

10 retreats to recharge mind, body and soul

Creative workshops, nature immersion and much more

Words: Jane Dunford

Fun and games in Montenegro

Playfulness is at the heart of the **Art and Play holiday**, based on a farm outside the Bay of Kotor. A family-friendly retreat designed to reignite joy and reconnect with the inner child, it's one for solo travellers and couples as well as parents with kids. There are creative sessions on everything from dance to painting, as well as time to enjoy the farm - feeding the animals, collecting eggs or helping harvest vegetables for farm-fresh meals. Excursions include hikes to hidden beaches, kayaking and trips to Kotor and Budva, but there's time to chill by the pool too; evenings are for board games, music and campfires.

Accommodation ranges from camping and glamping to cabins, a treehouse and restored farmhouse.

Seven days from £695, children 5-12 £350, under-fives free, includes brunch, dinner and snacks, 3 May and 23 August, responsibletravel.com

Get creative in Greece

Unlock your creativity on a week-long Exploring Ceramics retreat on the beautiful Greek island of Aegina. Led by the artist Marina Coriolano-Lykourezos, it's a meditative, playful experience with an emphasis on self-discovery, being present and having fun. With a maximum of six participants on each retreat, it's hands-on, with about six hours a day



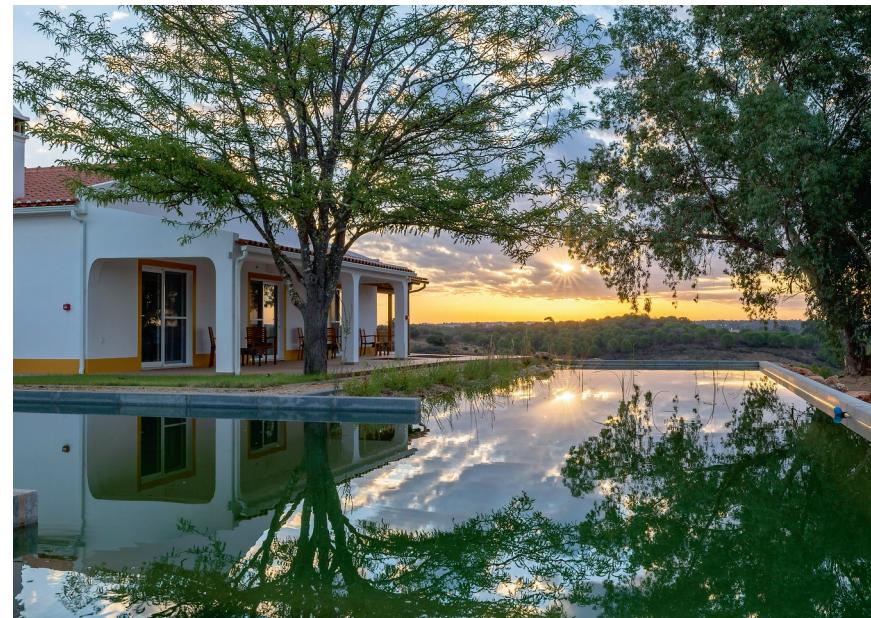
Exploring Ceramics in Aegina, Greece



Connect with your inner child on an art and play holiday in Montenegro (left). A riding and equine therapy break in Bosnia and Herzegovina (right)



Quinta Marugo (left), a wellbeing retreat in southern Portugal



exploring clays and techniques in the studio - no experience is necessary. Accommodation is in the Grape House or neighbouring Lemon House, surrounded by vines and a pistachio orchard, a short walk from the studio and Aegina port. Breakfast at home and lunch from local tavernas is included, as well as excursions.

Aegina Retreats runs various other workshops and holidays, including painting and creative writing. *Retreats run year-round. The seven-night Exploring Ceramics retreat is £1,800 solo or £2,750 for a couple, including accommodation, all tuition and materials, aeginaretreats.com*

Nature connection in Devon Founded by Mac Macartney over two decades ago, **Embercombe** is a 20-hectare (50-acre) rewilding site and

educational charity on the edge of Dartmoor. Retreats and learning weeks support visitors in reconnecting with nature, purpose and community. Embercombe's flagship retreat is the Journey, six days of guided reflection, self-discovery and nature connection designed to help participants identify and act on how they want to live their lives. Shared or private yurts dotted across the site provide basic but cosy accommodation, and hearty

vegetarian meals are enjoyed feast-style in a dining tent. The retreat welcomes people of all backgrounds. *There are several Journey retreats in 2026; the next is 8-13 March, £1,395, including accommodation, all meals and activities (bursary places available), embercombe.org*

Restorative haven in Andalucía

A favourite with the experts at the **Global Retreat Company**, the Yellow House is a new luxurious sanctuary offering restorative escapes in nature, around 40 miles north of Seville. As well as yoga and meditation, there are mindful walks, sound healing, visits to rescue donkeys on an organic farm and horse-drawn carriage rides. Accommodation is the former mayor's house in the pretty village of Higuera de la Sierra - a beautiful six-bedroom refuge with original tiles, antique furnishings and a courtyard with plunge pool. Food is a highlight,

focusing on southern Spanish cuisine with dishes such as fish stew and stuffed peppers (vegetarians and vegans catered for). This is one of several options run by Iberian Wellness Retreats.

Three-night retreats are €1,475, including accommodation, all meals and activities, from 30 April and 2 July, theglobalretreatcompany.com

Off grid in Mid Wales

Spirit Horse is an off-grid retreat centre on an 80-hectare rewilding site in a valley in Powys, with forested mountains, flower-filled meadows and tumbling waterfalls. A busy summer programme celebrates both eastern and western traditions, including meditation, storytelling, women's and men's circles, plus a festival-style "tribal" gathering, all held in Celtic roundhouses, yurts and temples. The signature Enlightenment Intensives, held three times a year, are for those looking to dive into self-enquiry, via exercises, silent walks and lectures.

It's a place for getting back to the wild - there are no hot showers, but there are waterfalls, natural bathing pools and a sauna. Three healthy meals a day are served in the main barn. *The five-night Enlightenment Intensive is £500, including meals, 21 May and 6 August; Cauldron of Plenty festival, £165 (bring a tent), 27-31 August, spirithorse.co.uk*

Healing with horses in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Meditate With Horses was founded by Katherine Beaumont after she recovered from a traumatic accident through meditation and spending time with horses. As well as day-long sessions and three-day silent retreats in the Lake District, there are longer trips further afield, all drawing on the therapeutic benefits of spending time with animals. The week-long Healing on Horseback in Bosnia break is based at a ranch in Livno and includes yoga, meditation, hiking and equine therapy. There are daily rides, a chance to see some of the last wild horses in Europe, time for swimming in the river and evenings around the fire. A new trip to Mallorca, including meditation, shiatsu and swimming with horses, launches in November. *The six-night Healing on Horseback retreat is £1,500, 23 May and 3 October, meditatewithhorses.co.uk*

Recharge in Portugal

Quinta Marugo is a wellbeing retreat centre in rural Alentejo, southern Portugal, designed to help people slow down and connect with nature. There's a range of group retreats, from mindfulness in nature to transformational breathwork, or the option to create a bespoke retreat. A personal four-day Deep Rest Retreat

offers time to recharge in peaceful surroundings and relax by the pool or fire, with a massage and organic meals from the farm included. Guests can tailor their experience with optional extras, including yoga, qigong and nature connection sessions.

Four-day Deep Rest Retreat from €585, quintamarugo.com

Men's rewilding in Cornwall

Both Sides Retreats are for men only, offering space to escape the stresses of daily life and reconnect with a sense of purpose and the natural world. Held in locations in the UK and Europe, they combine a range of activities, from cold water immersion to martial arts and bushcraft. Upcoming options include the Men's Summer Rewilding Retreat at Cabilla Cornwall on Bodmin Moor. Days include yoga, saunas, breathwork, river swims and walks in the onsite ancient temperate rainforest. *Men's Summer Rewilding Retreat, from £855, with food and all activities, 2-5 July, bothsidesretreats.com*

Digging deep in Italy

Looking for real change? **The Path of Love** is an intensive week-long programme of deep inner work, held at various locations in the UK and around the world. Blending western psychology and eastern spiritual practices, there's individual and group work, active and silent meditations, writing assignments and more, all led by psychologists and counsellors. It's a challenging journey, but participants claim genuinely life-changing results. Miasto retreat centre near Siena is one of the venue options, with pretty sandstone buildings surrounded by rolling Tuscan countryside. *Various options, including Tuscany on 5-12 March and 25 November-2 December, £3,190 or an early-bird rate of £2,800 (accommodation extra, from £520), pathretreats.com*

Readers' travel tips

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Winning tip

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