THE WINTER SUN SPECIAL

escapism

- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
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[EXCURSIONS]

THE SELECTOR

If you want a tropical snorkelling escape, need a resort-based reset or are ready for an ice excursion, we have you covered.

PERISCOPE UP

These top snorkelling spots offer stunning sea life scenes with scuba’s more approachable cousin.

1) JELLYFISH LAKE, PALAU

Who says all the best snorkelling happens in the open ocean? This marine lake is located on Ell Malk island in Palau’s Southern Lagoon region. The nameake population of jellyfish – recently rebounded to 700,000 thanks to conservation efforts – was cut off when the last ice age ended and glaciers melted 12,000 years ago. Getting to swim surrounded by clouds of stinger-free jellyfish (without predators they evolved that way) is an unbeatable experience.

2) LAGOON OF BORA BORA, FRENCH POLYNESIA

As if travelling to the underside of the world, in the middle of the South Pacific, wasn’t enough, you should go the extra step and dive underwater for the spectacular view in Bora Bora. In the lagoon, a rainbow of rare, tropical fish species swim calmly amongst coral gardens – especially at the southern tip – that are an eye-catching attraction in their own right. One spot is so well-suited to fish spotting that it has been nicknamed the Aquarium. Those with more flipper experience will want to join an excursion out into the ocean proper to swim with the large schools of reef sharks.

Blacktip reef sharks usually grow to five feet and, because they prefer shallow water, their distinctive fin tips are a frequent sight. Many have lost their usual skittishness after being fed by dive guides for years.
Escape from life’s hustle and bustle with these wellness retreats that put a focus on rejuvenation.

1) RANCHO LA PUERTA, TECATE, MEXICO

Without a beach in sight, Rancho La Puerta brings guests to a serene, 4,000-acre Mexican ranch. Located in a valley at the base of a mountain, rivers wind through marshland, groves of oak trees and 86 casitas serving as lodging. Ideal for active and spiritual travellers, they offer over 50 guided classes, such as aerial yoga, crystal therapy, H.I.I.T and trampoline fitness.

2) GRAIL SPRINGS WELLNESS RETREAT, BANCROFT

Eager to hit the reset button close to home? This wellness retreat is located in Bancroft (about a three-hour drive northeast of Toronto) and offers all-inclusive packages ranging from two to 21 nights. In addition to your accommodations, packages include plant-based meals, daily yoga and meditation and access to saunas and hot and cold mineral tubs. Guests can add juice cleanses, life coaching, mindfulness workshops and spa treatments to personalize their experience. Plus, they offer the unusual opportunity to participate in a meditation circle with horses, including Gracie and Saint Pete. Watch out for bring-a-friend specials.

Offerings from the Grail Kitchen are entirely meat-free and focus on fresh, seasonal produce. Naturally, they offer a juice cleanse. They also buy into the idea that food can control your body’s pH balance.

3) TOFINO RESORT + MARINA, B.C.

If getting active in nature is part of your idea of wellness, this Vancouver Island resort’s all-inclusive packages will be up your alley. Pick and choose from adventures such as whale watching, bear spotting, crabbing or prawning. Make time for a visit to Hot Springs Cove, a geothermal, waterfall-fed hot spring surrounded by old-growth forest. Included meals from 1909 Kitchen and the Hatch Waterfront Pub showcase fresh seafood. Paddle boarding and fishing can also be added.

4) COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE, BALI

Followers of alternative medicine may find what they seek with Como Shambhala Estate’s Ayurveda programme. On top of meals and accommodations, guests receive one-on-one private sessions with an Ayurvedic consultant, daily hour-long Ayurvedic oil treatments, massages based on the results of your consultation and private, therapeutic yoga classes. Cycling tours through rice paddies and walks around the lush estate complement your stay with a sense of place.

5) TRAVAASA HANA, MAUI

It’s no surprise that they know how to do wellness right in Maui. The experience at Travaasa Hana begins with a slice of welcome banana bread when you arrive and continues with a well-rounded roster of included activities such as guided meditations, lei-making workshops, ukulele lessons and traditional bamboo printing. Rooms continue the laid-back ethos with large windows and no clocks or TVs. The Wai‘anapanapa State Park and Hana Bay are nearby for independent connections with nature.