

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Wellness tourism is shifting but will become \$500B industry

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Black Tomato's Get Lost drops clients in remote locales. Image courtesy of Black Tomato

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While wellness continues to be a vital aspect of luxury travel brands' experiences, the face of the health movement has shifted.

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With affluent travelers' interest in health and wellness becoming an important feature in selecting their next trip, high-end hospitality brands have been forced to embrace it. However, in the past brands and consumers were more focused on fitness, but now digital detoxes and mental health are becoming more popular in catering to today's overly connected affluent.

Wellness in tourism

Luxury travel destinations are now offering consumers ways to unplug from the technology-focused aspects of their busy day-to-day lives for better mental health.

According to the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, boutique hotels should be prepared to cater to individual needs in the year ahead as unique requests continue to rise.

Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH), in part with Trendwatching, has comprised a series of trends in the independent hotel industry set to take hold in 2018, which includes an uprising of on-site literature as affluent travelers look to detox from digital devices. This year consumers will expect more of a hands-on experience in which they can design their entire trip, catered to their individual needs ([see more](#)).

Many brands such as Mandarin Oriental will offer services at their spas that will keep cell phones locked up in safe keeping so that guests are free from any distractions.



Mandarin Oriental focuses on wellness

Mandarin Oriental is one of many hospitality brands that offer interactive methods of detaching oneself from digital devices, including coaches and hands-on activities.

Bespoke travel company Black Tomato also helps affluent consumers get away from it all with a service that provides travel with a touch of the unknown.



Travelers who participate in the agency's Get Lost program will not know where they are venturing until they arrive at their destination, requiring them to give up a level of control over their travel plans. Offering a taste of adventure and disconnection, the service revolves around remote points on the map, allowing a vacation to be a holistic physical and mental journey ([see more](#)).

Detox to Instagram

From 2013 to 2015, the Global Wellness Institute found that the wellness industry grew 10.6 percent, while the rest of the world's economy struggled with a decline of 3 percent. This shows how quickly and how important health has become in society across the world.

The organization predicts that by the year 2020, wellness in travel will become a \$800 billion industry.

While digital detoxes are becoming a trendy aspect of wellness in tourism, it is not the only aspect of health that affluents are looking to. Traditional weight loss and detoxes are also vital in catering to this demographic.

Also, digital detoxes may be on many consumers' minds, but the pull of social media can be a big draw with young affluent travelers as well. Many of these tourists seek destinations that are considered "Instagramable."

This concept is important to remember when catering to the millennial demographic, who are now earning more substantial salaries and are proven to be exceptionally loyal. These consumers will also act as ambassadors for these brands via social media if their experience is a positive one, posting about their stays on various digital channels with pictures, video and stories.

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