

5 Ways to Take a Self-Care Vacation

By SHIVANI VORA JAN. 27, 2017



Box Canyon trail in the Rocky Mountain National Park. John Marino

In the space of a week, you've seen America [say goodbye to one president](#), [inaugurate another](#), march for women's rights, march against abortion and, [for a moment, fear that guacamole would become really expensive](#). Even if you've only occasionally peeked at the news, the shock of so many updates may have left you reeling.

This is the moment for a self-care vacation, especially one where the focus isn't on screens. But it sounds easier than it is. "Being so technologically connected all the time, as many of us are, is overwhelming, and a break is a way to show yourself some love," said Miriam Geiser, a travel consultant with [KK Travels Worldwide](#) in Chicago who has planned self-care getaways for clients and has taken several herself. "A self-care vacation is about slowing down and nurturing yourself so you feel truly mentally and physically rested at the end," she said.

Here is advice on how to take such a trip.



The California coast around Big Sur will make you forget about your digital devices.

Max Whittaker for The New York Times

D.I.Y. a Digital Detox You don't have to camp on a remote island to shed your devices. Leave your laptop and iPad at home, and lock your cellphone in your hotel room safe, using it only for emergencies. Sometimes, just the idea of cutting the cord can lead to anxiety, and the first few hours of such a trip can feel stressful, but Ms. Geiser said that many of her clients who have taken digital detox trips report feeling liberated and peaceful by the second day of their vacation. Suggested destinations: [Post Ranch Inn](#) in Big Sur, Calif.; and any national park within driving distance.

Painting Away the Pressure You don't have to be Picasso, but a vacation incorporating art can inspire creativity in your everyday life, according to Susan Sparks, a travel adviser at Points of Interest Travel in Aspen, Colo. "Art is a way to express yourself and go beyond your usual spectrum, and that can be very reviving," she said. Many resorts and spas around the world offer art classes, ranging from a few hours to several days, in painting, sculpture and collage. Suggested destinations: [Vik Retreats](#) in Uruguay; [Ojai Valley Inn & Spa](#) in Ojai, Calif.; and [Sundance Mountain Resort](#) in Sundance, Utah.



Upper St. Regis Lake in the Adirondacks, a good place to explore nature. Nancie Battaglia for The New York Times

Immerse Yourself in Nature There's nothing more relaxing, according to Ms. Geiser, than being surrounded by nature. Hearing the sound of crashing waves or chirping birds and insects, taking in a beautiful vista on a pristine lake, smelling the flowers of a tropical garden or feeling the warmth of the sunshine on your skin stimulate the senses in a positive way and take you away from the hubbub of your daily life. Spend your days on a nature-focused trip, going on hikes, bike rides and walks, or consider kayaking, fishing, horseback riding or snowshoeing. Suggested destinations: [Lake Kora](#) in the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York; [the Resort at Paws Up](#) in Greenough, Mont.; [Jade Mountain Resort](#) in St. Lucia; [Minaret Station](#) on South Island in New Zealand.

Savoring Rather Than Stress-Eating Food — cooking and eating it — can actually be a destressor, Ms. Sparks said. “Cooking, even if you only do it for a few hours, shuts off your brain, and at the end, you have a meal that you put your heart and soul into,” she said. Weeklong cooking holidays abound around the world. Suggested destinations: [Mamma Agata](#), a cooking school on the Amalfi Coast of Italy; and [Ballymaloe Cookery School](#) in County Cork, Ireland. Many hotels also offer half- and full-day cooking classes.

The Wellness Retreat Route The singular focus of these means that they do often work. Some retreats are meant to be a lifestyle overhaul with medical professionals who complete a comprehensive diagnostic analysis and provide a customized road map to improve your health. Other programs are more focused on detoxes or cleanses, and others still are spiritual in nature, offering daily yoga or meditation. No matter the approach, you'll return refreshed. Suggested destinations: The Ranch at Live Oak in Malibu, Calif.; Golden Door in Escondido, Calif.; Como Shambala in Bali; [Chablé Resort & Spa](#) in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico.