



Retreat from chaos, refresh your soul

KUNDALINI RISING

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Looking for a meaningful way to celebrate your holidays? I've got just the treat for you!

Yoga retreats are my favourite way to unwind, rejuvenate and have fun over my holidays. Stepping outside our comfort zones, moving away from our friends and family, disrupting our routine, gives us a chance to just BE, without the trappings of patterns and expectations that may have set in, so we can connect to who we truly are.

This may be what it takes to look at our lives from a distance, to identify habits that don't serve us, to redesign how we want to exist. Make time to connect with your true self and discover what it is that you love to do. This can bring about profound changes in your life.

I have been wandering around South Asia, sampling yoga retreats for about 20 years now, and I am about to reveal my favourite location to you. Are you ready? But first, why do I love this place?

I like to relax. Given the fast pace of life we live in Dhaka city, the density of people, the pollution of sound and air that



bombasts our senses, the last thing we want on vacation is another urban jungle. Visiting major cities may be fun, for a day or two, but does it leave you recharged or drained at the end of the trip?

I love yoga retreats that offer a sanctuary for mind and body. I like to hear the sound of ocean waves. I like to wake up with the sunrise on the horizon. I like to breathe fresh air and enjoy an ambiance that is Zen.

I like to eat well

Food is an important part of any holiday. On vacation, we want to indulge all our

senses in deliciousness. But that does not mean we need to damage our bodies, gain weight, and come back feeling worse. This yoga retreat offers a delicious and healthy selection of fresh, local, organic food prepared by expert chefs. There are also detox options if you are looking for a more intense transformation.

I like to connect to nature

On retreats, I like to be surrounded by trees



and flowers. We all know nature is good for the soul. Not only do we need trees for an exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide, but also, trees are green, the colour of the heart chakra, the centre of healing. Being in nature helps us heal. The profound beauty of nature reminds us of our place in the universe.

I like to get strong

During the year, at work, we often over-tax our mind, so on vacation, I like to go deeper into my body instead. This might be by

climbing to the top of a mountain (well... hill) from where I can watch a magical sunset, or swimming in turquoise waves and watching the fish busy with their days, or hiking in a forest to a hidden waterfall. These are the sort of moments I yearn for. I also like to practice yoga while on holiday. Remember, we practice yoga not to get better at yoga, but to get better at life!

I like to meet fascinating people

I like meeting travellers who go off the beaten path to see the world and know themselves in a deeper way. These people often form the tapestry of stories and personalities that underpin my vacations. Some are just faces in my life for a day, some become life-long friends. The key, for me, is to meet open-minded people with open hearts.

There you have it, friends and fans, this is why I love the place I am about to reveal. Drum roll.... Here it is, the name of my secret haven: Samahita Retreat, Koh Samui. www.samahitarettreat.com

Some good news, Samahita has a beautiful Christmas and New Year's program, so book your holiday now. It is also part of the Samui Sandbox, so you will be able to stay there while complying with the travel requirements of Thailand.

Enjoy your holidays! See you next year.

Photo: Shazia Omar

Shazia Omar is a writer, an activist and a yogini.