

Condé Nast Traveller

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Healing  Holidays

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

WELLNESS
& SPA
GUIDE 2023



THE WORLD'S BEST SPAS • TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTITIONERS • NEW PSYCHEDELIC RETREATS
A RADICAL RESET FOR MASCULINITY • THE RISE OF BREATHWORK • ESOTERIC THERAPIES

HOLISTIC HEAVEN

**More than 130 varieties
of Ayurvedic plants grow
in the medicinal garden**



INDIA

SOUKYA

GROUNDING HEALING AND A-LIST DEVOTEES

In spite of its roll-call of A-list visitors, from Emma Thompson to seven-time guest Queen Camilla, Soukya doesn't do swank. Rooms are neither opulent nor regal and exercise is more garden walking trail than high-tech gym. Instead, it's the quality of healing that attracts at this 30-acre estate 45 minutes from Bangalore. Combining Ayurveda with homeopathy, naturopathy and complementary therapies in one package, its programmes are as effective for stress and weight management as they are in helping to control arthritis and early-stage multiple sclerosis. A team of doctors, including integrative medicine pioneer Dr Issac Mathai, who founded Soukya in 2002, evaluate each guest with detailed case studies. Mathai's wife, Dr Suja, has a PhD in the absorption of vitamin D, while joined-up care is provided by specialists. Everything from the nasal passages to the colon is cleansed. More enjoyable therapies include Ayurvedic products being drizzled over, massaged into and slathered onto visitors. More than 130 varieties of Ayurvedic plants grow in the medicinal garden and are heated onsite in vats of oil. Sari-clad women work the vegetable patch that supplies the kitchen with ingredients for the delicious meat-free meals; the lush tropical gardens are alive with birdsong; and many of the plantation-style rooms have outdoor showers. It's so calming that guests leave feeling healed in both body and soul. And if India's too much of a schlep, an offshoot in Portugal opens in late 2024, meaning nirvana will be just a hop away. JANE KNIGHT

Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com/condenast) can arrange a seven-night Shakthi Rejuvenation programme from £3,729pp, including transfers, full board and treatments.

ITALY

LEFAY RESORT & SPA

LAKESIDE ESCAPE WITH TOP PRACTITIONERS

From its ringside seat over Lake Garda, Lefay has a wellness concept that can't be easily defined. It glides between ancient Chinese traditions and cutting-edge Western practices, and its ethos is equally fluid, underlining the importance of balance in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. So, although its success since opening in 2008 is undoubtedly due to excellent therapists and razor-sharp direction from its scientific committee, fans such as Alexa Chung and Irina Shayk also appreciate the leeway for la dolce vita at the spectacular alfresco pool and cosmopolitan bars. Multi-million-pound renovations have fairy-dusted the dining rooms and added an adults-only spa, smart rooftop suites and Gramen, a Michelin-worthy, mostly plant-based restaurant. The programmes have also been rebooted with an eye on post-pandemic concerns: its Immune System and Intestine Programme helps build resistance to infection through acupuncture, Tuina massage (an ancient Chinese practice that unblocks qi) and a diet to support gut microflora. Whatever your issue – stress, fitness, weight gain, sleep loss – there are regular consultations with inspiring practitioners such as psychiatrist Dr Stefania Doria. Personal trainer Veronica Tonni can teach exercises to slay tech neck in under an hour and Marco Pistore will guide you on trails through the resort's 27 acres. Mainly though, you will want to soak up Garda's gorgeousness from the sauna. This view, where you feel you're hovering between the sea and the sky, makes anything seem possible. SD

Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com/condenast) can arrange a three-night Discovery programme from £1,445pp, including transfers, full board and treatments.

