

## Travel

### Overseas spas that pamper with a purpose

By Ruth Jackson

If you like the idea of achieving something on your summer holiday, but still want to relax, then a new breed of spa may be for you. Whether you want to learn a martial art, help the local community, or just meet new people, there is a spa out there where you can do just that.

#### Purescapes, Portugal

While many spas stick to pampering you and trying to fight the flab with extravagant body wraps, Purescapes is more of a “biceps boutique”, says Susan d’Arcy in *The Sunday Times*. Set in a beautiful villa surrounded by orange groves, this Portuguese spa is run by sport and nutrition coaches who are determined to send you home honed and toned. As well as nutrition consultations, guests can have one-on-one fitness training, or take part in self-defence classes. And when it all gets too much, you can relax with yoga or your free daily massage.

*A week at Purescapes, Portugal, costs from £1,899 per person with Wellbeing Escapes, including flights. For more information call 0845-602 6202, or visit [www.wellbeingescapes.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingescapes.co.uk).*

#### Aviva, Austria

If you like to take your spa breaks alone, but “don’t want to feel like an outcast as you tuck into your dinner for one”, then try the Aviva hotel in Hohenweg, Austria, says Vicky Baker in *The Guardian*. It is the world’s first singles hotel and spa, with plenty of activities that will help you break the ice and start mingling.



Azura, Mozambique: “relaxed but responsible” eco-boutique

The hotel has a beautiful alpine location and the spa has state-of-the-art facilities, including a caldarium, the hottest form of steam room, used in Roman times to cleanse the skin and body.

*Rooms cost from £68 per night based on one person per room. Call 00 43 7216 37600, or visit [www.hotel-aviva.at](http://www.hotel-aviva.at) for more information.*

#### Azura, Mozambique

If you would rather just lie back and relax, then Azura should suit you. This ‘eco-boutique’ has “a mood that’s relaxed but responsible”, says Stephen Bleach in *The Sunday Times*. With private butlers, personal plunge

pools and designer décor, this is one eco-friendly resort that doesn’t skimp on the luxury, but with the local community owning shares in it, this hotel truly does help its neighbours.

And as for the spa, the philosophy here is to keep everything local. Therapists use tribal techniques, including wooden massage sticks and local remedies and potions, including marula – a concoction said to knock years off you.

*A week costs from £3,234 per person, full-board with Rainbow Tours. Call 020-7226 1004, or visit [www.rainbowtours.co.uk](http://www.rainbowtours.co.uk) to learn more.*

### Lounging closer to London

If you need some pampering, but don’t have the time to head abroad, consider one of the many spas dotted just a short distance outside of London. Leave your London home at 8am and you can be relaxing in the hot tub at the Utopia Spa at Alexander House by 10:30am.

Based in a 17th-century house with more than 170 acres of gardens and woodland, just four miles from East Grinstead train station, the Utopia spa is the ideal place to escape London for the day. The spa has



*Spa days cost from £135, including a two-course lunch. Call 01342-714914, or visit [www.alexanderhotels.co.uk](http://www.alexanderhotels.co.uk) for more information.*

four pools, all with differing water temperatures and water sprays designed to massage your aches and pains away. And if the water isn’t enough to ease tension, they offer a huge array of treatments, from Japanese hot oil massages – great for the muscles and your skin – to a Chocolate Fondue Facial.