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'We sipped pina colodas and soaked weary legs in thermal springs beneath the volcano'
Paul Bloomfield tours Central America on two wheels



The Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa, Lake District **2**

30 great spring mini-breaks

Glorious gardens, blossom trails, food festivals, cosy inns and country houses — **Richard Mellor** picks the season's best getaways

1 Wine and spa in West Sussex

There are fine woodland gardens, including camellias and bluebells, at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens near Horsham, which open fully on April 6. A few valleys over, Bolney Wine Estate offers "sparkling afternoon tea" tours on Thursdays and Sundays. South Lodge, a short stroll from Leonardslee, has just opened a new spa, with facilities from hydrotherapy pools to nail bars. The hotel also has azalea gardens, four-poster beds and bikes for hire to explore the spring countryside. **Details** B&B doubles, including use of the spa, cost from £265 a night (0800 0893929 (prideofbritainhotels.com))

2 Get on the water in the Lake District

Derwent House, on the Lake District's sole inhabited island, opens to the public five days a year. Visitors canoe over under supervision and learn about monks and wacky aristocrats. The first two dates this year are April 10 and May 30, fine times to enjoy the Lakes free of the summer masses. In Keswick the Lake District Paddle Boarding company hires boards from April 1 (lakedistrictpaddleboarding.co.uk). The Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa has pan-Asian cuisine and massages for sore paddlers in the valley of Borrowdale.



South Lodge hotel, West Sussex

Details B&B doubles cost from £200 a night (01768 787704, lakedistrictspa.co.uk)

3 Bluebell walks at Loch Fyne

A few miles south of Loch Fyne on Scotland's southwestern coast is the castle town of Inveraray. There are walks into woodlands with views over the sea loch. Equally scenic is Ardkinglas Estate, where conifers tower over a burst of bluebells in May. Retire to the Loch Fyne Hotel for a spa treatment and relax in tartan bedrooms. Fill up on oysters, venison burgers, cupcakes and local ales at ▶