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Brides Are Trading Boozy Parties for Luxury Wellness Retreats

The bachelorette party is getting a spa makeover, with many brides-to-be now opting for more tranquil settings.



Iliriana Balaj, center, hosted a five-day wellness party in Tulum, Mexico, in August 2022, about a month before her wedding. via Iliriana Balaj

Instead of a raucous weekend of late-night dancing and drinking at clubs or bars, Margaret Wilson chose a healthier setting for her bachelorette party last year.

Ms. Wilson, her sister and four close friends spent four days in February 2023 at a wellness spa in Sedona, Ariz., where they hiked through Boynton Canyon, meditated, enjoyed a healing sound bath and lounged around the pool.

“I had been through a lot of life changes the year leading up to my wedding, and I was looking for a low-stress, meaningful experience with my dearest friends,” said Ms. Wilson, 32, a dermatology physician assistant in Milwaukee. “This trip was meant to enrich my relationship with my loved ones and myself, and it did exactly that.”

Ms. Wilson decided on Sedona, she said, because it was “an interesting part of the country that offered nature and a unique experience that wasn’t solely dependent on partying.”

Wellness travel is now [one of the biggest travel trends of 2024](#), and more and more brides-to-be are choosing locations that they say might help them better prepare both mind and body for their wedding day.

Christian Davies, the general manager at Mii Amo, the wellness spa where Ms. Wilson and her group had celebrated, says he has seen an increase in bachelorette parties. Other spa managers have also seen a rise in demand in recent years.

“This bachelorette trend may track a broader shift in how we celebrate milestones,” said Sara Margulis, the chief executive of the honeymoon registry site [Honeyfund](#). “There is a strong desire to go beyond the boozy party and get out and connect with nature and enjoy each other.”

In a January survey, Greenback Expat Tax Services, which provides tax services for U.S. citizens living abroad, asked 1,000 men and women attending bachelor and bachelorette parties (including brides and grooms) about their location preferences for those parties. Three out of five respondents chose “a tranquil wellness retreat.”



Teeona Breon, in a white T-shirt, on a hike with her bridesmaids in Groveland, Calif., in July 2022. Rush Creek Lodge & Spa

Teeona Breon, 28, picked Rush Creek Lodge & Spa in Groveland, Calif., to celebrate her bachelorette party in July 2022 with her five bridesmaids. She was drawn to both the look of the lodge and the access to nearby Yosemite National Park.

“I’m not one to gravitate toward the bachelorette drinking and party scene because I like to prioritize my mental and physical well-being, so it was the perfect setting to allow me to indulge in that,” said Ms. Breon, a landscaping and design plant technician based in State College, Pa.

During the four-day trip, she and her bridesmaids spent time hiking and “taking in nature, while also finding moments for serenity and rejuvenation.”

Wellness-focused parties have become more than the typical prewedding spa day. Many brides are now looking to take longer trips to spa resorts, often near outdoor destinations.

Leticia Fernandez, the spa manager at Grand Velas Riviera Maya in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, noted that “brides-to-be are increasingly recognizing the need to prioritize their physical, mental and emotional well-being leading up to their wedding.”

Tammy Pahel, the vice president of spa and wellness operations at Carillon Miami Wellness Resort in Miami Beach, Fla., says popular spa requests for bachelorette parties include “experiences like meditation pods, infrared saunas and vitamin B IV therapy combined with traditional treatments like facials and massages.”

The treatments can be expensive. Forty-five minutes in the Himalayan Salt Chamber at Carillon costs \$125, and facials there start at \$239. At Rush Creek, an average spa package is around \$250, said Gigi Richardson, spa and wellness manager at the resort, though a bridal package (which includes extra treatments) could cost more: about \$550.

“We are seeing groups spend anywhere from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per person for a bachelorette weekend on average,” said Allison Odhner, chief executive and founder of Bach to Basic, a bachelor and bachelorette party-planning company based in Philadelphia and Nashville.



Water bubble beds at a spa in the Grand Velas Riviera Maya in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Grand Velas Resort

For her upcoming bachelorette party in October, Samantha Lawrence, 38, is planning a three-day getaway with her five closest friends and family at Kananaskis Nordic Spa in Kananaskis Village, Alberta, Canada.

“Parties aren’t really my scene these days, and with all the wedding planning stress, some scheduled relaxation sounds like a dream,” said Ms. Lawrence, a health and safety administrator based in Calgary, Alberta, who will be getting married next year. “I picked this spa because they offer a unique hydrotherapy circuit,” she said, “not to mention they’re located in the breathtaking Rocky Mountains, so the location itself is simply serene.” Full-day access to the hydrotherapy circuit costs about \$170 per person.

In addition to the location and activities, brides are extending the wellness focus to all aspects of the prewedding celebration, including their menus and gift bags.

In August 2022, about a month before her wedding, Iliriana Balaj, 30, hosted a five-day joint wellness party in Tulum, Mexico, with her now-husband, Matthew Balaj, and 16 of their friends and family members.

“I picked a location that naturally has healthier food options that are organic and local, as opposed to other common bachelorette spots,” said Ms. Balaj, the founder of Live Healthillie, an online store that offers health supplements, teas and low-toxin beauty products. “We wanted to appeal to everyone’s excitement level while considering many of my friends don’t consume alcohol for wellness reasons.”

Ms. Balaj and her group stayed at Tribe House Tulum and spent their days at the Nômade Tulum beach resort, while Mr. Balaj and his friends stayed in a separate rental and went on nature excursions.

Ms. Balaj also supplied her guests with goody bags packed with items like mineral and reef-safe sunscreen, natural skin care products and organic, herbal energy booster capsules.

A holistic health coach, Ms. Balaj gave up alcohol three years ago, so wild bachelorette parties aren’t something she can relate to anymore, she said.

“With the current trend of people becoming more wellness focused I think it is also inspiring more mindful bachelorette parties surrounded by just simple good vibes and memories,” she said.