

WIN A WEEK AT ONE OF THAILAND'S TOP HEALTH RETREATS

Condé Nast Traveller

THE BEST SPAS IN THE WORLD 2014

YOGA IN INDIA

ANTI-AGEING IN THE ALPS

DETOXING IN OMAN

WEIGHT LOSS IN FRANCE

GETTING FIT IN THE USA

+ THE MAYR CLINICS ASSESSED



THE SPA GUIDE

in association with Healing  Holidays

THE SPA GUIDE

When did you last go dancing? Or watch the sun rise? Or feel free and light and easy and energised? Most of us are juggling more than ever before. An alarming and growing number of us are tired, if not exhausted, for much of the time. The lines on your face, that sore back, those tension headaches, that annoying bit of flab around your bottom, those bitten fingernails, that end-of-day desire for a glass of wine or sneaky cigarette, even those recurrent 2am wakings – all are telling you that recharging your battery is fundamental to your health. And spas are about just that: learning to look after yourself. They are not just a flight of fancy, or an expensive over-indulgence (which is why, along with our pick of the top new-to-the scene players, we've also included some good-value options). The spas in this guide are about taking stock, rebooting, rebuilding. Some are the ultimate in tuning out, others are truly educational, even life-changing. And we are supported by the outstanding knowledge of the most esteemed spa tour operator out there, Healing Holidays, which offers not only bespoke, personalised and – most importantly – impartial advice on where would truly suit you, but also the best deals on the best programmes, which you won't find anywhere else. Perhaps in no other area of travel is the wisdom of a tour operator so crucial. You shouldn't starve and over-exercise if really what your body needs is rest and recuperation. Healing Holidays knows its properties, and it is masterful at gently matching you to the right spa in the right part of the world on a journey that won't wipe you out or leave you wondering if it was worth the money. There's no time to make mistakes when it comes to your health. This is the new *Condé Nast Traveller Spa Guide*. Our reviews are the most honest, detailed and authoritative you will find; a good massage isn't nearly good enough for us.

DAISY FINER, SPA GUIDE EDITOR

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

BEST NEW DESTINATION SPA VANA, INDIA

MOST EFFECTIVE REBOOT SIX SENSES ZIGHY BAY, OMAN

BEST VALUE FOR WEIGHT LOSS ABSOLUTE SANCTUARY, THAILAND

MOST SOULFUL SPA SONG SAA, CAMBODIA

BEST HEALTHY HIDEAWAY VAMIZI ISLAND, MOZAMBIQUE

MOST AVANT-GARDE CLINIC LONHEA, SWITZERLAND

MOST CONSISTENT HIGH PERFORMER IN:SPA

ON THE COVER: CHEVAL BLANC SPA, CHEVAL BLANC RANDHELI, MALDIVES PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARY ROZZI STYLED BY FIONA LINTOTT HAIR AND MAKE-UP: RUTH WARRIOR USING GUERLAIN TERRACOTTA BRONZING MIST MODEL: AMBER ANDERSON BIKINI: LISA MARIE FERNANDEZ

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SUNSHINE SAVIOURS

A reinvigorating blast of heat just when you need it, with therapists and treatments on tap



BEST
HEALTHY
HIDEAWAY

VAMIZI ISLAND QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO, MOZAMBIQUE

IN BRIEF Unspoilt castaway paradise for bespoke nurturing

THE LOWDOWN What a beach this is: wild and windswept, dotted with driftwood, all manner of shells and creamy coral. Sea turtles nest on the downy white sands; the conservation team has tagged one of them, Claudia, and tracked her all the way to Kenya. The water is endless different shades of blue and grey and can reach a bath-warm 30°C, while never dipping below 20°C – this is a genuine year-round destination, though winds perk up between January and March. And when the tide is out a vast, lunar-white landscape reveals itself. A stay here is a reminder that nature is the most powerful spa of all: soft, frothy clouds hang delicately in the sky, weaver birds sing to each other as they build nests in the fringes of your villa, and the sea can be heard all night. The island, which is home to not only the hotel but three villages, has all manner of wildlife: kingfishers dart in the bushes; butterflies land on your shoulder as you drive along its rocky roads in a Jeep; monkeys have been known to pilfer from guests' rooms; and if you're lucky you'll spot a king crab, though you don't want to tread on one in the dark as they can grow up to a metre long. After a few days here in the midst of a British winter, you will come up for air like a blinking mole emerging into the light. The general manager's wife, Meg Fey – a South African in her 30s, who grew up on a dairy farm – is a one-woman health team. She's brilliant, balanced, strong and wise, and performs some of the best reflexology anywhere, reading your body as if she knows you inside-out. She also gives wondrous massages with coconut and vanilla, facials using wild ginger and ginseng, head massages that leave you snoozing, and soulful, one-on-one unravelling yoga at just the right pace, accompanied by the sound of chirping crickets. As there is no actual spa building, all therapies take place in your villa. There are no lists, no forms, no staff asking you a million times, 'Did you enjoy your treatment?' All you need is someone with healing hands who listens to you and your body. You soon start to feel better, brighter. There's no requirement to detox here, either. The food is fresh and inventive. A breakfast of just-squeezed orange juice, platters of fruit, creamy yogurt with sticky granola, and wholegrain toast with homemade jams and marmalades flavoured with cumin is a comforting and reliable start to the day. Lunch might come in the form of a hideaway picnic, perhaps by a deserted lighthouse. And a picnic is never actually just a picnic: there will be soup to start – cold and zingy courgette, mint and lime – followed by maybe three different salads, kingfish with chickpeas and aubergine, a magnificent barbecued lobster, then watermelon sorbet to finish. There are drinks and nibbles, such as spankily fresh sashimi, at the main lodge before dinner, where you'll be asked your plans for the next day, and then treats such as grilled halloumi with beetroot or spiced snapper with vegetables. You soon slip into the cool, laidback African rhythm of the place, playing backgammon, reading a stash of books, signing up for another massage. Its reputation has fluctuated over the years, but right now Vamizi is top of its game (more so than Zanzibar's Mnemba). It's extremely special, unplugged, low-impact, eco-minded and gloriously unmanicured. A step back in time, while also being totally up to speed.

INSIDER TIP There's a World Wildlife Fund base here, and conservation is a cornerstone of the development of Vamizi, so don't miss the top-notch lectures by naturalists in the treehouse.
BOOK IT Africa Travel (+44 20 7843 3500; www.africatravel.co.uk) offers seven nights from £5,195, full board, including guided activities, flights and transfers.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS CALDICOTT

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