

the guide

SPAS OF THE FUTURE

Though many of Asia's wellness traditions can trace their roots back thousands of years, we would argue that there has never been a better time to enjoy them than right now. Across the continent, spas are showcasing new and ever-more diverse offerings for connoisseurs. From state-of-the-art technologies to hard-to-find holistic healing practices to visually stunning settings, here are the places to recharge body, mind and spirit. BY DIANA HUBBELL

LIGHTS STIMULATE ALPHA BRAIN WAVES AT DII MEDICAL SPA, IN BANGKOK.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF ESPA/RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA; COURTESY OF KATA ROCKS; COURTESY OF AYANA RESORT & SPA, BALI; OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF DII

BALI

Ayana Resort & Spa

There's a reason a dip in the ocean is so restorative: according to the 5,000-year-old practice of thalassotherapy—from the Greek word *thalassa* (sea)—those mineral-rich waters can help the body detox, relieve symptoms of skin disorders and boost cardiovascular function. Soak in all the benefits at this thalasso spa, one of the largest in the world, where the Aquatonic pool contains 700 million liters of saltwater pumped directly from the Indian Ocean. ayanaresort.com; 25-minute Under Water massage plus two hours in the Aquatonic pool Rp954,000.

HONG KONG

Salt Spa

Halotherapy originated from a centuries-old tradition in Eastern Europe in which patients spent hours in natural salt caves, where the air reputedly alleviates respiratory conditions. At these urban approximations, patients relax in snow-white, salt-crusted rooms inhaling dry sodium chloride aerosol particles pumped out by a halogenerator. This shot of saline-saturated oxygen can boost flagging energy levels. saltspa.com.hk; 60-minute facial from HK\$1,180.

SINGAPORE

ESPA at Resorts World Sentosa

Sweat out all those pesky toxins with a rest in a sweltering Turkish-style hammam. The 10,000-square-meter ESPA spa is decked out with ergonomically designed benches and oversized rain showers. When you can't take the heat anymore, shock your system in the spa's ice fountain. rwsentosa.com; 25-minute Revitalizing Hammam Cleanse S\$125.

PHUKET

Kata Rocks

In the chromatherapy chamber in this new Phuket venue, slowly shifting shades of light are designed to relax your psyche. After basking in the rainbow, take a sneak peek at some of the other unconventional extras, including a water bed-massage room and a MetroNaps pod for snoozing. katarocks.com; Thai massage Bt4,100 in the chromotherapy room.

OUTRAGEOUS AMENITIES

Bored of humdrum oil massages and reflexology? From Aquatonic pools to salt domes, these all-stars offer over-the-top facilities for your pampering pleasure.



ESPA VITALITY POOL
Bottom, from left:
AQUATONIC POOL
AT AYANA RESORT &
SPA BALI; CRYSTAL
THERAPY HAND
TREATMENT AT
KATA ROCKS.

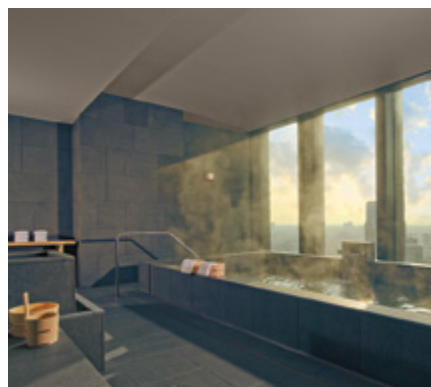




THE LUXE HOUSE, IN SINGAPORE. Right, from top: THE BARAI, HUA HIN; HEATED POOL WITH A VIEW AT AMAN TOKYO.

REGAL ROOMS

These design-centric spas and treatment rooms are equal parts art and indulgence.



HUA HIN The Barai

Renowned Thai architect Lek Bunnag designed this beachfront space, which exudes an almost mystical vibe. Your mind may well wander to ancient temples as you stroll along the colonnaded courtyard and its central reflecting pool at the heart of the complex, which is made up of eight residential spa suites and 18 treatment rooms. [thebarai.com](#); 90-minute *Chakra Energy Balance* from Bt4,200.

SINGAPORE The Luxe House

This swank newcomer proves that sometimes too much is exactly enough. True to its name, The Luxe House channels old-school opulence with velvet drapery, dark wood,

dazzling chandeliers and ornate floral arrangements. You'll feel positively royal while staff tend to overstressed heads, shoulders, knees and toes. [theluxehouse.com](#); 60-minute *Acupressure Foot Therapy* S\$158.

TOKYO Aman Tokyo

Zen minimalism gets a sexy, urban spin at Aman's first inner-city outpost. The clean lines and classic materials like *washi* paper and camphor wood, are enough to make design fans drool, but what really seals the deal is the view—the heated 30-meter pool comes with floor-to-ceiling windows for a panorama of the glittering skyscrapers of Shinjuku all the way to Mount Fuji in the distance. [aman.com](#); 150-minute *Aman Tokyo Signature Journey* ¥150,000.

BEIJING Rosewood Beijing

China's frenetic, smoggy capital can take its toll on even the toughest travelers, which is why you might be tempted to hide away in the plush little cocoon that is Sense spa and stay forever. Not to worry, the designers have anticipated your needs—the five spa suites are ideal for overnight stays and the glass-domed pool surrounded by greenery provides a tranquil place to unwind. Creative local touches peppered throughout the hotel include ink-brush paintings, photography and other artwork inspired by Chinese poet Bei Dao's *Rose of Time*. It is like getting a world-class massage in a stunning fine-art gallery. [rosewoodhotels.com](#); 60-minute *Sense Signature treatment* RMB810.

LUSH LOCALES

Location, location, location. Aching lovely vistas abound at these all-natural knockouts.



YOGA ON THE BEACH AT QUY NHON. Below, from left: TREETOP YOGA SHALA PLATFORM AT TRI, IN SRI LANKA; NATURE AND NURTURE AT FOUR SEASONS GOLDEN TRIANGLE.



PALAWAN

The Huma Island Resort & Spa

No, that's not a filter or Photoshop trickery: the ocean really is that luminous shade of teal. It's hard not to notice when you're in one of these overwater treatment rooms—each one sports a glass floor, through which you'll be able to gaze straight to the coral-speckled sandy bottom while your masseuse slathers aromatic virgin coconut oil on your back. [humaisland.com](#); *Kapuruan Signature massage* P2,500.

KOGGALA LAKE, SRI LANKA Tri

It doesn't get greener than this eco-haven on the country's largest lake. The delicate scent of cinnamon bark perfumes the air, while frangipani, tea and other foliage thrive along the resort's pathways. Huge windows in the spa display the forest canopy and the treetop yoga *shala* platform allows practitioners to salute the sun above a waving bamboo grove. [trilanka.com](#); 60-minute *Full-Body massage* Rs10,000.

CHIANG RAI

Four Seasons Golden Triangle

Though the elephants are doing all the work, it can still be exhausting to ride one, what with all the climbing and clenching. And since the main point of visiting this ultimate-luxury Bill Bensley-designed tented camp is to bond with the gentle giants who have found refuge in these jungles, you're going to need a lot of post-pachyderm pampering. Head to the open-air spa rooms, stilted cabanas on the side of a deceptively high hill, for a Mahout Recovery massage amid butterflies and birdsongs. Or, order a treatment to your tent for views across the Thai-Laos-Burmese border. [fourseasons.com](#); 90-minute *Mahout Recovery massage* Bt6,000.

QUY NHON, VIETNAM

Avani Quy Nhon Resort & Spa

For grownups still very much in touch with their inner child, this treehouse-inspired spa adds just the right amount of whimsy. Unlike your nostalgic pad of old, however, this hideaway protrudes from the side of a mountain overlooking the South China Sea. [avanihotels.com/quynhon](#); *Avani Signature Touch* VND1,500,000.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF THE LUXE HOUSE; COURTESY OF THE BARAI; COURTESY OF AMAN TOKYO

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF AVANI; COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS GOLDEN TRIANGLE; COURTESY OF TRI

SIX SENSES SPA
CHENGDU. Below:
FRESH SCRUBS AT
BANYAN TREE SPA
IN BINTAN; ANANDA
SPA OFFERS YOGA IN
THE HIMALAYAS.



CULTURAL QUEST

Rooted in their regional wellness traditions, these spas provide a much-appreciated sense of place.

FROM TOP: SETH POWERS/COURTESY OF SIX SENSE QING CHENG MOUNTAIN; COURTESY OF BANYAN TREE SPA BINTAN; COURTESY OF ANANDA IN THE HIMALAYAS

BORACAY, PHILIPPINES Mandala Spa & Resort Villas

Digging deep into the traditional healing practices of the Philippines, Mandala Spa offers a series of Hilot-inspired treatments. Banana leaves slicked with coconut oil are used to identify problem spots in the body, then a vacuum cup is used to restore equilibrium. mandalaspaaandresortvillas.com; 105-minute Hilot Trilogy P4,300.

CHENGDU, CHINA Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain

Taoism's teachings of balance and harmony infuse virtually every element of the spa. After a session with a traditional Chinese medicine specialist, try classic treatments such as *gua sha*, which stimulates circulation, *chi nei tsang*, which detoxifies the digestive system, and *tui na*, which uses martial arts techniques. 86-28/8728-9871; 60-minute Chinese Reflexology session RMB580.

INDIA Ananda Spa

Deeply entrenched in the holistic traditions of ayurveda, this Himalayan retreat is all about employing ancient methods to modern ailments. Your journey kicks off with a private consultation, in which a specialist prescribes a set diet and any number of the dozens of ayurvedic treatments to get your *kapha*, *vata* and *pitta* doshas back in sync. anandaspa.com; seven-night Ayurvedic Rejuvenation retreat from US\$5,117 per person or US\$7,497, double.

BINTAN, INDONESIA Banyan Tree Bintan

Indonesian-inspired treatments for him and her abound at Banyan Tree Bintan; there's a four-century-old Javanese ritual designed to purify royal brides-to-be, while gents can boost their stamina with an ultra deep-tissue Balinese Boreh massage. banyantreespa.com; 150-minute Javanese Lulur ritual Rp3,390.



BANGKOK

Dii

Starfish goo, royal honey, champagne, silk threads, pearls, red algae: Divana Spa taps everything from the deep sea to the haberdashery for the secrets of perfect skin. Dii medical spa, in Central Embassy, is the brand's most science-steeped outlet with a bevy of pioneering treatments like an electroporation facial that deposits peptide serum obtained from starfish into the skin. If you prefer the simple luxuries, try the golden silk scrub followed by an antioxidant champagne bath. "It is cutting-edge science mixed with ancient wisdom," says the spa's research and development director Apiradee Herunramdej, "and at the end of the day, it is all about feeling good." dii-divana.com; Andaman Aura 120-minute treatment Bt8,500.

Bonus: There's a fifth branch opening on Sukhumvit Soi 11 this month.

BALI

Vietura Spa, Sofitel Nusa Dua

This antiaging clinic uses a Skin Analysis System machine to create a personalized map of your face and pinpoint the precise treatments needed to maximize your radiance. From gentle options like platelet-rich plasma therapy and micro-exfoliation to the more intense Endolift, which uses a peanut-oil extract for facial injections, you can tailor a program that's perfect for you. sofitel-bali-nusadua.com; carboxy facial activation therapy Rp1,300.

SINGAPORE

ClearSK

The professionals at ClearSK will lift, tuck, brighten and smooth any problem areas, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, with the newest equipment and products from around the world. Thermage CPT uses hot and cold ultrasonic waves to break down and liquify fat cells, helping to restructure the face without surgery, while gentle pulses reduce the feeling of heat. This facility is more about beauty and dermatology than relaxation, but the results—up to two years of fresher looking skin—may well be worth it. clearskgroup.com; pricing varies by branch, full face and neck Thermage CPT package from around S\$4,000.

TRICKED-OUT TREATMENTS

Science, innovation and relaxation come together in spa experiences that feel plucked from the future, but will transport your skin into the past.



DII MEDICAL SPA,
BANGKOK. Below,
from left: CLEARSK,
IN SINGAPORE;
PERSONALIZE
TREATMENTS AT
VIETURA, BALI.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF DII MEDICAL SPA; COURTESY OF VIETURA SPA; COURTESY OF CLEARSK