

# Keep your cool

**m**indfulness, meditation, being present – we're all hearing these words more often. And with wellness-related travel set to grow by about 9% annually worldwide, according to the Global Wellness Institute, agents can play an important role in helping clients discover their own slice of serenity. From finding everyday joys in Japan to seeing why Scandinavians frequently rank among the world's happiest people, these 'calmcations' help immerse clients in mood-boosting techniques from around the world.

## SCANDI SMILES

Long summer days, free-to-roam forests and gorgeous displays of the northern lights – the natural wonders of the Nordics are the perfect recipe for feeling at ease. In fact, Finland has topped the World Happiness Report for the past eight years, with its toasty saunas, lakeside landscapes and fresh, local food adding up to a relaxing way of life.

The Culinary Delights of Lake Saimaa itinerary from Best Served Scandinavia gives clients the chance to indulge in this healthy lifestyle with tastings of tea, chocolate and even Finnish wine made from foraged berries rather than grapes. There's plenty of time to experience the country's active side at Sahanlahti Resort, ➤

If wellbeing is top of mind for your clients, suggest a trip rooted in traditional rituals, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**

Sunset swimming in Lake Saimaa, Finland

PICTURE: Miko Nikkanen



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Kava beach ceremony, Fiji; Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula attracts the right kind of visitor; enjoying the Norwegian fjords; Elsanranta Villas at Sahanlahti Resort, Finland

PICTURES: Tourism Fiji/Fraser Clements; Ruben Soltvedt



a former sawmill turned luxury hotel that's now home to stand-up paddleboarding, swimming and other watersports, along with five types of sauna.

Sue McAllinden, general manager at Best Served Scandinavia, says: "From lunch cooked on a campfire to boat trips on Lake Saimaa, every moment invites clients to slow down and reconnect with their surroundings. This is Finnish summer at its best."

**Book it:** Best Served Scandinavia's seven-night Culinary Delights of Lake Saimaa itinerary costs from £2,655 per person, based on two sharing. Includes breakfast, excursions, some meals, car hire and flights from Heathrow in July. [best-served.co.uk](http://best-served.co.uk)

**Or try:** Norway's antidote to anxiety is *friluftsliv*. Odd Tore Skildheim, Hurtigruten's head of product development and operations, says: "*Friluftsliv*, which literally means 'open-air living', reflects Norway's deep-rooted tradition of connecting with

Costa Rica's motto, *pura vida*, or the pure life, encapsulates the importance of staying positive and living simply

nature through active outdoor experiences. At Hurtigruten, we aim to give our guests an authentic taste of *friluftsliv* through guided hikes and nature-based excursions such as kayaking."

Hurtigruten's first fjords-only sailing, Inner Fjords Explorer, sets sail next April and gives clients plenty of time to get outdoors in these breathtaking, steep-sided sea valleys, with frequent opportunities for hiking, cycling and kayaking. The seven-night cruise costs from £2,186 per person, all-inclusive, based on two sharing. Includes

Wi-Fi, transfers and flights departing September 27, 2027. [hurtigruten.com](http://hurtigruten.com)

TROPICAL CHILL

Costa Rica's national motto, *pura vida* (pure life), encapsulates the importance of staying positive, living simply and expressing gratitude. It's woven into Costa Rica's fabric – clients will even see the phrase writ large from the moment they step off the plane.

A four-hour drive from San Jose's airport is the Nicoya Peninsula, known for its wildlife refuges and chilled surf towns. On Rainbow Tours' tailor-made 14-night Costa Rica in Style trip, clients will spend three nights relaxing on the Nicoya Peninsula's turtle-nesting beaches.

Jack Brooker, product and travel specialist for Latin America at Rainbow Tours, says: "For our guests, the remoteness of the Nicoya Peninsula is what makes it so special. When I was there, I came across a sign that said: 'Bad roads bring good people', which

reflects how it tends to attract purposeful and responsible visitors."

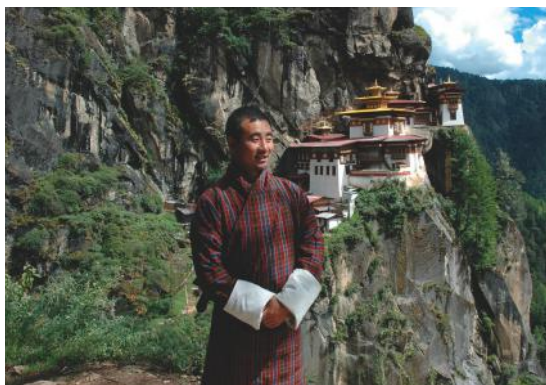
Clients will also experience the meaning of *pura vida* across the rest of the Central American country. Activities include horse riding, spotting a rainbow of birds ranging from macaws to hummingbirds in their cloud forest habitat, and paddleboarding on Lake Arenal with the famous and perfectly symmetrical cone of the volcano as a backdrop. When clients want some personal pampering, suggest a spa treatment in one of the luxury lodges featured on the itinerary.

**Book it:** Costa Rica in Style costs from £6,895 per person, which is based on two sharing. Includes all flights, transfers, breakfast and select excursions. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

**Or try:** Clients can experience Fiji's famously familial culture, relaxed pace and outdoorsy spirit by staying in a thatched *bure* (bungalow) on private Outrigger Castaway Island. A Fijian cultural day, held every Wednesday, sees guests ➤

# DESTINATIONS

WELLNESS | CALMCATIONS



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Buddhist monks on Mount Koya, Japan; Ritsurin Garden, Japan; Tiger's Nest monastery, Bhutan; Muluk spa, Hotel Xcaret Arte, Mexico **PICTURES:** Ali; Sophia Aubrey Drake/InsideJapan Tours; Rod Griffith

get involved with a traditional *lovo* (underground pit oven), followed by a communal *kava* ceremony where guests connect with each other and glasses are raised to the sky with a hearty *bula* (greeting) toast. First Class Holidays sells a 17-night trip from £5,100 per person, based on two sharing. Includes seven nights at Castaway Island, room-only, all transfers, flights connecting via Hong Kong plus two nights' stopover accommodation, departing in November. [fcholidays.com](http://fcholidays.com)

## FINDING ZEN

In Japan, the concept of *ikigai* roughly translates to finding one's purpose in life. Whether it's socialising with friends and family over karaoke or peacefully tending to plants in the garden, everyone's vision of *ikigai* is different; your clients can find out what theirs looks like by embarking on their own Japan adventure.

InsideJapan Tours' Hidden Japan itinerary explores a slow-paced, rural side to this Asian

“The first country to measure wealth in Gross National Happiness, Bhutan weaves people-centred practices into all aspects of life

archipelago. Beginning and ending in historic Kyoto, clients discover the origins of Shingon Buddhism on forested Mount Koya, before sailing across to lesser-known Shikoku by ferry, where they can stroll through Zen gardens and experience classic Japanese rituals, including steaming onsens and forest bathing.

InsideJapan product director Tyler Palma says: “Hidden Japan ends in the small town of Joge. Clients meet the local women's group, the head priest and many craftspeople [including lacquerware artisans]. It's a celebration of *ichigo iche* – one time, one meeting –

and about treasuring a once-in-a-lifetime moment.”

**Book it:** The 12-night Hidden Japan tour costs from £4,975 per person, based on two sharing. Includes B&B accommodation, some meals, ground transport and listed excursions, but excludes international flights. [insidejapantours.com](http://insidejapantours.com)

**Or try:** The first country to measure its wealth not in Gross Domestic Product but in Gross National Happiness, Bhutan weaves people-centred practices into all aspects of life. On Intrepid Travel's Premium Bhutan itinerary, clients discover cities, mountains and monasteries that make this Himalayan kingdom unique. They'll spend an afternoon at Gangtey Goemba monastery, its entrance flanked by images of the mythical *garuda*, learning what Nyingmapa Buddhism and happiness mean to Bhutan's people. From £3,635 per person, based on two sharing and including accommodation, transport, some meals and activities, but not flights. [intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com) **TW**

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REST

**Luxembourg** is a chilled-out city break for clients short on time. The walkable city centre has plenty of historic sights and streets, without being overwhelming – and the coffee culture will encourage them to sit down and recharge. Railbookers sells a three-night B&B package from £619, including all rail travel. Based on an October 7 departure. [railbookers.co.uk](http://railbookers.co.uk)

**India** was the birthplace of Ayurvedic medicine thousands of years ago, with a focus on increasing harmony in the body. Responsible Travel's nine-night Ayurvedic Cooking Holiday in Southern India takes place in a homestay on an orange pekoe tea plantation, where clients learn the health benefits of plants and spices. From £1,900, full board, with listed activities and transfers. International flights are extra. [responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)

**Mexico** puts its own twist on sauna culture with its *temazcal* (sweat lodge) tradition. The Maya ritual takes place in a low-roofed circular building where a shaman pours herb-infused cenote water onto heated volcanic stones. Clients can try it in comfort at the Hotel Xcaret Arte's Muluk spa. Seven-night all-inclusive stays cost from £3,049, based on two sharing a Garden Suite with transfers and flights from Gatwick in September. [kuoni.co.uk](http://kuoni.co.uk)