



# ADVENTURES IN WELLNESS

Feeling stuck in her own routine, writer Annie Daly went on a mission to learn how other cultures practice self-care. Inspiration ahead.

Wailea  
Beach on  
the island  
of Maui



**Connected bikes, CBD lip balm, every-kind-of-nut milks**—the wellness world has created countless innovative products designed to help us feel better. But wellness is about more than the stuff we buy and consume. It’s a revolution of the mind, an all-encompassing way of living. In search of less commercial forms of self-care, I set out (pre-pandemic) on a trip around the globe to learn about healthful rituals used by other cultures. In my resulting book, *Destination Wellness*, I describe all sorts of traditions that help folks return to the basics (nature, nourishment, love), replenish their reserves, and appreciate the simple pleasures in life. Here, I’ve collected a handful of ideas ripe for respectful borrowing.

**Hold a Cleansing Ceremony**

Hawaiians have always had a spiritual relationship with water, which is why they often turn to it for healing. Look no further than the *hi’uwai*, an ancient cleansing ritual that takes place in a stream or, ideally, the ocean. (The salt in seawater is believed to have purifying properties.)

“A hi’uwai can be done at the beginning or the end of an important event in your life, or even in the middle of something as a way to refocus or recenter yourself,” says Kainoa Daines, director of culture and product development at the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau. “It will always tell you when it’s needed—it’s a feeling.” There are many different types of hi’uwais, but one of the more common ceremonies washes away pain and worry. To perform your own, collect

a few leaves from a plant that’s special to you and carry them to a riverbank or beach. Start by stepping into the water and reciting a prayer or chant that’s meaningful to you. Then tear up the leaves and scatter them on the surface of the water. Each piece of leaf represents a feeling or fear you want to release.

**Balance Your Body**

According to the ancient Indian medical system of Ayurveda, your physical processes are governed by three life energies, or doshas, woven from the five elements of nature: Vata (space and air), Pitta (fire and water), and Kapha (water and earth). To stay in good health, you must keep those forces in equilibrium.

One of the easiest ways to encourage that state of balance is with a DIY face mask meant to soothe your overall

**To stay in good health, you must keep your life energies, in balance.**

system. Ananta Ripa Ajmera, CEO of the Ancient Way and director of Ayurveda at the Well, told me that during autumn, when your Pitta—which is a fiery energy—may become dominant, you want to use cooling ingredients to counteract that dosha and help regulate your internal temperature.

Ajmera recommends this luscious recipe: Mix together one tablespoon of moong dal flour (available on Amazon or at Indian specialty stores), a pinch of saffron, a drop of milk, and rose water to thin the consistency. Apply the mask to your face before you bathe, then rinse it off in the bath or shower.

**Cherish Connections**

The Portuguese word *saudade* describes that



Healing Ayurvedic spices



Samba dancing at a celebration in Brazil

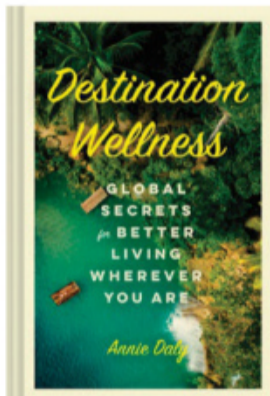
All photos courtesy of Annie Daly



unique emotional ache you feel when you miss someone. But to many Brazilians, *saudade* includes a sense of joy, too. Cláudio Torres, PhD, a professor at the University of Brasilia who studies the nuances of Brazilian culture, explained it to me this way: “[*Saudade*] means that you love someone, and it’s always good to love someone—even if they’re [far away].”

When the pandemic began last year, we were all separated from dear friends and family; try taking the Brazilian approach to your *saudade*. One way to cultivate that kind of joy is by focusing on your gratitude for the relationships that mean so much to you.

Torres recommends creating a photo album full of memories of loved ones and pals you don’t see often enough. As you curate the pictures, you’re bound to feel sentimental about the past. But the real goal is to embrace all of your powerful feelings for these beautiful people who have touched your life.



**GO DEEPER**  
To discover more about the historical and cultural context of the rituals described here, check out *Daly's Destination Wellness*. Hover your phone's camera over the smart code below for a link to buy the book.



## Have a Locally

**Grown Meal** In 1930s Jamaica, Rastafari originated as a religious and social movement. “[The first Rastas] were oppressed, or downpressed, by British colonization,” says Shamara Alhassan, PhD, an assistant professor of the Black experience in the Americas at Arizona State University. “So they decided to fight back by founding their own self-determined communities.” The Rastas moved to the hills, where they began growing their own food. They developed a connection to the land as a result and called their plant-based diet *Ital*, which is derived from the word *vital*.

Today, most Rastas continue to eat a diet full of fresh produce from their own garden or a nearby farm because they believe *Ital* is liberating—that it encourages free thinking. “*Ital* living is fundamentally about changing your lifestyle so that you may be a bit more self-reliant,” Alhassan explains.

Make your own *Ital*-inspired meal by shopping for ingredients at your local farmers’ market. When you get home, create what one Rasta chef described to me as a “bubble of vibes” to protect you from the outside

world: Throw on some good tunes, open your windows to let fresh air in, and prepare yourself a healthy feast without a single processed ingredient.

## Venture Outside— Every Day

Norwegians live by the philosophy of *friluftsliv*, which roughly translates to the “free air life.” They believe that the more time you spend outdoors the healthier you’ll be (no matter the weather).

One woman I stayed with outside the city of Bergen, Norway, went for a walk each day, through the wilderness or into town to shop at the fish market and buy fresh bread at the bakery. She even carried a lunch so she could stop at a pretty spot along the way to eat.

She told me her daily jaunt was her secret to staying well, which makes sense, considering the known perks of movement, nature, and sunlight. “Walk, walk, walk, and then walk some more—every Norwegian knows that!” she said.

Follow her lead and do some errands on foot, or add a stroll around the neighborhood to your regular routine. It’s bound to make you feel better. ✕



A Rasta farmer tending to turmeric



The wharf in Bergen, Norway