

52 PLACES TO GO 2018

## Where to Get Healthier in 2018

Hotels, cruises, airports and tour operators are making wellness a priority.



The Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills has introduced wellness rooms.

Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills

By **Shivani Vora** Jan. 9, 2018

What aspect of the travel industry won't wellness touch in 2018?

Perhaps none.

From hotels and cruises to airports, airlines, safaris and group tours, wellness promises to be everywhere in the world of travel. Five years ago wellness on the road meant heading to a destination spa to embark on a specific program such as weight loss or staying at a hotel with a nice gym; more recently, the concept has evolved to include all categories of travel, and encompasses overall physical and emotional health.

The data to support the rising interest in wellness travel abounds.

According to [the Global Wellness Institute](#), a nonprofit organization for the wellness industry, the wellness travel market grew to \$563 billion in 2015 from \$489 billion in 2013, and is expected to grow another 43 percent to \$808 billion between 2015 and 2020. Travelers made 691 million trips with a wellness component, such as healthy eating or fitness, in 2015, 104.4 million more than in 2013.

In addition, in 2016, the luxury travel network [Virtuoso](#) launched Virtuoso Wellness, a portfolio of 42 hotels and cruise lines. The company's sales for these wellness partners (Rosa Alpina, in Italy's Dolomites Mountains, and Uniworld River Cruises are examples) were up 20 percent last year compared with sales for the company's other suppliers, which increased nine percent.

Beth McGroarty, the research director for the Global Wellness Institute, said that the profusion of wellness programs in travel has redefined the purpose of a vacation.

"Vacations used to be associated with excess. You would have lavish meals, drink a lot and party," she said. "In today's high-stress world, however, people are desperate for rejuvenation and are prioritizing wellness when they have time off."

Leisure travelers looking to partake in a little — or a lot of — self-care are spoiled for choice, particularly in the hotel space where many of the big brands are incorporating wellness into guest rooms.

[Westin Hotels & Resorts](#) has a growing roster of properties, including ones in Melbourne and Milan, that will feature WestinWorkout rooms, accommodations where guests have the choice of either an in-room treadmill or stationary bike.

In December, [Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills](#) introduced seven wellness rooms in partnership with the wellness real estate company Delos. The amenities include toiletries from the beauty brand Lather that are made with natural ingredients, air purification systems that reduce allergens and promote restful sleep, showers with dechlorinators, and healthy in-room dining menus created in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic.

A night's stay in a wellness room starts at \$600 —\$50 more than regular room rates — and the hotel's general manager, Michael Newcombe, said that the demand for them has been notable. "Our regular clients asked us to bring wellness into the privacy of their rooms, and these new accommodations were our answer," he said.

Cruises, too, are increasingly embracing wellness, especially by offering health-focused voyages: The adventure cruise line [Linblad Expeditions](#), for one, in partnership with the exercise and spa brand [Exhale](#), began a series of three- and four-day well-being trips (starting prices from \$1,990 a person) in December around Mexico's Baja Peninsula. Guests on the journeys choose from activities like kayaking around the Baja coastline, snorkeling with sea lions and classes led by an Exhale instructor like power yoga and high intensity interval training.

Some travel companies are also offering more itineraries with wellness themes. Intrepid Travel will run 50 wellness-focused group trips this year, compared with 20 in 2017. One addition is the 12-day [Golden Triangle: Yoga & Bollywood Edition](#) (from \$1,258 a person) in India that includes three days in the city of Rishikesh to practice yoga on the banks of the Ganges.

Intrepid has more wellness trips this year, according to the company's travel director, Leigh Barnes, because the number of travelers who booked them increased significantly in 2017 — in the United States alone, the jump was 88 percent from 2016.

"We're seeing that travelers who traditionally wanted to indulge on a vacation are now searching for trips that help them maintain their personal wellness," Mr. Barnes said.

In the air travel space, both airlines and airports are stepping up their efforts in numerous ways toward keeping travelers healthy.

[Singapore Airlines](#), for instance, recently introduced Deliciously Wholesome, in-flight meals that were designed with the help of a nutritionist and are rich in complex carbohydrates, lean proteins and fiber. The dishes vary by class, but as an example, economy passengers can expect quinoa with ratatouille and chickpeas, and Oriental-style steamed fish.

[Delta Air Lines](#) offers guided meditation at its Asanda Spa Lounges in its Sky Clubs at John F. Kennedy International Airport and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Called Deepak Chopra Dream Weaver, the service can be booked for either 30 or 50 minutes, at a cost of \$30 and \$50 respectively, and is a light-and-sound experience in which fliers sit in a zero gravity chair and listen to a meditation led by Dr. Chopra.



Delta's service is limited to those who have access to Sky Clubs, but all travelers flying through Denver International Airport have the option of practicing meditation and yoga: Since last November, the airport's Concourse A has been home to [Yoga on the Fly](#), a studio with five 60-square-foot rooms that offer iPads loaded with yoga and meditation sessions; fliers interested in trying a session can rent these rooms in increments of 15 minutes (the cost is \$1 per minute).

Avery Westlund, the company's co-founder and a certified yoga instructor, said she came up with the idea for Yoga on the Fly because her frequent travels left her physically and emotionally exhausted. "Travel can be a grind, and yoga and meditation are simple and efficient ways to alleviate the stress," she said. The company expects to open locations at two more airports in the United States by early 2018.

Airports are a setting where travelers at least have the option to walk as a way to squeeze in some exercise, but traditional safari trips usually involve morning and evening game drives and few opportunities for activity. Now, some safari outfitters are breaking the same-old mold by giving travelers ways to keep fit.

The luxury company [Micato Safaris](#) provides its clients with a yoga mat, free weights and a jump rope. Runs through the bush in Kenya with Maasai warriors can also be arranged. And then there's a new 10-day private running safari in Kenya (from \$7,850 a person), where travelers visit the high-altitude destinations of Eldoret and Iten to meet and train with elite runners.

"Our clients were telling us that they didn't want to sacrifice their workouts while they were on vacation," said Melissa Hordych, the company's general manager. "We've tried to help them by giving them creative and fun ways to move."