



Best for nature lovers The Island Experience, Brazil

On the extraordinarily beautiful car-free paradise of Ilha Grande near Rio, this retreat has its guests heartily hiking through the tropical rainforest that covers the island right down to the ocean, and kayaking in its deep, silky waters. Never has an upper- and lower-body workout felt so magical. Each day is topped and tailed with yoga, and the emphasis is on stretching, breathing and strengthening. The staff are enthusiastic and easygoing; the food is lush and light. Guests can opt for calorie-controlled portions, and daily massages are done by local ladies who have created their own esoteric style of shiatsu. This is a pure, back-to-basics way for stressed urbanites to get fit; though if you want a tan, find some supportive but brief sportswear to hike in, because there's no time for soaking up the rays. Bring a book for the quiet evenings, which are all about talks on nutrition and cultural activities. At night, you'll sleep soundly in a simple room.

Seven nights, from about £1,100 a person all-inclusive, except flights, with Lotus Journeys (020 8968 3666; www.lotusjourneys.com).

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Best for outdoorsy types Purescapes, Portugal, Spain and the Canaries

A non-faddish healthy-break option, Purescapes is perfect for those who like the idea of getting fit in luxury – guests stay in a grand, airy villa surrounded by avocado and citrus groves in the Monchique mountains in the Algarve. The activities are many and all take advantage of the local environment, whether it is hiking along the coast or circuit-training in the hills. Activities include surfing, fitness training, qi gong, yoga, boxercise, nutritional consultations and massage, so you'll never be bored. Later in the year, retreats move to the Canaries, in pursuit of warmer weather.

Seven nights at the Purescapes Health & Fitness Retreat in the Algarve, Portugal, from £1,790 a person full board, including activities, yoga and unlimited personal training, with Wellbeing Escapes (0845 602 6202; www.wellbeingescapes.co.uk).



Best for alpha females In:spa, Italy

NEW

The word 'deprivation' does not figure at In:spa, one of the most successful body-transformation programmes, now in its sixth year. Its newest destination is the Villa Ferraia, set in a vast nature reserve south of Siena, Tuscany. The splendid isolation and the sun-bursting freshness of the produce would be enough to promote a sense of wellbeing even without the expert ministrations of the health gurus and instructors. The programme can be tailored to all levels of fitness. Early-morning yoga with Liz Lark is followed by ample breakfasts, circuit training or long hikes, and afternoons are devoted to sessions with a nutritionist, the personal trainer or the masseur. The whole experience leaves an afterglow that lasts for weeks. *In:spa Tuscany (0845 458 0723; www.inspa.co.uk); seven nights, from £2,195 a person all-inclusive, except flights.*

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