



**GOLDEN DOOR**  
CALIFORNIA, USA

**WEIGHT LOSS**

**THE WEST COAST CLASSIC SHINES ON SUPREME**

The most legendary health retreat in all America, if not the world. When it opened in the 1950s, Golden Door positioned itself as the glamorous younger sister to Rancho La Puerta (born from the same parents and located just across the border in Mexico). While Rancho La Puerta was modelled more on hippie commune-style living, Golden Door swiftly garnered a star following, with Elizabeth Taylor and Zsa Zsa Gabor enjoying its stratospheric levels of comfort, privacy and bespoke care. Individual attention is still the aim of the game, or at least as much as possible within the confines of a group retreat. Forty cocooning bedrooms are home to alpha females travelling solo (although the co-ed and men's camps are also book-ahead popular), and each night a personal schedule has suggestions to nudge guests out of their comfort zone. Mix adrenalin-calming yoga and meditation classes with revved-up cardio sessions, dance, archery, Pilates,

**YOU CAN FEEL THE ENERGISING BENEFIT OF MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND ALL-AMERICAN POSITIVITY - IT'S HUGE**

pottery, spinning – you name it, they offer it. In-depth consultations result in a timetable swiftly crafted and perfectly balanced to individual needs. The not-to-be-missed element are the hikes: each morning there's a choice of two, one more challenging than the other and both leaving the premises by 6am. There's nothing like being drenched in the dawn light of a Californian morning while summiting a mountain peak – it's affirmative. The silent walks, with the added element of t'ai chi, bond guests at a new level. It's a soul-searching experience, where you can feel the connection to the inner self. And that's what makes this retreat extraordinary. It's not just an expensive bootcamp. Yes, there are daily massages and facials, plus personal training sessions, manicures, pedicures and hot herbal wraps. But these are not what kick-starts the transformative effect, they are simply gloss. Golden Door's great attraction is its authentic heart. Everyone here is on their own personal journey and the support, new insights and fresh direction that guests glean are the fairy-dust. As well as the silent walks, yoga nidra is recommended for anyone facing difficulties sleeping, and walking the labyrinth, particularly by candlelight at night, is a chance to reflect on your life path. By the end of a week's stay here, soaking up the glory of the Japanese-style gardens and eating nourishing foods from the surrounding fields and kitchen gardens, you reach a state of palpable peace and balance. While European detox retreats are thorough, they can often involve a dose of lonely despair – here you feel the energising benefit of making new friends and all-American positivity. It's hugely stimulating. No starvation, no medical tests. Instead, you get sustaining meals at a table bedecked with fresh flowers and shared tales of the amazing session with the shamanic healer.

**INSIDER TIP** English shyness aside, try not to be too inwards-looking and join in – the more you give the more you will receive. And don't fret about what to wear for dinner: everybody dons a rather stylish Japanese robe. What a relief.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers a seven-night retreat from £8,390 per person, full board, including flights and transfers.



