



How to create a drama-free holiday season

Lessons learned at Miraval Berkshires

By Charlene Peters

Following a few years apart and still in the throes of a global pandemic, family gatherings for booster-vaccinated families will be in full throttle this holiday season. But be warned. While the yearning to be surrounded by loved ones overrides past grievances, this mindset can quickly shift from gratitude to drama once individual personalities collide in a repeat of past family dynamics. You'd almost forgotten about the dysfunction, right?

The best plan of action to glide through a drama-free holiday season is to prepare your own mind, body, and spirit with an abundance of meditation. And yoga. And whatever else you may need. But if you need to put the pedal to the metal for a full tank of inner strength, [Miraval Berkshires Resort & Day Spa](#) offers day passes or multi-day experiences meant to send you back to your family in a peaceful, chakra-balanced state of mind sure to linger well into the New Year.

The quintessential cozy escape of Miraval Berkshires begins with the scent and warmth of wood burning in the fireplaces at the check-in at this Lenox, Massachusetts location. (The other two Miraval resorts are located in Arizona and Texas.)

A quick tour and study of the map for this 300-plus acres of property indicates an increase in tracked steps, especially from a room in Cottage #9 – directly on the other end of the lobby. But passing through hallways of serene artwork on one side, and glass windows leading to the exquisite mountain views on the other, and passing by a few more fireplaces adds to the unwinding experience.

The rooms at Miraval are exactly what one would expect at a property awarded as a *Conde Nast Traveler* 2021 Readers' Choice. Well, except for the lumpiest bed ever, which initially surprised this travel writer. But visitors love these beds, and all of its components are available for sale and quite popular to those who choose to sleep on a bed and pillows of clouds.

After a wind-swept drive on the Mass. Turnpike, **Restorative Yoga** served as the perfect antidote to start the process of unwinding. Who knew yoga poses and a motionless body could be so rewarding? Every single person who practices meditation and yoga.

Experiences are what Miraval prides itself on, and there are experienced staff members on-call to help you select exactly what you need. This is highly recommended to tweak your itinerary with the guidance of an expert. My second experience was a result of a tweaked itinerary.

Once I left the yoga room, I was primed and ready for a private **Himalayan Sound Bath** in a room with walls of cork (sound barriers to get the full effect of the sound bowls) and a floor setting of Tibetan bowls and floor mats with pillows. Through guided meditation in breathing and the vibration of sound bowls, I began the process of letting go of what doesn't serve me. Even after a late dinner, I felt lighter and slept better than I had in a long time.

On Day 2, a leisurely morning without anything on the schedule but a buffet breakfast in the dining room and a to-go cup of green juice to sip on while I checked my emails at a peaceful pace. Priceless.

It was 11am when I boarded a van to head across the property to a building where **Hatchet Throwing** might release feelings and/or tension. Six participants lined up to toss various sized hatchets into blocks of tree trunks hung on a wall inside this recreation room. But thoughts of a random hatchet flung and ricocheting into someone's forehead was all I could imagine. While others enjoyed the tossing of metal primitive tools, I have to admit it wasn't for me. But hey, I tried it and now I know.

In fact, I also tried **Miraval Music Meditation** (you can access this soundtrack on [Spotify](#)), and this worked much better for my emotional state of mind. To focus only on the music instead of having music in the background while cooking, cleaning, entertaining, working, walking... it was a unique and fulfilling experience. Try it. You'll love it.

Next on my itinerary was the opportunity to pick up some iPhone tips during an **Artful Photography Stroll** from Miraval to the back patio of nearby Wyndhurst Manor and Club. Standing in the chilly weather left everyone craving time by the fireplace. I headed to my room to add a third layer before my scheduled hike through Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary where the topic was uber focused on beavers.



The carnage of trees surrounding us at every turn told the story as we passed dams, a beaver lodge, beaver-made canals, and trees with bottoms that looked like a freshly-sharpened pencil with wood chips that blanketed the perimeter. It was an easy but muddy hike, and enjoyable. Three sisters joined our group on this hike, and they shared their history of vacationing here annually from the time it used to be Cranwell Resort.

One cup of hot tea later, I was prone on a yoga mat for another Restorative Yoga class before dinner. A hearty helping of steak, parsnip puree, broccolini and a side salad fueled me for my final day – a half day – with a restructured itinerary meant to send me off on a high note.

All the restful meditations and stress-free days may have attributed to my insomnia on my final evening at Miraval. Or it was the idea of heading back into the real world. Fortunately, **Yoga Nidra Meditation** touts 20 minutes of a few restful yoga poses to gain three hours of sleep – or so your body believes.

To gain awareness of your current state of mind, a private **Chorus of Crystals with Aura Photos** is the perfect place for an energy/chakra cleanse. Once you get your first photo snapped, you lay on a massage table under a Vichy spa contraption above.



Instead of showerheads of water, you get a lineup of chakra colored light bulbs shining down on you. Need to open your heart? All lights will glow green. After the energy work, you'll once again place your hands on biometric plates and look into the tiny camera lens for a second aura photo, which should be slightly changed as a result of your chakra work. For me, my heart chakra opened under green lights and energy work so that my next aura photo was orange/yellow in emitting clogged emotions. *Fait accompli.*

A private **Oracle Reading** in Chinese astrology, birthdate analysis and cards sent me on my departure with much to mull over during my drive back home. Thankfully, I was able to record the session so I can replay until I manifest all that I desire in the New Year.

It's been three days since I returned from Miraval, and the state of nirvana I left with is still in place.

Happy Holidays to all with my wish of peace and drama-free family time!

Charlene Peters is a travel writer and author of "[Travel Makes Me Hungry: Tales of tastes & indigenous recipes to share](#)," available on Amazon.