

The changing face of wellness tourism in India



Wellness is the quality or state of being healthy in body and mind so that instead of just surviving, you are thriving.

Since ancient times in India, Ayurveda, Yoga and Meditation have been proven effective ways of healing the mind, body, and soul. Travellers from around the world come here for wellness and spiritual awakening. India is always a preferred place to attain the holistic healing of mind, body, and soul.

India's Wellness Tourism is much more than Ayurveda and Yoga retreats

The growing interest among the masses towards prevention over cure, natural over artificial, contentment over the competition is leading to a change in their lifestyle choices. Wellness is the latest fad and has rewritten the rules in almost all the industries globally, be it food, fashion, beauty, real estate, etc and travel is no exception. Today, more than ever, people are looking forward to a break from their mundane and stressful lifestyle and head to a place which could rejuvenate them inside out. The ongoing pandemic has also played a considerable role in giving a further fillip to it.

Wellness Tourism in India has also added newer dimensions to it, apart from the most popular Ayurveda and Yoga retreats. The new buzzwords in Wellness Tourism are responsible tourism, rural tourism, eco-friendly tourism, remote working and wellness staycations, etc. Experiencing a balanced life, in sync with nature, is in itself therapeutic and people are opting for it more than ever. Health, immunity and safety are major concerns shifting people towards wellness tourism.



AYURVEDA IS THE TRADITIONAL HINDU SYSTEM OF MEDICINE (INCORPORATED IN ATHARVA VEDA, THE LAST OF THE FOUR VEDAS), WHICH IS BASED ON THE IDEA OF BALANCE IN BODILY SYSTEMS AND USES DIET, HERBAL TREATMENT, AND YOGIC BREATHING. YOGA, SIMPLY PUT, IS UNION IN, AND UNION WITH, ALL SPHERES OF LIFE. IT IS THE SCIENCE OF CREATION, OFTEN CALLED THE FINAL FRONTIER, FOR IT OPENS DOORWAYS NOT JUST TO THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO THAT WHICH LIES BEYOND AND CONTROLS AND DIRECTS WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PHYSICAL DIMENSION. YOGA HELPS UNLOCK THE PHENOMENAL POTENTIAL THAT LIES HIDDEN IN A BEING. MANIFESTATION OF THOUGHT, HEALTH, BEAUTY, GLOW, ATTRACTION IS AMONG THE BASIC SIDDHIS OF YOGA UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF A GURU.

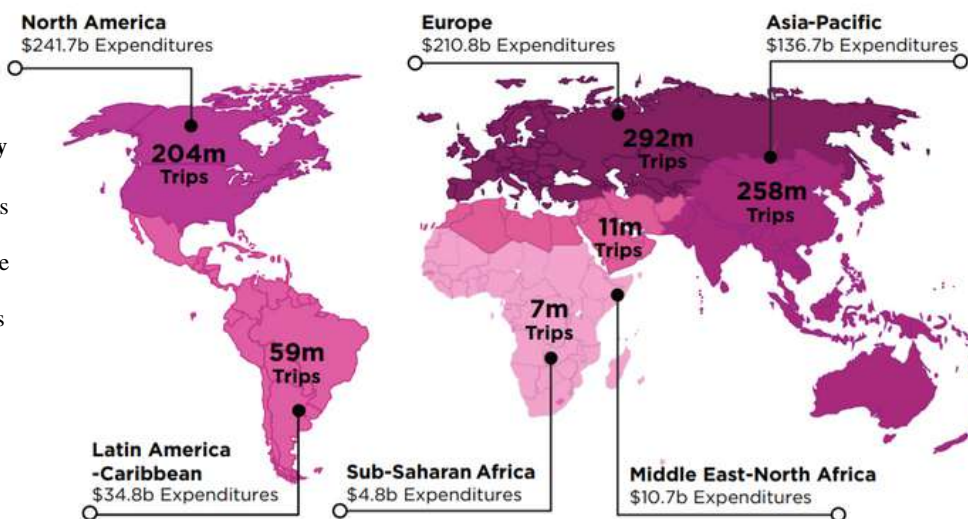
There has been a recent splurge in destinations that are in complete harmony with nature, its surroundings, flora and fauna, relatively unexplored, secluded and offer wholesome organic food, for a peaceful mind and a balanced body.

India's ranking in Global Wellness Tourism Market

Globally, wellness tourism is growing with 6.5 per cent annually, more than twice as fast as tourism overall (3.2 per cent), and it was worth US\$639 billion market in 2017. This segment is forecasted to grow even faster through 2022 (7.5 per cent yearly), to reach US\$919 billion, according to **Global Wellness Tourism Economy report by Global Wellness Institute**.

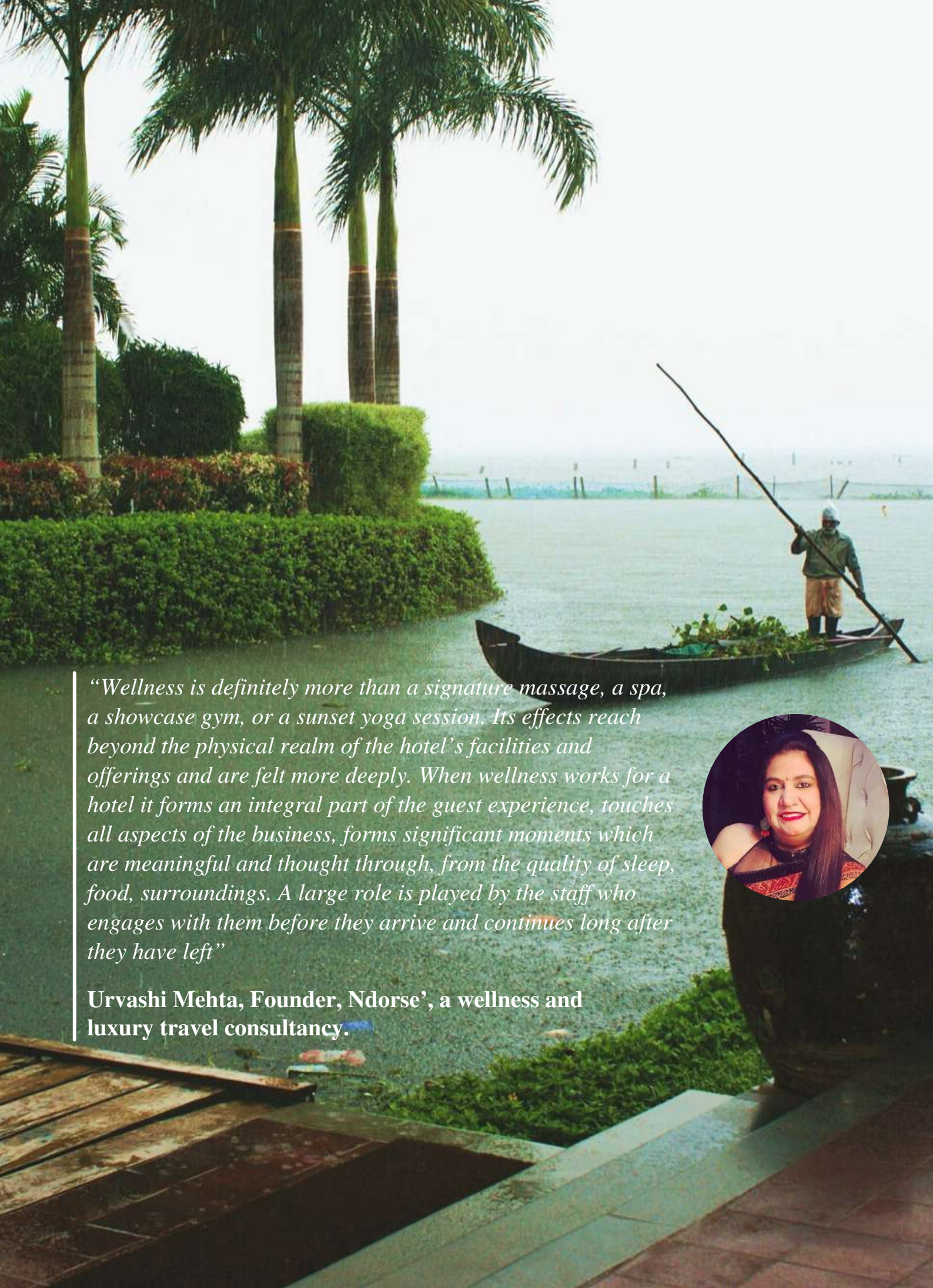
In 2017, India ranked 7th in the top 20 wellness tourism markets, and 10th among the top 20 spa markets in the world, while ranking 3rd in both the top 10 wellness tourism markets and top 10 spa markets in Asia Pacific. While the country itself is an attractive wellness travel destination globally, Indians are equally wellness travel freaks. According to reports, Indians made 56 million wellness-related trips, both domestic and international, in 2017 (a growth of 45 per cent over 2015), which included expenditures worth \$16.3 billion. Also, India ranked 2nd in terms of leading growth markets for wellness tourism, depicting an average annual growth rate of 20.3 per cent from 2015 to 2017, adding a little over 17 million wellness trips in the same period.

Wellness Tourism by Region, 2017 Combined Inbound/International and Domestic Wellness Tourism Trips and Expenditures



Source: Global Wellness Institute





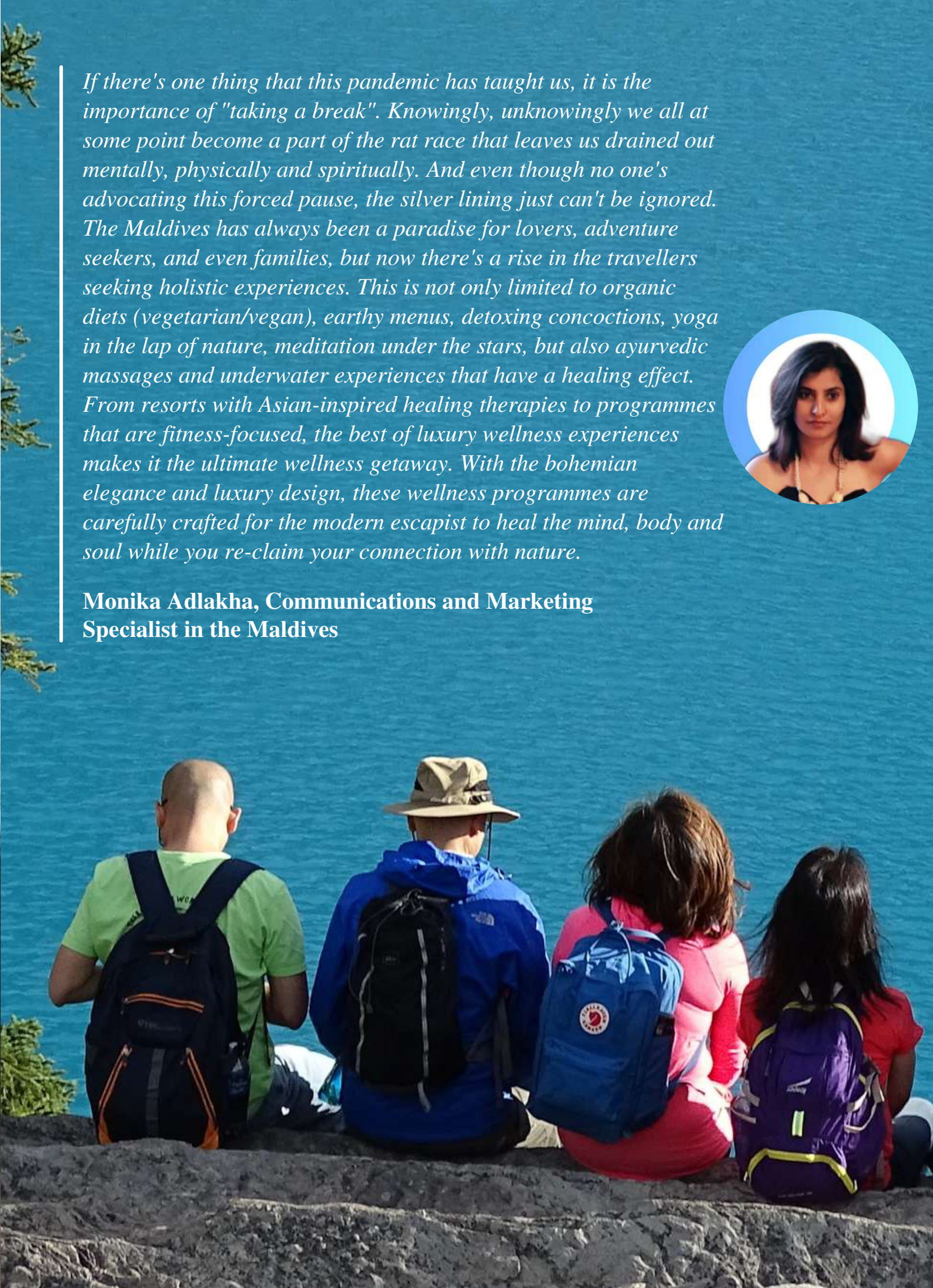
“Wellness is definitely more than a signature massage, a spa, a showcase gym, or a sunset yoga session. Its effects reach beyond the physical realm of the hotel’s facilities and offerings and are felt more deeply. When wellness works for a hotel it forms an integral part of the guest experience, touches all aspects of the business, forms significant moments which are meaningful and thought through, from the quality of sleep, food, surroundings. A large role is played by the staff who engages with them before they arrive and continues long after they have left”

Urvashi Mehta, Founder, Ndorse’, a wellness and luxury travel consultancy.



If there's one thing that this pandemic has taught us, it is the importance of "taking a break". Knowingly, unknowingly we all at some point become a part of the rat race that leaves us drained out mentally, physically and spiritually. And even though no one's advocating this forced pause, the silver lining just can't be ignored. The Maldives has always been a paradise for lovers, adventure seekers, and even families, but now there's a rise in the travellers seeking holistic experiences. This is not only limited to organic diets (vegetarian/vegan), earthy menus, detoxing concoctions, yoga in the lap of nature, meditation under the stars, but also ayurvedic massages and underwater experiences that have a healing effect. From resorts with Asian-inspired healing therapies to programmes that are fitness-focused, the best of luxury wellness experiences makes it the ultimate wellness getaway. With the bohemian elegance and luxury design, these wellness programmes are carefully crafted for the modern escapist to heal the mind, body and soul while you re-claim your connection with nature.

Monika Adlakha, Communications and Marketing Specialist in the Maldives

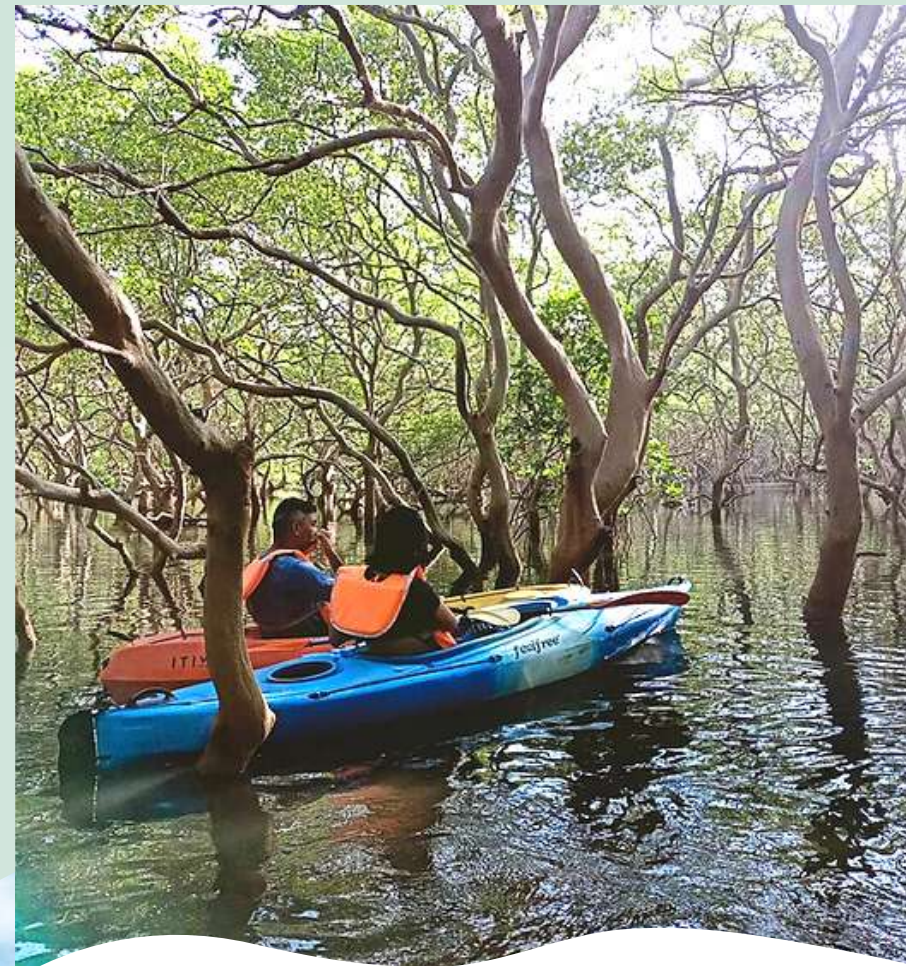


Let's look at some of **India's nature-inspired, rustic and eco-friendly destinations focussing on rejuvenation**

Terra Conscious, Goa **Responsible Tourism**

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Wayanad, Kerala **Rural & Wildlife Tourism**

Wayanad In Kerala is an all year round tourism place as it has a very soothing temperature. The place is famous for its spice plantations, popularly known as the spice garden of India. One could experience nature's bounty with lush green orchards and long spread plantations of spices, coffee and organic fruits and vegetables.

It also has numerous wildlife sanctuaries, reserves and national parks. Its dense woods, mighty mountains and gushing rivers make it an ideal spot for many adventurous activities like trekking, camping and mountaineering, etc.

Mawlynnong Village, Meghalaya **Eco-friendly Tourism**

Awarded as the "cleanest village in Asia" by Discover India, plastic bags and smoking are banned in Mawlynnong in Meghalaya. Bamboo is used extensively for construction and composting and nurturing trees are a common practice. The place is pleasant throughout the year while best during monsoon. The village offers an insight into Khasi tribal life, their festivals, local food and the way of living. With a hundred percent literacy rate, the khasi tribe is famous for children inheriting their mother's surnames and property is also passed through the matrilineal lines.

Other major attractions are The Living Roots Bridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the neighbouring Riwai Village, which is a short hike from Mawlynnong. The Khasi tribes of Meghalaya created these natural bridges by weaving together the roots of ficus trees. Another is The Sky View which is the vantage point having a viewing tower that is eighty-five feet high and completely made of bamboo.

Pragpur, Himachal Pradesh **Heritage tourism**

Pragpur, India's first heritage village, is situated in Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh. The village is named in honor of Princess Prag Dei of the Jaswan royal family. The prosperous merchants of Kuthiala Sood community travelled abroad and returned home to build mansions, schools and hospitals in architectural styles they observed there. The 300-year-old exquisite Havelis and heritage buildings take you to the bygone era.

Another attraction is the ancient water system, a large ornamental water tank called Taal. Built before 1868, the Taal is said to form the core of the village and is surrounded by several old community structures like the Nehar Bhawan, Naun, and Dhunichand Bhardial Serai.

Raja Ram Singh, who ruled over the state about two hundred years ago, was a man of artistic tastes. An ardent devotee of Krishna, he built a beautiful shrine dedicated to his favourite deity. The walls of the shrine are covered with breathtakingly elaborate and richly coloured Kangra-style miniature paintings.

