

JAN
BREAKAWAY

THE 2023 GUIDE



THE BITE-SIZED BREAK

Although the idea of the mini break is as old as the idea of going somewhere else for, well, a short break, it only became a trend around 20 years ago. In as much time, a number of studies were launched investigating the benefits of taking small breaks. These are not to be confused with the micro break, standing-up-for-a-walk-around-the-table-style breaks designed to clear your head every so often during the working day. Mini breaks are like short holidays for when you can't go away for a week (or three), but just need a change of scenery.

In our always-on, email-on-the-go world, it's easy to fall into the trap of feeling that we don't have time for breaks, but studies in recent years have shown that taking breaks – even short ones – not only reduces stress but makes us more productive. The distance from our daily routine brings us perspective, meaning we make better decisions. Also, when you take a short break, it's easier to switch off completely. Your team should be able to go without you for a few days, whereas a two-week gap is harder to manage without the occasional check-in.

This guide makes a case for taking more time for yourself. Not the kind that expects so much you keep putting it off until “one day”. No, this is for one of those more impulsive weekend getaways we all need a little more of. Even if you only use this guide for a few moments of quiet escape, it should inspire you to take every opportunity to step away from your daily grind to clear your head and reset – even if it sparks an idea to plan the ultimate staycation.

MINI-BREAK PACKING GUIDE

There's no one-size-fits-all solution to the packing conundrum. For some of us, packing is as simple as a fresh pair of underwear for every day away and a few re-wearables for the rest. And for a mini break, why should it be more complicated than that? But packing doesn't come naturally to all of us. No matter where you fall on the impulsive-compulsive scale, a list is always a good idea. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with a universal weekender list, with a few "magnifiers" you can apply to different scenarios, depending on the kind of breakaway you're planning. Apart from remembering to pack all necessary chargers (and consider spending as little time as possible on your phone), there are three broad themes to consider.

WHAT YOU WILL BE WEARING EVERY DAY

Take yourself through every day. Visualise it from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep. Create small (emphasis on minimal) piles for each day with every item of clothing you'll be wearing. If you want to be super-efficient about it, you can even go so far as to stash each day's clothing in a pillowcase. That way, you simply remove each day's outfit from your luggage as and when you need it.

WHAT OUTFITS TRANSITION WELL

At some destinations – unless you're going at the height of summer – it's possible you might experience four seasons in one day. The last thing you want on a mini break is to feel like what you've packed is inadequate and you end up spending the weekend couped up under the blankets instead of going for daily Something's Gotta Give style walks on the beach. Check the weather ahead of time, by all means, but when going to destinations where the weather is notoriously unpredictable, like the Cape West

Coast, you can never go wrong with layers. But be clever about it. One casual coat or jacket is all you need to lock in the heat. For the rest, keep it "between seasons" for a smooth indoor-outdoor transition.

WHAT'S ALREADY AT THE DESTINATION

Gram for gram, few items tip the weight scale quite like liquids. Those bulky shampoo bottles and schmancy glass bottles of body wash were not made for travelling. Sure, we don't mess with our three-step routines (so pack your skincare products), but many hideaways come fully stocked with soaps and lotions that are often not only adequate but downright luxurious, and a great way to try something new. For the rest, decant your lotions and potions into travel-sized (100 ml) bottles. When renting a house, consider that it might come with accessories like wine coolers and beach towels if you're planning sun downers with a view of the ocean. Those all add bulk, even if you're taking the car.



THE WEEKENDER LIST

Whether catching a flight or trekking a couple of hours across the countryside, overpacking is never necessary. But for some of us, that's easier said than done. When flying, aim to fit everything into your carry-on luggage. That way, you eliminate any chance of the airline losing your luggage. You're only going for a few days. Why spend any of your precious down time on a lost-and-found adventure? These are the items that should be on any list:

- A comfortable pair of shoes
- A pair of socks or stockings for every day (optional)
- Underwear for every day, plus one extra
- A comfortable pair of jeans or trousers
- A top for every day, plus one extra
- A dress or pair of shorts
- Sleepwear, if required
- Toiletries, watch volumes
- A day bag, handbag or rucksack, depending on the occasion
- A universal travel adapter, if travelling abroad
- A power bank, for emergencies, mostly
- A passport, ID or driver's licence, depending on the destination
- Your wallet, unless you only tap these days
- Your Kindle or a book, something that won't result in a 2-hour Instagram scroll

From here, you can customise your list to suit your destination with these "magnifiers", or supplementary lists.



THE BEACH LIST

Pack a capsule wardrobe of lightweight items that take up very little space, but not without checking what's already there. Keep it light as a feather.

- A pair of flip flops
- Sunglasses, if you haven't packed those already
- Sunblock, if you can't buy some locally
- Swimwear
- Beach towel, most places have towels, though



THE WINTER LIST

Winter wardrobes – no matter how "capsule" we go – are invariably bulky, so wear your bulkiest clothes on the trip over, keeping your luggage light.

- Winter coat or jacket
- Socks
- Scarf, a versatile item that works just as well lounging on the stoep
- Gloves, if you're going to a destination where temperatures merit them



THE COUNTRYSIDE LIST

The rural idyll calls for long walks in the out-of-doors, and in rare cases, frolicking. Apart from your usual countryside attire, be sure to pack the following:

- Hiking shoes or Wellingtons – depending on the terrain
- A water bottle
- A cap or hat
- Sunblock
- A small rucksack, with a couple of snacks



THE ROMANTIC GETAWAY LIST

We all have a different notion of what it means to be "romantic", and it is very destination, weather, and context dependent, so get inventive.

- The first wine you both shared. If not wine, what else is there?
- A small gift. It really is the thought that counts
- Make a personal playlist, songs that bring back good memories for both of you
- A flirty outfit that makes you feel confident



📍 benguerra island, vilanculos, mozambique

AZURA BENGUERRA

As the first Tesla-powered property in Mozambique, Azura Benguerra runs completely off solar energy and exists in harmony with the local community, meaning that this corner of paradise is 100% off-grid.

SENSE OF PLACE

The lodge, comprising 20 luxurious villas situated right on the beach, faces west, offering shelter and calm. Because Azura Benguerra is situated in the tropics, there's always an air of summer about the island, no matter when you book. All the staff hail from the local community, and all the lodge's fresh produce and seafood is sourced from local growers and fishermen, with whom the lodge has nurtured a strong relationship.

THE STAY

Every villa has a dedicated Mozambican butler who tends to your every need. Although you never need to leave your suite, the lodge's restaurant experience is as quirky as the cuisine is packed with freshness and flair. The beachfront bar, of course, is where all the action happens. Beyond the reaches of the lodge, island activities include fishing, island hopping, scuba diving, horse riding and dune climbing.

THE FOOD

With its local and Portuguese blend of freshness and spice, Mozambican cuisine is amongst the most exciting on the African continent, with fragrances of coconut and cashew to complement the wealth of seafood sourced from the country's turquoise waters. You can read more about the intricacies of the Mozambican palate in JAN the Journal Volume 8.

📍 franschhoek, cape winelands

MAISON FRANSCHHOEK

No JAN list is complete without a jaunt to Franschhoek. This 18th century barn conversion belongs to Chris Weylandt (yes, of Weylandts fame) and his wife Kim, and neighbours La Motte Wine Estate (and JAN Franschhoek).

SENSE OF PLACE

As can be expected, the Maison is an exemplar of the Weylandts lifestyle, decorated in a careful curation of the company's luxuriously rustic – yet undeniably local – aesthetic. The walls become a gallery of local art by artists Jacqueline Crewe-Browne, Lionel Smit, Dylan Lewis, Wilma Cruise, Johann Moolman and Strijdom van der Merwe, offset by antiques from Chris and Kim's travels. For such an historic building, the flow between the outside and inside bears mentioning, with vast living spaces opening up onto the gardens and the vineyards beyond.

THE STAY

It's the kind of place that invites you to open the curtains in the morning and lie in for another hour. In summer, you can submerge yourself in the cooling swimming pools that look up at the surrounding mountains, while the dining table calls for long nights of board games and hearty conversation, until the owls hoot the nocturnal animals awake.

THE FOOD

The Franschhoek Valley is one of South Africa's most prolific foodie hot spots, with an array of incredible eateries all within 10 minutes of the house. Also, it's Franschhoek, one of South Africa's most celebrated wine destinations.





📍 schrywershoek, west coast national park, west coast, south africa

HOUT HUISIE

This gorgeous little cottage is so remote that it is often used in films and photoshoots as a dead ringer for beach and island locations ranging from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean and the coast of New England.

SENSE OF PLACE

Schrywershoek really is the essence of the West Coast idyll. Three clusters of whitewashed chalkstone cottages speckle the bluff, overlooking unspoiled lagoon beaches where boats are drawn up onto the sand. Some of the older buildings dating back to the 19th century have end chimneys, reed ceilings, window frames and rafters fashioned from the timbers of wrecked ships.

THE STAY

Hout Huisie, which is 100% off-grid, embraces its rustic chic wholeheartedly. The cottage comprises two bedrooms and an open deck that's just a few paces from what is essentially a private beach. At night, you're lulled to sleep by the rhythmic lapping of the lagoon's waves breaking on the shore, while during the day, you're surrounded by changing hues of blue and green. Make the most of the experience by packing a pair of walking shoes, and if that's your thing, a kayak or a bicycle. There's a lot of wide-open terrain to explore.

THE FOOD

The West Coast is all about living off the land and sea. When staying at Hout Huisie, bring your own provisions for your mini break, but should you want to explore the local cuisine, there are plenty of rustic eateries in Langebaan. Fish and chips, of course, doesn't get better than when it's sourced fresh from the sea.

📍 langebaan, west coast, south africa

FRAILANN

With a name like this, you know there's a story. This incredibly special beach cabin-style abode was named after the owner's grandfather's French fishing vessel (still following?). The house itself used to be a boathouse, which has been rehabilitated into a contemporary beach house that hovers just above the high-water mark of the lagoon.

SENSE OF PLACE

Frailann is located right next to the oldest beach house in the village, which incidentally, is where the owner's parents first met. Of all the communities around the Langebaan lagoon, Frailann has dropped anchor amongst what is arguably the most charming, with some families going back more than six generations.

THE STAY

Almost every space optimises its view of the lagoon with its contemporary design, yet never compromises its familial heritage and traditional Langebaan charm. The house comfortably sleeps 10 adults and a couple of kids (who get their own bunk room and en suite bathroom). For the rest, there's a large open-plan kitchen, living and dining space, with a wind-sheltered courtyard, patios and long viewing decks, a library, a TV lounge and a cosy "dungeon".

THE FOOD

Frailann is all about creating a home away from home, so bring your own delicious treats, or leave it for when you arrive in town, where between the town centre and Laguna Mall, you've got three leading supermarkets to choose from.





📍 **trepuzzi, puglia, italy**

CASTLE ELVIRA

Castle Elvira is that completely unexpected mini break destination that's equal parts history and whimsy. It stood abandoned in the Puglian countryside outside the town of Lecce for a century before it was discovered by London creative power couple, club owner Steve Riseley and creative director Harvey B-Brown (a South African expat). It took them four years to restore this ruin to the showstopper it is today. The first residents of this newly established boutique hotel were throwback 80s band Bananarama, who shot a music video here with Harvey.

SENSE OF PLACE

Steve and Harvey have transformed this castle, which was first built in 1890, into a luxurious residence that on the inside resembles a countryside villa, complete with every imaginable creature comfort. Step outside, however, and you walk into a fairytale of joy and escapism, particularly when you catch a glimpse of the Puglian sunset.

THE STAY

The interior is an eclectic maximalist's dream: luxurious linens of pink and green, aloe-vera infused pocket sprung mattresses, Conran linen, original hand-painted frescoes on the bedroom ceilings, walls washed in blue and yellow, and art that tells a story around every corner (all art is also for sale). The experience includes art classes, bicycle rides and even piped music. Truly, something that overtakes the senses.

THE FOOD

Breakfast, lunch and dinner can be equally eclectic. A spread of Italian cakes and pastries, eggs Benedict, and smashed avo on toast are standard fare in the mornings. Lunch, on the other hand, happens anywhere on this 37-acre property – and might involve a burger with crispy bacon, cheese and pesto – while dinner is often themed and can vary depending on the mood of the day. Just go with it.

📍 thornybush game reserve, mpumalanga, south africa

SASEKA TENTED CAMP

In the local Tsonga dialect, saseka means “beautiful”. This may seem like an obvious choice of name, but in this case, the description applies to every aspect of this tented camp experience that takes “glamping” to a whole new level, and where South African residents enjoy special local rates.

SENSE OF PLACE

Dappled along the banks of the Monwana River are 10 spacious suites, as well as a larger villa ideal for families or groups. The design was inspired by tented camps from yesteryear, although the suites offer a blend of nostalgic and contemporary design, with an interior colour palette that echoes the local flora and fauna.

THE STAY

Each suite has its own pool, outdoor shower, and private sundeck overlooking the river. It's possible to see the entire Big 5 from your veranda, but this bush immersion experience also includes twice-daily game drives. The atmosphere is casual, warm and relaxed.

THE FOOD

Each villa comes with a private chef. Dinners are often served under the stars on a lantern-lit riverbed. Lunch comprises fresh and light meals made with ingredients sourced from the community garden, while dinner is a gourmet, three-course affair. Game drives involve snacks and sundowners.





📍 tsitsikamma mountains, garden route, south africa

BOBBEJAANSKLOOF

Bobbejaanskloof is a true escape. With 20 km of dirt and grass tracks spread over a 150-acre farm, staying on the property is like having your own personal playground, ideal for long hikes and mountain biking, always returning to the lap of luxury.

SENSE OF PLACE

Situated on the edge of Plettenberg Bay on the Western Cape's lush Garden Route, Bobbejaanskloof lies tucked into the foothills of the Tsitsikamma Mountains. This dramatic private wilderness is home to a myriad fynbos traversing ancient forests and sweeping plains. The farm is just a 20-minute drive from the hustle and bustle of Plettenberg Bay, but as night falls, you realise just how sheltered you are here from pollutants, artificial light, and noise.

THE STAY

Think contemporary living in the middle of nowhere. After a long day out and about, imagine coming back to the homestead and sinking into a leather armchair with a glass of whisky, followed by a long, luxurious bath. The exterior of the house is equally cosy, kitted out with armchairs, storm lanterns and woven rugs. In a storm, the patter of raindrops on tin roofs will conjure memories of life on the farm, while on a hot and sunny day, the deep stoeps provide a welcome respite from the heat.

THE FOOD

This is farm life at its best. With the town of Plett just an ambitious stone's throw away, stocking up on the essentials is a breeze. The kitchen is the heart of the home, and a huge table invites you to have long leisurely lunches while you cook. The farmhouse also boasts a surprisingly diverse vegetable garden from which you can source ingredients. But when you're looking to let someone else do the cooking, there's no shortage of options in town.

📍 hermanus, overberg, south africa

STONE HOUSE

Hermanus is famous for being South Africa's best place to go whale spotting. Every year between July and November, the Southern Right whales come to Walker Bay from the waters of the Antarctic to live their best life. Apart from being their breeding season, it's also a time for the mothers to tend to their calves before returning to the south. Stone House is one of the few residences in Hermanus where you can see this spectacle without getting out of bed.

SENSE OF PLACE

Situated just a five-minute walk from the town, you approach the house over a low wall and enter the front courtyard – a boules court shaded by a giant Madagascan cedar – which leads into another double-volume courtyard and living area. The first thing that catches your attention is the vista of the bay. Throughout the house there are several gathering points, including courtyards, fireplaces, and bomas.

THE STAY

This child-friendly, five-bedroom abode is rich in design inspiration. There are “moments” everywhere you look, from Indian shutters and giant paper chandeliers to witty interpretations of “dolosse”, wrought iron standing lamps by a local blacksmith, and handmade tiles with a hint of Moroccan heritage.

THE FOOD

Being so close to the centre of town, you're spoilt for choice, with an array of fantastic cafés, restaurants and bars to choose from. Apart from all the usual suspects in the South African dining arena, Hermanus is also home to many one-of-a-kind spots that surprise and delight the palate. Be sure to visit the Hermanuspietersfontein market on a Saturday to sample some locally made wine, olive tapenades and oils, as well as freshly baked breads.





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