

BEAUTY

Find Euphoria: the luxury Greek spa retreat to visit now

Euphoric by name, euphoric by nature

By Skye McAlpine

30 August 2022



EUPHORIA RETREAT Courtesy of Euphoria Retreat

From the moment you step through the gates at Euphoria, you sense quasi-magical forces at work. The setting is nothing if not idyllic: a 19th-century villa sympathetically and thoughtfully restored into a romantic haven that is set into the mountainside just over the ancient town of Mystras.

All sweeping colonnades and sandy-coloured stonework: there is something about the serenity of the hotel's setting - the intoxicating scent of the herbs growing throughout the grounds; the orange tree groves; those sweeping, breath-taking views from every direction - all of it together, somehow, feels immediately restorative. The rooms have that same soothing quality about them: impeccably decorated in restful, quiet colours with luxuriously large, comfortable beds and the kind of crisp white sheets you just long to slip into. When you open the windows, you can hear the sound of cicadas chorusing all around you as the gentle mountain breeze wafts in.



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And then there's the menu of spa treatments which combines the very best from the western world of alternative medicine and traditional Chinese medicine: cupping, acupuncture, watsu, lymphatic massage, infra-red sauna, chakra re-alignment, five elements meditation and energy treatments... pretty much everything you ever needed (and didn't know you needed) to feel like the very best and glowingly healthy version of yourself. When you're not busy doing a treatment, taking a class or exploring the stunning surrounding area (it's a very easy walk into the village of Mystras and to the nearby Byzantine ruins; or a short drive to visit Sparta), you can while the days away sitting by the poolside; take a dip in the cold and hot pools in the spa (to reinvigorate your circulation); or relax in the steam area, which includes a cold plunge pool, ice fountain, tepidarium, Byzantine hammam, traditional steam room and Finnish sauna - all exquisitely decorated with marble, stone and mosaics.



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better able to face daily challenges, both mentally and physically. This sets the tone for everything from bespoke programmes to group classes (don't miss yoga with Liz, or the extraordinary hikes with Elias through the unbelievably picturesque surrounding mountainside) to the food, which is fresh, nutritious and gloriously abundant. You most certainly won't be hungry: the Euphoria nutritionist works with each guest to craft a culinary programme that suits their specific needs and goals, but typically each day starts with a delectable and perfectly apportioned Greek breakfast (be it thick, creamy yogurt dressed with nuts and fruit, buckwheat pancakes, or Euphoria's unforgettably good homemade granola with nut milk) and a tall, iced glass of water infused with local mountain herbs. Then, fresh smoothies and snacks are made for you and delivered to you. For lunch and dinner, some delectable variation on the theme of fresh fish, grilled or steamed, with wilted greens and Greek salads, served up in the restaurant.



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Above all, Euphoria is a reminder to take a kinder, more holistic, approach to our bodies: and though in-house nutritionists insist upon replenishing ourselves with antioxidants, rather than starving to lose weight, the pounds seem to fall off nonetheless. If you're feeling run-down, overwhelmed and exhausted then a few days at Euphoria will - without doubt - breathe life and joy right back into you.



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Healing Holidays (bealingholidays.com; 020 7529 8551) can arrange a 3-night Boost Your Energy programme from £1,099 per person sharing, including transfers, full board accommodation and inclusions of the programme

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