

By SARAH SEKULA

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10 Great Destinations to Grow Into the New Year

These Vacation Venues Can Help You Pursue Your New Year's Goals

Whether your New Year's resolution is to learn a new language, trek through a mountain range or dabble in the art world, there's likely a vacation venue that can help you pursue your goal. Lucy Danziger, editor in chief of Self Magazine, shares getaways to revamp your image and feed your soul.

Rancho La Puerta -- Tecate, Mexico

Activities range from triathlete training to photography instruction. "You'll feel as if you're a world away from the grind as you stroll through oak groves at the base of Mount Kuchumaa, a peak the locals consider sacred," Danziger says. "Don't miss the morning trek to the spa's organic farm, where you'll be greeted with the freshest breakfast you've ever tasted." rancholapuerta.com

Maca Bana -- St. George's, Grenada

This cliff-top hotel's lush surroundings -- koi ponds, verdant gardens and white-sand beaches -- are sure to inspire the aspiring artist. Art lessons with the hotel's owner, in the field and in the studio, teach you to visually record natural landscapes and develop an inspirational sketch book. macabana.com

Four Seasons Resort Nevis -- Charlestown, Nevis, West Indies

There's activity for the whole family at this resort. For youngsters and parents: Hit the high seas and earn a diploma after completing a six-hour training course. For tykes and teens: The resort's partnership with the Sea Turtle Conservancy encourages preservation and protection of endangered sea turtles, Danziger says. They can create turtle-inspired crafts and continue to track the creatures online, thanks to the program's GPS tagging system. fourseasons.com/nevis

Aspen/Vail -- Colorado

The 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, an extensive network of 30 backcountry huts, allows cross-country skiers and hikers to challenge their abilities. Both pursuits encourage understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and build self-reliance, Danziger says. Note: Novices should sign up for a guided tour. (Aspen Expeditions and Aspen Alpine Guides offer them.) 970-925-5775; huts.org

Various locations in Thailand

Exotic Thailand is an ideal setting for a life-changing experience. Consider a 15-day eco-tour to "enjoy extraordinary wildlife experiences like nowhere else in the world," Danziger says. You'll play with cubs at a tiger sanctuary, bathe pachyderms at an elephant camp and learn the secrets of Thai cooking, too.

wildplanetadventures.com

Canyon Ranch Hotel & Spa -- Miami Beach

This Zen-like hotel, with its focus on health and well-being, encourages self-discovery. "Total Health Packages (feature) specialists who guide you through new approaches to prevention, diagnoses and treatment of health concerns, and weight and stress management," Danziger says. 800-742-9000; canyonranchmiamibeach.com

Kenwood Inn and Spa -- Kenwood, Calif.

This inn is a good choice for those who want to become savvier about wine. "The concierge will tailor a Sonoma-centric itinerary for you to become a wine expert during your stay," Danziger says. Outside: It's lush vineyards and rolling hills. Inside: This "Mediterranean villa-style hideaway is the perfect place to loosen up," she adds. Spa treatments incorporate local grapeseed oils and red-wine extracts. 800-353-6966; www.kenwoodinn.com

Brompton Cookery School -- Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England

This farmhouse turned cooking school lets you "unleash your inner chef with courses including Taste of Italy, All Things Chocolate and Stylish Vegetarian." The focus is on making healthy dishes using fresh, savory ingredients. Chances are, says Danziger, "you'll eat better for the rest of your life."

bromptoncookeryschool.co.uk

Costa Rica

"Pursue two passions with one trip," Danziger says. "In the mornings, you'll attend a professional school to study Spanish language and culture." Afternoons are all about surfing off the coast of Tamarindo. Here, you'll find "some of the most pristine beaches — and gentle, gradual breaks, where locals will take you out and make hanging 10 seem easy," she says. 406-962-3038; learnspanishandsurf.com

Altai Republic -- Russia

A vacation spent working on conservation projects is not only educational, it's re-energizing. This two-week expedition has participants "tracking wild snow leopards and their prey," Danziger says. You might spot the elusive Altai ibex and argali mountain sheep, as well as other mammals and birds. Plus, base camp

is in a spectacular setting at the foot of Central Asia's majestic white-capped mountains. biosphere-expeditions.org