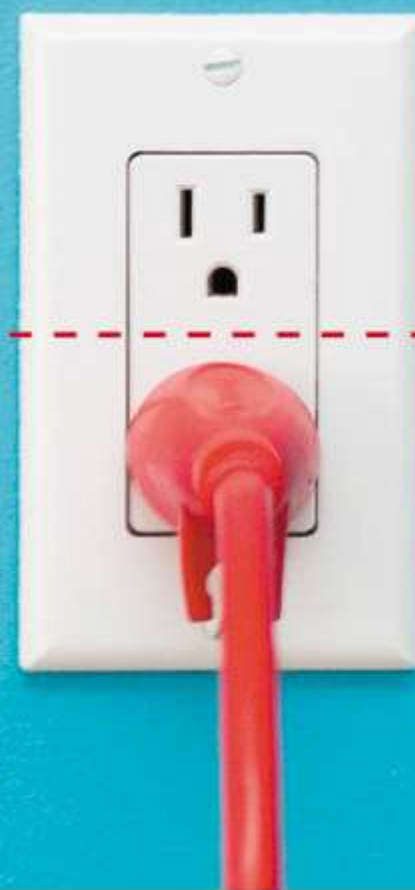


THESE DAYS
A VACATION
CAN LEAVE
DAILY LIFE
BEHIND, BUT
NOT OUR
ELECTRONIC
TETHERS.
UNLESS WE
WANT TO BE

UNPLUGGED PLUGGED



GETTY IMAGES

Places where pleasure is the plug-in and only boats need a port

BY NECÉE REGIS | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

We love our gadgets, gizmos, and high-speed connections. It is heady stuff: We sign in, link in, tweet, post, and Google. But all this technology makes it difficult to relax, especially when we are expected to be connected 24/7.

A trend is emerging to free us from this constant communication: the unplugged vacation. Many hotels and resorts are offering outdoor activities, yoga classes, and even old-fashioned board games as ways to relax. Some boast of rooms with no phones, TV, or Wi-Fi.

So step away from the keyboard. Power down your phone. At the following destinations, getting unplugged has never been easier. (Prices are for two people per night in June unless noted.)

ANSE CHASTANET BEACH, ST. LUCIA What do you call a resort that advertises “do nothing” as an activity? We call it heaven. On St. Lucia’s quiet southwestern



Hilltop yoga at Carmel Valley Ranch in the Santa Lucia Mountains south of San Francisco.

coast, the Anse Chastanet Resort offers an old-time Caribbean experience. Air conditioning? Cable TV? You will not find them in the 49 hillside or beach-level rooms on this lush 600-acre estate. Instead, louvered windows and — in some rooms — an open-air-style missing fourth wall allow for cooling trade winds, and views of both the Petit and Gros Piton mountains. The resort borders two pristine bays, part of a marine reserve protecting miles of colorful coral reefs 10 yards beyond the water’s edge. Enjoy complimentary snorkel gear, windsurfers, kayaks, and sunfish sailing. Also available: tennis, scuba diving, hiking, and bird-watching. If you must — there’s Wi-Fi in the library. 800-223-1108, www.ansechastanet.com, from \$330

SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA You have heard about ice hotels — but what about salt hotels? The Luna Salada Hotel (Salt Moon Hotel) is constructed of blocks cut

UNPLUGGED, Page M4



WeMo keeps you connected to your home by smartphone.



Thrive tablet has two USB ports, uploads photos, connects to TV.



GoFlex can store all sorts of files and create its own Wi-Fi signal.



Android based nabi tablet lets kids read, color, puzzle, listen, watch, connect to Wi-Fi.



4G-V signal booster improves voice service and data transfer speeds.



SpareOne has a battery that can stay charged for 15 years.



VoyagerPRO lets you use voice commands to hear, transmit e-mail.

Gadgets with cool, connectivity, and powers we can call our own

BY KARI BODNARCHUK | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

We live in a wonderful wireless world. You can store your entire entertainment system, from your movie collection to your e-book library, in a virtual cloud that is accessible from anywhere in the world. You can talk into a little headphone and have your words suddenly appear in someone’s inbox. You can even control devices in your home using your smartphone and a few electrical gadgets while sunning yourself on the other side of the globe.

How cool is that?

Technology continues to evolve. Duracell Powermat is working to incorporate its wireless charging units into airports, restaurants, coffee shops, and even places like Fenway Park. By June, tables at New York’s Madison Square Garden will have coaster-size charging pads built into them, so people can refuel their devices while watching a Knicks game, for instance.

A growing number of hotels now provide guests

with tablets (on loan during their stay) or smartphone apps that enable them to remain connected to the property. Stay at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, for example, and you can order room service or extra towels, book spa treatments or shows, or make restaurant reservations through a smartphone app, whether you are at a casino at the other end of town or a trailhead in Red Rock Canyon, an hour’s drive away.

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INSIDE

Taking the plunge (and a long soak) in **Montana’s** hot springs. **M2**

EXPLORE NEW ENGLAND

Concierges at eight hotels share their behind-the-scenes knowledge. **M5**

In **Connecticut**, tracing African-American history and a struggle for freedom. **M5**

Wherever you go, staying in touch could add to the fun

► PLUGGED

Continued from Page M1

You can still kick back and enjoy your travels even if you remain plugged in. Some of the following gadgets and technology may even make your adventures easier . . . more relaxing . . . more fun.

Belkin's WeMo system, due out in June, eliminates that panicked moment in your airport-bound taxi when you wonder, Oh, no, did I turn off the coffeemaker? This clever system lets you stay connected to your home while you are on the road with a smartphone app and a few wall-socket gadgets.

Plug the Home Control Switch into a socket and then insert power cords for lights,

small appliances, or a motion sensor into the switch. Launch the WeMo app, which lists all connected devices, and you can control your home with a swipe of your finger: Turn off the iron, schedule lights to go on at random times while you are away, and program the radio to serenade your cat each night. www.belkin.com/wemo

Wilson Electronics' Sleek 4G-V helps improve one of land travel's most maddening experiences: dropped cellphone calls. This universal cell signal booster can significantly improve voice service and data transfer speeds. Plug the device into your car, a wall socket at your hotel, or a portable battery pack and bring it with you into

the great outdoors. Then slip your phone in the cradle and boost your service by two to three bars. www.wilsonelectronics.com

Save space on your mobile device, but maintain access to your books, movies, music, and other important files using **Kingston's Wi-Drive**. This portable wireless storage device holds up to 64GB and creates its own Wi-Fi signal that can be accessed by up to three people at once. That means your child can watch "Finding Nemo" on her tablet while you rock to your favorite tunes on your iPod, and another travel companion reads the latest Grisham novel on a Kindle Fire. All of these media files are stored on the iTouch-size device and accessible via a mobile app. www.kingston.com

Not enough space? **Seagate's GoFlex Satellite** portable Wi-Fi drive does the same thing, but offers 500GB of storage and access for up to eight people at once, as long as everyone is not using high-power applications. seagate.com/goflexsatellite

You can also store important information, from business files and copies of your pass-



KINGSTON

Wi-Drive can be accessible to others and creates its own Wi-Fi signal. Powerbag has a built-in charging station.

port to your music library, on **SugarSync**. This cloud-based service safely holds your songs, photos, multimedia files, and other documents in a virtual vault that you can unlock while on the road. Sync, share, and access your data through an online computer or a mobile app. Upload vacation photos as you travel, too, just in case something tragic happens to your camera or storage devices en route. www.sugarsync.com

Let's say you are driving along a winding road and you need to answer an incoming e-mail. Slip on your **Plantronics Voyager PRO HD** headset, which senses when it is on your ear, launch the company's Vocalyst app, and hit the "call" icon. Once you are connected, simply say, "Send an e-mail" and start talking. Your reply gets converted to text and transmitted. The Voyager can also stream GPS directions and weather reports from your phone, and music from any of your portable Bluetooth devices. It can even read your Facebook wall updates to you. www.plantronics.com

SpareOne can save you in a pinch, if things do not go quite as planned. This slim and lightweight cellphone runs on one AA battery that can stay charged for 15 years, if unused, and it provides up to 10 hours of talk time. Pop any SIM card into this dual band GSM phone and make a call, even if you do not have electricity. You can also dial 911 and be located by rescue crews without inserting a SIM card. Or plug your number into a speed-dial button and give it to your child while traveling, for peace of mind. www.spareone.com

Toshiba's Thrive may seem bulky compared with other tablets, but that is to accommodate several invaluable features



CHRIS CLOR/POWERBAG

for travelers: a full-size USB port, a full-size SD card slot, an HDMI port, and a mini USB port. You can upload photos on the road without needing any adapters, plug in a USB flash drive loaded with movies or other bulky files so they do not take up valuable tablet space, and hook your tablet up to a TV for big-screen viewing. Best of all, the Thrive has a replaceable battery so you can pop open the back and slip in a spare for an additional six to 10 hours of use — perfect for long-haul plane trips. us.toshiba.com

Keep children entertained on the road (and their sticky fingers off your gadgets) with **Fuhu's nabi**, a mini Android tablet with hundreds of fun and educational programs. It comes in a funky silicon case that withstands drops and tumbles. Fire it up and your children will disappear into a world of games, movies, art projects, music, and more. They can read books, take photos, color, or do puzzles, and then connect to Wi-Fi and launch music videos and shows, from "Sesame Street" to "Imagination Movers." It is a full-function device in a kid-size package. www.nabitab.com

The **Biscotti TV Phone** lets you stay connected to family and friends without having to huddle around your portable device: Its wide-angle view captures entire rooms, and you can even pan and zoom. This lightweight device, about the same size and shape as the Italian biscuit after which it is named, connects to the HDMI port of any television and lets you make free and unlimited video calls to anyone else with a Biscotti unit or a Google Talk account. All you need is an Internet connection and a high-definition TV. Ease of use: My 2½-year-old can call Grandma

without help. www.biscotti.com

Call anyone in the United States and Canada for free from wherever you are in the world with **magicJack PLUS**, which plugs into a standard phone and either your laptop or a router with high-speed Internet. You will pay reasonably inexpensive rates to call other countries. Transfer your current phone number to the magicJack or have your work, home, and cell numbers forwarded to your magicJack number while you are away. That way, people stateside can call you without paying international rates, and they won't even know you are traveling. The device offers the usual calling features, too: voice mail, call waiting, caller ID, and directory assistance, all for free. magicjack.com

Maybe you want to stream live video of your first marathon run — on the other side of the country — for all your friends and family to see, or of whales breaching near icebergs on your Alaska cruise. Link the **Contour+ video camera** to your smartphone and to **Cerevo's new LiveShell device**, and you can broadcast high-definition footage to Ustream.tv, where friends can watch your adventures in real time. The free Contour Connect app also lets you use your smartphone as a remote control to start and stop recording. contour.com, shell.cerevo.com

You cannot stay connected if your devices' batteries die en route. Keep them charged by traveling with a backpack, messenger bag, or briefcase from **Powerbag**. Each has a lightweight, built-in charging station that lets you charge up to four devices at once. You can juice up your cellphone, tablet, e-reader, and GPS, for instance, while dashing through the airport or flying home. www.mypowerbag.com

As your plane touches down or you point your headlights toward home, fire up the WeMo app on your smartphone and with a swipe of your finger, flip on a couple of fans in the house to clear out the stuffy air and turn off the motion sensor guarding your front door. Why? Because you can.

Kari Bodnarchuk can be reached at travelwriter@karib.us.

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