

# Spas

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If you are thinking about locking yourself away from the world, behind the peaceful and stress-free walls of a spa; Sedona, Hawaii, the Caribbean, even Europe probably make the short list of destination contenders. But Asia? All of the attention being paid to that corner of the globe seems to be centered on booming economies, population growth, and even the Olympics. But, when was the last time someone told you they were going to China just to chill out?

Just like everything else in this neck of the woods, relaxation is becoming big business. “Spa-ing in China, while still new, is moving at a tremendous pace” says Dirk De Cuyper, General Manager of the Hilton Sanya resort in southernmost tip of Hainan Island, off the coast of mainland China. “With city life being stressful and fast paced, plus constant air pollution, it is no wonder that more and more Chinese, female and male alike, are taking to spas like bees to honey.”

The resorts may be new, but the healing power of touch was discovered ages ago in Asia. Ancient methods combined with superb service and beautiful architecture makes a spa getaway in the Far East very appealing indeed. Here are some great spots worth checking out.



### **The Asian Spa at the Fullerton, Singapore.**

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of one of the world's busiest financial, arts and shopping districts, the Asian Spa at the Fullerton is a true escape, especially if swimming is your thing. Begin the journey toward relaxation with a dip in the outdoor infinity pool overlooking the city. Then move on to the spa on the lower level of the 400-room luxury hotel. The décor is minimalist but the spa offers some really great pampering packages.

One of our favorites is the \$200 Indonesian Heritage combo which includes a 30 minute Javanese Lulur, (a traditional ritual that begins with Lulur-- , a tumeric and rice skin scrub applied lightly to exfoliate). After the skin has been cleansed, there's a traditional yogurt application, followed by an exotic flower bath and an Indonesian Massage; in contrast to most western massage techniques. Coconut oil is used and very little pressure is applied on the body. Downward strokes are applied on the muscles to remove tension. Then upward strokes towards the heart, and circular thumb movements are used for better blood flow. The bottom line: you'll feel fantastic.

<http://www.fullertonhotel.com>



## **Six Senses Hideaway, Ninh Van Bay, Vietnam.**

This property has won Hotel of the Year awards from several notable European magazines and it's easy to see why. First, it's accessible only by boat and set in the center of a coral reef on the edge of a jungle. Whoever decided to call this a hideaway wasn't kidding! The mantra here is "balancing the senses."

Balanced or not, your senses will be treated to their own private party if you get a massage in one of the two outdoor treatment rooms with a view of the turquoise sea below with the scent of flowering plants surrounding you. The Six Senses spa has also just started monthly wellness programs (yoga, Tai Chi etc.) designed to take place outdoors and make you one with nature.

<http://www.sixsenses.com/Six-Senses-Hideaway-Ninh-Van-Bay/index.php>



## **Chiva-Som at Hua Hin, Thailand.**

About 130 miles south of Bangkok, this spa oasis is located within the beach resort Hua Hin and takes a holistic approach towards health and relaxation. Chiva-Som means "Haven of Life" in Thai and the first thing that happens upon arrival is that you receive a private consultation to identify your mental, physical and spiritual health and then an individual program is designed toward your needs. (Editor's note: for a full review see [Chiva-Som International Health Resort](#) in the Hotels & Resorts section)

One of the most appealing aspects of the spa, aside from the massages and the stress reducing treatments (the Water Therapy Suites are a must) is the surroundings. The waterfalls, tropical gardens and guest

rooms with terraces overlooking the Gulf of Siam can't be beat. There is a three-night minimum during the high season (October to April) and a two-night minimum otherwise and there's also a Medi-Spa on sight, if you intend on a discrete nip or tuck during your stay.

[http://www.chivasom.com/content/huahin/huahin\\_introduction.htm](http://www.chivasom.com/content/huahin/huahin_introduction.htm)



### **The Mizuki, at the Tokyo Conrad, Japan.**

You may feel like you stepped into the set of “Lost in Translation” in this high rise hotel spa, but the Mizuki spa really is the perfect way to relax while still enjoying the excitement of this vibrant city. First you don't even have to leave the property to see Tokyo because, the spa, on the 29th floor, has incredible 360 degree views. The decor is streamlined and tranquil and, since its set in an international city, the spa seems to be trying to incorporate global themes. There's grape seed aromatherapy from the Napa Valley and German biocosmetics, but there is also no way the Mizuki would be mistaken for anything other than a Japanese spa.

There's a lovely Hinoki soaking tub - a tub made out of Hinoki cypress wood. There is an ancient Japanese tradition of having a long soak in a warm bath to stimulate blood circulation and decongest the lymphatic system. One of the Mizuki's most inviting signature treatments is the “Spirit” which starts with a foot treatment and a Hinoki bath; bamboo stick massage; full-body oil massage and facial, with a break in between for a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony... naturally.

<http://conradhotels1.hilton.com/en/ch/hotels/index.do?ctyhocn=TYOCICI>



### **Chuan Spa at Langham Place, Hong Kong.**

In Chinese, “Chuan” means flowing water and water seems to play a pivotal role in many of the treatments given at this holistic spa.

All treatments begin here with the Tri-bathing ritual--a steam or sauna followed by a cooling Japanese shower and then a long soak in the Oriental hot tub... all before your first treatment even begins.

One of our favorite packages, designed to appeal to international travelers, is the Jet Lag treatment which starts with a hydrotherapy bath (the idea is that the jets help stimulate circulation and release fluids that built up on the plane). There's also a great rehydration facial to complete the bring-you-back-to-life process and start your visit off on the right foot. The spa also has facilities to learn about traditional Chinese medicine and all the treatment rooms are designed by Feng Shui master to maximize the feeling of peace and tranquility.

[http://www.chuanspa.com/en/Melbourne\\_Spa\\_Hong\\_Kong.shtml](http://www.chuanspa.com/en/Melbourne_Spa_Hong_Kong.shtml)



### **Banyan Tree Lijiang, China.**

It's easy to have a one-with-nature spa moments at the Banyan Tree Lijiang in the Yunnan province. For starters the property itself is located 6,562 feet above sea level with amazing views of the spectacular Jade Dragon Snow Mountain(considered a sacred place by the locals). The red clay roofed villas are huge and all have private gardens and heated outdoor Jet Pools or plunge pools.

Many of the treatments include Chinese herbal cures, specifically packaged and directed by the seasons, which correspond to the Chinese Elements of gold, wood, fire and water. For example, Spring would be wood which symbolizes renewal. The treatment includes a tropical fruit scrub and a sports massage.

The nearby village is also definitely worth checking out. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a bit of a throw back to another era, complete with very narrow cobblestone streets.

<http://www.banyantree.com/lijiang/index.html>



### **Banyan Tree Phuket, at Bang Tao Bay, Thailand.**

In many cultures the Banyan tree symbolizes serenity and that is fitting for this hotel and spa. The rooms are filled with teak furniture and vibrant Thai colors and the tropical gardens sit on the edge of a peaceful lagoon.

The spectacular double pool villas (two pools: one directly accessible from the bedroom and the second is an infinity edged pool in the garden) come with a 90-minute couples massage.

This destination spa will offer three, five, and seven-night packages tailored to what you want to do. If fitness and wellness is a goal, there's a world class golf course and top notch gym facilities. If you need five days of someone rubbing your back and generally vegging out in an open-air sunken tub, this is also the place you want to be.

[http://www.banyantree.com/phuket/packages/spa\\_indulgence.html](http://www.banyantree.com/phuket/packages/spa_indulgence.html)



### **Aman Spa, at the Amanpuri Phuket, Thailand.**

This destination spa is nestled in a tranquil setting overlooking Thailand's Andaman Sea. It is one of those places you imagine in your dreams -- tall palms, white sand, warm breezes. Mmmm... Ok, we're back.

A complimentary one-hour spa treatment comes with stays of three nights or more. Interspersed amongst a coconut grove, Amanpuri's 40 Thai-style pavilions differ by views and feature a private outdoor terrace.

Aman, in the ancient Sanskrit language, means peace and that seems to be what the spa is about. It's surrounded by a lotus pool and the two open-air massage rooms give you the sensation that you are almost floating above it. The open-air reception pavilion features Thai music performed every evening.

<http://www.amanresorts.com>

### **Spa Botanica at the Sentosa, Singapore.**

Spa Botanica has been called an urban day spa, but it's set in a lush, quiet garden that will give you the sensation of being far away from a city. It is also Singapore's first destination spa and offers signature treatments, like the 3 hour Singapore Flower Ritual, a deep pressure



massage set in an outdoor pavilion where local herbs and flowers are applied, and then followed by a fragrant frangipani flower bath. Mud detoxs are also a specialty here and are presented in a ceremonial way to honor the body.

In addition to the relaxing treatments, there are two beautifully landscaped labyrinths, outdoor pavilions and a spa garden, all designed to quiet the mind and make you again one with nature.

<http://www.spabotanica.com>

### **The Spa at the Four Seasons, Hong Kong.**

For a great view of the city while you get rubbed and pampered, check out the two luxurious spa suites, Aqua and Crystal, at this property. Each room is a full service and private spa, that you can have all to yourself for hours on end. They have their own day bed, vitality pool, flat screen TV and mini bar, a private bathroom and sensory steam shower.

In the showers, there are heated “mother of pearl” recliners to relax, enjoy the steam and fix your gaze on a large amethyst crystal, which is supposed to calm and center you. One of their best signature treatments here is the “Oriental infusion”. It starts with an herbal foot soak while a therapist determines the balance of Yin & Yang in your system. She will then personalize the treatment to your needs. We don't know what that means exactly, but it sounds good. Exfoliation and massage are followed by steam and accupressure. If you aren't feeling really good by the end of these two hours, you need to seek professional medical help.

<http://www.fourseasons.com/hongkong/spa.html>



### **La Résidence Phou Vao Hotel, in Luang Prabang, Laos.**

The first luxury spa hotel of its kind in the World Heritage town of Luang Prabang walks a delicate balance between providing modern comforts, set in a traditional setting. Carved Laotian furniture and colorful silk paneling surround all the typical spa amenities. An infinity plunge pool and a water lily pond overlooking the city surround the spa.

Treatments have a definitely Laotian spin and feature local herbal remedies aimed at healing. If you check out the flawless faces around you, you'll be likely to sign up for an Anti-Aging package, which remarkably is just \$75 for three hours. Petitgrain, Cajuput and organic green tea, are steamed throughout the body and followed by an organic facial. Leaving will be the most difficult decision you will face during your entire stay.

[www.residencephouvao.com](http://www.residencephouvao.com)

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