

The best 20 active holidays (that also promise a bit of luxury)

Paddleboard in the Maldives, get sporty in St Tropez or try forest-bathing in the Andalusian woods



Hiking in Cape Town
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Susan d'Arcy

Saturday March 19 2022, 12.01am, The Times

Spring is when nature powers back up after the dark and depressing winter months. If you've succumbed to a few too many evenings in the company of Mr Box-Set and Mrs Takeaway, you may feel the need to recharge your batteries as well. If so, there are plenty of tempting incentives to turn your next holiday into an active break.

You'll be in good company. A-listers love nothing more than the arrival of warmer weather to get sporty outdoors — and while they're at it, show off their lean frames in their latest athleisure fashion line. You can copy Katy Perry and have a go at stand-up paddleboarding in the mirror-calm, tiffany-blue lagoons of the Maldives or strike out across the pea-green rice paddies of Bali in the footsteps of Daniel Craig, or follow Emma Roberts's lead with some challenging horse riding in Costa Rica's mist-covered mountains.

There's no shortage of perspiration inspiration in Europe either, as days grow longer and the continent turns into one giant alfresco gym. You can opt for peaceful pursuits such as forest bathing in France, which not only lowers blood pressure but supports the immune system and is even linked with a decreased risk of cancer. Or you can go heart-pumping, taking part in spectacular rock climbing in the pink-tinged and drama-loaded Dolomites, or try the world-class white-knuckle mountain biking in Spain.

It's a holiday though — so here, we've chosen resorts where there is always a stress-busting massage, a celebrity-endorsed facial and maybe even a Michelin-starred meal waiting for you back at base.



1. Eat, pray, exercise in Bali

This month Bali dropped its quarantine restrictions, so wellness warriors are hot-footing it to the jungle-draped Como Shambhala Estate near Ubud. Its talented staff cleverly blend indulgent Indonesian and Ayurvedic treatments and alfresco fitness into a deceptively powerful cocktail that keeps stars such as Daniel Craig, Chrissy Teigen and John Legend in six-packs. Cycle through lush paddy fields, hike the Tjampuhan Ridge for views of temples and distant volcanoes or raft the mighty Ayung River, which crashes through the estate in a blaze of white water. Dinner can be plant-based or a meat feast depending on your mood.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £1,630pp ([comohotels.com](https://www.comohotels.com)). Fly to Denpasar

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2. Remodel yourself in Madeira

From Yeotown's Barnstaple HQ, you might find yourself yomping along the Devon coast alongside guests such as the Olympic gold medallist Victoria Pendleton. But if you prefer to tone up in tropical temperatures, Yeotown has opened a second venue in a 16th-century farmhouse on Madeira. The results-driven schedule remains much the same as in Blighty though, with an emphasis on coastal and mountain hiking, bookended by sunrise yoga and sunset breath work. In between, get pumping at fitness sessions, dial back during meditation classes and pick up healthy tips at cooking and bio-hacking workshops. Happily, that still leaves time for a daily muscle-melting massage.

Details: Five nights' full board from £2,675pp, including activities and daily massage (yeotown.com). Fly to Funchal



The Maison Ila retreat in southern France

3. Go green in France

It's all about green exercise at Maison Ila, the luscious retreat from the skincare brand whose fans include Gwyneth Paltrow and Natalie Portman and which reopens in late April. Tucked away in the time-worn village of Sonnac-sur-l'Hers in mystical

lake swims, on bike rides down quiet country lanes, and on heart-pumping Nordic walks up to views of the Pyrenees. Combine all that exercise with yoga, sound healing, therapeutic massages, meditation and bedrooms where the walls are encrusted with crystals and contented sleep is assured.

Details: Seven nights' all-inclusive from £2,935pp (maisonila.com). Fly to Toulouse



The F Zeen resort on Cephalonia, Greece

4. Glow on a Greek island

The reality TV star Millie Mackintosh didn't let a little thing like a honeymoon interrupt her fitness routine; she and new husband Hugo Taylor checked into the stylish adults-only F Zeen on Cephalonia. It has a two-tiered, flower-scented outdoor gym as well as kayaking, biking, stand-up paddleboarding and a dozen daily fitness classes. The resort, which reopens in late April, has epic views to Mount Aenos, which is home to a national park, the island's tallest peak and a surefire holiday highlight for the athletically inclined.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £1,699pp, including flights and transfers (ba.com)





Quinta do Lago in the Algarve, Portugal

5. Bloom in Portugal

Quinta do Lago is the Algarve's most exclusive enclave. Madonna loves its bone-white beaches, the presenter Chris Evans rates its golf courses and Frank Lampard is a fan — he may feel his beleaguered Everton footballers could do with a trip to the resort's world-class fitness centre, the Campus, to boost their form. The complex offers everything from state-of-the-art gym facilities to padel lessons, from beach bootcamps to barre fitness. Hiking, biking and kayaking alongside flamingos in the Ria Formosa Nature Reserve is also on the doorstep. If your bank balance doesn't quite match Madge's, the Magnolia Hotel, a five-minute drive from the Campus, is an affordable retro hideaway, with a pool built for post-activity R&R.

Details: B&B doubles from £105 (themagnoliahotelqdl.com). Fly to Faro

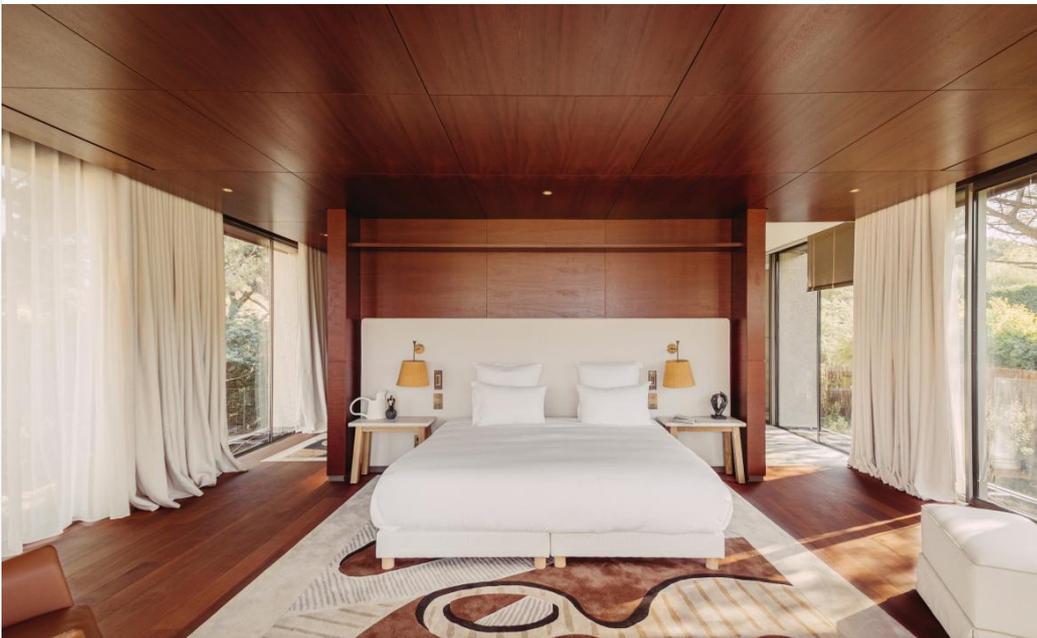


6. Healthy carbs in Marbs

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Once a royal residence, the Costa del Sol's Marbella Club is still a big hit with Hollywood royalty, including Eva Longoria, Mariah Carey and Bruce Willis. They have ample opportunity to get red-carpet ready as the resort offers aerial yoga, Pilates, seafront cycling and guided hikes and horse rides through the nearby nature parks and mountain ranges. Recovery options include intensive sports massages using calcium or magnesium concentrate and personalised wellness menus. Or you could simply stay poolside and exercise your neck muscles, rubbernecking famous fellow guests.

Details: Seven nights' full board from £3,925pp, including transfers and activities (healthandfitnesstravel.com). Fly to Marbella



7. High style in St Tropez

Surely nowhere has more beautiful bodies per square mile than the south of France — and St Tropez's Lily of the Valley resort, with a design inspired by the hanging gardens of Babylon, is where the rich and famous get ready for their close-ups. Its optimal weight and serenity programme has been developed by Dr Jacques Fricker, France's answer to Dr Michael Mosley, and includes yoga, exercise classes, outdoor sports, massages and personalised nutrition plans as well as time off to flaunt the results of your efforts on the nearby unspoilt Gigaro Beach.

Details: Seven nights' full board from £4,270pp, including activities, treatments and transfers ([wellbeingescapes.com](https://www.wellbeingescapes.com)). Fly to Nice



Auberge Hacienda AltaGracia in Costa Rica

8. Costa Rica is the new wellness capital

Move over Thailand, Costa Rica has grabbed the holistic health crown, thanks to impressive wellness-focused resorts such as the new Auberge Hacienda AltaGracia, which has 50 swanky casitas spread over a 864-acre tropical estate in the foothills of the Talamanca Mountains. There's high-altitude hiking to hoover up the calories, tree-canopy rope climbs in the El Rio jungle, mountain biking over challenging terrain and alfresco

infused with local herbs and flowers and riverside massages and meditation. It worked for the actress Emma Roberts, who recently reset here.

Details: Five nights' full board from £5,675pp, including flights, transfers and activities (healingholidays.com)



Meditation in the Apennines at Palazzo Fiuggi

9. Malibu goes on holiday to Italy

You'll find as many A-listers at the Ranch Malibu as in the pages of *Vanity Fair*: not least the new-look Rebel Wilson. From next month, you can skip the long-haul flight but still experience that trademark transformation at its camp at Palazzo Fiuggi, an hour outside Rome. Expect four-hour morning mountain hikes in the mist-hugging Apennines, strength and core training classes in the palazzo's glorious 20 acres of parkland and plant-based menus from the palazzo's culinary wizard, Heinz Beck, whose restaurant in Rome, La Pergola, holds three Michelin stars.

Details: Seven nights' full board from £8,445pp, including flights, transfers, activities and treatments (healingholidays.com)





Cycling in Girona
TONI VILCHES

10. Wheel adventures in Spain

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Girona is Europe's cycling capital, although it's possibly the Costa Brava's wild beaches that were more of a draw for Hugh Grant, Tom Holland, Kylie Minogue and the like. They all checked into the Hotel Camiral, 20 minutes outside the city, where the contemporary bedrooms make elegant decompression chambers after hours in the saddle or hiking along Cami de Ronda, an ancient coastal route through sea cliffs and secret beaches. The 1,334-acre resort also has tennis and padel courts, two football pitches and even zip lines tucked away in its woodlands as well as a new high-tech wellness centre with cryotherapy and oxygen chamber therapy.

Details: B&B doubles from £225 (pgacatalunya.com). Fly to Girona-Costa Brava

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Four Seasons Kuda Huraa in the Maldives

II. Catch a wave in the Maldives

Its wonderful coral reefs grab the headlines, but the Maldives also has world-class surf breaks. Close to Four Seasons Kuda Huraa, a classic Robinson Crusoe resort, you can ride long, bowling lefts at Honky's, racetrack sets at Chickens or open tubes at Cokes. There's also windsurfing, kitesurfing, X-Jetpacks and Hydrofoil experiences, although Katy Perry favoured the stand-up paddleboarding and yoga when she stayed. A trip to the resort's new rooftop night spa rounds off the day in style.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £4,295pp, including flights and transfers (elegantresorts.co.uk)



12. Dodge the clubs on Ibiza

Oku is a sparkling recent addition to the Ibiza hotel scene, with minimalist bedrooms, an award-winning Japanese restaurant and the island's longest swimming pool, complete with cantilevered platform that works for its twice-daily yoga sessions as well as regular DJ sets. It's a stroll from cute Cala Gracio beach for sunset kayaking trips or a snorkel through sea caves. This summer, Oku is launching wellness breaks, kicking off with a five-day retreat by the fitness guru James Stirling, aka London Fitness Guy (May 19-23, £1,514). It features endorphin-boosting beach bootcamps and coastal hikes, sunrise yoga and moonlight meditation.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £1,625pp, including flights and transfers (scottdunn.com)



The Santo Maris resort in Santorini

13. Suite treat on Santorini

The boho-chic adults-only Santo Maris resort is close enough to Oia for the obligatory sunset selfie, but far enough away to exude a sense of splendid isolation. Crank up your karma by staying in one of its new wellness suites, which open on April 20 and have been curated in partnership with beauty editor turned

with hydromassage and wellness-enhancing amenities such as sleep sprays, notebook journals, body scrubs and face masks as well as a healthy minibar. Complimentary garden yoga and alfresco exercise classes build up your stamina for a five-hour bike tour of the neighbouring island of Thirassia — population a sleepy 150 and a glimpse of what Santorini was like before tourism.

Details: Four nights' B&B from £805pp, including activities and one massage (santomaris.gr). Fly to Santorini



Casale Panayiotis, Cyprus

14. Soak up some wellness in Cyprus

Tucked away in the Troodos mountains, Kalopanayiotis was a place of wellness long before the marketing bods coined the term “destination spa”. Cypriots have been coming here for centuries to soothe their aching bones in the village’s thermal springs. The 21st-century holidaymaker has picked up the baton and added serotonin-boosting walks along serene nature trails, challenging mountain biking and creature comforts such as massages and meditation at Casale Panayiotis, a collection of stone cottages in the shadow of the Unesco-protected Agios Ioannis Lambadistis monastery.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £488pp, including flights (olympicholidays.com)



Rosa Alpina hotel, Italy

15. Work up an appetite in the Dolomites

The decor at hotel Rosa Alpina is a masterclass in traditional Alpine charm, discreetly sprinkled with indulgences — such as a restaurant by one of Italy’s best chefs, Norbert Niederkofler. Happily, putting in the hard yards to give you the appetite for his three-Michelin-starred menus can be great fun too. Try uplifting walks or mountain biking in the wildflower meadows and larch forests or white-knuckle adventures in the Dolomites’ natural gym, climbing rock faces or hanging out on the nearby via ferrata, where you use a series of ropes and ladders to reach the peaks.

Details: Seven nights’ B&B from £4,675pp, including flights, transfers and some activities (blacktomato.com)



La Bobadilla, Spain

16. Nurture yourself in nature in Spain

From the outside, La Bobadilla — an hour outside Malaga in the Sierra de Loja — looks like a typical whitewashed village. Similarities end with the bricks and mortar, however: inside, this 800-acre estate is all about pleasure, with three swimming pools, four restaurants and an impressive spa with hydrotherapy, saunas and steam rooms. There's tennis, cycling and horse riding, and this year the hotel launches Nature Retreats for a deeper immersion into the environment. This features forest bathing through its olive, oak and almond trees, Nordic walking and qigong, the slow-mo version of Chinese martial arts, to a soundtrack of bird song.

Details: B&B doubles from £189; five-day nature retreats from £580pp ([barcelo.com](https://www.barcelo.com)). Fly to Malaga



Quad biking at Chedi Lustica Bay, Montenegro

17. Coast with the most in Montenegro

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Lord Byron called Montenegro “the most beautiful encounter between land and sea” and that’s without the advantage of having on tap pastimes such as stand-up paddleboarding and quad biking through its nature reserves and beaches — these are favourite days out for fans of the Lustica peninsula, such as the Beckham family. Base yourself at the glamorous Chedi Lustica Bay, overlooking the marina on Traste Bay, and you can add kayaking, outdoor yoga and fitness classes, sailing and wreck-diving to the activity equation too.

Details: B&B doubles from £167 (chedilusticabay.com). Fly to Tivat



Lion's Head, Cape Town
GETTY IMAGES

18. Sporting buddies in South Africa

After two years of lockdowns and red lists, Cape Town is back with a bang. Right now, the weather is seductively warm, Bree

perfection. Active types should unpack at the plush Twelve Apostles hotel for surfing, kitesurfing and stand-up paddleboarding, best timed to coincide with this stretch of coast's spectacular sunsets. You can hike Table Mountain, bike between vineyards or kayak with the dolphins, and if you want company on jogs or need a tennis partner, the hotel's staff double as sports buddies.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £4,999pp, including flights, transfers and activities (abercrombiekent.co.uk)



Château de Cenonceau in the Loire Valley
ALAMY

19. Pedal through fairytale France

The fairytale châteaux of the Loire Valley provide an unforgettable natural spin studio, with pit stops at classic castles such as Chenonceau, Azay-le-Rideau and Clos du Lucé, Leonardo da Vinci's former home, waiting at the end of riverside cycle paths and forest-lined lanes. While you pedal, a concierge transfers your baggage to your next overnight bolt hole, all converted château hotels, where you will have earned a dip in the pool and a gourmet dinner.

Details: Five nights' half-board from £1,465pp, bike hire extra (macsadventure.com). Fly or take the train to Amboise



Hotel Anassa, Cyprus

20. Starry bolt hole in Cyprus

The discreet stealth-wealth style of Anassa and its secluded location on the fringes of the Akamas National Park have made it a firm favourite with celebrities such as James Bond actor Naomie Harris for years. Make your stay as 007-charged as you like, since water-skiing, wakeboarding, windsurfing, parasailing, scuba diving, canoeing, jet-skiing and sailing trips to the Blue Lagoon are all available, as well as mountain hikes, Jeep safaris and quad biking adventures. Hit the brakes with yoga in its flower-filled gardens or a facial featuring this year's must-have creams by the biomedical scientist Augustinus Bader.

Details: Seven nights' B&B from £2,400pp, including flights and transfers (scottdunn.com)

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