



The World's Best Spa & Wellness Resorts

Vacations are no longer about margarita benders and all-you-can-eat buffets. Now, wellness-based retreats have taken over our travel pastimes. Here are five of the world's best spa resorts where you can reap the benefits.

BY JENNA SCATENA

KAMALAYA

Koh Samui, Thailand

This tropical resort on Thailand's gorgeous Koh Samui island was named 2017's "Worldwide Health & Wellness Destination of the Year" by the World Spa & Wellness Awards and "Spa Cuisine of the Year" by the AsiaSpa Awards. It earned these titles not just for its setting (after all, it was built around a centuries-old cave once used by Buddhist monks as a meditative retreat), but for its integrative wellness approach, pulling inspiration from various traditions, including Chinese medicine, naturopathic wellness and ayurveda therapies. Emotional guidance mentors and life-enhancement retreats round out the offerings.

GO: Avoid the rainy season in November and April, and May when it can be unbearably hot.

SPA PICK: Don't miss the Chi Nei Tsang, a traditional Taoist abdominal massage. Based on the theory that the "gut" is a "second brain," it promotes circulation and the health of internal organs while releasing stress from the nervous system. Pair it with time in the Om Steam Cavern and plunge pools, then hit the Elixir Bar.

PLAY: Connecting with nature is an essential part of a trip to Kamalaya. Take it all in by taking an outdoor yoga class.

EAT: Soma Restaurant (*soma* is Sanskrit for "food of the gods") has a food-as-medicine philosophy, avoiding sugar, salt and dairy and instead focusing on herbs and spices with medicinal properties. Enjoy healthy dishes while admiring spectacular views of the coast and outlying islands. kamalaya.com

IMAGE COURTESY KAMALAYA

Group meditation yoga at Kamalaya Koh Amui



AYANA Resort & Spa's Diamond Miracle Treatment

AYANA RESORT & SPA

Bali, Indonesia

Strategically located on Bali's stunning southeastern peninsula, AYANA Resort & Spa is a sprawling wellness epicenter featuring a 290-room hotel and 78 private pool villas. The resort's Thermes Marins spa strikes the balance of indulgent and thoughtful, incorporating earth tones and bamboo accents throughout. It also has the world's largest Aquatic seawater pool, with water supplied directly from the Indian Ocean.

GO: Bali's temperate climate makes it perfect for visits year-round.

SPA PICK: The Diamond Miracle Treatment is a 2.5-hour experience combining a foot soak, massage, crystal peeling and sensual ocean-splash rose bath using petals from 500 red roses. The therapeutic massage uses oils bound with elements of silk and pearl, combined with a Crème de la Mer facial infused with sea quartz and diamond dust.

PLAY: Make your own aromatherapy fragrance at AYANA's perfume-making studio, or take advantage of the resort's many cultural activities, such as batik-making.

EAT: AYANA has 18 restaurants and bars from which to choose, but Kampoeng Bali is a top pick, offering gourmet Balinese fare paired with theatrical Kecak performances. ayana.com



Golden Door entrance



Golden Door Bamboo Forest

GOLDEN DOOR

San Marcos, California

Think of this Japanese-inspired resort as one massive, very high-end sanctuary. The property's 600 wooded acres are flanked by mountains and meadows filled with citrus groves, bamboo forests and gardens. Golden Door is a spa unlike any other, with an enlightened East-meets-West philosophy to make you feel beautiful and restored inside and out. No wonder celebrities like Oprah Winfrey love this secluded spa retreat.

GO: Any time of year is a good time to visit sunny San Diego.

SPA PICK: Don't overlook the booster options. Detoxifying herbal wraps steeped in steaming baths and infused with hand-picked rosemary are a long-standing tradition here, while the aromatherapy enhancements add essential oil blends to massages to deepen their benefits.

PLAY: Golden Door has over 30 miles of hiking trails and is one of the only spa resorts that includes personal training in its programming.

EAT: All of the resort's cuisine is sourced from the on-site culinary garden and made with holistic nutrition for mental, physical and spiritual well-being. goldendoor.com

IMAGES COURTESY JESSICA SAMPLE/GOLDEN DOOR, AYANA RESORT & SPA

TSCHUGGEN GRAND HOTEL

Arose, Switzerland

Thirteen spacious treatment rooms set the stage for one of Europe's sleekest luxury wellness retreats. The lavish resort, which is built into the Switzerland's Grison Mountains, features a minimalistic, modern design of glass, wood and granite, providing constant reminders to unwind throughout your stay. From traditional massages to completely customized treatments based on requests, this is a spa you won't ever forget.

GO: July to mid-September is the best time for hiking and nature enthusiasts, while December through March has a stunning snow-covered backdrop.

SPA PICK: The signature Tschuggen massage combines five of the spa's most popular treatment techniques into one 75-minute session. The massage therapists are also physiotherapists and are expertly trained to ease muscle fatigue after an active day on the mountains.

PLAY: In summer, there's plenty of hiking and biking options, as well as golfing on one of Europe's highest courses. Winter brings its own benefits with direct access to the ski slopes via the hotel's mountain railway.

EAT: The Bergoase Spa Lounge offers a light menu of healthy snacks and small meals. Grand Restaurant features a mindful approach to nutrition with whole foods and local, seasonal ingredients. tschuggen.ch



Tschuggen Grand Hotel wellness center



Tschuggen Grand Hotel exterior



Sparkling Hill Resort's Crystal Lobby

IMAGES COURTESY SPARKLING HILL RESORT, TSCHUGGEN GRAND HOTEL

SPARKLING HILL RESORT

Vernon, British Columbia, Canada

Overlooking Lake Okanagan, Sparkling Hill Resort is as dramatic as the mountains that surround it—and as dazzling as the 3.5 million Swarovski crystals that veritably built it. At the center is KurSpa, a wellness retreat offering more than 100 transformative healing treatments, aromatherapy saunas and an indoor pool complete with underwater music.

GO: Late summer and early fall offer the best weather—and longest days—though ski buffs will love the wintertime powder.

SPA PICK: KurSpa focuses on treatments that ease stress, detoxify and promote vitality. Try the signature Cryo Cold Chamber; spending just three minutes in subzero temperatures gives the nervous and circulatory systems a major boost.

PLAY: Use the resort's helipad for some high-alpine adrenaline skiing in the Monashee Mountains, or embark on a wine tour to renowned Okanagan Valley wineries.

EAT: The flagship restaurant, PeakFine, offers a seasonal selection that celebrates Okanagan Valley ingredients. Enjoy dishes such as braised Madeira lamb shoulder with figs in the sparkling dining room, which is, like the rest of the spaces here, illuminated with Swarovski crystals. sparklinghill.com