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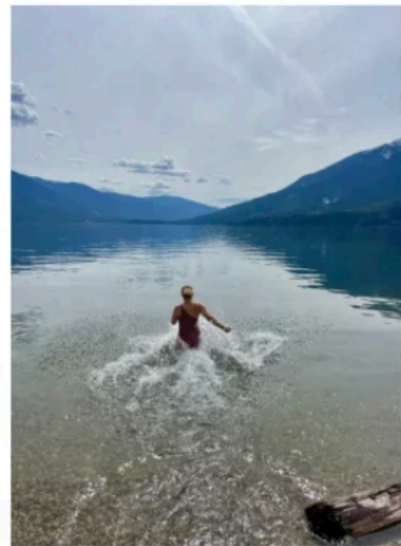


# THE WELLNESS ISSUE

SPORTS

# Take a Swim on the Wild Side

Discover the thrill of plunging into natural bodies of water. BY JILLIAN DARA



“Wild swimming is about freedom and unpredictability — the open water has a character and mood that pools simply can’t replicate,” explained Raul Levis, general manager, Mandarin Oriental, Costa Navarino, who’s appreciated long swims in natural bodies of water since his upbringing in Brazil.

As defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, wild swimming is the “practice or activity of swimming for pleasure in natural waters.” Levis regularly swims more than a mile in the Ionian Sea; on weekends he swims up to 3 miles. “It’s a stronger workout session surrounded by nature and the changes in current, winds and waves,” he said, touting wild swimming’s benefits for mind and body, including cardiovascular strength and posture improvement.

Historically, wild swimming referred to cold lakes and rivers, but destinations and tour operators increasingly offer wild swimming experiences in open ocean associated with warm destinations such as Greece’s Peloponnese region and Palermo, Sicily, where Villa Igiea, a Rocco Forte Hotel, added a new wild swimming excursion for its inaugural winter season.

For a more traditional experience, Anantara The Marker Dublin Hotel, The Fife Arms and tour operator Black Tomato, respectively, offer cool dips in the Irish Sea, Cairngorms lochs

and the glacial lakes of New Zealand.

“In today’s fast-paced digital world, people are craving ways to strip back the noise and get back to something much simpler and more grounding,” said Carolyn Addison, head of product, Black Tomato. The surging interest in cold plunges and cold-water therapy, she said, has exposed the wellness benefits these waters bring physically, mentally and even perhaps spiritually. “This trend has naturally extended to wild swimming during travel for the chance to reset in stunning natural settings.”

Discover wild swimming excursions at properties worldwide. At Marine Troon on Scotland’s Ayrshire coast, the Wellness Weekend with holistic wellness advocate Sophie Hellyer includes wild swimming. Guests at The Singular Patagonia can take a self-guided dip in Chile’s Señoret Channel. In Newfoundland, Fogo Island Inn offers a cold plunge in the icy Labrador Current. In Canada’s British Columbia, Mountain Trek Health Reset Retreat presents two wild swimming opportunities as part of its seven-day program in the alpine lakes of Kokanee and Kootenay.

Luxury travel operator EXP Journeys can arrange wild swimming excursions for clients in Lake Powell, as well as New Mexico’s Vermejo Private Reserve and in Hidden Lake near Moraine Lake in Alberta.

**Cool Dip:**  
Wild swimming at Anantara The Marker Dublin Hotel (left), and British Columbia’s Mountain Trek Health Reset Retreat (right)

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