

# JOURNEY TO Renewal

THE BEST **HEALING RETREATS** OF 2018

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RECONNECT  
& RESTORE**

Where Do  
You Want  
to Be Now?

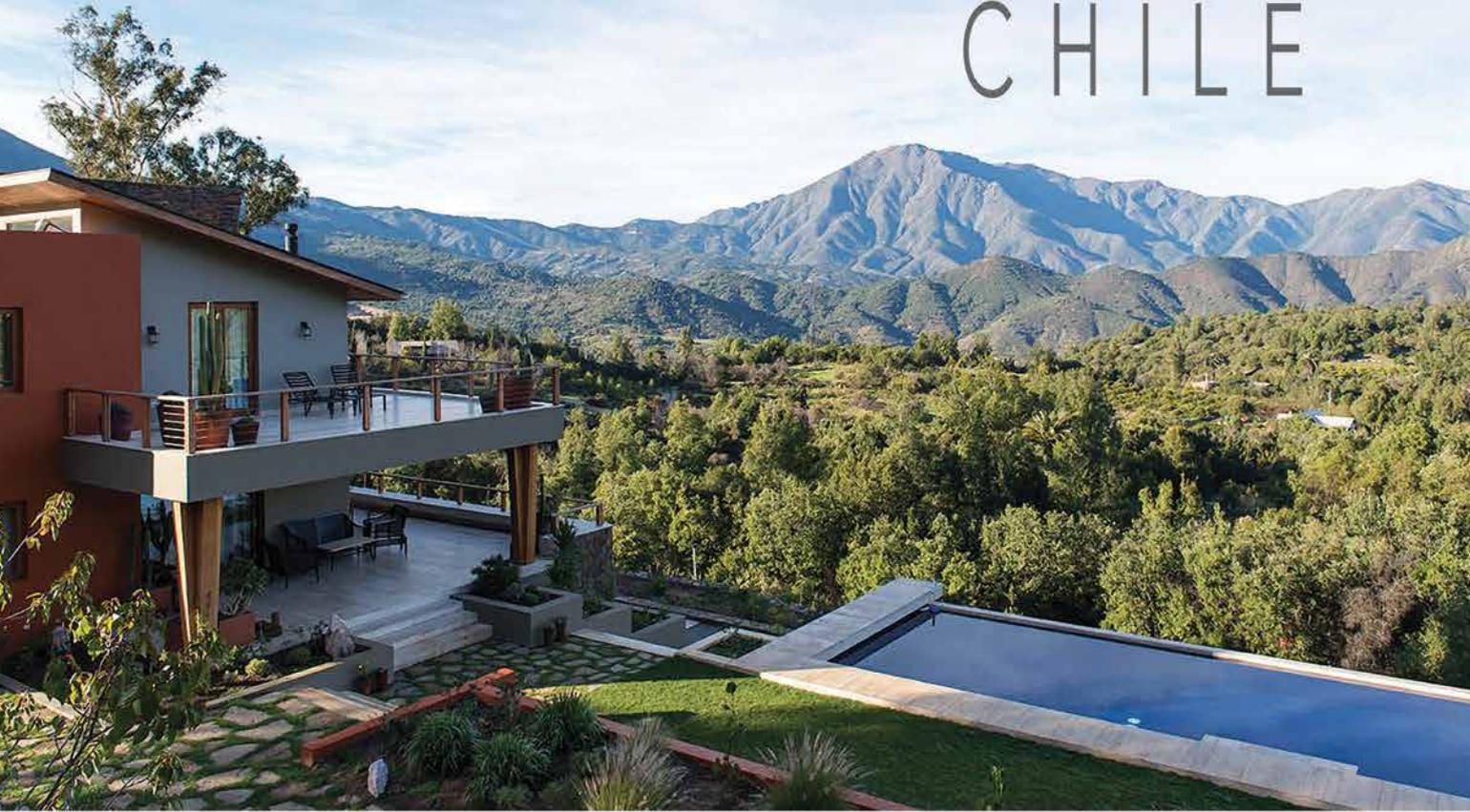
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# JOURNEY TO Renewal

THE BEST **HEALING RETREATS** OF 2018

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# WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE RIGHT NOW?

**THAT'S THE QUESTION** that came to mind as I sat down to plan this year's retreat guide. Every place represents a different kind of yearning. The sea, for example, beckons in a different way than the mountains do. Right now, I'm actually thinking about Wales, and I trip I took years back. The reason that calls to me is that I love the solitude of the cliffs and craggy moors and breathing in the brisk sea air. I was pleased to discover that 2018 has been deemed "The Year of the Sea" by Visit Wales. You can read more about that in our roundup of seaside retreats on page 18.

There are lots of possibilities to explore in this third annual *Journey to Renewal*, from volunteer vacations to transformational travel to wellness getaways. And to encourage more responsible travel—things you may not have thought of—Martha Honey, executive director of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), shares expert advice on what to do before you depart, while you're at your destination, and when you return. Turn to "Transform the Way You Travel," on page 4.

As you sit with this issue, close your eyes and take a journey in your mind—ask yourself, "*What is calling to me right now—and what do I need now?*"

Enjoy the journey,  
Mary Bemis  
Editor in Chief



CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE

## JOURNEY TO **Renewal** THE BEST HEALING RETREATS OF 2018

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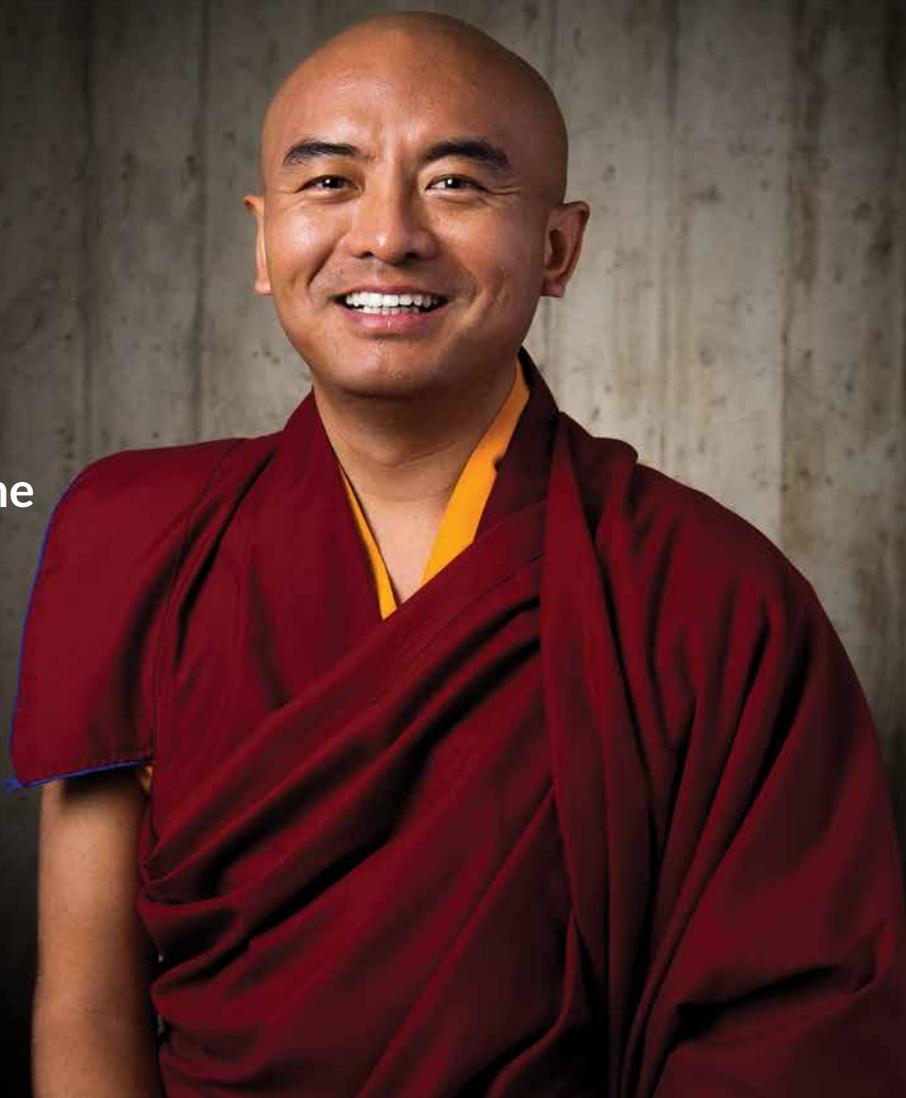
**Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche**

June 2 - June 6, 2018

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**Meditation enables us to discover a lasting contentment that is not subject to the fluctuating conditions of our lives, and to nurture the qualities of wisdom and compassion that naturally manifest from awareness itself.**

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The Joy of Living is a secular path of meditation practice. Though rooted in the ancient Buddhist teachings of Tibet, these practices are not religious in nature. They deal with basic functions of the mind, such as mindful awareness and the impulse to move toward happiness and away from suffering. Through them, we learn to approach all experiences with unconditional warmth and acceptance.

Tergar Meditation Community supports individuals, practice groups, and meditation communities around the world in learning to live with awareness, compassion, and wisdom. Grounded in the Tibetan Buddhist lineage of our guiding teacher Mingyur Rinpoche, our online and in-person programs are accessible to people of all cultures and faiths, and support a lifelong path toward the application of these principles in everyday life.

# TRANSFORM THE WAY YOU TRAVEL

*How to help generate positive economic and environmental benefits for local communities*



## THE CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

(CREST) was founded in 2003 with a mission to “transform the way the world travels.” We were responding to the growing ecotourism movement, which posits that, done well, tourism can generate positive economic, environmental, and sociocultural benefits for local communities and host countries.

Over the last 15 years, CREST has conducted field projects, produced handbooks and fact sheets, published articles and books, organized conferences, and made films, all geared toward educating consumers, as well as businesses and governments, on the principles and good practices of ecotourism, or what we call “responsible travel.” And we have found that one of the “unintended benefits” of this type of travel is that it gives the consumer—the traveler—an enriched vacation experience centered on enjoyment and experiential learning. In contrast with generic mass market, “fly and flop” beach or cruise tourism, responsible travel provides consumers—travelers—with opportunities for engaged interactions with local communities, slower-paced exploration of far-flung destinations, and opportunities for new experiences ranging from scuba diving, wildlife viewing, and white water rafting to yoga and wellness classes, wine tasting, and cooking lessons based on local cuisine and ingredients.

Today CREST’s mission remains a work in progress: While the tourism industry has certainly not been fully transformed, we are in an era of transition. Each year we find growing numbers

of consumers who are choosing responsible, sustainable types of travel both because they’re better for the planet and local communities and because they offer a superior vacation experience.

Ready to become a more sustainable traveler? Here are CREST’s practical guidelines for traveling responsibly.

## BEFORE YOU DEPART

### Do your research:

- Consult guidebooks and online resources to learn about your destination’s environmental, social, and political issues.
- Research websites specializing in responsible/sustainable travel options.
- Check if the companies you are considering have achieved recognition in leading responsible travel competitions, such as World Travel & Tourism Council’s Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and World Responsible Tourism Awards ([responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)).
- Check if the companies have eco-certifications and eco-awards or labels.
- Ask about the environmental policies and practices of hotels and tour operators you’re considering.
- Ask if the tour operator or hotel supports any local conservation or community-development projects (see CREST’s [travelersphilanthropy.org](http://travelersphilanthropy.org)).
- If you’re interested in voluntourism, carefully investigate the local projects (see CREST’s *Dos and Don’ts of Travel Giving & Travelers’ Philanthropy Handbook*).



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continued from page 4

## WHILE YOU'RE AT YOUR DESTINATION

### Be responsible with giving and buying:

- Eat in locally owned restaurants and stay in locally owned lodges, hotels, and B&B's.
- Buy locally made handicrafts and products.



- Never buy crafts or products made from protected or endangered animals.
- Hire local guides, and make sure they are licensed and live locally.
- Pay the fair price—don't engage in overly aggressive bargaining.
- Think twice about giving money to children; this can perpetuate a cycle in which children are sent to beg rather than to school.

### Be culturally sensitive:

- Before entering sacred places, homes, and private land, ask for permission.
- Always ask for permission before taking photos of individuals.
- Dress appropriately for local customs.
- Take the time to learn some words and phrases in the local language.

### Be environmentally conscious:

- Refrain from taking seashells, coral, or other natural objects.
- Make your transportation count! Explore eco-friendly transportation. Are low-carbon or public transportation options, such as trains or buses, available?
- When traveling short distances, try not to fly.
- When flying, choose direct flights if possible, on larger planes and/or newer, more fuel-efficient fleets.
- "Offset" the carbon emissions from your flights to mitigate your carbon footprint.

- Choose "green" airports, like Seattle-Tacoma International, Portland International JetPort, Baltimore-Washington International, and San Francisco International, which are taking steps to be more sustainable.
- Always carry your trash away from natural sites to dispose of properly, and recycle and compost waste when possible.
- Use limited resources wisely, such as water, fuel, and electricity.
- Stay on designated trails and observe set distances from wildlife—never provoke, touch, or otherwise engage animals.
- Be an animal-friendly traveler; we suggest at minimum following the 5 Freedoms, explained by Born Free ([bornfree.org.uk](http://bornfree.org.uk)), and avoiding circumstances that endanger animal welfare.

## WHEN YOU RETURN

### Help perpetuate responsible travel:

- Share with others your experiences and promote responsible companies, destinations, and practices (blogging, social media, and the like).
- Consider making a donation to programs that give back and benefit the local community you visited.
- Integrate further responsible travel suggestions into future trips.

—MARTHA HONEY PHD

**Martha Honey PhD** is the Executive Director of the Center for Responsible Travel, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit focused on sustainable tourism.

*Dress appropriately for local customs, and take the time to learn some words and phrases in the local language.*

# RELAX AND REJUVENATE

---

Sunrise Springs, the sister resort to the legendary Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs, offers tranquility as well as many unique opportunities for a deeply transformative wellness experience. Soak in mineral-infused waters under the Santa Fe sky. Engage in ancient Medicine Wheel and Sweat Lodge rituals for spiritual renewal. Try our hands-on classes in everything from organic gardening to expressive painting. Follow your personal journey!

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**#11 Top City in the World**



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# THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

*Leaving the security of a world you know and hurling yourself into a new one will teach you to trust not only others but also yourself.*

**RECENTLY, I AGREED TO TRAVEL** with 10 strangers. We would hike in Wales, spending 15 hours or more a day together. We would come from three countries and four U.S. states. Though we would never be in danger, we would be vulnerable and dependent on each other. We would struggle up hills in sleet, rain, and hail. We would bandage each other's blisters at the makeshift "surgery." We would pull each other from the muck and quicksand, share each other's handkerchiefs, and laugh at one another's impromptu humor. In the evening, we would meet for drinks and a civilized meal where we would be responsible for making conversation.

Traveling, to me, is the ultimate adventure—but I prefer to do it with *intimati*. So, in spite of the intriguing program, I was

skeptical. It might be an interesting trip, I thought, but how could it be fun? Being with people all day long whom I didn't know well would be laborious and enervating. Still, almost reluctantly, I went to Wales. And, guess what? I had a blast.

Without the security blanket of family and friends, I had to offer myself to these strangers. Lacking any résumé or credits, wearing bulky clothing, my hair stuck beneath a black knit cap, and limping on my recently hyperextended knee, I presented my best self—the me from deep inside, the me without agenda or baggage or complications.

Throughout the week, each of our personal tales unfolded. But we began in the present tense, hiking with one another, catching glimpses of the Irish Sea, swooning at adorable lambs

gamboling behind ancient rock walls, and meditating in the presence of standing stones. As it turns out, these people became my *intimati*. I got to know them from the inside out, which is not always how things are done. In real life, it's easy to lose track of oneself. Whether it's the putting-out-fires pace that defines much of our lives or the regulated rhythm of well-honed routines, something, sometimes, causes us to forget who we are. Yes, we have names and labels, tasks, and occupations. Such monikers indicate our identities.

But that vital *us* that fills with wonder, that craves adventure and knowledge and nourishes itself on unadulterated joy—that is the *us* that goes missing at times. That vibrant, pulsing, passionate *us* somehow ends up in a box, pushed deep into the back of the crowded closet of our souls. But this sealed box must



*That vital us that fills with wonder, that craves adventure and knowledge and nourishes itself on unadulterated joy—that is the us that goes missing at times.*

be rediscovered, moved to the front of the closet, opened wide, and passed around. Without our essential self, we are empty vessels, going through the motions of living as starving souls. Without being connected to our hungry spirit, we tune in too much to others' perceptions of us and our motivations. It's easy to forget who we are when we haven't had a chance to introduce ourselves, on the deepest level, to new people willing to see us with fresh eyes. Worst of all, we give ourselves labels that inhibit us and have little to do with who we really are inside. It may seem easier to sleep through life, especially if we are reasonably happy. But knocking on that door inside you and reacquainting yourself with your true inner self is an integral and invaluable aspect of life's journey.

One way to wake yourself up is to join a group. Becoming a member of a group has immediate results because the act of plopping yourself into an unknown situation forces you to act intuitively. Animal instincts sharpen. Your ears widen, and you

see more effectively. All your senses arouse to protect you in this uncharted territory with different regulations. What you reveal and how you reveal it defines you anew. As you act in this new world, you awaken. You see yourself differently because you're responding from the core. The threatening adventure of novelty allows you to wipe away the veneer and be real—if you dare.

Even signing up for a class can be an adventure. No matter how much schooling we've had, there's always something new to learn. Casting aside insecurities to pursue a new subject just for the heck of it can be liberating. Taking a French class, then, is not just about mastering a new language, but also about being surrounded by new people who know nothing about you. As you broaden your mind, your true self breaks free. You tap into a forgotten source of your identity.

Joining a cause, volunteering for something you believe in, becoming a member of an exercise group or a writer's group, taking a cooking course—all of these take you places you've never been and ask you to step outside yourself. But why stop at taking a class? Take a trip with strangers. Watch in awe as they become your friends. Leaving the security of a world you know and hurling yourself into a new one with strangers will teach you to trust not only others but also yourself. —**BECCA HENSLEY**

**Becca Hensley** is a spiritual adventurer and a widely published travel writer. Based in Austin, Texas, she is a contributing editor at [InsidersGuidetoSpas.com](http://InsidersGuidetoSpas.com).

*"Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have."*



— ECKHART TOLLE

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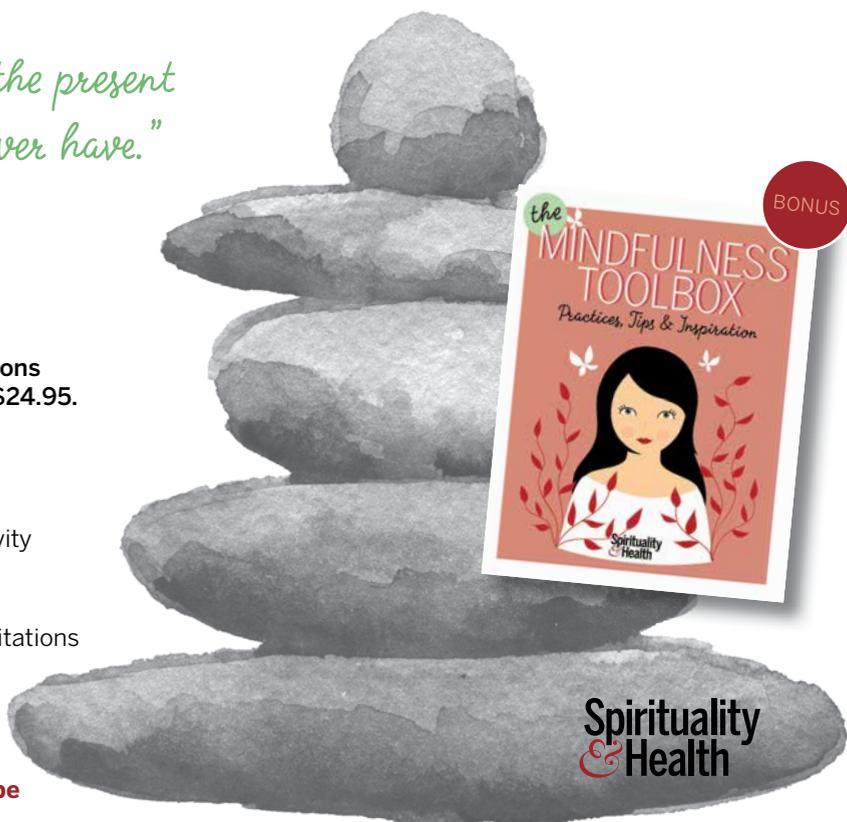
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# MOUNTAINSIDE *Serenity*

EMBRACE YOUR INNER MOUNTAIN GOAT AND . . . BY **MARY BEMIS**

## Slip Away to the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range

Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite is a mere two miles from the south entrance to Yosemite National Park, and encompasses 48 spectacular acres that border the Sierra National Forest. The views can't be beat since the lodge, named for legendary Chief Tenaya of the Southern Sierra Ahwahneechee people, sits a mighty 5,288 feet up. There's lots to do at this pet-friendly lodge, including archery, geo-caching, hiking and biking, rock climbing, and stargazing. The property recently partnered with Balanced Rock ([balancedrock.org](http://balancedrock.org)), a local nonprofit travel company, to offer health and wellness programs that focus on inward reflection in combination with outward exploration of the beauty of the High Sierra. [tenayalodge.com](http://tenayalodge.com)

## Take Tambo del Inka's Train to Machu Picchu in Peru

Nestled between the city of Cusco and the ruins of Machu Picchu, the Urubamba Valley connects a modern city with ancient Incan culture. The valley is home

to Tambo del Inka, a quiet, contemporary hotel that honors its natural environment. Stay at the hotel and explore the surrounding valley with its plentiful archaeological sites and colorful villages, or sign up for the Quinoa Trail, a day full of quinoa-themed activities at the hotel and throughout the Sacred Valley. There's also a noteworthy spa

with indigenous treatments and panoramic views of the Andes. With serene views of the mountains and of the Urubamba River, the hotel makes a great base for culture hounds and adventure seekers—and boasts its own train station serviced by PeruRail with daily morning departures to Machu Picchu. [tambodelinkaresort.com](http://tambodelinkaresort.com)



Train to Machu Picchu

THIS PAGE: COURTESY TENAYA LODGE AND TAMBO DEL INKA RESORT; FACING PAGE: COURTESY SUN VALLEY RESORT AND STOWE MOUNTAIN LODGE

## Stargaze at Grand Teton National Park

Love to lose yourself in a gorgeous night sky? Snake River, situated amid the scenic and serene Grand Teton National Park, is one of the nation's premier stargazing sites. Join knowledgeable local guides on a 10-mile dinner cruise and stargaze away, while learning about the region's history and abundant wildlife. A bonus: the bona fide western cookout, featuring fresh river trout. Catch the cruise at Jackson Lake Lodge, located in Grand Teton National Park. [gtlc.com/lodges/jackson-lake-lodge](http://gtlc.com/lodges/jackson-lake-lodge)

## Book a Boot Camp in British Columbia

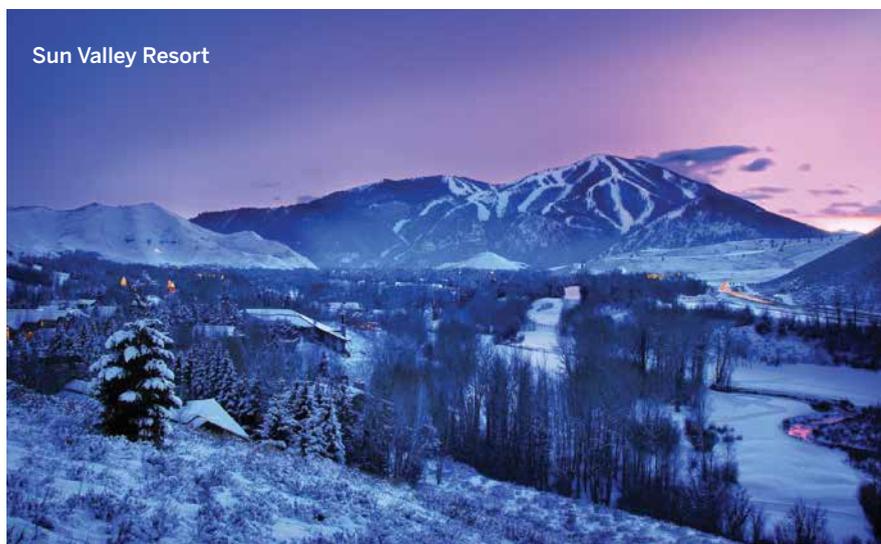
"Find vitality" is the motto at Mountain Trek Fitness Retreat, located in the beautiful mountains of British Columbia. The hiking-based retreat, housed in a simple timber-frame lodge, gives you an ultra-personalized program with activities like Nordic trekking (three to four hours daily), yoga, massage therapy, detoxification treatments, and a variety of fitness options. The program here is specifically designed to "help guests reclaim their functional fitness and natural health." New to the expert staff is a naturopathic doctor offering food sensitivity testing, and adrenal and sex hormone testing. Fresh, organic food is on the menu. [mountaintrek.com](http://mountaintrek.com)

## Chill Out in Sun Valley

There's a reason why everyone here has a healthy glow—fitness-minded folks have been traveling to Sun Valley Resort since 1936. While it is revered for its championship-level winter sports, Sun Valley is a great destination any time of year. There are 400 miles of single-track and 30 miles of paved trails for runners and hikers of all skill levels, and mountain bikers are sure to appreciate the 30 miles of car-free bike paths and hundreds of miles of single-track paths. Sun Valley is home to the annual Sun Valley Wellness Festival, and there are options for all—music, food, and wellness packages (acupuncture, cupping, and Reiki are on the menu here) at the newly revamped Spa at Sun Valley. [sunvalley.com](http://sunvalley.com)

## Meditate on Dercum Mountain

Mountaintop yoga is just one of many outdoor offerings for guests staying at Colorado's Keystone Resort. Take in the scenery on the gondola ride to the top of the mountain, 11,640 breathtaking feet



Sun Valley Resort

up. The hour-long class is pretty much guaranteed to refresh and rejuvenate. Afterward, enjoy a healthy lunch and juice before heading back down. Outdoor enthusiasts will embrace the many activities available here, from snow tubing to hiking to mountain biking and so much more. [keystoneresort.com](http://keystoneresort.com)

## Detox in the Shadow of Mount Kuchumaa

Since first opening in the late 1940s, Rancho La Puerta, the original health and fitness retreat in Baja California, has

always been about personal empowerment. The ideal, and real life-changer, is to stay a week, eat organic, learn how to move in new ways, and work on your inner and outer well-being. Weeks are themed (dance, nutrition, yoga, and more) with expert lectures. A new and noteworthy option: the Detox and Cleansing Retreat. [rancholapuerta.com](http://rancholapuerta.com)

**Mary Bemis** is the editor in chief of *Journey to Renewal* and the founder of [InsidersGuidetoSpas.com](http://InsidersGuidetoSpas.com).

## Rustic Furniture Making

If you've always wanted to try your hand at woodworking, head to the Green Mountain state. Guests at Stowe Mountain Lodge, a Destination Hotel, can book the new Rustic Furniture Making experience. Learn basic woodworking, joinery, and finish techniques to make an original piece of log furniture to take home. [destinationhotels.com/stowe-mountain-lodge](http://destinationhotels.com/stowe-mountain-lodge)



Stowe Mountain Lodge

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AYURVEDA & WELLNESS JOURNEYS  
IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS



A Ayurveda (Ayur·ved·a) is known as the science of life. Thousands of years old, this science provides time-tested solutions that have helped people of all ages achieve their wellness goals. Whether it be increased vitality, stronger immunity, weight management, or just feeling healthy and alive, Ayurveda has a powerful track record of supporting physical and even spiritual well-being.

The way people share about their Ayurveda experiences shows how holistic it is. As Eva F. shared, "It's nurturing spiritually, it's nurturing emotionally. The silence is very nurturing. I lost weight. I lost 5 pounds, but more important is the lightness of being that I experienced."

One place to find authentic Ayurveda retreats, cleanses and treatments offered in a spectacular natural setting is in North Carolina at the Art of Living Retreat Center's Shankara Ayurveda Spa. Set amidst the silence of the Blue Ridge Mountains, connected with a thriving wellness center and college in India, and offering access to live-in Ayurvedic experts and a wide range of treatments, the center is a bucket list destination for anyone interested in the wellness experience of Ayurveda. What's more, the center is launching a new Ayurveda expansion in 2018! Learn more at [artoflivingretreatcenter.org/spa](http://artoflivingretreatcenter.org/spa)



# WIN A Restorative AYURVEDIC RETREAT

## CHOOSE FROM ONE OF TWO OPTIONS

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- ◆ 2 nights accommodation
- ◆ 2 Ayurveda treatments
- ◆ Ayurveda-inspired dining
- ◆ Guided yoga and/or meditation
- ◆ Shankara beauty care gift set

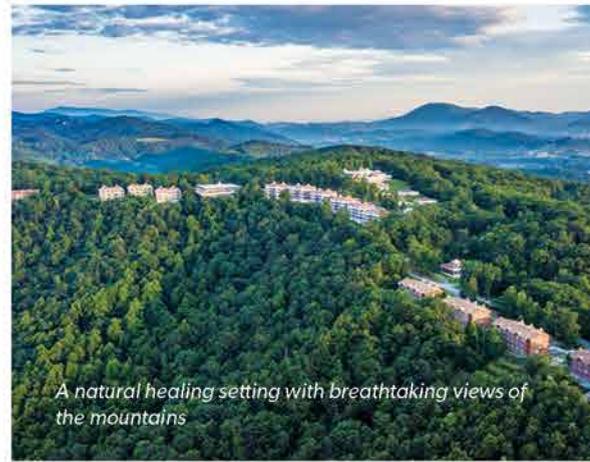
### REFRESH CLEANSE

- ◆ Personal Ayurveda consultation
- ◆ Pre & Post cleansing & personalized wellness plan
- ◆ 6 nights accommodation
- ◆ 3 Ayurveda treatments
- ◆ Ayurveda-inspired dining
- ◆ Guided yoga and/or meditation
- ◆ Shankara beauty care gift set

Learn more about the two options at: [bit.ly/ayurveda-retreat](https://bit.ly/ayurveda-retreat)

## ENTER TO WIN

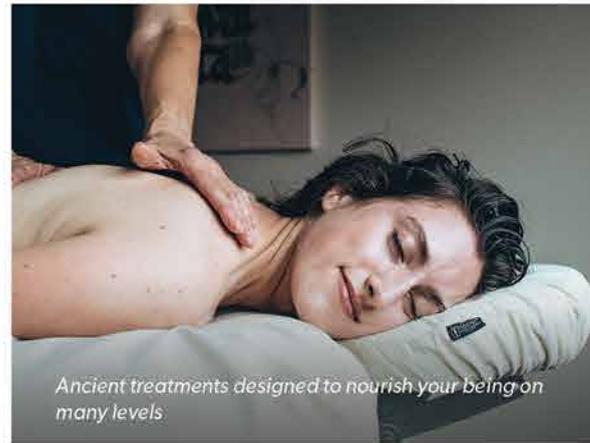
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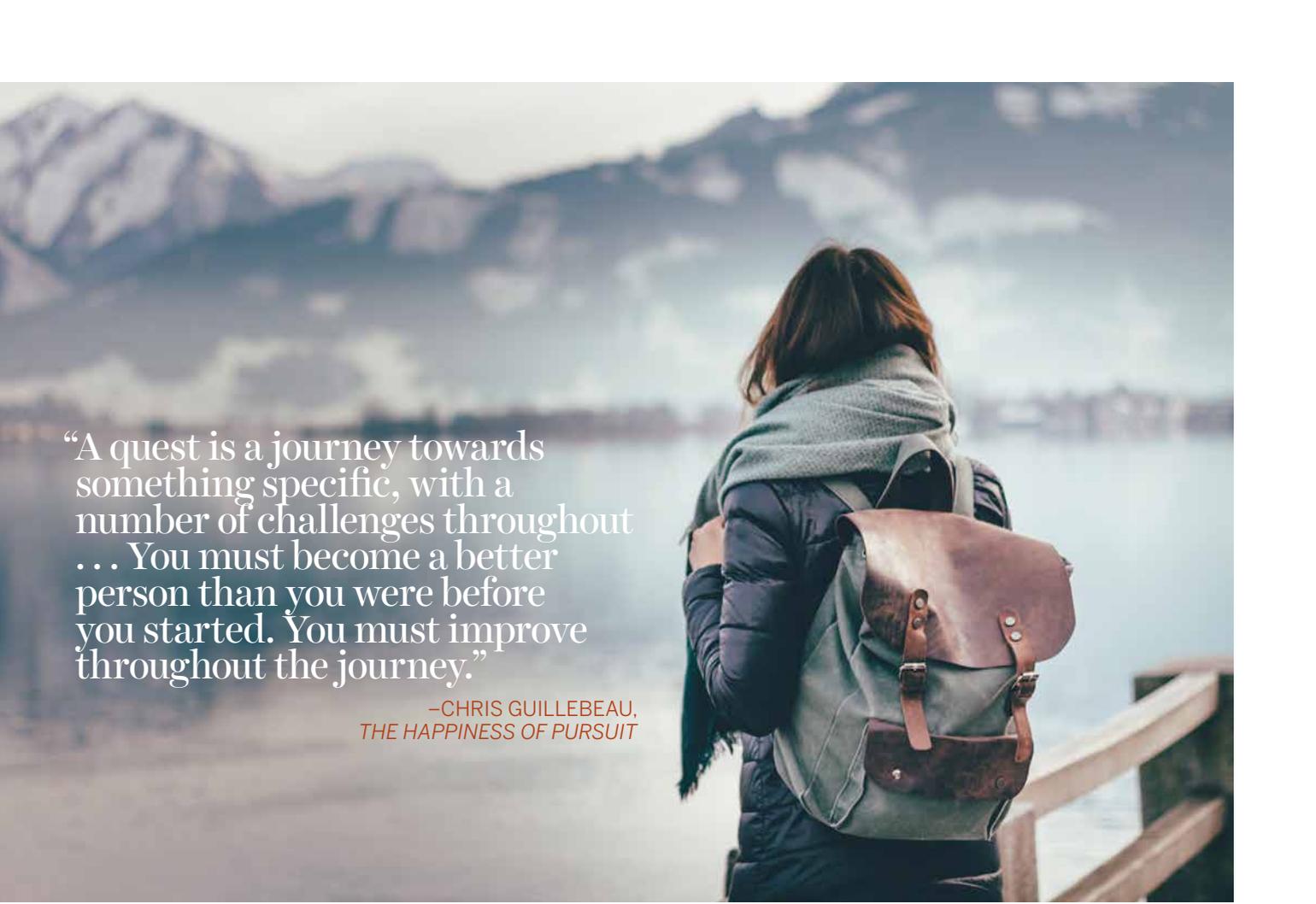
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A person with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue puffer jacket and a grey scarf, is seen from behind. They are carrying a brown leather backpack and standing on a wooden railing overlooking a large body of water. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains under a clear sky.

“A quest is a journey towards something specific, with a number of challenges throughout . . . You must become a better person than you were before you started. You must improve throughout the journey.”

—CHRIS GUILLEBEAU,  
*THE HAPPINESS OF PURSUIT*

# WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL?

A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT AND EXPERIENCING THE  
WORLD TAKES YOUR VACATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

BY **MARTINE BURY**

**O**n a trip to Dehradun, India, I met a Canadian woman in her 30s traveling through the country alone. She had an amazing back-story. The year before, she had a lucrative career working at a hedge fund and all the trappings that came with her job—beautiful, modern home; luxury car; and so on. A random, nearly catastrophic stroke left her entirely paralyzed in a hospital ICU, unable to speak. She overheard the doctors tell her parents that she would never have a normal life, feed or bathe herself:

worst-case scenario. She promised herself at that moment that she would function again because she always wanted to go to India. After a long journey of physical therapy and rehabilitation, including many painful setbacks, she booked her trip, and committed to doing as much as she could out of her comfort zone, from meditating with monks in rugged cave temples to embarking on a long train journey to the country's remote corners. At a gem shop we happened on, she bought herself a beautiful sapphire ring as a reward for reaching her goal—ending up fit, confident, happy, healed, and ready to help people in need back home.

We all have some inkling of travel as the hero's journey, as depicted in wildly successful memoirs such as Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* or Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*. You know something needs to change, so you set out on a quest . . . and you get somewhere, stronger, wiser, better. A new movement in travel seeks to codify this type of journey as Transformational Travel, or TT. It's about going with intention, diving into the experience, and opening to change rather than simply ticking a destination off your bucket list.

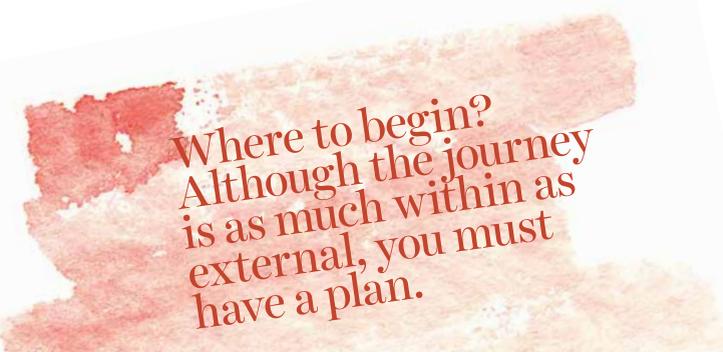
"Transformational Travel is *any* travel experience that inspires people to make meaningful, lasting changes in their lives, go beyond their comfort zones, and challenge themselves culturally, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually," says Michael Bennett, executive vice president of travel operator Nomad Hill and cofounder of the Transformational Travel Council. "TT is about people becoming the hero of their own lives, and helping to transform the world around them at the same time."

The Transformational Travel Council (TTC) was founded in 2016, when a group of travel experts—tour operators, guides, travel-marketing gurus, and industry pioneers—formed a collective based on the impact of their own personal journeys. Far and wide, they want to share the ethos that travel can make your life better. "Intentionality brings travel to a new level," says Bennett. "It demands that you look at your trip as a unique opportunity to learn, grow, change, and transform yourself."

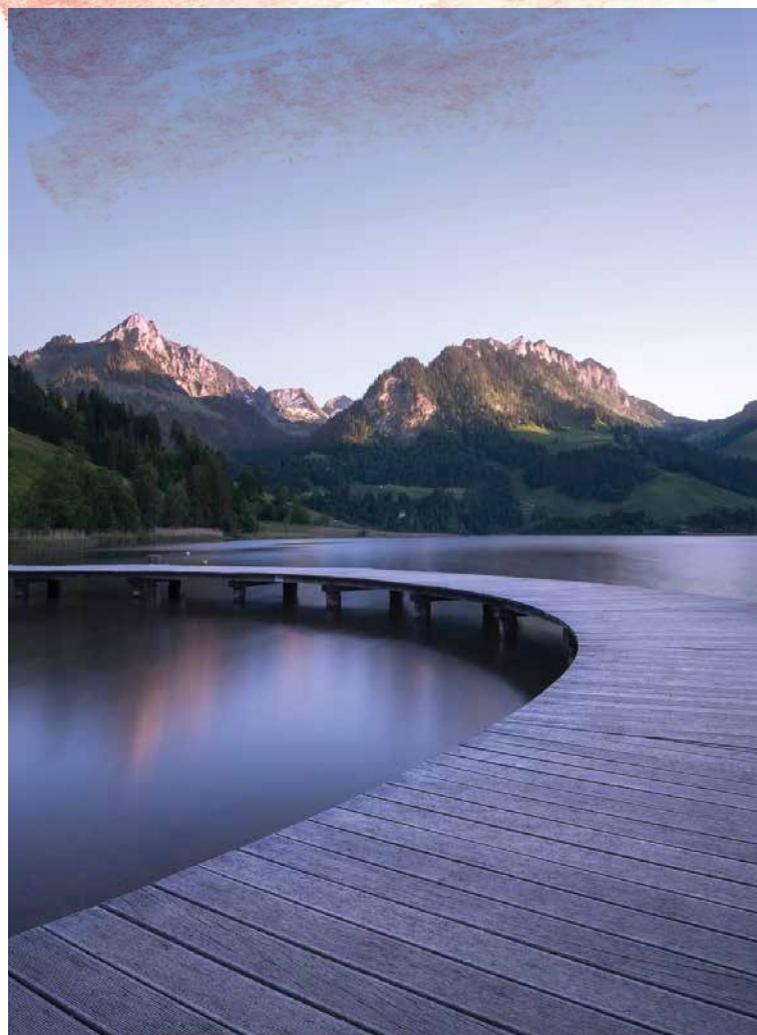
Where to begin? Although the journey is as much within as external, you must have a plan. The experts at TTC work with clients to curate experiences that create fertile ground for the traveler's desired goals to flourish. There are also hundreds of retreats: curated opportunities for enrichment at hotels, resorts, and on select cruises to choose from if more guidance or community is required. Whether you are ready to dive into something bold and epic or wish to begin with something small, "you can't simply go and 'let the

mountains speak for themselves,' as the old adage goes," says Bennett. "You need to bring a new kind of mindfulness and consciousness to your travels to include experiences that will challenge and inspire you to travel like a HERO—with heart, engagement, resolve, and openness."

From seeking better health to healing an emotional rift, the travel experience can empower you to face obstacles head-on or see things from another point of view. According to Bennett, there is a method to traveling with intention, outlined by the Transformational Travel Council as seven



Where to begin?  
Although the journey  
is as much within as  
external, you must  
have a plan.



types of travel experiences. Here, he shares them with *Journey to Renewal*.

- 1. Travel with purpose or feel the call to adventure.** Go seeking something new, different, and better in life (even if you don't know exactly what you are going to find).
- 2. Travel with a sense of openness.** Being open-minded and open-hearted allows you to truly engage with the experiences, people, and places in a much deeper and more meaningful way.
- 3. Cross the threshold of adventure into a zone unknown.** This can lead to a critical psychological disconnection from the ordinary world and routine at home and can open up channels of creativity and imagination and freedom.
- 4. Take on cultural and physical challenges.** Push your comfort zone and see how resilient, resourceful, and powerful you are.

**5. Engage in meaningful conversations.** Listen without judgment and share thoughts, ideas, perspectives, and life stories.

**6. Reflect on your experiences.** This can be accomplished through journaling, prayer, meditation, art, or some combination of the above. Find time to make sense of what you are seeing, doing, and experiencing. Process it all, and explore how you might be able to apply what you learn to your life.

**7. Take intentional action beyond the actual trip.** When you get home, make desired changes in your life inspired by shifts that took place on your journey. Create what you want in life.

**Martine Bury** is a writer, travel and lifestyle expert, and culture-obsessed globetrotter based in Los Angeles. Her work has appeared in outlets including *Sunset*, *Forbes Travel Guide*, and *Travel & Leisure*.

## THREE TRIPS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

### Oahu, Hawaii

Tucked into a lush oasis on Oahu's west side, **Kahumana Organic Farm and Retreat** offers bold vision and relaxation in a holistic program that gives guests a chance to eat well, practice yoga, embark on a healing journey, learn about organic farming, and volunteer on the farm, which supports multiple local, community initiatives—from community supported agriculture (CSA) and championing sustainability to providing enrichment for the mentally disabled to addressing

the problems of food deserts, hunger, and poverty. Two retreat homes feature 17 rooms that comfortably house groups or individuals, and also provide a nice launching point for exploring the island's most serene beaches and epic hiking trails. [kahumana.org](http://kahumana.org)

### Okavango Delta, Botswana

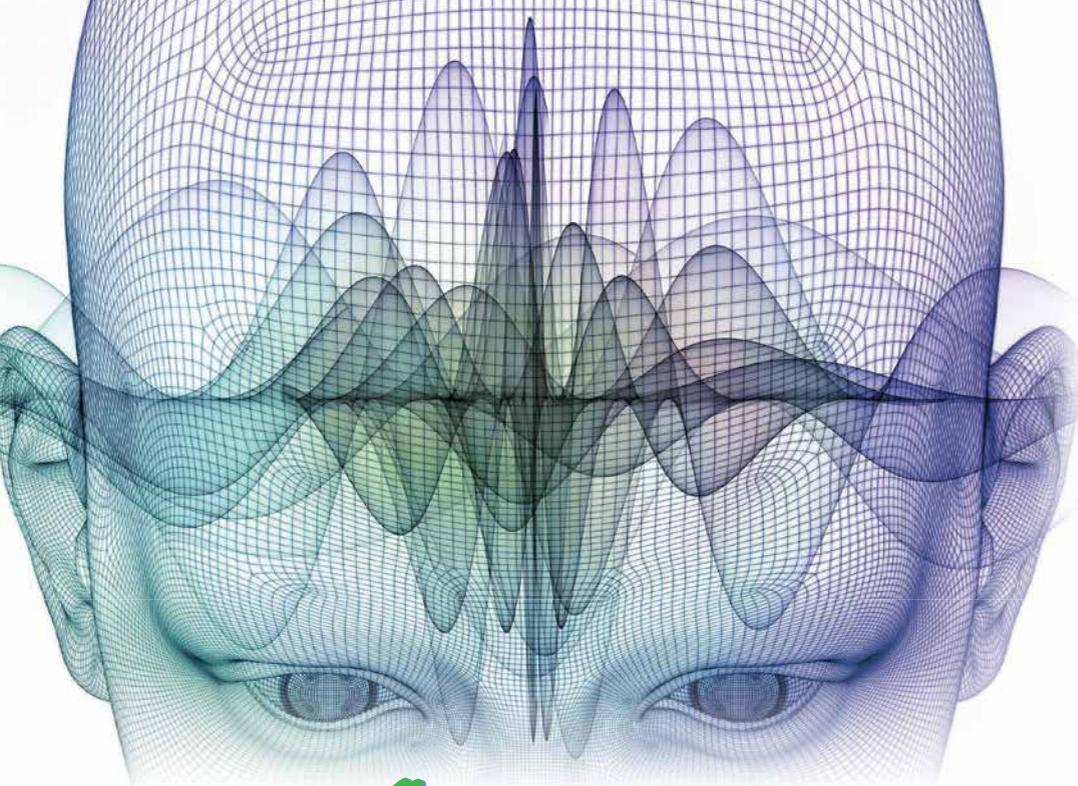
A safari introduces you to the wonder of wide-open spaces, wildlife, starry night skies, and ancient cultures as you base your days around nature's rhythms, like the rising and setting of the sun. The vast,

labyrinthine water world of the Okavango Delta and the untamed Moremi Game Reserve is the perfect place to connect with self. **Jacada Travel's Digital Detox Safari** literally helps you unplug your devices—and get out of your comfort zone—on a luxe, nine-day journey that includes six days, untethered, on a mobile safari followed by three nights at iconic Jack's Camp. [jacadatravel.com](http://jacadatravel.com)

### Carlsbad, California

Aviara Wellness Academy at **Park Hyatt Aviara** offers an unconventional approach to traditional resort activities via curated, multiday retreats that infuse a mindful enrichment ethos to guests' interests like improving your golf game at the Golf Academy, mastering your swing at Tennis Camp, cooking, and learning to surf with Executive Chef Pierre Albaladejo. All of these experiences can also be added, a la carte, to the onsite VeraVia integrative retreat, which helps guests achieve wellness goals through a customized program of counseling, guided meditation, nutritional seminars, private fitness classes, hikes, and nature exploration. [aviara.park.hyatt.com](http://aviara.park.hyatt.com)





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# SEASIDE Retreats

CHOOSE A STAY BY THE SEA AND LET THE TIDES SOOTHE YOUR SENSES.

BY **MARY BEMIS**

## Experience the Year of the Sea

When I think of Wales, I conjure up castles and crags and moors. It's true that the country is home to 600-plus castles—but it is also home to a number of national parks, World Heritage sites, and the 870-mile Wales Coast Path. This year is deemed the “Year of the Sea” in Wales, and the focus is on drawing travelers to the country’s spectacular coastal experiences and culinary offerings. There are a number of places to stay, but why not pitch a tent and go cliff camping? Gaia

Adventures ([gaiaadventures.co.uk/individual-courses/cliff-camping](http://gaiaadventures.co.uk/individual-courses/cliff-camping)) will show you the way in Anglesey, North Wales. [visitwales.com](http://visitwales.com)

## Retreat to Wellness

Known for its pristine natural setting and stewardship, Terranea, a Destination Hotel, encompasses 102 acres along California’s coastline on the Palos Verdes Peninsula—but only occupies about a quarter of that site, leaving 75 unspoiled acres to explore. The property is committed to preserving the natural, cultural,

and historical integrity of the area, and offers a unique respite. Beautifully landscaped, the walks along the coastline are good for whatever may ail you. Solo travelers will feel just as comfortable as families here, and there are a number of wellness-focused options for all. Sign up for yoga or a spinning class in the ocean-front studio, or book a spa soak in the gorgeous copper tub that overlooks the Pacific. New this year are the Wellness Bungalow Retreats—three-, five-, and seven-day packages crafted to offer the ultimate wellness escape. Oceanside Bungalows are stocked with foam rollers,



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Anglesey, North Wales

yoga mats, and more, and your stay includes a personalized program of spa and wellness activities. [terranea.com](http://terranea.com)

### Learn About Mayan Herbs

The resident shaman at Viceroy Riviera Maya in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, comes from a long family line of Mayan shamans from the Yucatan village of X-pichil. A master of the healing properties and uses of the region's botanicals, he cultivates a sacred garden of healing plants at the resort, drying and preparing a number of native herbs that are used in customized healing treatments and experiences. Of note is the IchKiil, or Mayan Rebirth Bath, a ritual that represents the cleansing of soul, mind, and spirit.

[viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/en/rivieramaya](http://viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/en/rivieramaya)

### Be Mindful by the Sea

Situated on California's Monterey Peninsula, Carmel-by-the-Sea is a cozy coastal destination that boasts the Scenic Bluff Path, which will take you all the way from Carmel Beach to Carmel River State Beach. The city has just launched its Mindful-by-the-Sea wellness program. Organized in partnership with Rich Fernandez PhD, CEO of Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute, and *Mindful* magazine, the program offers tips, tools, and retreats to help guests "be more present while here, and take away that feeling when they leave." The three-day retreats are held at the Sunset Center, just blocks from the ocean.

[carmelcalifornia.com/mindful](http://carmelcalifornia.com/mindful)

### Find Serenity on a Secluded Island

The unspoiled island of Lanai has a lot going for it, and if you're into outdoor adventure (most of the landmarks are accessible only by four-wheel drive vehicles), crystal-clear waters, and acres and acres of blissfully undeveloped land, this is a welcome respite. The secluded island, the sixth-largest but the tiniest publicly accessible inhabited island of the Hawaiian Islands, is hard at work at becoming a sustainable community. With the vision and means of tech titan Larry Ellison, who purchased the majority of the island in 2012, this is fast becoming a reality. Choose your stay at one of two hotels on the island: the charming 11-room historic Hotel Lanai ([hotellanai.com](http://hotellanai.com)), built in 1923 and situated in the center of the tiny town, or the well-appointed Four Seasons Resort Lanai on the southeastern shore of the island. [fourseasons.com/lanai](http://fourseasons.com/lanai)

### Embrace Your Vitality

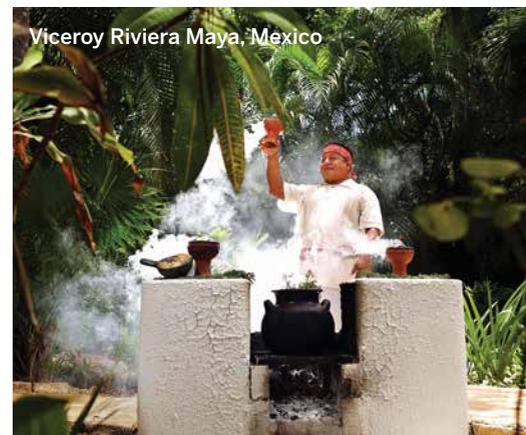
The Island of Losinj, one of more than 1,100 islands on the stunning Croatian coast, is a natural paradise with secluded beaches, gentle-scented air, fresh seafood, fine local wines, and 155 miles of walking trails. It's home to the Vitality Hotel Punta, a wonderfully low-key wellness hotel with incredible views of the Adriatic Sea. State-of-the-art exercise facilities boast dedicated spaces for yoga, Pilates, and aerial exercises; healthy cuisine features a plethora of menu options (vegan, paleo, macrobiotic, gluten-free, and more); the award-winning spa

focuses on holistic treatments and organic skincare; and an expert staff will work alongside you to ensure an optimal stay. [vitality.losinj-hotels.com/en](http://vitality.losinj-hotels.com/en)

### Perfect Your Practice

Whether you're a novice or not, enjoy kayaking, paddle boarding, and more at Yemaya Island Hideaway on Little Corn Island on the Caribbean side of Nicaragua. In addition to beachfront water sports and pristine beaches, Yemaya, which translates to "goddess of the sea," offers daily yoga classes and a number of specialized yoga retreats. Farm-to-table fare, a small spa, and a total of 16 oceanfront suites make this eco-chic hideaway worth the trip. [yemayalittlecorn.com](http://yemayalittlecorn.com)

**Mary Bemis** is the editor in chief of *Journey to Renewal* and the founder of [InsidersGuidetoSpas.com](http://InsidersGuidetoSpas.com).



Viceroy Riviera Maya, Mexico





# Volunteer VACATIONS

STEP OUT OF YOUR SELF ON  
THESE WORLDWIDE VOLUNTOURS.

BY **BECCA HENSLEY**

“**Y**ou have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you,” wrote John Bunyan in his spiritual treatise *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Little could he have imagined the excesses and external stimulations of our era, a time in which selfies seek to proclaim the meaning of our existence in the world, and texts take the place of deeper, heartfelt conversations. When that feeling of listlessness and meaninglessness strikes, consider that perhaps your heart space needs a boost. You can pry your soul open to its full extension with a dose of simple selflessness. Time off from the grind doesn’t need to be all about you. Consider these “voluntours” as the spirit’s best medicine.

## Vinaka Fiji

Always dreamed of exotic Fiji? Most visitors to this island nation spend their days at five-star resorts to dive, boat, or hike the verdant tropical landscapes in search of jaw-dropping waterfalls. Consider mixing philanthropy with tropical repose when you travel to this Pacific island nation’s Yasawa Islands as a volunteer with Vinaka Fiji. Incorporating 27 villages, the rugged, poverty-stricken Yasawa Islands subsist far below the world standard for health and prosperity. Clean drinking water is scarce and health care remains nearly nonexistent. Help to enhance the lifestyle of the

villagers during one- to 26-week stints as part of the Vinaka Fiji Trust. Opt to tutor children in the schools, plant crops, install water tanks, or staff the baby clam nurseries, among other needed tasks. [vinakafiji.org.fj](http://vinakafiji.org.fj)

## REI Adventures

Known for its sensible, affordable, earth-conscious clothing, REI has throngs of fans. Touting an homage and respect for nature that sets a standard, REI has also created a spectrum of adventures that authentically immerse its customers into world cultures. Make a difference when you sign up for one of its volunteer



Vinaka Fiji

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vacations—jaunts that place you side by side with local park rangers and expedition leaders to protect destinations for future travelers. With volunteer trips that take you from the Scottish Highlands to Patagonia, REI curates impactful opportunities to improve the world, such as giant tortoise conservation in the Galapagos Islands or trail restoration around the world's national parks. [rei.com/adventures](http://rei.com/adventures)

### AndBeyond Safaris

Africa ignites the soul. Most travelers there espouse a love for animals, and yearn to protect wildlife. Many, as a nod to their transformative experiences in the bush, would love to do more to help endangered species in the wild. Now there's a way to help. AndBeyond, a luxury safari outfitter, joins safari-goers with scientists in an effort to catalog rhinos in the wild. For the guest-funded activity, known as "rhino notching," animal lovers will travel with veterinarians and conservationists by helicopter in search of rhinos. Finding one, the team tranquilizes it from the air, then lands to gather important data from the sleeping animal to ensure it is healthy and safe. If needed, guests may assist in notching the ears or placing tracking devices in the horn, to allow the team to continue tracking the welfare of the creature. When finished, the vets give the rhino an antidote and the team quickly exits the scene. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com)

### Birds of Bali

Wildlife buffs and bird lovers can flock to be a part of Friends of the National Parks organization in Indonesia, a group bent on ensuring a harmonious relationship among habitat, communities, and wildlife. On Nusa Penida, a secluded, undeveloped island off the coast of Bali, work

to save the last Bali starlings and other birds. Combine charitable work with a conventional stay in Bali's Sanur Beach area, located a 45-minute ferry ride away. Inland on the slopes of Mount Batukaru at Besikalung Wildlife Sanctuary, be on the front lines with experts to guard birds, monkeys, and other wildlife threatened by poachers and illegal animal traders. [fnfp.org](http://fnfp.org)

### Stay for Good

Be magnanimous, and the reward will be a warm feeling in your heart. But Soneva, one of the biggest names in sustainable travel, wants to give you something more for your efforts. Visit any of its three properties (two in the Maldives and one in Thailand) to take part in its new eco-campaign, "Stay for Good." Under its tutelage, enrolled guests can work alongside the resort's marine biologists, horticulturists, mycologists, ecologists, and community engagement managers to support local sustainability initiatives. Snorkeling with scientists to identify turtles, participating in mangrove cleanup, and gardening comprise some of the possible activities. In return, guests will receive complimentary bonus nights at the resorts. [soneva.com](http://soneva.com)

### The Whale Shark Project

Jacques Cousteau called the Sea of Cortez "the largest aquarium in the world." In that marine-life-rich haven, the colossal whale shark lurks, feeding on plankton. While vacationers can opt to swim with the massive fish on an organized excursion, nature lovers may prefer to take that recreational activity one step further. The Whale Shark Research Project in San Felipe, Baja California, invites marine aficionados to tender their time to the service of these gentle giants. No background in science or marine

biology is required, only a passion for the sea—and its creatures. Participants will be matched with jobs appropriate to their experience and interest. Expect to collect data, do research, spread education, and have the opportunity to breast stroke alongside the fascinating creatures more times than you ever thought possible. [whalesharkrp.com](http://whalesharkrp.com)

### Namu Travel Tours

Balance your footprints on the earth with a customized, eco-friendly, luxury tour to Costa Rica. Namu Travel, a green and conscious outfitter, designs jaunts through cloud forests, fishing expeditions, and afternoons on untrammelled beaches. The hotels are chosen specifically for their sustainable standards, each offering local and onsite tours, which support the regional economy. In all, local sourcing for the restaurants is paramount. On a voluntour with Namu, expect options that encompass working in the rainforest and interfacing with a local community. [namustravel.com](http://namustravel.com)

**Becca Hensley** is a spiritual adventurer and a widely published travel writer. Based in Austin, Texas, she is a contributing editor at [InsidersGuidetoSpas.com](http://InsidersGuidetoSpas.com).



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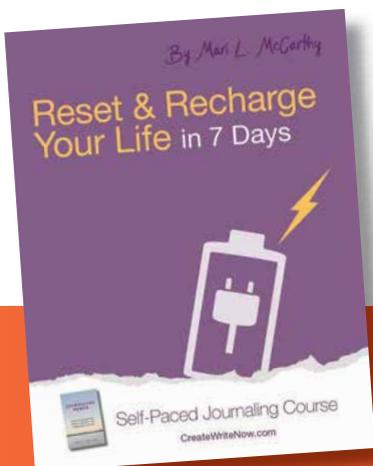


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# Awakening at the Sunrise Suite

“SOMEDAY,” I PROMISED IRIS, UNABLE TO COMPLETELY QUELL MY BOURGEOIS ROOTS, “I WILL TAKE US THERE IN GRAND STYLE.” IT DIDN’T HAPPEN LIKE THAT.

BY **PERRY GARFINKEL**

**I**n the fall of 1972, a year into marriage and our first jobs, my bride, Iris, and I agreed that if Richard Nixon was reelected U.S. President, we would leave the country for as long as our money lasted. On November 8, we laid a world map on the floor of our one-bedroom in Boston and chose India. The book that compelled us was *Be Here Now*, by the former Harvard psychologist Richard Alpert, who’d changed his name to Baba Ram Dass after finding a guru in the foothills of the Himalayas. Iris wanted to find that guru; I went along for the Kiplingesque journey.

Three months later we found ourselves in a funky hotel just off New Delhi’s Connaught Place in the city center where snake charmers and masseurs tried to charm naïve Western tourists out of newly converted rupees. It was a different India then. This was 30 years before “Brand India” and “Incredible India!” and “Call Center India.”

We hit some of the traditional tourist spots—the Taj Mahal in Agra, the erotic temples of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, the Red Fort in Old Delhi, the burning ghats along the Ganges River in Benares. We took third-class Indian rail (slept in the luggage racks), stayed in government guesthouses, and slept on the beaches of Goa in self-made palm huts.

In Mumbai, then called Bombay, we discovered a Red Cross Salvation Army hostel for 10 rupees a night each (equivalent to \$1 then). I have only two other distinct memories from that city. One was a visit to an opium den in one of Bombay’s seediest neighborhoods. The other was standing in front of our hostel, looking into the distance at the world-famous Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, built in 1903 by the wealthy Parsi industrialist Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. “Someday,” I promised Iris, unable to completely quell my bourgeois roots, “I will take us there in grand style.”

It did not happen quite like that.

*continued on page 28*



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continued from page 26

In 2004, my journalism career in high gear but my marriage long over, I returned to India researching a story for *National Geographic* about the growing worldwide popularity of Buddhism. By then I had changed a great deal. India had changed more. Now there were malls, Bollywood had become an international film phenomenon, there was a rising middle class, and Western clothing was much more prevalent among that class. Tourism had become serious business. Cars outnumbered the three-wheeled auto rickshaws; leg-powered rickshaws had all but disappeared. But some things had not changed. “Just now coming,” a common phrase that people uttered, still could mean anytime from later today to never. Genteelly queuing up in line remained a foreign concept. The smells, the symphony of street cacophony, the bureaucratic chaos were all the same, but amplified.

Also amplified, thanks to the magazine’s generous budget, were my accommodations—at the Taj! My corner room, No. 641, was called the Sunrise Suite. It had a low ceiling with odd angles and asymmetrical cut-off corners. The living room couch was an L-shaped loveseat with a patchwork of rich maroon fabric adorned with hundreds of tiny mirrors. From one balcony I looked across the street at Mumbai Harbor, which opens to the vastness of the Arabian Sea, and further down at the iconic Gateway of India.

I had to pinch myself. It had all come true, minus Iris.

Somehow all this sentimentality got wrapped up in my mind with the womb-like Sunrise Suite. Other than a few outings, I barely left it, cozied up on the loveseat rereading the great Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore and the guru Paramahansa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Yogi*, which Iris and I had devoured in Goa. I was set on finding that hostel we’d stayed in, and one early steamy morning I walked many blocks surrounding the hotel but I could not find it. Disappointed, I headed back when suddenly I saw the familiar Red Cross signage; it was literally diagonally across the street from the Taj. What had seemed so far away back then was just across the street. The life lesson did not elude me.

In 2008, the Taj Hotels commissioned me to ghostwrite a chapter for a hotel trade book. I spent a month living in the Taj, interviewing and writing. My room faced the Gateway of India, even closer than I’d been four years earlier.

On November 26 that same year, now back in New Jersey, I was out for dinner with my mother when a close friend called my cell. “Get to CNN right away,” he said. I rushed to the restaurant bar and asked the barkeep to flip on the cable network. The first images I saw of the terrorist attack on Mumbai—now known in India as 26/11—were flames shooting from Room 641, “my” Sunrise Suite. Later, I learned, the



Gateway to India

Indian journalist Sabina Sehgal Saikia had been trapped in that room and lost her life.

About two years later, I attended the emotional reopening of the original wing of the hotel. I walked into Room 641, now renamed the Bella Vista, ready to be thrown asunder by a wave of reminiscence and depression. But it had been so completely transformed, elegantly redesigned in the spirit of a Mediterranean residence, that I could barely envision its past incarnation. I fully appreciated the importance of erasing 26/11 memories the room may evoke, but on a purely visceral level, no amount of redecorating could change my feelings for the room and what it meant to me.

The night before the official opening, I returned to the Palace’s sixth floor, following the unlikely sound of loud chanting echoing through the halls. Outside No. 641 a dozen Hindu priests, bare-chested and in traditional white *lungi* skirts, lit incense and poured milk over a statue of the Hindu elephant god Ganesha, who reigns over success and surmounting obstacles. Mesmerized by the rapid-fire rhythmic repetition, I joined them. Later I was told they chanted for three hours, endlessly repeating lines from the 2,500-year-old Vedic scriptures:

“Please do away with all evil that happened here. Remove any defects from this place. May the souls of anyone who lived or died here rest in peace. And for the people conferring this hospitality, let all their wishes be fulfilled.”

I, too, prayed for those lost, and for those selfless staff who would now return to these halls and rooms. I also gave thanks that my own life had brought me full circle to that moment. To be alive at all, to know that evil was not in my heart, to acknowledge any of my own defects and continue to work on removing them, to be able to find moments when I could rest in peace, in . . . this . . . breath.

**Perry Garfinkel** is the author of *Buddha or Bust*. A longtime contributor to the *New York Times*, and a teacher of writing, he returns to India frequently.

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# BREAKING BORDERS

## MEANDERING UP A STEEP INCLINE

through Bogotá's notoriously dangerous Barrio Egipto neighborhood—just steps from the city's tourist-flooded historic district La Candelaria—I found that things seemed relatively normal. Kids

are playing. Oldtimers are milling about. Women are carrying the groceries home. It all seems so mundane until motorcycle police come whizzing around the corner and down the hill toward our group. I see a policeman's eyes light up. He hops off

the back of the motorcycle even before it comes screeching to a halt. "You're foreigners?" he exclaims in not only amazement but also genuine fear (for us, not himself!).

Our brave leader, rife with tattoos and healed bullet wounds, dressed in a ball cap and button-down denim shirt sealed to the top, is nicknamed "El Calabazo" ("The Pumpkin"). He is a member of *La 10ma*, one of four gangs that control parts of this crime-ridden neighborhood. He tells the police not to worry, that we are safe with him. The police balk at the idea. El Calabazo insists. "OK, whatever . . ." the policeman relents. "You're responsible for their safety."

And that is precisely the point. We are in the midst of what is surely Bogotá's most fascinating new city tour, a walk around Barrio Egipto—a neighborhood that foreigners are warned not to go anywhere near—with gangbangers who have given up a life of crime in favor of this cultural tourism initiative started by Universidad Externado de Colombia in cooperation with Impulse Travel ([impulsetravel.co](http://impulsetravel.co)). They've traded guns for guiding, if you will.

On the Breaking Borders tour, you learn the history of organized crime in the neighborhood, take in outstanding city views, visit the homes of former gang members, and, if you're lucky, try some local *chicha* (homemade hooch made from fermented corn). Proceeds and tips not only help support the community, but also help keep previous criminals like El Calabazo off the streets—he earns COP\$25,000 per person per tour. On a good day, that's much better pay than flipping iPhones! And they say tourism doesn't pay! —KEVIN RAUB

**Kevin Raub** is a Lisbon-based travel and entertainment journalist and author of nearly 50 Lonely Planet travel guides.



El Calabazo, a member of one of four gangs that control parts of Bogotá's Barrio Egipto neighborhood.

KEVIN RAUB



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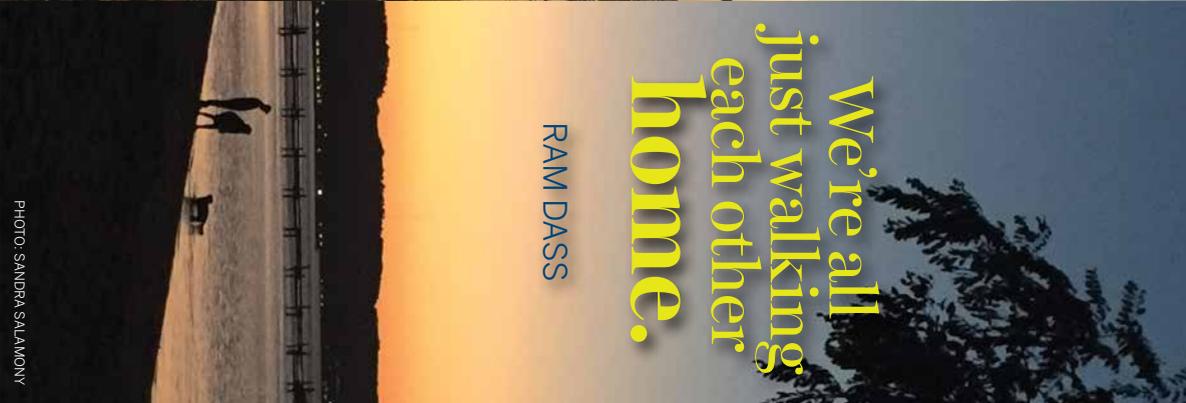
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