barriers to connection."

Miraval Austin, 13500 FM2769, Austin, Texas 78726, +1 (855) 234-1672

Santani

Where: Dumbara, Sri Lanka

When: Year-round packages

What: On a 120-acre abandoned tea estate -- overlooking a UNESCO World Heritage site,

the Knuckles Mountain Range -- sits this stunning, 20-room ayurvedic wellness resort. Santani -- opened in 2016 by impassioned college camping buddies -- offers seven- to 21-night wellness packages with focuses like detox, stress, health, yoga and even addiction.

Rooted in ancient ayurveda (and "doshas" or mind-body types), the programs also incorporate modern science and nutrition, addressing the aging process with annual reboots. Those experiences are bolstered by the mind-blowing setting, design (inspired by a notion of "architectural silence"), culinary program (with ingredients sourced from the on-site greenhouse), a hillside spa (with comprehensive hydrotherapy) and lovely staff.

Don't miss: A four-mile hike to the nearby hanging bridge -- still used by the village -- takes you through scenic paddy fields, winding up at an ideal river bath location.

Santani Wellness Resort, Arantenna Estate, Werapitiya, Kandy, Sri Lanka, (+94) 11 255 9755

Hotel Joaquin



Hotel Joaquin opened late last year.

Hotel Joaquin

Where: Laguna Beach, California

When: Year-round; Scheduled Retreats: Yoga For Bad People, January 18 to 21; Nourish, April 28 to May 1

What: In September 2018, the folks behind insider Palm Springs spot Korakia Pensione opened Hotel Joaquin, tucked above Shaw's Cove in sparkling Laguna Beach.

Inspired by historic European inns and St. Barth's, this 22-room resort is all about the details, from vintage finds and exposed rafters to clean lines and oversized throw pillows. There's a natural laid-back peace to this petite property with its seaward views and vinyl record players playing Carly Simon in place of TVs.

The on-site "Adventure Director" reaches out to guests to organize itineraries including everything from surfing to private yoga and meditation. Chef Leandro Bongarra at Saline restaurant sources humanely raised meat and local produce, creating wellness-driven fare like bone broth, turmeric teas, green juices and his signature "Rawnola" with blue majik almond milk (with algae), blueberries, pomegranate, honey, walnuts and coconut yogurt wheat flakes,

served in a real baby coconut. Official wellness retreats are also planned throughout the year.

Don't miss: Yoga in the garden, summer snorkeling or a hike to Laguna's "Top of the World." Guests are shepherded to the site in the hotel's restored Land Rover and are rewarded with 360-degree views.

Hotel Joaquin, 985 North Coast Highway, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, +1 (949) 494-5294

Rancho La Puerta

Where: Tecate, Mexico

When: Year-round

What: Rancho La Puerta is one of the original wellness retreats, dubbed a "health camp" when it opened in 1940. Just an hour south of San Diego, California, the destination has continued to evolve, offering individualized schedules with myriad activities from pickleball and Pilates to nutrition lectures and sunset meditation.

Their newest offering is a 14-day "Detox and Cleansing Retreat," which is all about reducing inflammation and waistlines for increased clarity and energy. Guests partake in a seven-day juice cleanse (made with seasonal produce freshly plucked from the on-site farm), five spa treatments (including colonic hydrotherapy and massage) and two private 90-minute chats with holistic doctor Michael Finkelstein, MD.

Don't miss: There are 4,000 acres to explore at the foot of Mount Kuchumaa, including gardens, hiking trails, an organic farm, diverse species of birds and more.

Rancho La Puerta, Carretera Tecate-Tijuana K.M 136.5, Rancho la Puerta, 21520 Tecate, B.C., Mexico, +1 (800) 443-7565

Sha Wellness Clinic



The terrace lounge at the SHA wellness clinic in Alicante.
SHA Wellness Clinic

Where: Alicante, Spain

When: Year-round

What: A decade ago, after battling his own health problems, founder Alfredo Bataller Parietti launched this futuristic retreat destination -- evoking a giant super yacht, docked on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by natural parkland -- with an eye towards "total mind and body transformation."

Combining holistic therapies, therapeutic nutrition and Western medical treatments, SHA offers four-, seven-, 14- and 28-day programs with focuses from weight loss to a total "Life Reset."

At arrival, coordinators create customized plans to address immediate concerns, but also ferret out root causes. Between treatments from acupuncture to hydrotherapy, guests munch on Mediterranean and Japanese-inspired vegan cuisine without refined sugar and take Healthy Living Academy workshops including tai chi and laughter therapy.

Don't miss: Brain photobiomodulation -- a "brain phototherapy" treatment launched in 2018 and developed in conjunction with NASA and Harvard University -- which has been shown, after 45 minutes, to accelerate and re-balance the processes of cellular recovery, improving energy, performance and mind-state.

SHA Wellness Clinic, Carrer del Verderol, 5, 03581 L'Albir, Alacant, (+34) 966 81 11 99

Anantara Kihavah

Where: Baa Atoll, Maldives

When: Year-round

What: Set on a private island within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, lush with coconut, papaya and mango trees, each of 80 villas sits either over the turquoise lagoon (with glass-bottomed baths!) or on the white sand beach.

Bespoke three- and seven-day Balance Wellness retreats revolve around the overwater spa, complete with glass viewing panels beneath treatment beds, so guests can observe the growing coral bed during their services.

Signature retreats for "Longevity" (targeting toxins that overload the liver) and "Detoxifying" (rejuvenating the immune system) begin with a consultation to determine dosha (body-mind type), medical history and personal needs.

Guests experience yoga, meditation, pranayama breathing, diet, chakra alignment (for emotional health) and ayurvedic treatments -- like a Shirodhara service, which is meant to open the third eye (increasing intuition) and is often followed by a guided stargazing session. The brand new Cocoon Medical Spa -- a first in the Maldives -- offers high-tech services from post-flight IV vitamin infusions to a vampire facial.

The resort also hosts revolving healers, currently including a Tibetan sound therapy, reiki and massage practitioner.

Don't miss: Each spa treatment starts with ginger tea and a foot ritual with lavender sea salt scrub and peppermint mist.

The Abhyanga Massage is a signature: marma points (like acupuncture points in Chinese medicine) are gently massaged using Ayurveda herb-infused oils to stimulate the immune

system, improve lymphatic drainage and calm the nervous system.

Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas, P.O. Box 2098, Kihavah Huravalhi Island, Baa Atoll, +66 (0) 2 365 9110

Eaton DC



Eaton DC shook up the Washington hotel scene when it opened.

Adrian Gaut

Where: Washington, DC

When: Year-round

What: Eaton DC opened in September 2018, a newfangled hotel concept inspired by "radical" New Age self-care and enacting social change.

The 209-room hotel is meant to be a hub for mindfulness and creative collaboration with a radio station, wellness-forward beverages like Activated Charcoal shots, crystals gifted at check-in and in-room Himalayan salt lamps.

Now, they're opening their adjoining "Wellness Center" with facilities including a meditation room and yoga studio (inspired by Zen Buddhist temples and Joshua Tree's Integratron) and two infrared saunas.

To foster this alternative notion of hospitality and healing (more Burning Man than hotel fitness center), guests -- and locals -- will build piecemeal wellness retreats, signing up for sessions from reiki to shamanic healing and classes from yoga flow to urban mindfulness, but also more intensive experiences like emotional healing workshops and weekends with visiting experts.

Don't miss: Sound bath ceremonies, every first Saturday of the month. Guests lie down and let sound frequencies and tones of the instruments (often singing bowls) wash over them, helping to shift brainwaves from waking to relaxed consciousness.

Eaton DC, 1201 K Street NW, Washington DC 20005, +1 (202) 289-7600

1440 Multiversity

Where: Scotts Valley, California

When: Year-round

What: Born out of a foundation by the same name, 1440 Multiversity is a non-profit "purpose-built" campus for compassionate people who crave "conversations that matter."

Set squarely in the redwoods between Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley, this retreat targets body and soul, but is heavily weighted towards the mind. People arrive here not only to unplug, but also to contemplate challenges from leadership to storytelling.

Guests -- and groups -- can curate their own "Rest & Renewal" retreats, staying on campus, eating haute farm-to-table meals, wandering amidst the redwoods, taking daily wellness classes -- from yoga to qi gong -- and lolling in the spa's infinity-edged hot tub overlooking the forest.

But, most often, guests sign up for weekend- or five-day-long faculty-led programs taught by everyone from meditation gurus to TED Talk alums. Some 2019 highlights include workshops with bigwigs like Andrew Weil, Deepak Chopra, Martha Beck and Sharon Salzberg.

Don't miss: Visit the 1,000-year-old "mother" tree on campus in a spot dubbed "Cathedral," an enchanting forest amphitheater. From there, take a walking meditation through the on-site labyrinth.

1440 Multiversity, 800 Bethany Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066, +1 (844) 544-1440

The Ranch, Dolomites

Where: Hotel & Spa Rosa Alpina, the Dolomites, Italy

When: August 25 to October 19

What: In 2010, The Ranch at Malibu -- a six-day, seven-night (minimum) integrative wellness retreat destination on a working ranch in California's Santa Monica Mountains -- opened, attracting Hollywood's elite and making an instant name for itself.

Now, they're taking their show on the road to a charming Alpine hotel in San Cassiano, offering 22 guests an Italian pop-up version of their mind-body recalibration. The program includes intense fitness and wellness regimens (eight hours of low-impact activity for calorie burn—often hikes and yoga, offset by massage) and a strict vegan diet.

Never fear: Using locally grown ingredients, chefs prepare plant-based versions of Italian fare like spinach and zucchini lasagna with homemade macadamia nut "ricotta" cheese.

Don't miss: This UNESCO Natural World Heritage site has hundreds of miles of trails -- all with varied views. Some days, retreaters hike ridge-lines at higher altitudes; on other days, they're in the woodland forest, along running streams and by waterfalls.

The Ranch Dolomites at Rosa Alpina Hotel & Spa, Strada Micurá de Rù, 20, 39036 San Cassiano in Badia (BZ) Italy, (+39) 0471 849 500