

# Business Traveler



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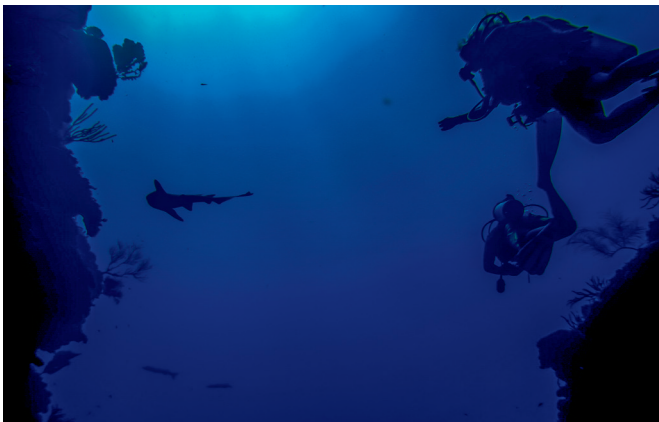
***Shark Tank* star and entrepreneur Daymond John on the secrets of his success**



## Winter Blues

At these tropical resorts, wellness is in the water

> **THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY** brims with rejuvenating travel experiences, yet one timeless tactic to cure the winter blues still stands above the rest: a tropical vacation. Just being near the ocean yields countless health rewards. Research shows that gazing at the sea alters the frequency of brain waves, sparking a calm, meditative state. Walking barefoot on the sand aids relaxation by grounding us to the earth.



And the health perks of simply being around a large body of water—staying active, getting more sunshine and spending time away from screens—can improve physical and mental well-being.

I noticed all of these health benefits and more within minutes of sipping my welcome coconut at the Motu Nao Nao resort. Adventures and wellness at this lagoon-flanked escape, one of French Polynesia's newest private islands, center on the South Pacific's signature turquoise water.

"Everything in French Polynesia revolves around the lagoons," says Sophie Bessou, sales and marketing director for South Pacific Management, which operates the island. Guests come for all sorts of aquatic activities, she says, "on the water, in the water and under the water."

The sheer volume of activities made that obvious. I found solace while beachcombing and bicycling the lagoonside trails.

Other options include sunrise yoga by the lagoon, Pilates in the water-view garden, or the most popular attraction: on-site watersports.

"Our guests love to paddle at their own pace to discover the lagoon," says Bessou. Motu Nao Nao also invites visitors to experience the traditional Polynesian canoe, known as a *va'a*. For millennia, Pacific Islanders used this mode of transit to explore and settle across the sea. Now, guests can try these sailing canoes right off the Motu Nao Nao shores.

As far as tropical getaways go, it's hard to top paddling at a private island in the South Pacific—especially via a traditional *va'a*—but Motu Nao Nao is far from the only place to reap the health benefits of a beach vacation. Here are five more sports to stave off the winter blues.

### What's the best tropical resort for snorkeling?

Alaia Belize, the country's first Marriott property, pairs luxury digs with Belize's world-renowned diving. The sleek-white Ambergris Caye property has a five-star PADI dive shop on-site. Guests can embark for a day of snorkeling or a series of scuba lessons straight from the Alaia dock, with biodiverse dive sites such as Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley reachable within 30 minutes. After a day on the water, unwind with cocktail-and-sushi pairings at Alaia's ocean-view Vista Rooftop Sushi Bar.

### Which tropical resort is best for surfing?

Starting this month, surfers will have a new way to enjoy Oahu's deep-rooted surf culture as Wai Kai, a wave and water haven, opens within

LEFT: COURTESY OF MOTU NAO NAO; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION



2021 with a fresh look. Now, travelers can enjoy new digs and a variety of watersports in the BVI's North Sound, one of the world's best kiteboarding destinations. Try a kiteboarding lesson, learn to windsurf, or enjoy one of the many other adventures on offer, such as kayaking, scuba diving, wing foiling and e-foiling.

### What's the top beach resort for free-diving lessons?

Go beyond traditional scuba diving with a lesson in free diving at Amanyaara, a luxury Aman resort on a far-flung Turks and Caicos nature reserve. The experience, led by a free-diving expert and guide, teaches guests how to calmly hold their breath while diving without supplemental oxygen. Free diving connects people with the ocean in a new, unique way. Amanyaara's other attractions, such as diving courses, kayak ecotours and sailing charters, guarantee a full-on sea immersion.

### Where's the best resort for whale watching?



[The health perks of being around a large body of water can improve physical and mental well-being.](#)

Few ocean experiences elicit awe like encountering whales, and for that, Islas Secas in Panama knows how to deliver. Most whale-watching getaways have just one season, but Islas Secas, an island resort near Panama's Coiba National Park, sits in the path of two different humpback whale migrations. Travelers can view these majestic creatures from December to April and July to October. Watch for whales from the property's shore, or join an expert-led boat tour. Guests can also rent catamarans, jet-powered Seabobs or surfboards to admire the sparkling Panama waters from every angle.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Wai Kai at Hoakalei, Oahu, Hawaii; Saba Rock, British Virgin Islands; Islas Secas, Panama; Amanyaara, Turks and Caicos  
OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Motu Nao Nao, French Polynesia; Alaia Belize

TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF WAI KAI; TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF SABA ROCK; BOTTOM LEFT: JACK JOHNS; BOTTOM RIGHT: KRISTIN RASMUSSEN

Hoakalei resort on February 10. Wai Kai includes an array of cutting-edge watersport experiences: a 100-foot-wide adjustable wave powered by Citywave; a surf academy cocreated with top X Games athlete Shane Beschen; and sports such as outrigger canoeing, paddleboats, kayaking and stand-up paddling.

### Which tropical resorts offer kiteboarding?

If kiteboarding intrigues you, look no further than Saba Rock, a resort in the British Virgin Islands. The property closed due to damages from Hurricane Irma but reopened in late

