

THE NO-GIMMICKS, NO-HYPE HEALTH AND FITNESS MAGAZINE

EXPERIENCE LIFE

Being Healthy Is a Revolutionary Act

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LIFE TIME
THE HEALTH AND FITNESS MAGAZINE

Wild & Well

Getaways combining adventure with health-enhancing options can leave you feeling recharged and ready for anything.

BY SARAH TUFF DUNN

After years of talking about it, my two best friends from college and I decided to finally go on a girls' getaway in April 2016. We didn't want to choose between an arduous adventure and a relaxing spa, so we made our way to Indian Springs, a resort in California's Napa Valley, where we spent three dynamic days. The rolling vineyards offered ideal hiking terrain for challenging our bodies, while the natural hot springs provided the perfect pools for soothing our minds and muscles after long days on the trail.

In the mornings, we'd head out for a challenging trail run, tackling twisted roots on a winding route to an awe-inspiring vista.

In the afternoons, we submitted our bodies to volcanic-ash mud baths — a warm tub of thick goo and hot, geyser-fed mineral water — designed to wash away toxins and stresses.

Now, when pressures from work

or family obligations build, I find myself tapping into the natural highs and natural baths of Napa at home by doing something exhilarating, like taking a long hike followed by a calming soak in my bathtub.

My friends and I aren't alone in our quest for this sort of getaway. Increasingly, more travelers are pairing vigorous challenges, like whitewater kayaking or mountain biking with more restorative types of après activities — unique holistic-healing experiences that nurture a vacationer's body and mind.

"As the world's stress ratchets up, people, seemingly paradoxically, are rabidly seeking more voluntary stress and more intense physical and mental challenges — followed by doses of spa relaxation," notes SpaFinder.com's 2016 report on travel trends.

"A few years ago, people typically chose to do something outlandish or go to the spa," says Nancy Harrison, a Fort Collins, Colo.-based adventure-

travel expert. "Today, they can combine wildness and wellness, spending two-thirds of the day on a huge adrenaline rush, and then spending some time grounding and pampering in a positive way."

There are biological reasons why travelers might find this vacation approach beneficial, says Kenneth Pelletier, MD, PhD, director of the Corporate Health Improvement Program at the University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. When people voluntarily choose to do something stressful and out of the ordinary — like bungee jumping or skydiving — the adrenaline rush brings their attention into the present moment because it requires total focus.

After the rush, Pelletier explains, the parasympathetic nervous system rebounds, brain waves slow, and blood pressure and cortisol levels drop. A massage or a meditation session during this interval can extend these benefits.

Indian Springs | Calistoga, Calif.

Cost/amenities: The 17-acre "bohemian hideaway" features mineral pools, native gardens, and ponds. Accommodations include a collection of lodge rooms, historic cottages, bungalows, and Mission Revival buildings. Rooms cost \$239/night and up; spa treatments are from \$80 to \$290. www.indianspringscalistoga.com

