

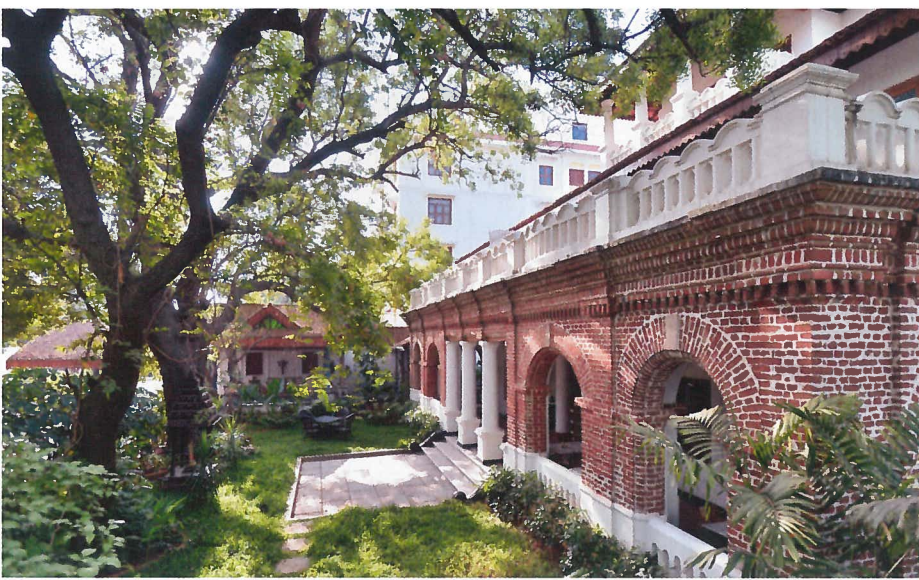


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THE ACOUSTIC HEALER

*Siddha and Sound Spa Program
Svatma, Tamil Nadu, India*

WHAT TO EXPECT This holistic spa harnesses ancient techniques from the temple-rich region of Thanjavur in southern India. You can go as spiritually deep as you like, with sound healing, yoga and meditation on tap, chanting with a Vedanta priest, astrology readings, and plenty of treatments led by reiki master, Beni Kikon.

NEED TO KNOW On arrival, guests have a consultation with resident naturopath Dr Aravindar to identify the root of any physical or emotional problems. You follow a strict vegetarian diet, which sounds restrictive, but when combined with sound healing and twice-a-day treatments (massages with oils, fresh-herb scrubs and floral baths), it becomes remarkably effortless. Svatma is home to the first sound-healing chamber in India: a deeply restorative practice where you lie on a bed with 33 strings, which tally with the 33 vertebrae in the spine, as a therapist plays to create an acoustic massage. After an hour, you wake up from a dreamlike state, feeling as if you have shed 10 years.

THE MUST-TRY Exploring the Navagraha astrological temples in Tamil Nadu was the most transformative part of my healing – the extraordinary spiritual energy put any small anxieties I had into perspective.

THE RESULTS An incredible experience that helped me reevaluate my exercise regime, emotional wellbeing and nutritional habits (I lost more than six pounds). But the greatest lesson I learned was the importance of being kinder to myself. *Delilah Khomo Seven nights from £2,450, including full board, the Siddha and Sound Spa program, flights, transfers and guided excursions; ampersandtravel.com*

Crystal Clear

Using crystals to support your spiritual balance is a healing tradition that dates back to ancient Egyptian times. Here, Azalea Lee, a crystal healer at Place 8 Healing in Los Angeles, shares the four crystals she believes everyone should have

FOR ANXIETY OR STRESS

“Haematite helps you feel centered when your mind and body are disconnected, especially when you’re anxious, stressed, have a lack of focus or need motivation. Keep it in your lap or somewhere close to your skin for the best effect.”

FOR COMBATING NEGATIVITY

“Black tourmaline is a powerful crystal that turns negative energy into a positive or neutral charge. Channel any bad feelings and squeeze the stone to absorb the negative energy from your body; the bigger the crystal, the better. It also protects you from harmful electromagnetic energy, so keep it by your cell phone and laptop.”

FOR WHEN YOU NEED COMFORT

“Rose quartz opens your heart chakra so that more love and harmony comes into your life. Carry rose quartz close to your heart, particularly when meditating.”

FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

“If you are coming to terms with difficult emotions such as grief or heartbreak, malachite is a great supportive stone. Place on a bedside table every night and make a silent agreement to start the healing process: ‘Help me to let go and release feelings that are of no use to me.’”

As told to Chanelle Ho

THE CHAKRA REBALANCER

Ila Wellness Retreat, Jumeirah Vittaveli, Maldives

WHAT TO EXPECT Taking time out to recharge is the premise behind this Rest and Replenish program, the brainchild of Denise Leicester, founder of Ila Apothecary (*ila-spa.com*). A yoga teacher and sound healer, Denise is deeply connected to the spiritual elements – which for a hardened London yogi who favors 90-minute sweat sessions on the mat, is the opposite of what I’m used to. Daily, two-hour bespoke treatments with your own dedicated therapist – either in the spa, where the massage bed overlooks passing sea life such as baby sharks and manta rays; or in the comfort of your own villa – are the main focus here, and a total restorative luxury.

NEED TO KNOW Food follows Ayurvedic principals (light and easy to digest) and my sattvic (energy-balancing) menu is delicious – lots of fresh island fruit and vegetables, warming spices, herbs, grains and pulses.

The ocean is irresistible, and with a private beach villa, there’s plenty of opportunity snorkel it all off too – take it to the next level by exploring and learning more about the reef with the hotel’s marine biologist, Emily.

THE MUST-TRY The chakra healing session brings a powerful shift. First a consultation determines where energy might be blocked, then a customized oil blend is used for massage, reflexology and reiki – sandalwood and jasmine helped to clear through my manipura (sacral) and muladhara (root) chakras, linked with anxiety, security, and stress. Finally oil is poured onto the third eye. I had some strange dreams that night, but felt much lighter the next day, and still do.

THE RESULTS I left fully relaxed, and although the muscles have re-tensed and the tan faded, a magnesium salt bath, plus Ila’s SOS body balm and Pearl Drops, recreates that Maldivian calm back home. *Farah Shafiq Seven nights from £3,965, including half board, all therapies on the five-day retreat, flights and transfers; destinology.co.uk*

