



LONELY PLANET'S

**BEST** *in* **TRAVEL**

**2014**

THE BEST TRENDS, DESTINATIONS, JOURNEYS  
& EXPERIENCES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR



# BEST LUXURY BOOT CAMPS

AT THESE WELLNESS RETREATS, THE STAFF WILL KICK YOUR BUTT – AND THEN SPOIL YOU SILLY.

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## 01 PURE KAUAI, HAWAII, USA

Use the island's stunning nature as a gym – surf lessons, kayak excursions, rainforest hikes and beach runs – at Pure Kauai bespoke fitness vacations. Guests are set up in private cottages or villas, then catered to by personal trainers, health-minded private chefs, personal assistants and wellness practitioners from massage therapists to intuitive healers and astrologists. Although vacations can be as active or as mellow as guests wish, the sports instructors and personal trainers are prepared to kick it into high gear. Quite a few celebs have stayed with Pure Kauai to get in shape for a role.

Getting there: fly to Kauai. There is a five-night minimum stay; [www.purekauai.com](http://www.purekauai.com).

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## 02 THE RANCH AT LIVE OAK, MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, USA

Don't call it a spa – it's a week of tough love. Nothing is optional: not the pre-dawn wakeup calls for morning yoga, not the 16km to 21km hikes every day, not the four hours of fitness classes, and not the superstrict diet (no

meat, wheat, sugar, dairy, caffeine, alcohol or processed foods). Participants, no more than 16 at a time, may suffer migraines or vomit on the trail and still the instructors push them to keep going. The results: nearly everyone loses noticeable weight and feels better leaving than they did when they arrived – partly from the detox diet and partly from having survived.

Getting there: fly to Los Angeles. The program ([www.theranchmalibu.com](http://www.theranchmalibu.com)) is Sunday to Saturday; there's also a four-day version.

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## 03 THE ISLAND EXPERIENCE, ILHA GRANDE, BRAZIL

There's more to this island than hammocks and *caipirinhas*: it's also home to a seven-day program designed to detox and de-stress through rainforest hiking, kayaking, yoga and meditation and a vegetarian diet. In a casual atmosphere, up to 12 guests get personal attention and gentle encouragement, rather than drill-sergeant discipline. The founders created the Island Experience after a seven-day hike around Ilha Grande that left them wanting to share the experience with others: not just physical challenges but also learning

to face one's limits, beat challenges, manage fears and open up to other cultures.

Getting there: fly to Rio de Janeiro. The program is Sunday to Saturday; [www.theislandexperience.com](http://www.theislandexperience.com).

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### ★ THE ASHRAM, MALLORCA, SPAIN

The seasonal program is the same as at the original Ashram in California, where celebrities have long flocked to lose weight and clear their heads. It's rigorous, to be sure: 5.30am wakeup calls for yoga; four to six hours of hiking, sometimes with nearly 1000m of elevation gain; afternoon kayaking, strength training, TRX or Pilates; more yoga; minimal, vegetarian meals; and utterly

exhausted sleep. With up to 14 guests, everyone gets pushed – hard. You'll stay in a restored 17th-century olive farm surrounded by orchards and terraces with stunning views, where the guest rooms have beamed ceilings, local art and private bathrooms.

Getting there: fly to Palma. The program runs Sunday to Saturday and is held from April to June; [www.theashram.com](http://www.theashram.com).

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### ★ ESCAPE TO SHAPE, INTERNATIONAL

The premier 'travelling fitness spa' combines luxury, culture and fitness in glamorous locations around the world. Each program is tailored to make the most of its location, with a focus on history, culture, people, cuisine



GET SOME WAVE THERAPY  
IN KAUAI'S SURF

and natural wonders – and butt-kicking. While destinations have ranged from Cape Town (where the program included African dance) to Sicily (where guests climbed Mt Etna), the setup is consistent: each day includes a total body workout that might involve yoga, Pilates, circuit training, hiking, kayaking or biking; healthy meals that reflect the region; and a bit of downtime to explore and enjoy the surroundings.

Trip length varies but is generally about a week; [www.escapetoshape.com](http://www.escapetoshape.com).

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### ☆ CAL-A-VIE, VISTA, CALIFORNIA, USA

Don't let the la-di-da name and French Provençal decor fool you: the seasoned trainers here seriously kick butt. The morning mountain hike can turn into a mountain run. Guests are allowed to do as much or as little as they want, and there are a lot of beginner-friendly options among the 125 classes, but there's also CrossFit and an amped-up TRX class. The gym is as state-of-the-art as it gets and the high staff-to-guest ratio (21 trainers for up to 32 guests) ensure that anyone who asks to be challenged will be. It's not unheard-of to have one student and two instructors.

Getting there: fly to San Diego. Programs are three, four or seven days with set dates; [www.cal-a-vie.com](http://www.cal-a-vie.com).

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### ☆ BIKINI BOOT CAMP, TULUM, MEXICO

Founded about a decade ago, this was one of the first adventure-fitness-and-yoga programs around. The boot camps combine cool shabby-chic settings (originally the Amansala ecoresort in this yoga mecca on the Mayan Riviera and now also on Ibiza) with

activities and vacation fun. Most of the fitness classes, from power walks to cardio workouts to yoga classes, take place right on the sand and they're complemented with salsa or belly-dancing classes. Guests range from fitness newbies to hardcore gym rats and the program is tailored accordingly.

Getting there: fly to Cancún. Programs are six nights with set dates and begin on a different day each week; [www.bikinibootcamp.com](http://www.bikinibootcamp.com).

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### ☆ THE BODYHOLIDAY, ST LUCIA

It may take willpower to make this a boot camp, as the 'holiday' part of the name is taken seriously and there are all the temptations of an all-inclusive Caribbean resort. But for guests with enough drive, there are lots of offerings that would challenge the founders – one of them a former ultramarathoner. A day may include a 7am beach boot camp class, a 4-mile run, morning aerobics, afternoon windsurfing and evening Ashtanga yoga. It all gets kicked up a notch during the WellFit retreats in March and November, when ex-Olympians and pro athletes lead the training.

Getting there: fly to St Lucia. WellFit retreats are five nights; other stays can be any length; [www.thebodyholiday.com](http://www.thebodyholiday.com).

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### ☆ CHIVA-SOM, HUA-HIN, THAILAND

The name means 'Haven of Life', but for guests who sign on for this destination spa's fitness retreats, life is anything but restful. There are classes nearly 12 hours a day, from Muay Thai boxing to Ashtanga yoga to a cardio session called Mountain Trek, plus private fitness assessments and an array of personal training sessions, both indoors and

REVITALISING  
BODY AND SOUL  
AT CHIVA-SOM SPA



out. A team of highly trained international specialists oversee the fitness and the Eastern and Western wellness services (reflexology, Thai massage, deep-tissue bodywork) that soothe sore muscles after classes are done. The healthy Thai food is delicious.

Getting there: fly to Bangkok. Chiva-Som has a three-night suggested minimum; [www.chivasom.com](http://www.chivasom.com).

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### ★ LA RÉSERVE RAMAUTELLE, FRANCE

Just a few miles from Saint-Tropez, this resort is primarily a place for summer relaxation. But it offers a surprisingly rigorous boot camp fitness retreat, centered on the very

civilised European sport of Nordic walking (with poles, which makes it a lot harder). Each guest (no more than eight) starts with a medical assessment before embarking on a program of daily 15km to 20km treks through the mountains and along the coast, tailored to guests' fitness levels. This being France, a balanced Mediterranean diet and slimming treatments like balneotherapy (bathing in mineral-rich waters) speed up the results.

Getting there: fly to La Mole. The boot camp program is five nights and available anytime from April to November; see [www.lareserveramatuelle.com](http://www.lareserveramatuelle.com).