

Late deals

UK/IRELAND

EDINBURGH GOLF COURSE: Greywalls Hotel, on Muirfield Golf Course outside Edinburgh, offers afternoon tea plus tennis for £32 per couple, or doubles from £215 with full Scottish breakfast.
SOUTH DEVON FARMHOUSE: Farm and Cottage Holidays (01237 459 889) offers seven nights' self-catering in 12-acre Harris Farm, near Sidmouth, from June 19 for £669, with accommodation for seven in three bedrooms.
COTTAGE IN YORKSHIRE: Yorkshire Cottages (01228 406 701) offers seven nights' self-catering from any Sat in June/July at cosy Nook Cottage in little village of Middleham, sleeping two in king-size bed, for total £296-328, saving £74-82.

SHORT BREAKS

ABU DHABI: ITC Classics (01244 355 527) offers five nights' B&B in June/July at Emirates Palace from £2,172, including flights and transfers.
SUN CITY: Virgin (0844 557 3870) five nights' B&B at five star Palace of the Lost City from £2015 on departures June 29-July 3, if booked by June 19. Package includes Virgin Atlantic return flights into Jo'burg and car hire.
NEW YORK: Virgin (0844 557 3870) offers three nights' B&B at three-star Mela Hotel from £910, including Virgin Atlantic flights on departures July 6-15.
LAS VEGAS: Virgin (0844 557 3870) offers four nights' room-only at three-star Flamingo from £977, including Virgin Atlantic flights on departures July 2-15.
MIDWEEK BRUSSELS: Flight Centre (0844 800 8628) offers two nights' B&B at three-star Best western Brussels city centre hotel from £149, including return Eurostar, for travel until June 30.
BUDAPEST: Flight Centre (0844 800 8628) offers three nights' B&B at three-star hotel from £225, including flights ex-Gatwick until July 11, if booked by June 30.
LUXURY LA: Flight Centre (0844 800 8628) offers five nights' room-only at five-star St Regis Monarch Beach Resort from £1,105, on departures ex-Heathrow Sept 9-Nov 25, if booked by June 30.

SHORT-HAUL SUN

NEAPOLITAN RIVIERA: On the Beach (0871 911 0202) offers seven nights' half-board at three-star hotel from £394, ex-Gatwick July 1.
NORTHERN CYPRUS: www.ArmyVillas.co.uk (0090 533 880 8844) offers penthouses in Lapta from July 11 from £289 per person, including return flights Stansted-Ercan and transfers.
CAMPING IN BRITTANY: Keycamp (0844 406 0319) offers seven nights' self-camping at Les Mouettes from June 19 for £271, saving £200. Ferry crossings/fly drives can be arranged for supplement.
SOUTH OF FRANCE BY RAIL: CV Travel (020 7401 1044) offers seven nights' self-catering at air-con villa sleeping 12 from July 10 for £724 per person, including return rail travel to Cannes via Lille. Ideal for two families.
ALGARVE: CV Travel (020 7401 1044) offers villa sleeping eight from June 19 for total £1,692, saving £185, equivalent to £212 per person at full capacity.

LONG-HAUL

DUBAI: On The Beach (0871 911 0202) offers seven nights' B&B at four-star hotel in Dubai from £495, ex-Heathrow July 4.
RED SEA: Longwood (020 8418 2515) offers seven nights' B&B at five-star resort in El Gouna from £394, including flights ex-Gatwick June 18.
MALDIVES: Hayes & Jarvis (0871 664 0246) offers eight nights' full-board at three-star Biyadhoo Island Resort on South Male Atoll for £799, saving £275, ex-Heathrow with Qatar June 28.
NEW ZEALAND TOUR: New Zealand Sky (0845 543 2168) offers 16-day self-drive tour of North and South Islands from £1,749, saving £100, on selected dates in June. Package includes scheduled flights ex-Heathrow, transfers, car hire with full insurance, maps and 15 nights' self-catering accommodation in motels on circuit taking in Auckland, Rotorua, Wellington, wine regions of Marlboro', Christchurch and Queenstown.
BARBADOS: Virgin (0844 557 3870) offers seven nights' all-inclusive at three-star Escape at the Gap from £779, saving up to £290, on departures June 7-30, including Virgin Atlantic return flights.
RED SEA: Red Sea Holidays (0845 026 5973) offers seven nights' all-inclusive at four-star Siva Grand Beach Hotel for £489, saving £100, ex-Gatwick June 18.

THEMED HOLIDAYS

DISCOVER NORTHERN CYPRUS: Singles specialist Just You (0800 112 3311) offers seven nights' half board at four-star hotel in Famagusta from July 6 from £669, including BA flights ex-Heathrow, optional boat trip and visit to Nicosia and tour manager throughout.
GRAND RAIL JOURNEY THROUGH EASTERN EUROPE: Just You (0800 112 3311) offers 12-day journey from June 25 via Poland, Hungary, Austria and Prague, including dinner and piano concert in Warsaw, folkie show in Budapest, Danube cruise in Vienna, excursion to Zakopane, and city sightseeing tours. Package from £1,659 including return flights into Warsaw, half-board accommodation in own room, one night overnight train, tour manager.
HARRY POTTER IN DISNEY: Directline (0800 408 5607) offers seven nights' room-only in three-star EcoLodge Inn & Suites from July 8 for £550 (four sharing), exclusive of park entry to see new Harry Potter attraction and including departures ex-Gatwick. Price includes £25 online booking discount.
US SOUTHERN STATES: Jetsave (0871 664 0293) offers 12-day toe-tapping tour of Southern Music & Dixieland from June 25 for £1,075, saving £356, via New Orleans, Memphis and Nashville and including visit to Graceland. Package includes 10 nights' hotel accommodation and tour director.

Boot camp stamps on bad foodie habits



STUNNING SCENERY: North Devon coastline during a long morning hike and, right, the exterior of the NuBeginnings house in Ilfracombe

IT WOULD be easy to be lulled into a false sense of security by the luxury surroundings and the picturesque coastal setting of NuBeginnings boot camp, but don't be fooled. They mean business.

Just because men in military uniforms aren't barking instructions at you at 5 o'clock in the morning doesn't mean it's an easy option. NuBeginnings is a holistic approach to weight loss including diet, high and low impact exercise, nutrition talks, acupuncture, and hypotherapy.

But it still involves early-morning beach workout sessions — running into the wind and up sand dunes — long coastal hikes in all weathers and tough interval training workouts. The week-long programme is about helping mainly overweight people to tackle their food and exercise issues and change their relationship with food.

When I went all the guests were there for different reasons and each exercise session is tweaked to suit the range of fitness levels and abilities.

The aim is to bring about long-lasting and continued weight loss. This support carries on after the week through regular phone calls, e-mails and the NuBeginnings Inner Circle website which shares healthy recipes and advice on weight loss. I wanted to lose a few pounds, get a kick-start back into exercise and try to combat my chocolate addiction (and I'm not using this term in jest). I have been known to devour a whole Easter egg in one sitting which belonged to my housemate. I bought him replacement chocolate — and then ate that too.

Assessment

So it was with my willpower failing, feeling bloated and sluggish that I packed my suitcase and headed 'up north' for the week.

Perched on a hill on the outskirts of Ilfracombe, NuBeginnings is based in a converted hotel and is a home away from home.

Greeted by Jenny and Dave, I was shown to my room and quickly changed before the dreaded weigh-in and fitness assessment.

My fears were not completely realised and although I had expanded and lost some of my puff, it wasn't irreversible damage.

Whether it is to lose weight, gain fitness or lower cholesterol, the staff at NuBeginnings are very accommodating and really do look after your every need — what they won't do is pander to you.

We had an introductory talk and a light dinner before heading to our rooms, ready to start the week that most people hoped would change their lives.

The rooms ooze luxury and it wasn't long before I was fast asleep only to be woken from

my slumber by a knock on the door. It was time for the bums, legs and tums class.

Most days start off with an exercise class, then breakfast which varied from porridge and homemade muesli with nuts and blueberries to ingeniously created healthy banana muffins and pancakes.

The food is locally sourced and beautifully cooked and presented. The daily calorie allowance, including the all-important morning and afternoon snack, comes to about 1,500 — everything you need to keep you going but less than the recommended amount so you lose weight.

The diet is based on Patrick Holford's glycaemic loading nutrition plan. In plain English this means eating foods which keep blood sugar levels constant so you don't crave food and then reach for the Dairy Milk.

The foods are generally low in fat and carbohydrates, but high in protein. The programme is set out so you eat something every three to four hours until dinner time — keeping your metabolism fired up and your blood sugar on a level.

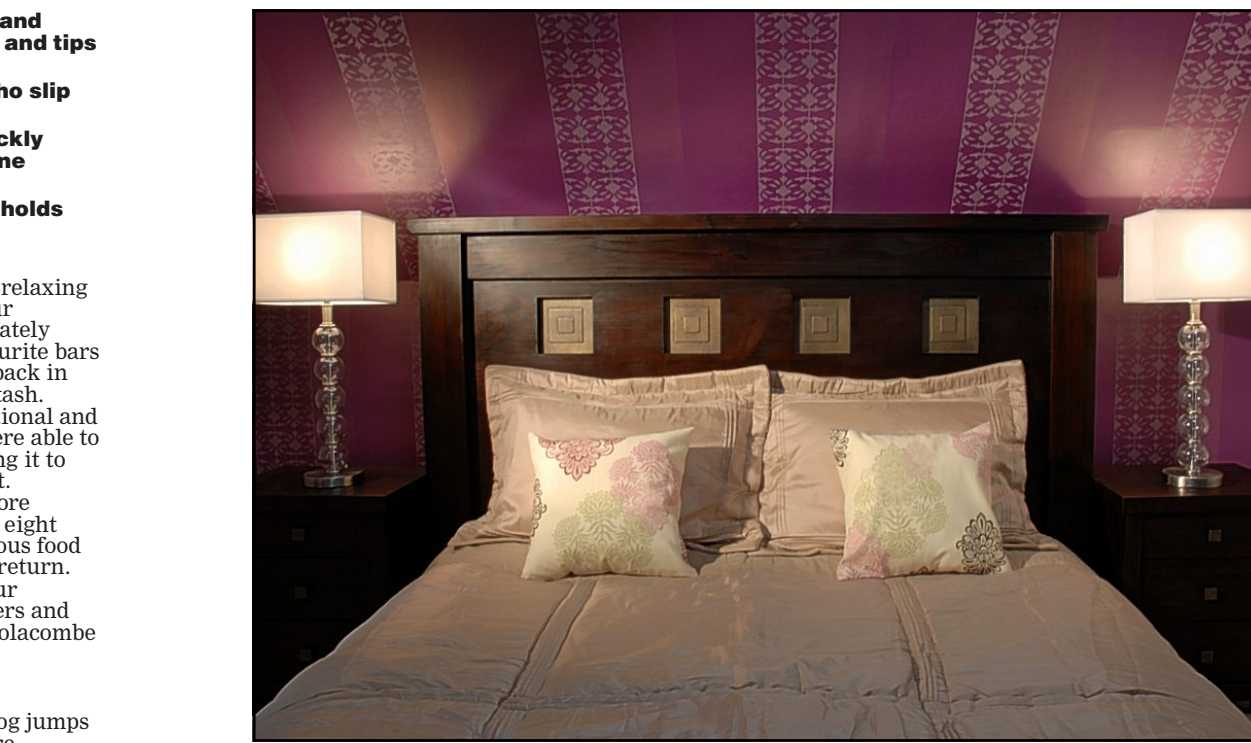
However, I must make a confession. I smuggled some mixed nuts into my room for fear of ending up nibbling on the dried lavender and I did find I was genuinely in need of them after some of the more challenging, exercise-filled days.

The second day involved a day-long hike along the North Devon coastline in beautiful sunshine. We split into groups, each with our own guide. Ours was a fast-paced hike in which we covered about 13 miles of stunning scenery.

We stopped only twice for our mid-morning snack of apple, a few nuts and herbal tea and then again at lunchtime for thick homemade soup.

On our return from the hike we had the option of a sauna before our therapies, which included hypnotherapy or deep tissue massage. After a long day's hike and a re-awakening of lazy muscles, the massage was a welcome treat and really helped to ease away any aches and pains.

The hypnotherapy was interesting. I was relieved to find I didn't start acting like a monkey or involuntarily lifting my arms into



BOUTIQUE SURROUNDINGS: The luxury interior of one of the rooms at NuBeginnings

the air. It was actually a pleasant and relaxing experience which aims to tap into your subconscious and retrain it. Unfortunately envisaging myself walling up my favourite bars of chocolate did not work for me and back in reality I scaled the wall to reach the stash.

But other people found this an emotional and cathartic experience in which they were able to confront their food issues, often linking it to things that had happened in their past.

The next day there was a slightly more relaxed hike (still covering more than eight miles) with more therapies and delicious food prepared by Gary awaiting us on our return.

The third day saw the toughest of our workout sessions with personal trainers and fitness fanatics Louise and Zoe on Woolacombe Beach.

Achievement

Running into the wind and doing frog jumps and other leg-numbing exercises before clambering up sand dunes was tough, but all of us felt a real sense of achievement after the class.

For those of you thinking your legs may be a little too rusty for such vigorous exercise, don't panic. Some of the group went for a brisk walk along the beach or did the easiest version of the exercises. Everything can be catered to ability, but the staff do expect you to push yourself — and, believe me, you will end up thanking them for it.

After the beach workout we had a breakfast of banana muffin. Without a doubt the best cake-related product I have ever tasted and it felt like a real treat after being blarney about on the beach at 8am.

Throughout the week we had varied exercise sessions including yoga, pilates, boxercise, core abs, circuits, strength and interval training.

It was fun and informative, at times a little patronising, but always well-intentioned. By the close of the week I had lost 4lb and toned up — losing more than an inch off my waist and going home with a flat stomach.

Others' weight loss was more significant with some members of the group losing between 8lb and 11lb. Since getting back into normal life it has

THIS WEEK: Paignton Zoo adoption auction and dinner



From left, Sheila Scott, Maureen Perry, Sue Sayer, Ronnie Clack, Chris Marsland



From left, Frances Roach, Geoffrey Roach, Margaret Greenhouse and Steve Greenhouse



From left, Julian Chapman, Mike Bungard and Sarah Hewitt



From left, Sonia Wallace, Callie Simmonds and Lisa Simmonds

Fact box

NuBeginnings is a weight loss boot camp and retreat on the outskirts of Ilfracombe.

It offers specially designed weeks for men and women who want to lose weight and increase general wellbeing. They combine a programme of nutrition, exercise and hypnotherapy to help people to change their relationship with food.

The average weight loss, per guest, while at NuBeginnings is 10lb.

For more information about the boot camp and prices call 01271 862 792, e-mail info@nubeginnings.co.uk or visit www.nubeginnings.co.uk.

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