

Turn off, tune in, drop out: Four tech-free holidays



Scrap the smartphone, wave goodbye to WiFi and recharge your personal battery on these digital-detox getaways

Forty-seven. That's the number of times most of us check our smartphones every day, according to a recent survey by Deloitte. Phone coverage has never been better, and with WiFi available in every cafe, hotel and even on some Underground lines, even the most minimal tech consumer finds it tricky to switch off completely.

Tour operators have cottoned on to this, and are now doing a roaring trade in "digital detox" getaways. But despite the hype, it's harder than you'd think to go incommunicado: if there's no WiFi in your hotel, you can just hold your phone out the window to get your (slightly embarrassing) fix. However, it is possible to completely escape the trappings of the information age – if only for a few days – on one of these spectacular holidays.



Run with the wolves in Arctic Norway

Snowmobiles may provide high-decibel thrills across frozen lakes and slopes, but to cross the forests, hills and plains of the glistening Narnia that is the Scandinavian Arctic, nothing is as exhilarating as sitting in a sled, being whisked along by a pack of huskies. Giving a surprisingly smooth and fast ride, these close relatives of the wolf are strong and capable wayfinders, instinctively flying along forest paths leaving tree roots and rocks untouched. On a three-day Husky Safari with Artisan travel, award-winning musher Sven Engholm and his blue-eyed hounds will take you through breathtaking winter scenery, covering up to 30 miles a day. You'll be starting and finishing at Engholm's own husky farm and spending two nights in a remote cabin with the chance of spectacular Aurora Borealis displays and magical midnight silences, bar the odd howl from your four-pawed friends outside.

Three nights' full board accommodation, including flights, transfers, guidance, clothing and equipment, from £2,145 per person; artisantravel.co.uk

Regain balance in Sri Lanka

Dubbed the "best yoga retreat in the world" by the Observer magazine, the lakeside hideaway of [Ulpotha in Sri Lanka](#) is a tranquil utopia, where twice-daily yoga sessions take place under a pagoda to a chorus of tropical birdsong. When not working on your down-facing dog, you can swim or kayak across the spring-fed lake, snooze lazily in a hammock, watch the macaques throwing mango peel at each other, have an Ayurvedic massage or explore the local villages by bicycle. Those desperate for a phone signal can get one by climbing up to the nearby "sunset rock", but be warned: you'll never be able to do justice to that magnificent sunset or sense of utter peace using a camera. Better to simply embrace it before heading back to the retreat to catch the nightly frog chorus, while supping from a fresh coconut.

Two weeks' full-board, excluding flights, from US\$2,940 (£2,348) for scheduled programmes; nealsyardholidays.com



Connect with the ancient world in Peru

Did Indiana Jones get in a sweat on a rope bridge? Well, yes, but he was being chased by a knife-wielding priest. So you'll be as cool as a cucumber as you navigate the 100ft-high rope bridge system at [Reserva Amazonia](#) in Peru, which offers astonishing views of the rainforest canopy. One of several hotels by award-winning sustainable luxury tour operator Inkaterra, there are in total three resorts within the Manu National Park, and Inkaterra runs multi-centre holidays between them. All have several hundred species of birds and flora, but the [Hacienda Urubamba](#) is the only one with an organic farm where you can pick your own native ingredients; while the [Machu Picchu Pueblo](#) hotel has its own glass-walled restaurant in the jungle and a luxury botanical spa.

A 13-day trip to Peru, visiting four Inkaterra properties, starts from £4,325 per person, based on two adults sharing. This includes two nights in Lima, three nights at Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica, two nights at Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, two nights Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, three nights at Inkaterra La Casona, return flights and airport transfers, the train and a guided trip to Machu Picchu, plus guided daily excursions at the Inkaterra properties; [rainbowtours.co.uk](#)

Go native in South Africa

This hearty and affordable holiday at Mtentu Lodge in the wildest corner of the Wild Coast region of South Africa offers a vast array of activities for thrill seekers, whether canoeing and horse riding, exploring the nearby deserted beaches with accompanying shipwrecks or being treated for any ills by the local Sangoma in their homes. But you won't be uploading any videos of these experiences until you get back to civilisation, as there's no internet and you can only get a phone signal after a 900ft climb up 'Signal Hill'. Situated within and owned in partnership with the Amadiba community, there are comfortable cabins and dorms available, all with thatched verandas taking in views of the ocean and of the [Mkhambathi Nature Reserve](#), a land of open grassland and swamp forests. Showers are solar and gas powered and a percentage of profits go to the local community, who part own the lodge. It's only accessible by 4x4, horse or foot so even before you arrive, you'll know you've gone off-grid.

£192 for a three-day Amadiba Explorer package, including guided horse-riding and hikes through the wilderness, travel and transport not included; [mtentulodge.co.za](#)