

A Vacation with a Purpose: Spa 101

When you think of spa, you may visualize healing waters and mineral springs. Your image would be on target, however nowadays 'spa' is much more than that. Consider going to a Day Spa and pampering yourself for a day, add in Yoga or a Pilates class and you've done a great job on focusing on yourself and creating a little more balance. Now, consider a few days or a week of fitness classes, pampering spa treatments, stress reduction, healthful spa cuisine and additional opportunities to create a healthier lifestyle. Perhaps a cooking class or nutrition class is appealing or something more challenging like climbing a rock wall or doing something you never thought you'd do. A spa vacation is relaxing, rejuvenating and in many cases a week away could be life changing and that's why it's a Vacation with a Purpose!

Let's embark on a journey to discover more about Spa Travel. Relax, pour yourself a cup of green tea and discover a world of possibilities.

Spa 101

Spa Travel is growing and spa-goers are looking for new experiences. Indulge your senses and consider a Spa Vacation. Below you'll find information to help in your decision process.

Hotel & Resort Spas - these typically include fitness facilities and can sometimes be managed by an outside source or by the resort. Spa visits are usually complemented by use of the resort's other facilities, such as golf, beach or tennis. Spa cuisine may or may not be offered.

Destination Spa - The key focus is to provide specific health and wellness treatments and facilities. It's most beneficial to stay a week, however four-five days is the average stay. Spa cuisine is always offered at a destination spa. Some destination spas have their own natural springs which provide mineral, thermal or seawater for hydrotherapy treatments.

Medical Spa - A fast-growing part of the spa business, medical spas (or medi-spas) usually have a medical director supervising treatments that could include cosmetic surgery, dermatology and other "age-slowng" treatments. Typical spa treatments are also usually offered at medical spas. The growing trend is for medical doctors to open medical spas either on the same site as their medical facility, or adjacent to it.

Cruise Ship Spa - Cruise ship spas provide spa and fitness facilities aboard ocean liners. Cruise ships are now also offering spa cuisine in restaurants throughout the vessel.

(Source: International Spa Association, www.experiencespa.org)

Spa Focus:

Now that you have an idea of the different types of spa opportunities, consider what you'd like to do and what area you might like to focus on. Do you want to focus on

fitness and perhaps hiking or are you looking for a location to help reduce stress and create a healthy lifestyle. Consider the following:

- **Stress Management:** Learn how to manage stress and learn new relaxation techniques and ways to put them into practice when you return home. Learn how to create a life in balance.
- **Pampering:** Indulge in spa treatments from facials to massages to something exotic.
- **Fitness, Health & Nutrition:** Stretch your body and participate in an array of classes, sports activities and integrate what you learn into your lifestyle. Learn how lifestyle choices can lead you to a path of wellness.
- **Spirituality & Enlightenment:** Engage in T'ai Chi, Yoga, Meditation and other practices to calm your mind and spark your spirit. All roads lead to self-awareness and tranquility.

Sample schedules are available to review and offer ideas on what you can do on your spa vacation. Below is just one possibility:

Sample a Day

7:00AM Morning Yoga or Fitness Walk
8:00AM Breakfast
9:00AM Hiking Adventure
10:30AM Challenge Activity or Wellness Seminar
12:30PM Lunch/Cooking Demo
1:30PM Relax/Pool
3:00PM Spa Treatment – Hot Stone Massage
4:00PM Yoga/Pilates/Stretch Class
7:00PM Dinner
8:00PM Meditation/Stargazing

Spa Services:

Okay, so you've been going for facials, massages and maybe even a body wrap every so often. There's an abundance of treatments available at spa locations, many are 'signature' treatments created by the spa as well as 'exotic' treatments that are sure to rev up your senses and bring serenity to your body, mind and spirit.

Spa Treatments Glossary from A-Z:

Aromatherapy: An ancient healing art using essential oils from plants, leaves, bark, roots, seeds, resins and flowers. Oils are used to treat emotional disorders, organ dysfunction, and skin problems and are used during massage, facials, body wraps and hydro baths.

Ayurvedic: An ancient system of traditional folk medicine from India using a Variety of techniques to restore balance. Often used in nutrition, herbal medicine, aromatherapy, massage and meditation.

Feldenkrais (Method): A system of bodywork developed by Moshe Feldenkrais that attempts to reprogram the nervous system through movement augmented by physical pressure and manipulation.

Lomi-Lomi: Hawaiian rhythmical, rocking massage.

Salt Glow Treatment: The body is rubbed with a vigorous, abrasive scrub, consisting of coarse salt usually mixed with essential oils and water. It cleanses pores and removes dead skin. It is usually followed by a gentle shower and moisturizer.

Thalassotherapy: An Ancient Greek therapy (thalasso is Greek for sea) – treatments use the therapeutic benefits of the sea, and sea water products for their vitamins, minerals and trace elements, which can heal and reinvigorate skin and hair. (Source: International Spa Association)

Enjoy the Spa Lifestyle!

Author's Bio:

Donna Mantone-Adinolfi is a travel, spa and wellness writer and is committed to promoting and writing about healthy lifestyles and is passionate about helping others. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications as she has studied at both William Paterson State University in Wayne, NJ and New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM and she is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Holistic Nutrition.

She has traveled extensively and is an expert in the field of destination spas and spa resorts and promotes personal development, self-awareness and living in the moment. Her writing can be found in various publications as well as Balance Magazine where she has been the Travel Editor since 2000. In addition to Balance Magazine and her freelance writing, Donna also writes an advice column titled "Dear Donna" about healthy living, travel, spa and wellness and her goal is syndication. She also writes a blog for the Wine & Hospitality Network and Spa Vacation Experts.