

SPAIN

Where: Reiki at Shanti-Som, Spain

What: Set high in the Andalusian hills above Marbella, this retreat is so dreamy that you have to fight the urge not to flood Instagram with images of wood pavilions, Buddha statues, fresh juices and fringed parasols around the pool. And customised treatments mean you can

focus on weight loss or enjoy seven days of yoga. But it's the three-night Reboost Body and Soul retreat that comes highly recommended – who wouldn't feel more harmonised thanks to healthy food, meditation, hikes, life coaching and reiki?

Why: Lying on a spa bed while a reiki practitioner hovers their hands over your body and tries to free energy blockages might sound a little woo-woo, but don't knock it until you've tried it. This is

powerful stuff. Our reviewer felt she was coping with a lot – work pressure, Covid fallout, family arguments, illness and relationships – but just 15 minutes into her reiki session she found herself in tears. A therapist held their hand over her oddly hot and constricted throat chakra and suggested she might be holding in some emotions. The rest of the hour-long experience aroused similar sensations in other places, such as the heart chakra. By the end, she felt drained but more relaxed and peaceful than she had for a long time.

Stay: It's a boutique escape with just 15 rooms, so no screaming kids will mess

with your zen state. Bedrooms have balconies and terraces with views of the stunning Sierra de las Nieves, and just place a little buddha ornament outside your door if you don't wish to be disturbed until it's time to tuck into citrus-marinated salmon or a beetroot carpaccio salad in the gorgeous dining pavilion. *Reboost Body and Soul retreat from £757; shantisom.com*



Women's Health

TRAVEL WELL



GERMANY

Where: Ayurveda at Parkschlösschen, Germany

What: A slice of alternative Eastern therapy around 90 minutes from Frankfurt Airport. You'll be booked in for an introductory consultation, which includes a lecture on what Ayurveda actually is (a holistic healing system that originated in India more than 5,000 years ago and aims to balance mind, body and spirit), and then a *dosha* (ayurvedic body type) diagnosis by Dr Vanita Kansal. After checking your pulse, skin and tongue, and asking questions about your lifestyle habits, Dr Kansal will then allocate you a meal plan and treatments that are specific to your dosha.

Why: The treatments are particularly remarkable, from the four-handed massage to

shirodhara, a healing technique where warm oil is poured continuously on to your third eye for 30 minutes. This is a strangely intense and trippy experience, producing lots of dancing, colourful blobs inside your closed eyelids and vivid flashbacks. Eventually, you fall into a very deep sleep. Luckily, there is a therapist on hand to gently shake you awake and lead you into a second room where a warmed bed, shower and herbal tea awaits, allowing you to relax and recover in cocoon-like bliss.

Stay: Rooms are wifi-free and low-key, with calming wood, beige and cream decor and a 'time out' bag for your mobile phone. Champagne, this is not. **From £180 per night; parkschloessen.de**





NORFOLK

Where: Crystal healing at Breathing Space, Norfolk

What: This red-brick country house in the Norfolk Broads looks more suited to a family staycation than a spiritual awakening, yet its list of alternative therapies and treatments rivals any posh wellness retreat in Europe. Take your pick from chakra balancing, chirolgy (palm reading), neurolinguistic

programming and numerology, though it's crystal healing that everyone's after in 2022. Big names from Victoria Beckham to Katy Perry shout about the amazing properties and benefits of crystals.

Why: Devotees claim that crystals aid everything from stress and pain relief to an enhanced immune system. Once you're lying down (on a massage bed overlooking

a lake – nice), healers Samantha Cullingford or Paulina Jones take you through a visualisation to connect you to your inner self. Then, they place crystals around your body and on your energy points (chakras). The aim is to leave you feeling restored and rejuvenated by balancing chakras and removing any blockages. The good news is that if anything negative arises, such as past traumas,

the healers know powerful coping methods to help you, such as EFT (emotional freedom technique).

Stay: Choose the main house – a self-catering willow cottage with two bedrooms and a log burner – or stay in a shepherd's hut with a double bed and cute kitchen.

From £110 per night; breathingspacenorfolk.com

LONDON

Where: Sound healing at The Mandrake, London

What: A city setting might not seem like the obvious place for a healing treatment, but this cool hotel has weekly Spiritual Wellbeing events worth checking out, including shamanic rituals, cacao ceremonies and sound healing with gongs, conches, and crystal and Tibetan bowls.

Why: You're going to feel more relaxed and peaceful than you have in a long time, guaranteed. How does it work? Well, the various instruments being played during a sound healing lull your mind from an alpha to a theta brainwave rhythm, meaning your

consciousness shifts into a dream-like state. This feels more like meditation than, well, meditation. You're also healing on a cellular level, too, as the vibrations give your cells a sonic massage.

Stay: The hotel's name (taken from a plant whose root is said to be hallucinogenic) gives you a clue about what to expect at this disorientingly dark central London crash pad. Plants cascade down the walls of the inner courtyard, and the bedrooms have velvet-covered chairs, sexy Venetian masks and rainfall showers. Botanical cocktails are also served at the dimly lit Waeska Bar.

From £344 per night; themandrake.com



SOMERSET

Where: Meditation at Marston Park, Somerset

What: This hip new glamping site near Frome offers everything from collaboration weekends, such as Pikes in Ibiza last summer, through to wild swimming. Browse the list of daily activities chalked on a blackboard in the open-air reception, which include things like yoga and Full Moon Sound Baths. Don't miss meditation with Susannah on Zen Sundays, which takes place in the Hideout tent, edging Marston's beautiful lake.

Why: Even the most stressed will leave this class feeling chilled and changed. Sitting cross-legged, eyes shut, Susannah gently guides the class for 60 minutes, inviting you to concentrate on your breath and

individual parts of your body – harder than it sounds when your internal voice wants to chat about what's for dinner. When you can focus, your heart rate slows, thoughts ebb and flow, and then, suddenly, you find yourself tuned into the sounds around you: ducks on the lake and the low hum of distant cattle. Opening your eyes after that hour, everything appears brighter, and you'll genuinely feel more connected to your surroundings.

Stay: Building on your new-found love for the world, take a swan pedalo for a spin on the lake, sip local cider at sunset, tuck into freshly baked pizza, dance beneath a mirrorball and then crash in a canvas suite. The enormous bell tent comes with a wood-burner,



double bed (there are two futons for extra beds), a guitar and paints (yes, you're encouraged to get creative here). If money is no object, you can spend the night in Futuro: a retro 1960s house in the shape of a UFO. **From £120 per night (Futuro from £400-£1,200); marstonpark.co.uk**



TRAVEL WELL