

# Ask the experts

Our panel give advice on experiencing olive harvests and relaxing retreats

**Q** I've always wanted to take part in an olive harvest in Europe. I'd like to stay on a farm or an olive estate, and ideally it would be somewhere that has good rooms and a great restaurant. Where do you suggest?



**Patrick Millar,**  
marketing manager,  
Kirkers Holidays:

We feature many rural properties in Spain and Italy where guests can stay amid olive groves and sample homemade olive oils. But the best place to actually join in the harvest is the Masseria Mandranova — a working farm in the unspoiled countryside of southern Sicily, which produces some of the region's finest olive oils.

The main farmhouse and two outbuildings house nine comfy bedrooms, while delicious local dishes, prepared using homegrown ingredients, are served on the terrace. The coast is only six miles away and Agrigento and its impressive ancient Greek Valley of the Temples ruins just 16 miles away.

The price is from £678 per person. This includes flights from Gatwick to Catania, car hire with fully inclusive insurance, three nights' B&B accommodation and the services of the Kirkers Concierge. [kirkersholidays.com](http://kirkersholidays.com)



**Rhiannon Batten,**  
travel editor, *Olive*  
magazine:

At the family-owned Dionysos Estate, near Marmaris in Turkey, luxury terracotta-roofed suites cascade down the hillside between the estate's olive, fig and lemon trees

and the sea, giving spectacular views of the coast and the surrounding pine-clad mountains.

There's a spa and an infinity pool but it's the food that shines. The modern Turkish menus in Dionysos' three restaurants make the most

of the estate's organic produce and are created by the owners' daughter, Didem Senol, a celebrated chef and the proprietor of Istanbul's Lokanta Maya ([lokantamaya.com](http://lokantamaya.com)) and Gram restaurants ([grampera.com](http://grampera.com)).

Twice weekly field-to-fork picnic lunches are popular with guests, as are olive tastings; the estate's extra virgin olive oil is highly regarded. If you want to do more than taste the peppery final product, one week each autumn (18-25 October this year) guests can join the harvest, working alongside local farmers picking and pressing the fruits of the estate's 1,500 olive trees.

Prices start at £700 per person for seven nights B&B, including flights and the olive harvest experience. [olivemagazine.co.uk](http://olivemagazine.co.uk)



**Sean Dillion,**  
clients manager,  
Tuscany Now:

I'd suggest the Estate of Petroio, a working 900-acre olive oil and wine estate, located in the hills above Rufina, a short drive northeast of Florence. It's also a private retreat that sleeps 30, and its interiors and facilities are of a luxurious standard, plus the views of the Tuscan countryside are breathtaking. From £7,431 for a week. [tuscanynow.com](http://tuscanynow.com)

**Q** I want to go on a wellness retreat with no yoga or spa. Where and

what do you suggest?



**Sam Lewis,** travel  
journalist and health/  
wellness expert:

Green Farm Fitness offers group retreats in a Kent farmhouse. Eat organic, enjoy a massage, or picnic by the pond. Guests can also exercise outdoors in 60 acres, with health and fitness coach Kathryn Freeland. From £395 per person, double occupancy for two nights. [greenfarmfitness.co.uk](http://greenfarmfitness.co.uk)

Alternatively, Middle Piccadilly is a thatched Dorset farmhouse ideal for chilling out in the garden and enjoying holistic treatments and vegetarian food in a laid-back, hippie atmosphere. From £75 per person for the all-juice programme and £100 per person a night full-board on a raw food or vegetarian basis. The family-run retreat has three cosy treatment rooms and a studio, offering everything from reflexology to shamanic healing. [middlepiccadilly.com](http://middlepiccadilly.com)

If you want sun and something more 'spa like', try the Hotel Adler Thermae in Tuscany. Yes it does yoga, but it's not all about doing headstands. There's hiking and biking, plus a thermal spa and ayurveda treatments. Five nights from £1,095 per person, including flights. [healthandfitnesstravel.com](http://healthandfitnesstravel.com)

## GET IN TOUCH

If you're in need of travel advice, email our team: [inbox@natgeotraveller.co.uk](mailto:inbox@natgeotraveller.co.uk)