



# NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## Welcome to the world of medical spa breaks

Once the preserve of the plastic surgery-seeking starlet, increasing numbers of travellers are turning to medicalised spas to treat specific mental and physical health issues, from stress and weight problems to insomnia, chronic pain and the menopause.

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*By Sam Lewis*

Sha Wellness Clinic.

PHOTO BY SHA WELLNESS CLINIC.



**Pain management:** Many spa retreats, such as Thailand's Kamalaya and Chiva-Som, employ physiotherapists and Pilates instructors to help guests recover from injuries. The Structural Revival Programme at Kamalaya corrects imbalances, realign the body and improve posture, with five-night packages. At Chiva-Som, cranial relief therapy is used for pain management and there are specific programmes for those in remission from cancer: the 10-night Cell Vitality package, costs from £7,299 per person.

**Medical testing:** Spas are increasingly using qualified doctors to carry out consultations for treatments that stray far from the mere medi-pedicure. Six Senses' Integrated Wellness programmes, for example, see doctors measure your heart rate, oxygen uptake and arterial efficiency with the results analysed to work out where stress, exercise and lifestyle are having impact. Your records are transferred to whatever property you stay at, to continue treatment each time you holiday, with costs dependent on treatment.

**Hormone help:** For help dealing with hormonal changes, including the menopause, head to Palácio Estoril, just 20 minutes from the centre of Lisbon, where a seven-day healthy-ageing programme costs from £2,519 per person.

**Sleep soundly:** Suffer from insomnia? Check into Spain's SHA Wellness Clinic to be assessed by a team of specialists who will recommend treatments such as acupuncture as well as a personalised diet to enhance sleep and overall wellbeing: seven nights from £4,655 per person.

**Emotional support:** For clients coping with a traumatic event such as divorce or bereavement, **Wellbeing Escapes** is gaining a reputation for rejuvenating spa stays. Its retreat in the Dominican Republic, hosted by holistic expert Kyra Montagu, offers a combination of natural therapies including nutrition, herbal medicine, yoga and massage: seven nights from £1,900 per person.

**Weight & digestive issues:** The Original FX Mayr in Austria hosts a week-long programme that includes mitochondria therapy, a treatment that aims to boost the metabolism and break down fat deposits for enhanced weight loss: from £1,300.

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