

# DestinAsian

FROM ASIA TO THE WORLD

## THE 2018 LUXE LIST

THE BEST NEW  
HOTELS IN THE  
ASIA-PACIFIC  
REGION



⊕ HONG KONG, MONGOLIA, BANGKOK





Clockwise from left: Guests at Oneworld Ayurveda can undergo a BaliSense purification ceremony; paddling to a lakeside hut at Sri Lanka's Ulpotha; Aro Ha serves a variety of farm-fresh vegetarian fare.



## DIGITAL DOWNTIME

Screen-escape getaways are now a firm fixture at spas and wellness resorts across the Asia-Pacific region. From downtown Kuala Lumpur to the wilderness of New Zealand's South Island, here are a handful of places worth seeking out.

### INDONESIA

At Bali's **Oneworld Retreats** ([oneworldretreats.com](http://oneworldretreats.com)), whose small-scale property dings to a jungle ravine outside Ubud, most yoga programs include a day of silence—when instructors switch off the Wi-Fi and ask guests to take a digital detox. In place of electronics, participants are provided journals for writing, paper for drawing, and mandalas for coloring to tease out their creative instincts. Just 20 minutes up the road, sister property **Oneworld Ayurveda** ([oneworldayurveda.com](http://oneworldayurveda.com)) makes ignoring technology's siren call an essential part of its multi-day Panchakarma detox. No devices are permitted in any communal spaces, and cards are given out reminding guests not to use computers or phones in order for the benefits of the treatments to work on mind and body. Many practitioners report feeling so good after a day off the grid, they extend their digital detox for the rest of the retreat.

### MALAYSIA

Travelers need not leave the city to cut out all screen time. At the Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur

([mandarinoriental.com](http://mandarinoriental.com)), you can check your phone in via the spa's Digital Silence Service and embark on a half-day or overnight digital disengagement. The five-hour Digital Wellness Program, developed with the help of the Mayo Clinic, consists of mindful activities like yoga and journaling to slow down the mind, complemented by healthy spa cuisine and a treatment that targets areas affected by repetitive usage of devices: the hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, temples, and eyes. On December 12, all Mandarin Oriental spas worldwide will offer Silent Night, a time when treatments are performed without music or talking. Look out for the brand's Digital Wellness Retreats that will be launched before the end of this year.

### NEW ZEALAND

The last thing you'll feel like doing is checking your email when staying at Aro Ha ([aro-ha.com](http://aro-ha.com)), an eco-friendly luxury wellness resort outside Queenstown that overlooks the northern arm of Lake Wakatipu. On arrival, guests are advised to switch off their devices and embrace natural living



to the fullest through activities ranging from raw vegan "un-cooking classes" to hikes in the surrounding mountains. There's no Wi-Fi access in the public areas and most cellular services don't reach the remote location. Going screen-free is encouraged on Silent Day, whereas longer retreats include a Tame Your Tech session that outlines research about the use of screens and practical advice on reconfiguring them, following co-founder Damian Chaparo's tips to make them less addictive.

### SRI LANKA

There is no Wi-Fi, electricity, or even phone service at Ulpotha ([ulpotha.com](http://ulpotha.com)), a remote village-cum-retreat four hours by car from Colombo in the island's central region. But the resultant tranquility

is wholly liberating. Centered on a 1,000-year-old spring-fed reservoir, Ulpotha immerses its guests in a daily routine of yoga, Ayurveda, and detox treatments amid an electromagnetic-free environment that encourages restful and thoughtful days. Says general manager Suzi Scott, "The program combined with a digital detox allows one to recuperate on profound levels. We notice how our guests bond with each other far more deeply than if they were distracted by their smartphones." Typically open to guests six months a year, the retreat has simple pleasures in spades: comfortable mattresses and crisp sheets in sparse but tasteful mud huts, freshly made gourmet vegan meals, and colorful birdlife on the luxuriant grounds.