Sometimes no matter how hard we try, it’s difficult to maintain balance in our lives. Personal situations, life pressures, and global circumstances often impact us in ways we can’t predict or control. And balance seems beyond our reach. Balance can come from inside us, but sometimes we need a little help. You don’t need a day at the spa, a yoga retreat, or a week of green detox smoothies to enhance your mind-body connection and improve your wellbeing (although they can help!) Be active, get moving, discover new places, meet new faces. Channel the meditative and restorative power of nature. Rest and relaxation is always part of the equation when it comes to taking care of our health and wellness.

But connection helps us deal with uncertain times and travel revitalizes the soul and opens our eyes to fresh new perspectives. Connection to people, places, and experiences.

Conveniently, the unforgettable destinations of the Xanterra Travel Collection check all the boxes, these are places that refuel the mind and invigorate the soul. Planning a journey, connecting with loved ones, getting away from your everyday surroundings and into ones that take your breath away, strengthening your sense of wonder. All of these things make us feel better and improve our mental health. So why not take your travel to the next level by tapping into the ways in which the most beautiful and legendary places in the world can improve our wellbeing. And take a vacation you don’t need a vacation from.

Plan a trip with friends, family, and loved ones you haven’t seen in more than a year. Discover charming towns off the beaten path by bicycle or on foot. Experience the nourishing power of hiking some of the most iconic parks and legendary destinations. Whether you’re climbing up mountains or sitting back staring up at the stars, let’s get moving.
Active Fitness Journeys

“All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking.”

–Friedrich Nietzsche, Philosopher

Improve strength, increase endurance, build confidence. Reduce stress, feel accomplished, feel better from the outside in. What kind of magic pill provides such incredible benefits? There is no pill, and there is no magic in creating and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. But there is magic in taking that perspective on the road and building active fitness into your travel plans.

Come Walk With Me

In addition to having such a positive impact on your physical and mental wellness, what better workout than to take your time, take it slow, and see things up close on a Country Walkers tour? Put one foot in Italy and the other in Switzerland at the mountain pass that marks the border. Take a moment to pause and reflect at the beaches of Normandy. Climb up the ladders to the Monasteries of Meteora, perched on giant rock pinnacles. Stroll the magnificent grounds of Glamis Castle in Scotland, the setting for Shakespeare’s MacBeth. Fresh air, fresh perspective. Engage all your senses, embrace the calm and the quiet.

Not feeling up to a hike just yet? Follow our six-week walking fitness plan and you’ll be set to walk along vineyard-blanketed hills, hike beside the endless stone walls of England’s Lake District, and get your feet tapping with a traditional Irish dance in no time.

Travel with care and intention? Sounds like a refreshing change of pace.

“The life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving.”

–Albert Einstein, Physicist
Ticket To Ride

Get your heart pumping, the memories flowing, and connect with experiences that matter. Pick up the pace only ever so slightly and trade your hiking boots for two wheels on a VBT Vacations bicycle tour. Ride past stately homes and enjoy marsh views on the Isle of Hope in Savannah. Embrace the relaxed way of living in very bicycle-friendly Italy, stopping for gelato along the way. And learn about the secret life of lobsters on a trip through Maine’s Acadia National Park. Places that take you away from the crowds and up close with colorful locals, deepening your experience and making you feel part of the community. Getting away from it all has never made you feel more connected.

Outdoor and Nature Discoveries

“Live in the sunshine, swim in the sea, drink the wild air.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, Poet

Get exercise, fresh air, some good old sunshine (and vitamin D). Improve sleep, focus, and your sense of self esteem. It’s as simple as trading treadmills for backwoods trails, lifting weights for paddling oars. There’s nothing like being outside surrounded by nature to improve your mood, change your outlook, and move your body. Getting outside in some of the most legendary destinations in the world? Well, let’s just say you won’t need a step counter to motivate you to keep going. These landscapes will take care of that all on their own. Beyond the physical benefits of being active outdoors, the perks transcend our muscles and our bodies, its rejuvenating and restorative powers have been widely studied. Even simply being in the forest has numerous scientifically proven benefits. The Japanese call it forest bathing, Shinrin-Yoku. We call it the joy of connecting to nature, forest or otherwise.

Yellowstone National Park

Deep canyons, misty waterfalls, steamy geysers. Vast valleys of a dazzling diversity of wildlife. With nearly 3,500 square miles to cover, Yellowstone National Park is the great outdoors, and then some. The world’s first national park is truly an extraordinary geothermal wonder. And there is no better place to get outside.

Cross the Continental Divide

En route to Yellowstone Lake, spend a winter afternoon skiing through the wildlife-packed Blacktail Plateau. Or maybe a beautiful hike, descending to the bottom of a canyon, embarking on a strenuous trek up to a mountain peak, or simply a long walk to a backcountry lake or waterfall. Yellowstone’s extraordinary natural setting is as good as nature gets.
Connect With Local People and Culture

Connection takes on an entirely new meaning in times of uncertainty and strain. More than just being a part of something else, connection helps us cope. But prolonged periods of isolation mean we’re all craving and longing for connection even more. Connection to each other, yes. Friends, family, loved ones. But also connection to meaning, something larger than ourselves. And what better way to discover meaning than through travel?

Authentic experiences can also contribute to healthy living. Discovering ancient traditions, witnessing indigenous practices, savoring local ingredients and culinary customs, learning about history and culture, admiring art and architecture—all of these activities cultivate wellness practices that empower us both mentally and physically, practices that help reduce stress, ease loneliness, and decrease anxiety. New sights, unfamiliar surroundings, getting out of your comfort zone, experiencing new things, meeting new friends, sharing new worlds with old ones, result not only in improvements in mental wellbeing, but have lasting impact beyond the interaction itself, helping us grow, develop empathy, and to see a bigger picture. The beautiful world beyond our own.

Grand Canyon National Park

Breathtaking. Staggering. Once-in-a-lifetime. Enormous. These are all words that come to mind when we imagine the Grand Canyon. Getting outside in nature is one thing. Getting outside and soaking up this natural wonder of the world is another thing entirely. Imagine a place where the angles, colors, shadows, the sky and the clouds seem to defy logic, and even science. Like stepping into a vivid yet surreal dreamscape. Imagine standing in a place where the world—or at least the earth beneath your feet—seems to fall away.

If you’re up for a spectacular excursion, ride some of the more than 275 miles of the powerful Colorado River—the canyon’s creator—on a Canyon River Adventure. Beginning with a flight to the canyon’s East Rim and including a guided tour winding your way on foot through stunning Antelope Slot Canyon alongside a Native American guide. Or take a bucket list hike at your own pace to the bottom of the Grand Canyon down the 10.3-mile Bright Angel Trail (which starts in the Historic Village) to the Colorado River. It’s not every day you descend down alongside the layers of the canyon walls.

We all know about the unforgettable physical beauty of the Grand Canyon. But experiencing it?

“The most important things in life are the connections you make with others.”

–Tom Ford, Fashion Designer and Filmmaker
Rest & Relaxation

“We humans have lost the wisdom of genuinely resting and relaxing. We worry too much. We don’t allow our bodies to heal, and we don’t allow our minds and hearts to heal.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Master, Peace Activist, Scholar, Mindfulness Teacher

As much as we love taking on new adventures and actively exploring our legendary places, we also recognize the value of resting when we need to. Taking a minute to pause. Being still. Embracing calm. Engaging in a little relaxation. With all the collective stress and anxiety of the world, mental wellness is now just as or more important than our physical wellness. We could all use a reset, so we can return to regular life, revived and replenished. At the Xanterra Travel Collection, we have extraordinary destinations aplenty. But we also have special spots that are just right for caring for our minds, our hearts, and our souls.

**The Oasis at Death Valley**

Perhaps what your mind, heart, and soul needs, is an escape to The Oasis at Death Valley in California, a true oasis in the desert landscape of Death Valley, where civilization is a good 100 miles away. Retreat to one of the new cozy one-bedroom Ranch Cottages and get away from the frantic pace of modern life.
Lose yourself in stands of mature date palms. Soak in swimming pools fed by nearby hot springs that deliver a steady flow of balmy 87-degree water. Soothe tired muscles with a massage at The Inn’s spa, The Wellness Sanctuary, complete with relaxation area with a waterfall overlooking the gardens. Indulge in spa-room services such as aromatherapy oxygen bar, salt scrubs, and hot stone massages. Head out for a leisurely round at The Furnace Creek Golf Course at Death Valley, the lowest elevation golf course in the US. And at the end of the day, catch breathtaking western sunsets that give way to expansive skies and endless stars. Since Death Valley is the largest Gold-Tier International Dark-Sky Park in the U.S., gaze up into vast total darkness and let the constellations, planets, celestial events, and even galaxies take your breath away.

Windstar Cruises

Nothing says rest and relaxation like sailing the world on an elegant yacht with Windstar Cruises. Luxurious touches, indulgent spa treatments, un-crowded decks, mesmerizing ocean views. Relaxation can easily be found onboard what feels like your own private yacht. Swim and snorkel the legendary islands of Tahiti, laze on the hidden white-sand beaches of Cabo San Lucas, or stroll the pristine and bio-diverse coastlines of Costa Rica. And while soft sand and sunny shores are made for relaxation, with Windstar, it’s easy to think beyond the beach when it comes to resting up. Cruise far up narrow fjords, get up close to scenic shorelines and wildlife-rich islands, and take in the unforgettable colors of the Northern Lights high in the night sky on an unforgettable Alaska cruise.

Mountain Meditation

“In the midst of movement and chaos, keep stillness inside of you.”

— Deepak Chopra, Author and Meditation Guru

Looking for more focus and calm without having to spend time sitting in stillness? Take a crack at active meditation, a style of meditation that involves physical activity. Think of it as your senses on overload—the sight of the landscape, smell of the fresh mountain air, sound of silence, feel of the trail beneath your feet. In paying attention to the experience of your body, all of our senses work together to help anchor you to what’s right in front of you. We’re paying attention to the present moment, and in these places, the moments are unforgettable ones.

Being outside in nature itself has beneficial meditative properties. But you don’t need to sit quietly on a rock to reap the benefits; movement and mindfulness can
co-exist. And co-exist they do in the legendary destinations of the Xanterra Travel Collection. Perhaps no location grounds us and gives us perspective more than the many mountain ranges we call home.

In the mountains, perhaps we can find stability among the chaos and unpredictability of everyday life. Mountains after all can be a powerful visualization, even more so if they’re standing strong right in front of you. Centered, still, grounded. Steady, stable, unchanging. No matter what is going on around it. So put your phone down and your head up. And find the stillness you need, even while you’re moving.

Glacier National Park

Alpine meadows, deep forests, waterfalls, lakes, and of course, glaciers. Glacier National Park is seemingly endless acres of rugged, breathtaking landscapes, the “Switzerland of North America.” Perhaps one of the most breathtaking of all the national parks, Glacier is a tribute to wild natural places and offers plenty of opportunities for mindfulness. Hike exciting mountain trails to high alpine wilderness or to the base of a mighty glacier. Take an iconic Red Bus Tour along spectacular Going-to-the-Sun Road, the roll-back tops of these vintage buses provide full views of the stunning mountains and the area’s signature Big Sky. Need a real rest? Make your way to the historic Many Glacier Hotel. Perched on the shores of Swiftcurrent Lake in a majestic valley, this magnificent swiss chalet style hotel provides an awe-inspiring setting.

Rocky Mountain National Park

Change your focus from racing thoughts to soaring peaks. And you’ll see plenty as you travel along the backbone of the Continental Divide on an epic journey on Rocky Mountain National Park’s Trail Ridge Road. The aptly named Highway to the Sky is the nation’s highest paved roadway, and takes you through some of the country’s most scenic wilderness. Wind your way through five distinct ecosystems—majestic mountain ranges, emerald lakes, ethereal waterfalls, lush valleys, and abundant wildlife. There are several scenic viewpoints along the way, but nothing quite like the 12,000-foot vantage point at the top.

Zion National Park

Dramatic. Breathtaking. Wondrous. A place whose very name means a place of peace and refuge, Zion is the ultimate escape. A sanctuary with more than 146,000 acres of cliffs, canyons, diverse plant and animal life, and uninterrupted beauty. Its massive sandstone walls and towering cliffs, some as high as 3,800 feet, are made for mindfulness and reflection. Vast doesn’t even begin to describe it. Take your meditation to the next level by catching the sunset, seeing Zion’s signature red cliffs deepen in the setting sun, like some kind of extraordinary work of art. Then watch this stunning terrain fade to silhouette into the dark night sky and stand in awe as the sky above you fills with thousands of stars. Like the water that carved these canyons, connecting to this land is a powerful experience, one that stays with you forever.
What makes a place unforgettable? Is it just one thing, a moment of delight like seeing the sunset into the South Rim. Or maybe it’s the experience itself, like finally checking the Grand Canyon off your bucket list. Better still, it might be who we’re sharing the moment with: on an overdue vacation with all the family, taking the kids on that summer trip they can’t wait to tell their friends about. Unforgettable can be many things. These are places that stay with you forever. These are experiences you never forget. They leave an impression on your mind and earn a permanent place in your heart. This is Xanterra’s world of unforgettable.

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