

THAILAND IS WELCOMING YOU BACK AGAIN

Words: Frances Geoghegan

For decades, now weary spa-goers have travelled in their droves to Thailand. This friendly yet sophisticated, exotic yet welcoming nation is the world's ultimate destination for spa and wellness holidays. Here you will find the very best Yoga and Pilates retreats as well as spas where you can shed pounds, detox or simply enjoy a large dose of pampering.

It is almost as if better health and healing happens more easily in Thailand, thanks in part to nurturing and caring hands, deliciously healthy food, superb practitioners and stunning natural surroundings.

Healing Holidays, Europe's leading wellness travel company, have been waiting with bated breath to be able to send their clients back to Thailand, and so are thrilled that a re-opening date of July 1, 2021 has recently been announced.

At first you are only able to fly directly onto the magical island of Phuket, where you will be required to stay, quarantine-free, for a minimum of seven days before you are then allowed to travel freely to anywhere else in the country. To mark the re-opening Thai Airways are launching a brand new, non-stop weekly service in July from London Heathrow to Phuket.

The even better news is that from October 1, 2021, you will also be able to arrive into a number of other provinces, including Koh Samui



and Krabi, again without having to quarantine upon your arrival.

To celebrate the imminent reopening, we are highlighting some of Healing Holidays' top Thai wellness spots to visit for a yoga retreat. Their totally flexible booking conditions and industry-leading expertise and advice means that there has never been a better time to start planning your visit to one of the most results-driven spa destinations that there is.

ABSOLUTE SANCTUARY, KOH SAMUI

Lying in a peaceful area on the north-east corner of the island sits the recently-renovated Absolute Sanctuary, a simple but utterly wonderful spa. If you have ever dreamt of a yoga or Pilates holiday in Thailand, and are determined to detox, get fitter and lose weight but without it costing the earth, then this is the spa for you. This is a real rocket-charger. The yoga classes

are amongst the best you will ever experience, so much so that Absolute Sanctuary's yoga gurus train other yoga instructors from around the world.

SAMAHITA, KOH SAMUI

Set on the south coast of the Koh Samui, on one of the most ravishing, undeveloped parts of the island, lies this yogi marvel – Samahita. Brilliant yoga in all its forms is the order of the day here - both dynamic and restorative, as well as pranayama breath and meditation. The owner, Paul Dallaghan is a yogi master, teacher and scientist with over 30 years of experience and a cult global following, with his classes amongst the most sought-after in Asia. He even trains the trainers and nothing gives him greater pleasure than to see his pupils go deeper into their practice and grow further in their expertise.



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AMANPURI, PHUKET

The very first of the Aman resorts, Amanpuri set the benchmark for the style and luxury that this brand is famous for. Overlooking the sparkling Andaman Sea this serene beach resort offers the perfect escape from everyday life, blending harmoniously with the natural surroundings to ensure you feel completely immersed in this tropical haven. Offering holistic spa experiences at the Aman spa, as well as tailor-made yoga sessions, (choose from *hatha*, *vinyasa* flow laughter or SUP), meditation and plenty of other therapies and activities, a wellness retreat, (or immersion as they are referred to here), at Amanpuri promises to be a completely regenerative experience.



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AMATARA, PHUKET

Tucked away in a peaceful corner at the very bottom of the island, overlooking the glittering Andaman Sea, the Amatara experience is one of total wellness. They offer a variety of health and wellbeing programmes, including detox, weight management, fitness, yoga, stress management and even a family wellness retreat. Be sure to try their unique Thai Hammam experience, which brings together traditional Turkish and Moroccan bathing practices with the wisdom and gentleness of Thai spa therapies.



THANYAPURA HEALTH & SPORTS RESORT, PHUKET

Nestled in majestic hills not far from the airport, Thanyapura is dedicated to promoting active living and a healthy lifestyle through sports and wellness. Their health and wellness programmes focus on lifestyle modification, disease prevention and balance. Thanyapura optimises each individual stay with its world-class facilities, comfortable rooms, delicious and nutritious food and dynamic group classes, including multiple types of yoga.





SIX SENSES YAO NOI, KO YAO NOI

An idyllic hideaway located halfway between Phuket and Krabi, this stunner overlooks the breathtakingly beautiful Phang Nga Bay. Be sure to visit the Six Senses Spa, which promotes traditional Thai healing practices and incorporates the four elements of earth, water, fire and air to balance the senses. The resort also offers guests a wide variety of yoga styles, including aerial, *hatha* and yoga *nidra*.

KAMALAYA, KOH SAMUI

This lush and lovely holistic spa is a wondrous place to de-stress and to take a step back from the demands of life. With unparalleled views overlooking the southern coast of Koh Samui, the award-winning Kamalaya is a spa with a soul. Built around a tiny cave where Buddhist monks used to come to mediate, there is a real sense of spirituality and a genuine approach to healing. A stay here works wonders for the mind and body in equal measures. With uniquely-tailored programmes, delectable food, knock-out treatments and yoga classes in various styles, including *hatha*, *vinyasa* and *yin and yang*, it's no wonder Kamalaya has such a following.



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CHIVA SOM, HUA HIN

The Grande Dame of destination spas, Chiva Som has been transforming the lives of its guests for over 25 years and still remains triumphantly at the top of its game. It's brimful of world-class specialists in every area of health and wellbeing and offers a holistic approach to maximising physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing with its extensive range of treatments and yoga classes in various styles, including *flow*, *hatha*, *power* and *ashtanga*. The best of the best.

Frances Geoghegan, owner and founder, Healing Holidays first recognised a new demand for wellness from luxury travellers over 15 years ago. Having lived through a personal bereavement and her own health issues, she was driven to seek out the best international medical practitioners and finest alternative wellness experts. The result was Healing Holidays, an industry pioneer that has since propelled her to becoming one of Europe's leading wellness experts.

www.healingholidays.com