

Monkey business and meditation in India Find peace and relaxation at Himalayan yoga resort

*Excerpted from an article by **Becca Hensley** - Special to the Austin American-Statesman*

When a monkey the size of a toddler sneaks into my room to steal apples, I have a moment. Maybe it's the curry from the night before, but I swear he's the part-simian Hindu god Hanuman, come to pull blossoms and petals into the air and turn the sky I see outside my window a scorching, sizzling red. He jumps up on my chair and natters at me. I'm at Ananda in the Himalayas, one of the world's premier yoga and Ayurveda retreats, 100 acres of garden on a hill hovering over the undulating Ganges and the sacred city of Rishikesh in northeast India. Majestic, snow-capped peaks pierce the horizon behind. This is the city the Beatles made famous with their pilgrimage to practice under their master, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, back in the day, set in a region known as the birthplace of yoga.



Ananda in the Himalayas' complimentary daily yoga classes are held in various parts of the 100- acre property.

Image: Kevin Garrett

IF YOU GO

Stay: Ananda in the Himalayas is a destination spa worth the long flight to India. Sign up for one of the Wellness Experience Packages, from Weight Management to Renewal. www.anandaspa.com.

Do: Combine a trip to Ananda with a longer trek through India. Outfitter **Micato Safaris** can organize an itinerary that takes you from Mumbai to Kerala to Jaipur, bookending your adventure with a stay at Ananda. micatosafaris.com.

Don't miss: Ganga Aarti, a ceremony at sundown on the banks of the Ganges, which involves the lighting of lamps as a demonstration of illumination and truth.

Take home: Upon checkout, you'll receive a kalava, a sacred, red thread tied around your wrist after a blessing. Its presence will remind you of your experience for days to come.