

# CATALINA

## An Island Retreat for Yogis

BY BEKAH WRIGHT



As any good yogi will attest, taking a yoga practice on the road brings with it a whole new sense of enlightenment. Yoga retreats in exotic locales abound. The price tag for such a getaway, though, may seem daunting. So when we heard about the one-day Yoga/Hike collaboration between REI and Catalina Island, our ears perked up.

Offered in the off-season, fall through spring, the Yoga/Hike program can be booked through the REI website. Your adventure departs from the Long Beach Catalina Express Ferry Terminal at 7:45 am. Our tip #1, stake out a spot on the deck and keep eyes trained for dolphins during the hour-long transit.

Upon disembarking at Avalon, participants are shuttled over to Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden for the three-mile “Garden to Sky” hike led by a member of the Catalina Island Conservancy. The senses immediately tune in to the beauty of the desert and endemic plant collection, as well as views extending across both sides of the island. Another visual delight is a monument honoring William Wrigley Jr., the chewing gum magnate who was devoted to the development of Catalina Island. An element seen throughout the town can be spied here -- handmade glazed tiles from Catalina Pottery.

Following the hike, a perfect cool-down is a personalized, one-hour yoga class. As if winking from a fork in the road, the historic El Encanto Building lures travelers for this very purpose, along with a side dose of pampering. Indeed, it’s currently the home of Island Spa Catalina. Yoga/Hikers will make a beeline for the Wellness Studio, replete with views of Avalon Harbor. The studio’s regular schedule includes yoga classics that range from the basics to Balance & Flow.

After class, there’s free time for lunch (not included in the package price) and exploring the historic town of Avalon. Our tip #2, stick around Island Spa Catalina for a treatment (reserve in advance), lunch, and pool time. Go for the Island Deep Tissue Massage (there’s a 60-minute version, but spoil yourself by choosing 90 minutes) paired with Heated Quartz Sand Therapy enhancement. Tight bodies are lulled into submission on a quartz table of warm sand that can be ergonomically adjusted to relieve muscle, arthritic and joint pain. Post-treatment, have lunch delivered to the Vista Deck Terrace and take in its swoon-worthy Pacific views. Later, cool off with a dip in the pool and a fresh juice elixir.

At 5 pm, the REI Yoga/Hike program concludes and participants return on the ferry. Our tip #3: Don’t leave! Plan ahead for an overnight stay and spend more time luxuriating island-style.

Check into ideal waterfront accommodations at Pavilion Hotel Avalon. Just 14 steps from the beach, this retro hotel has a favorite gathering spot – its firepit. Here, hotel guests grab a cup of joe or a glass of wine and share stories. Breakfast provided daily as well as a wine and cheese hour at day’s end. Where to practice asana? In the lush courtyard within the u-shaped structure.





For evening entertainment, our tip #4: dinner and a movie. Avalon Grille has an offering that combines both (restrictions apply). The open-air venue serves up American fare.

Movies begin nightly at 7:30pm. Current-run films are showcased in a work of art unto itself -- Catalina Casino. Stay late for the new Twilight at The Casino Tour to take in the theatre's art deco magnificence, such as the 50-foot domed ceiling, hand-painted murals, 1929 Page pipe organ and a ballroom where big band acts continue to play in the new millennium.

The next morning, rise with the Sun. Tip #5, let spirits soar while communing with nature. Options for doing so abound, Catalina is, after all, home to bald eagles, American bison and garibaldi. Float on the clouds during a Descanso Canyon Zip Line

Eco Tour, or take on the Catalina Aerial Adventure. Embark on a Jeep tour of the island's interior to spot local critters like foxes and buffalo. Give the element of water its fair due with an afternoon of snorkeling or SCUBA at the Underwater Park.

A time-sensitive experience not to miss -- the Dale Chihuly exhibit at the Catalina Island Museum runs through December 11, 2017. On view are Chihuly's most iconic works, including Seaforms, Red Reeds, Mille Fiori, Macchia, Baskets, Sea Blue, and Green Tower. What better way to conclude a getaway than inspired by boundary-breaking, gravity-defying art? From tuning into nature, to engaging the senses through cuisine and the arts, this "yoga retreat" is certain to imbue at-home practices with fond memories and the desire for repeat visits.

REI Hike/Yoga Information: \$135 member, \$155 non-member (Tip: spring for a \$20 REI lifetime membership, which can be purchased online, over the phone, or in person). Package includes round-trip ferry (outbound departure is 7:45 am with a 5 pm return). Those looking to upgrade to Commodore Level tickets can do so at the ferry terminal. Also included is the three-hour hike and one-hour yoga class. Yoga mats provided. Participants are encouraged to bring two liters of water and closed-toe shoes for hike. \*Limited to 15 enrollees. Sign up at [www.REI.com/learn](http://www.REI.com/learn)

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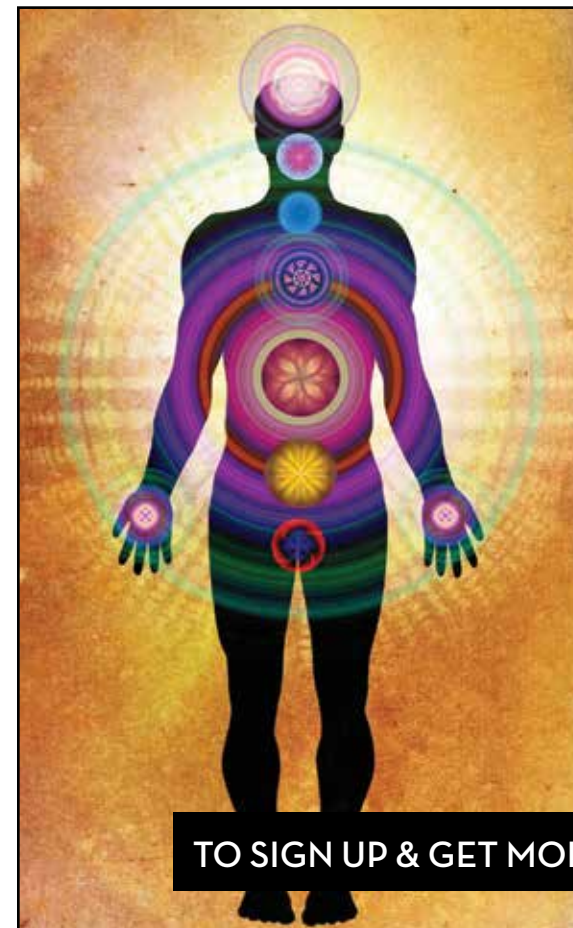
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