

# HEAL WITH



# Animals

# TAP INTO THE HEALING POWER OF ANIMALS

**Communing with our fellow creatures on this planet inspires feelings ranging from calmness to outright awe.**

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aving animals in our lives is so good for us. They protect, guide, assist, eat, and play with us. They can bring us so much joy. And they can heal us. They enhance the quality of our lives and well-being at so many levels.

Interacting with animals calms our nerves and clears our minds because it keeps us in the present moment naturally. It can significantly help with anxiety and depression. And we don't have to engage with them directly to get the benefits. Observing animals, especially in their habitats, can be beneficial as well.

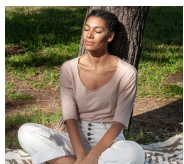
Having a pet is something only some can access. And even if you have a houseful of furry friends, you can still greatly benefit by seeking even more, or different kinds of, critter energy. So, here are four ways to get closer to the wild ones, from the littlest, ever-present creatures to the rarest and most majestic.



*Even the simplest moments with our furry friends can completely change our moods for the better and put us in tune with our own intuition as well as the richness of our world.*

# 4 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH ANIMALS

## 1 Keep it Local



Head to a nearby park, ideally one with many plants, trees, and even a water feature. Find a comfy spot, relax, and observe.

Look for ladybugs, butterflies, birds, squirrels, bunnies, raccoons, and other urban fauna. Give it a little time, be still, and see what catches your eye. At first, you might think there isn't much going on around you. Keep at it. Soon you'll discover the stirring of life is everywhere. Animals really are all around us. Notice their behaviors and how they interact with their surroundings.

## 2 Go Day Tripping

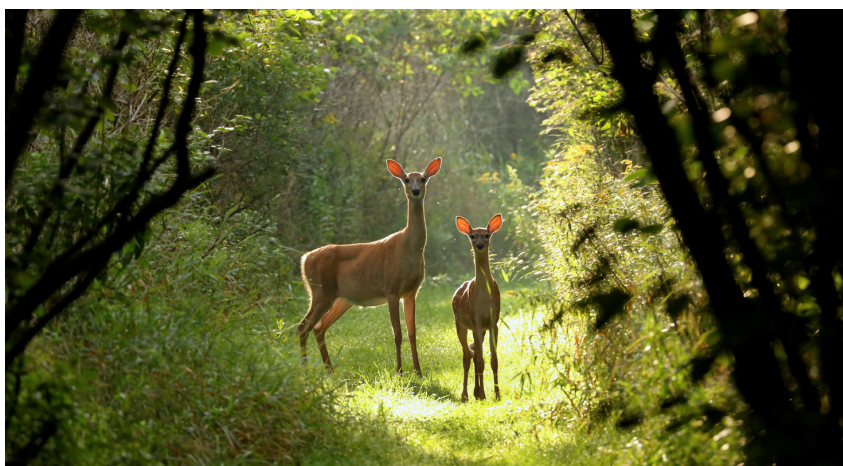


Visit a farm that's open to the public or a wildlife refuge or preserve. You'll see more domesticated creatures on a farm, while a preserve will have a wider variety of

species. Give yourself the time needed to be fully in the moment and explore everything the place has to offer. Observe the animals in their environment and engage your other senses as well. If it is appropriate to touch, touch. If there are sounds, listen. If there are smells, smell them (even the icky ones). Get to know that animal without any need to speak its language.

Communing with nature via a horseback ride adds an extra layer of wellness. Horses have taught humans about leadership and communication since the beginning of time. They have a way of becoming teachers in nature's classroom and can enlighten us with self-discovery through direct experience with the natural world. Our confidence grows when we interact with horses in an open environment. Your horse encounter could be during a farm visit—but other options abound for horseback riding day trips in or near most areas.

*Ready to get up close and personal with the grandeur of nature? From sighting wildlife, including the Wyoming "Big 5," to making a new equine best friend, you'll find it all awaits at the Absaroka Ranch during my [Wyoming Women's Wellness and Yoga Retreat](#).*



## 3 Get Hands-On



Volunteering at a shelter is absolutely one of the most meaningful ways to engage with animals. Animals at a shelter are often fearful and need comfort and company. Showing love (while caring for other basic needs) to a shelter dog, cat, bunny, or other creature creates a bond between you and that species while simultaneously

giving you the toasty glow of giving back to the world. Win-win!

You could go a literal step further and offer pet care services such as pet sitting or walking. Rover.com is a platform where you can open your own online shop. You determine what you offer. It could be walking dogs on the weekends or caring for people's cats in their homes while they're on vacation. You get to enjoy a pet on your terms *and* get paid. Another option is to let your family, friends, and neighbors know you're willing to help when they go out of town or need an extra hand with pet duties.

## 4 Go Deep into the Wild



If it's within your means, plan your next vacation visiting a thriving ecosystem where animals are abundant. Snorkel in Hawaii, go on [a ranch retreat in Wyoming](#), kayak in Alaska, stay in a tree house in Costa Rica, or treat yourself to [an African wellness safari](#). Go where the animals are truly free, and so are you.

There are many qualified outfitters who plan unique eco-tours to some of the lushest corners of the world. Be fully immersed (safely) and experience what it's like to be an animal in the wild. Do your research and only book with an outfit with a track record of being mindful and respectful towards the animals, environment, and community. Remember, animals are not here to entertain us. We must base our relationship with them on kindness and respect.

PRO TIP: Feeding animals in the wild is a no-no. It teaches them to depend on humans, and human food is not always good for them. They are also wild. By getting up close and personal, you could end up with a nasty scratch, bite, or even worse. Animals in the wild are to be observed, not disturbed. Live and let live!