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WELLNESS TRAVEL

Focusing on the Mind, Body & Spirit in 2021 & Beyond

Wellness travel was already emerging as one of the most important segments in travel pre-pandemic, but in this new travel landscape, it has catapulted onto tourism's main stage. This past 16 months have taught us that health and safety are priority number one, and with that has come a new mindset for many—that personal wellbeing is of utmost importance. And once someone has embraced healthy habits at home, they are sure to take them on the road.

So, how does wellness travel fit into this new travel landscape?

For this *Wellness Travel Trends Report*—a complement to the Wellness Travel Trends Survey conducted on **recommend.com** as well as the *Tips on What Makes a Perfect Wellness Vacation Webinar* (both conducted in partnership with the **Wellness Tourism Association**)—we reached out to experts in the wellness travel segment to gain insight into what will drive demand and what travelers will be looking for now and into 2022. This report also contains the survey results, which provided some interesting data, including that travelers are looking for an overall reboot while on a wellness vacation; are seeking accommodations with access to a range of outdoor activities; and their must-haves while on a wellness vacation include healthy food options; a range of fitness activities; spa treatments; and peace & quiet.





EMBRACING WELLNESS TRAVEL IN THIS NEW LANDSCAPE

"The pandemic has made more of us realize the value of good health and the increasing importance of being proactive with our own self-care," says Anne Dimon, president of the **Wellness Tourism Association (WTA)**. "Industry studies show that the main drivers behind the growth of wellness travel are those who already incorporate wellness into their lives and want to take those healthy practices and priorities with them when they travel. As the industry recovers, your clients will certainly be looking to you to help them meet their wellness needs and wants."

In speaking with Dimon and the other industry experts, it's apparent that although pre-pandemic the concept of wellness travel was already shifting from simply being a spa-immersed vacation, the last year-and-a-half has resulted in even more of a change in how travelers view a wellness vacation.

Yes, a day at the spa or an early morning beachside yoga class might be part of the picture, but a wellness vacation is so much more than that. Even if you're planning a more traditional vacation where wellness isn't the sole focus, your client might ask about incorporating wellness components—eating healthy throughout; having access to a range of activities; having a space for meditating; having access to the outdoors (those wide-open spaces we've been talking about), etc. What the data and the experts seem to

signal is that travelers want wellness as an integral part of their vacation, and still others are now seeking—and are going to continue to seek—immersive wellness retreats, vacations, getaways—as couples, as a group, as a solo traveler, even as a family. In other words, your demographics for tapping the right client is wide open.

As Rebecca Platt, corporate director of sales & marketing for **SunSwept Resorts (BodyHoliday & Rendezvous, both in Saint Lucia)**, points out, "Wellness travel has

There's nothing wrong with creating an experience with wellness in mind, but it forces the experience designer into a very traditional path. Wellbeing, on the other hand, is a much more broad and a holistic take on helping people feel good. Wellbeing encourages us to look at the variety of ways that people achieve their peace of mind, joy, confidence, greater on, etc. — not just health on a physical level."

**-- Luis Ramirez, Spa & Wellness Director, Mexico,
& Arabelle Del Pilar Rosario, Spa & Wellness Director,
Dominican Republic, Melia Hotels International**



The age demographic you should be focusing on, according to the Wellness Travel Trends Survey: Sixty-seven percent of respondents say 46-73, so a broad range. That said, don't discount Millennials as they too are seeking a reboot after these last 16 months.

Resort and Naladhu Private Island

(a cluster of three resorts just half an hour by boat from Male and all located around a stunning lagoon in the South Male Atoll), adds, "There is an importance in being able to access or being able to keep up with our daily wellness practices. Most of us live in the 'hustle and bustle' but we have learned to make time for an hour in the gym, yoga before or after work or a weekly IV infusion to keep it all together. Wellness travel now offers the opportunity for us to 'stick with it' even if that is in the middle of the Indian Ocean or on the top of a mountain range."

always been an important element within the travel industry, however the past 18 months has really highlighted the need for self-care and enhanced wellbeing for all of us. The tumultuous time we have all endured recently has inevitably taken its toll on our mental wellbeing—not seeing family and loved ones, having movements restricted, not being able to travel, not to mention the emotional struggle so many people have been through if they have lost someone close to them. Then there is the physical elements of being restricted and as much as we all have tried to compensate with home

workouts and virtual classes, etc., the physical strain also has an impact on our overall wellness. With all the above in mind, wellness travel is a vital part of the new travel landscape as it allows us to enter this post-COVID world with the opportunity to reset our body, mind and soul."

Bodina Qureshi, director of spa at **Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort, Anantara Veli Maldives**

// We all deal with situations differently and to be able to experience wellness within travel is important in achieving your overall optimal wellbeing. The new travel landscape we are seeing as the world starts to reopen is seeing a wider emphasis on self-exploration and immersive experiences that allow today's travelers to evaluate what they need to maintain and enhance their own physical and mental wellbeing."

-- Rebecca Platt, Corporate Director of Sales & Marketing, SunSwept Resorts



Wellness travel has been a growth phenomenon even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognized that trend some time ago and we're continuing to explore ways to deliver a variety of wellness experiences to our guests when they travel with us."

-- Stijn Creupelandt, Director, Hotel Services, Seabourn



"Gone are the days of simply eating specific foods or going to the gym," says Stijn Creupelandt, director, hotel services for **Seabourn**. "Sure, those things are still important, but today's wellness-minded traveler has developed new habits that focus on mental and physical wellbeing." In fact, says Pedro Castillo, spa & wellness director at **Eden Roc Cap Cana**, "We learned that staying active is crucial to having good health. The inspiration for creating [the resort's new wellness] *Lifestyle* program is founded upon the concept that simple and effortless changes in our daily routine can significantly improve our quality of life. From my personal perspective, we not only need to boost our immune system; we need to keep better health and a strong immune system on a daily basis."

Now's the time to truly do away with yesterday's concept of a wellness vacation. The pandemic added to the shift that was already occurring pre-pandemic within the segment and it allowed it to blossom in different directions. In fact, says Teresa Ostler, registered nurse, general manager of **Skyterra Wellness Retreat**, "We have a new demographic of guests who have not incorporated wellness into their past travel. We have seen a significant increase in teachers, healthcare workers and solo travelers who have high-stress lives and may have even lost loved ones. This demographic desires stress reduction and a reset from the past 18 months."

Both Luis Ramirez, spa & wellness director, Mexico, and Arabelle Del Pilar Rosario, spa & wellness director, Dominican Republic for **Melia Hotels International**, agree that "wellness is the new future." Today's traveler seeking a wellness vacation wants to "travel to places that connect to wellbeing in all aspects. Wellness is also a big business, and the hospitality industry is no exception. This is the beginning to match the travelers' desires with the wellness path."

Dan Gibson, sr. director of communications for **Visit Tucson**,

sums it up nicely: "In a lot of ways, the very nature of travel is connected to wellness, seeing yourself in a different place, having a different experience. However, the pandemic put a new focus for people on taking care of themselves, that life can be unfortunately short, so wellness has emerged as an even greater concern."

TRAVELERS LOOKING TO RECONNECT, HEAL FROM THE PANDEMIC

There's a new demographic of people invested in traveling with wellness top of mind—as Olster mentioned, people who never would've even looked at this type of travel before are doing so now. Dimon notes that, "People who might not even consider themselves to be part of the 'wellness travel'

There has been an undeniable shift in the way people perceive wellness and their personal wellbeing and a substantial movement to feel better."
-- Bodina Qureshi, Director of Spa, Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort, Anantara Veli Maldives Resort and Naladhu Private Island





surge will become so based simply on the fact that they will be making their personal health and wellbeing a top priority at home and subsequently, taking those newly formed habits and practices with them when they travel.”

And Olster’s colleague, Jeffrey Ford, executive director of Skyterra Wellness Retreat, says, “Travelers are looking for a reset now more than ever due to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, many travelers expressed the need for a vacation after their vacation.

“In the new travel landscape, wellness travel is more important than ever. Travelers re-evaluated their priorities and are more focused on health because of the pandemic. We have also seen a significant shift in our collective thinking about the importance of a holistic wellness routine, which has extended beyond daily habits to include healthy vacations.”

-- Teresa Ostler, Registered Nurse, General Manager, Skyterra Wellness Retreat

These travelers are now planning purposeful vacations so they can return home rested with energy and optimism, prepared to continue their wellness journey. Travelers want to make the most of their wellness vacation, often seeking unique experiences in beautiful places. They want a renewed sense of health and wellbeing achieved through experiences and activities.”

Purposeful—that’s a word I’ve been hearing a lot lately when it comes to what today’s traveler is seeking. Loulu Lima, chief travel guru/owner, **Book Here, Give Here**, says, “The pandemic has made my clients be more purposeful in their travels. They are focused on mind, body and spirit. They want to connect with locals more. They want to have more connections with local communities and help make a difference.”

But what specifically can you be recommending to your clients who might want a wellness vacation in those wide-open space? “The outdoors are more a part of the wellness vacation now,” says Gibson. “It checks out—people have

spent so much time inside, plus the experience of being near people takes some getting used to again—but a full wellness vacation more often includes activities like hiking, biking, climbing, outdoor yoga, etc.”

Beaches, mountains, forests... anything that brings them closer to nature—that’s what travelers want. As Colin C. James, CEO of the **Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority**, points out, “It has been proven, that persons want to go to places that are less crowded, with less noise and pollution. They want to visit a place that is pristine.”

Notes Andrea Dragosits, founder, **Souljourn Adventure**, “We will continue to see more domestic travel and staycation experiences with a whole new meaning to ‘slow’ and mindful travel. There will also be a demand for nature-based travel and a focus on sustainable tourism.”

“Many,” adds Jill Radin-Leeds, president, **Just Spas & Adventures**, “are looking for a destination that offers a range of activities from walking/hiking, yoga and lots of fitness classes, while many want a structured program of



Travelers want to experience nature, the outdoors and space. It has been proven, that persons want to go to places that are less crowded, with less noise and pollution. They want to visit a place that is pristine.”
-- Colin C. James, CEO, Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority

fitness and eating so they can both lose weight and return home with the tools to continue on a better path for themselves. Our clients want a destination that offers healthy eating choices. In addition, everyone wants some pampering and enjoying the total spa experience because once returning home you are in a better mental and physical place.”

Melia Hotels International’s Ramirez & Del Pilar Rosario say that advisors need to keep an open mind when it comes to who is seeking a wellness vacation: “We truly believe that even a business traveler is seeking wellness in business trips. Primary wellness travelers are seeking more of a conscious vacation where they can nurture their inner peace and find a wellness improvement where they stay, where they can eat well,

have healing therapies and focus more on sustainability. Secondary wellness travelers are looking for at least something that can fulfill their own wellbeing. The Coronavirus has upended every aspect of life and heightened mental health concerns for most people. Given this, many people now wish to take wellness trips to recover mentally, spiritually and physically.”

One of the ways to do that says Qureshi is by recommending your clients opt for healthier alternatives—“Travelers are selecting vitamin IV infusions over deep tissue massages. They are waking up at 6 a.m. to take part in yoga and fitness activities to start their day. They are gravitating towards healthier more wholesome food options and ending their days with immune-boosting shakes.”

Creupelandt says to look around you for new wellness travel clients. “Just look at your friends and family that have discovered or rediscovered walking or biking or quiet meditation.” Additionally, he points out, “One of the most important facets of wellness that many of us realized as vitally important is the ability to socially interact with other people. Travel enables that social interaction powered by an underlying desire to learn about the world around us.”

SURVEY SAYS...

We wanted to hear from you—you gave us the 4-1-1 and here’s what the *Wellness Travel Trends Survey* says:

The pandemic most certainly contributed to what Dimon calls the “wellness wave,” with more than half of survey respondents noting that COVID created a surge in travelers seeking a wellness vacation. Of course, given the ongoing crisis, travel advisor’s clients, said 63 percent of survey respondents, are still nervous about travel restrictions in destinations, with many still choosing to stay closer to home.

Whether it’s a staycation or a far-flung destination, wellness travelers, say survey respondents, are looking for certain must-haves while on a wellness getaway: healthy food options; a range of fitness activities including yoga, tai chi and similar activities; spa treatments; and peace & quiet. The top three reasons wellness-minded travelers are looking to get away? According to the survey: overall reboot; a few stress-free days; and learning how to become more proactive with their own health. Most important for most travelers in this new travel landscape—accommodations with access to many outdoor activities.



CATERING TO THE NEW WELLNESS TRAVELER

"As the industry begins to recover, there will be greater demand by more travelers for the basic amenities, attributes, activities and programs that will help [travelers] maintain their health-focused lifestyles, or assist in launching them on the path to becoming a healthier human being with a stronger and more resilient immune system," says Dimon. With that in mind, here are few recommendations.

🌀 Launched upon **BodyHoliday's** reopening in May 2021 are three new wellness programs: *Wellness Rehabilitation*, *COVID Convalescence* and *Boost Your Immunity*. Platt says that the programs are a combination of both active and mindful elements and are designed bespoke for each and every guest. With the *Wellness Rehabilitation*, guests will be able to fully immerse themselves in all aspects of the four pillars of wellbeing that incorporate relaxation, fitness, holistic nutrition (for mind,

body and soul) and restoration. Activities and treatments include everything from ocean swimming and bike rides, to personal box fit, Pilates, tai chi, meditation, Ayurvedic treatments, chanting, Bhutanese healing and osteopathy. It can be undertaken as 5-, 7-, 14- or 21-day retreats. The *COVID Convalescence* is a 5-day non-medical program created especially for COVID recoverees, many of whom will have been asymptomatic or had the virus in a mild form. The program targets and strengthens the respiratory system, and treatments include meditation, yoga and Reiki as well as Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD), hypnotherapy and osteopathy. The *Immunity program*, meanwhile, focuses on mental wellbeing, nutrition and fitness, including holistic metaphysical approaches.

🌀 **Seabourn's** small ship environment, says Creupelandt, is ideal for today's wellness traveler. "During a Seabourn vacation," he says, "there are a number of ways the wellness-minded traveler can

stay focused on their overall goals and routines. First and foremost, wellness starts with our onboard facility, Spa & Wellness with Dr. Andrew Weil, The Spa has a resident Mindful Living Coach and offers a full array of services such as yoga classes, crystal sound therapy, massage services and our onboard fitness center that rivals any land-based resort in terms of variety of strength and cardio equipment. We're also offering more healthy menu choices. For example, our newly enhanced breakfast service at The Patio now features a healthy lifestyle bar with freshly made juices, nuts and dried fruits. I would also offer that a ship provides a perfect

// The opportunity to regain some of your humanity through a vacation with wellness integrated into the itinerary is an important and welcome one."
-- Dan Gibson, Senior Director, Communications, Visit Tucson

environment to truly relax and unwind with plenty of quiet spaces to meditate or even treat yourself to some well-deserved extra sleep.”

🌀 The three **Anantara** resorts in the Maldives where Qureshi is the spa director, offer guests, she says “an all-encompassing wellness platform offering comprehensive wellness programs that include lifestyle consultations, treatment/activity recommendations and specially crafted wellness food menu options. Our wellness dishes & beverages include fresh, unrefined and wholefood ingredients designed exclusively for nutritious balance and to promote greater wellbeing. Our wellness team is dedicated to helping guests feel better through movement therapy, nutritional guidance and innovative new therapies. This includes now having a resident Naturopath and Nutritionist as part of the team, offering nutrition and lifestyle consultations and hosting workshops and seminars such as ‘Peak Performance Nutrition’ and ‘Simple Tips for Eating Healthily.’”

🌀 The Dominican Republic’s **Eden Roc Cap Cana**, says Castillo, “truly believes in personalization and thinks this is what wellness travelers are looking for, especially in this day and age.” With that in mind, the resort debuted an *Endless Wellbeing* package “as an escape where people can reset their reality and bring a new sense of peace into their daily life through countless activities, amenities, classes and experiences here in our tropical paradise.” Guests will be guided by the property’s Wellness Concierge, who will customize the program for their specific wellness, fitness, dietary and mental health goals and needs. In addition to overnight accommodations in one of the property’s wellness suites that includes customized in-room aromatherapy and an in-room fitness

kit as well as a personalized menu at all F&B outlets, the program features a variety of customized activities and classes such as yoga, meditation, aeroyoga, healthy cooking classes and a consultation with the property’s natural medicine guru.

• **Skyterra Wellness Retreat**, located in North Carolina, recently moved to a new campus with all-private lodging and accommodations, more than nine miles of trails that cross streams and lead to a waterfall, a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen, indoor and outdoor yoga spaces,

fitness spaces, classrooms, and a dining room with expansive mountain views. “We are also in the process,” says founder and owner Sue Crowell, “of adding an indoor/outdoor pool and pickleball courts, both of which should be completed by the end of this year. We’ve seen more guests seeking healthy weight loss, and our *LoseSmart* program also supports the needs of many new wellness travelers. With a holistic approach to weight loss, guests focus on safe and effective long-term exercise habits and



Anne Dimon, WTA president, offers these tips for selling wellness travel:

- 🌀 **First of all, familiarize yourself with the lexicon** (wellnesstourismassociation.org/glossary-wellness-tourism-industry-terms);
- 🌀 **Second, know that wellness travel is not all about the spa experience. Also, it’s becoming more accessible, meaning that wellness travel experiences are available in various price categories both with and without spa treatments;**
- 🌀 **Third, be aware that according to the most recent consumer survey conducted by WTA, the most highly rated motivation for planning a post-pandemic wellness vacation is ‘to return to everyday life feeling rejuvenated.’ This motivation was rated most important across the board by Millennials, Gen X and Boomers.**



nutrition. *LoseSmart* is a personalized program that offers a wide variety of individual services and aftercare. Many new wellness travelers also come to Skyterra seeking help with healthy aging through increased mobility and strength training."

🌿 **Melia Hotels International**, meanwhile, offers a wellness-inclusive concept where the main focus is to balance the wellness wheel through five spaces that together provide a mental, physical, emotional and curative wellbeing: A *Social* space where your clients can meet the culture and learn through special experiences to connect with

their soul and others; a *Sensorial* space where they can have the most healing therapy to release pain or just stress; a *Culinary* space with multi-flavor dishes taking advantage of the local tastes and KM0 products; a *Silent* space where they can find their own peace reading a book, meditating or simply hearing the sound of nature; and finally a *Personal* space where guests can cocoon themselves in a wellness suite by *Stay Well*, which features a Deepak Chopra welcoming video, the award-winning wellness program of Cleveland Clinic that includes guided meditation and stress-free section, vitamin C-infused shower, air purifier, essential oil aromatherapy diffuser and an all latex memory foam 100 percent organic mattress.

🌿 Says James, "**Antigua and Barbuda's** tourism product is really suited to the needs of the wellness traveler. Our new campaign, 'Your

Space in the Sun,' was specifically created to take into consideration their desire for space. The destination provides travelers with all the space they need, space to move, space to play and space to just be, in an unrushed, beautiful location surrounded by calming, turquoise beaches and tropical sunshine. A lot of our properties offer physical fitness and spa experiences from yoga to massages, there is fresh farm-to-table dining in all fresco restaurants and great outdoor excursions."

🌿 For those clients who prefer staying a bit closer to home, **Tucson**, says Gibson, offers "experiences that fit all wellness travelers, I believe, especially as our properties have evolved. **Miraval** offers classes about beekeeping and local honey to make a deeper connection to their unique surroundings; **Canyon Ranch** offers opportunities to experience Tucson's unique gastronomy culture. Many local resorts use products from the Sonoran Desert in their treatments, plus opportunities to be outside in the unique environment Tucson offers. There's something healing and restorative about the desert and Tucson's wellness community works to provide that experience to visitors."



// Quarantine opened the eyes of many to the reality that living a balanced life and incorporating both exercise and family time is both a blessing and necessity in a healthy lifestyle."

-- Pedro Castillo, Spa & Wellness Director, Eden Roc Cap Cana



WELCOME TO SAINT LUCIA!

One of the Windward Islands of the West Indies' Lesser Antilles, Saint Lucia is nestled halfway down the Eastern Caribbean archipelago.

Saint Lucia is known for its natural beauty and diverse attractions, including the signature Piton Mountains (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), a tropical rainforest, the highly Instagrammed mud baths at the Sulphur Springs Park and one of the world's only drive-in volcanoes.

Culturally rich offerings include the bustling marketplace in Castries, quaint coastline fishing villages and internationally inspired cuisine. Saint Lucia's wide range of accommodations includes five-star hotels, all-inclusive resorts, intimate inns and value-oriented properties.

The destination also offers world-class cruise and yachting facilities. The island is continually recognized as one of the leading wedding and honeymoon destinations worldwide.

The Saint Lucia Tourism Authority is the official destination marketing and promotion organization for Saint Lucia. Check out Instagram for Augmented Reality (AR) Filters that transport users on virtual cultural and island adventures.

Learn more at **www.stlucia.org** and follow on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

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Take advantage of Covid-certified hotels, resorts and villas offering incredible savings this spring and summer. Scoop up room credits, spa treatments, dining perks, yoga, activities and more.

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At Seabourn, we believe that traveling for pleasure has a redemptive power that enriches people's lives. It expands your mind to new perspectives, recharges your body, and feeds your soul. Our gracious team members on board are passionate about ensuring your client's every comfort is taken care of so they can focus on **learning about new cultures, meeting new people, enjoying farm-to-table local cuisine, rejuvenating in our award-winning spa and having once-in-a-lifetime adventures.** They only need to unpack once as their ultra-luxury resort at sea travels to the most sought after destinations across all 7 continents.

About Seabourn

Seabourn's ultra-luxury resorts at sea represent the most advanced evolution of small ship cruising with all ocean-front suites and exceptional amenities. The official cruise partner of UNESCO World Heritage, Seabourn offers immersive destination experiences on all seven continents. Prestigious partnerships enhance our award-winning cuisine and world-class spa, and our heartfelt hospitality provides unforgettable Seabourn Moments on every voyage.

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True Dream by Live Aqua—The perfect design for a sensory experience.

Designed as an oasis of rest and relaxation for true hedonists, True Dream is the ultimate dreamlike stay. Here, every detail has been thoroughly planned and executed to live unforgettable sensations in and out our guestrooms. You will find everything you need to envelop your senses: the sensory design of our rooms, the warmth and seduction of Live Aqua's exclusive aromas; an exceptional pillow menu and our featured Live Aqua bed. In addition, the personalized "Your Wish My Wish" room service experience elevates each stay to a new level, where our guests' wishes are not just commands, but a fundamental part of our deepest sense of purpose.

This is your space, your place, your moment. Enjoy it. Live it. Dream it.

For you to live in your home our unique sensory experience, we have created Live Aqua Home Collection, our exclusive selection of iconic items, to bring pleasure and sophistication into the most refined homes, such as our spectacular Live Aqua aroma kit, pamper yourself with the soft, comfortable textures of our kimono robes and slippers; bring a playful touch to your days with our iconic rubber ducky. The experience include:

- True Dream bed
- Bed linens
- Pillow menu
- Edgy Tech
- Your Wish My Wish" assistance
- Scents
- Customized ambiance lighting
- Perfect acoustics
- Digital temperature control
- Sensory design
- Turndown service
- Entertainment
- Select Minibar
- Luxury Amenities
- Double vanity area
- PRIVATE Spa
- Bathtub
- Music Experience Music

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