

MIND GAMES

For those at home in the kitchen, **COOKING IN PROVENCE** offers a unique taste of France and an ideal introduction to the local cheeses, wines, olives, breads, and other specialties. The prix fixe for a one-week session: \$2,400 (www.cookinginprovence.com). • Research expeditions through the **EARTHWATCH INSTITUTE** are a great way to escape the office—and gain a deeper understanding of the environment. Participants spend up to one month with a small team of scientists. Projects vary, from gathering data on the nesting ecology of Costa Rican sea turtles to documenting the biology of Madagascar's endangered lemurs. Prices range from \$600 to \$4,000 (www.earthwatch.org). • Whatever your hobbies, one way to improve is to take a lesson. If skiing is your passion, consider skiing the Alps with two-time Olympic silver medalist **PENNY PITOU**. Weeklong sessions start at about \$2,000 (www.pennypitoutravel.com). • Russian, anyone? Most of us would love to learn another language. The **RUSSIAN VILLAGE** (www.rusvillage.com) is a popular language school near Moscow where students converse with actors, philosophers, and politicians. Or you can brush up on your Spanish at the **CENTER FOR BILINGUAL MULTICULTURAL STUDIES** in Guernsey.

Do your talents extend beyond the office? Picture an escape to Tuscany for a one-week landscape-painting workshop by **ETRUSCAN PLACES**. Held at a 600-acre farm located in a small valley on the outskirts of San Gimignano, each session is small and highly personalized. Prices range from \$1,475 to \$1,875 per person and include lodging and meals (www.landscapepainting.com).

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