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TOP 10 NUTRITION-FOCUSED RESORTS

It was Greek physician Hippocrates who famously said, "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food". Ayurvedic science has always believed food plays a vital role in health and longevity and modern science agrees too. The good news for spa addicts is that health resorts and luxury hotels are increasingly tapping into the power of cuisine to be the icing on the cake – so to speak – of the wellness experience. Not only are we seeing restaurant menus boast award-winning organic, biodynamic and raw food dishes, but resorts are also engaging qualified nutritionists to design the menus and provide tailored advice to clients. The results are both delicious and nutritious.



Six Senses Destination Spa, Thailand

Six Senses Destination Spa at Phuket stands out from the very stylish Six Senses crowd as the brand's only dedicated wellness retreat. Its location on the private island of Naka Yai is also pretty impressive. Once you set foot on its breezy shores you'll have at your fingertips all the finest activities, facilities and cuisine to boost your health and wellbeing. Sign up for a multi-day integrated health programme where nutritional consultants will put your diet and lifestyle under the microscope. At mealtimes, choose between organic fishetarian spa and raw foods cuisine, which may sound limiting for some but in the hands of expert chefs is a rich, exciting and tasty bounty. Cooking classes are offered in the Cuisine Cave so guests can boost their nutritional know-how when it comes to their own kitchens. www.sixsenses.com



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The Farm, Philippines

Healthy cuisine is high on the priority list for this consistent award-winner. We've even given them our stamp of approval with a 2009 Asia Spa Award for Spa Cuisine. The Farm's commitment to nutrition is evident in its organic kitchen gardens, vegan menu planning, food preparation and cooking techniques. Meals are prepared using the highest organic, unrefined and wholesome, all natural ingredients. Even the water for cleaning and cooking is from a pure underground water source. Sign up for one of the new workshops for 'living food' preparation to become a nutrition expert at home. There are also intensive masterclasses for private chefs. www.thefarm.com.ph

The Spa Resorts, Thailand

These days it's not unusual to find organic kitchen gardens on-site at retreats and resorts that proclaim their passion for nutrition. But at The Spa Resort at Chiang Mai, this commitment is bumped up a notch with a 20-acre organic farm nurtured on its magnificent hillside grounds. Guests are invited to visit the farm to learn all the basic principles of organic farming and to taste fresh produce plucked from the rich soil. Resort chefs also run regular raw food classes and the Radiance Restaurant is an industry award winner. To learn how food is a natural cleanser, join a seven-day wellness programme and focus on fasting and cleansing techniques. Or enjoy a Raw Foods Delight retreat packed with daily meditation and yoga, spa therapies, pampering and activities, complete with a delicious raw food menu to cleanse your body as you relax. With five-star luxury at every step, willpower simply won't be an issue. www.thesparesorts.net



One World Retreats, Bali

Founded in 2002, One World Retreats offer getaways to suit yoga and pilates fanatics, adventure junkies, budding authors and those seeking spiritual development. On the nutrition front, try the six-day Purity Retreat for the Mind, Body and Soul based at a boutique eco-friendly retreat tucked in Ubud's lush jungle setting. You'll be treated to a gourmet "living diet" of fresh, cleansing foods so forget meat, dairy products, wheat, starches and processed products. Daily workshops will cover all you ever wanted to know about raw food, detoxification, super foods and the keys to radiant health. You'll also enjoy daily morning Qigong classes, a night-time purification ceremony and a visit to a traditional Balinese healer. www.oneworldretreats.com

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Jiva Healing, India

Jiva Healing is a boutique health retreat business run by a passionate, fun-loving and savvy team of professionals trained in yoga practice, nutrition and massage therapy. Try their three-day Juice Fasting and Detoxification retreat in Goa, India to give your body a break from toxins. The programme includes one-on-one nutritional counselling sessions, carefully planned meals (think nutrient-packed broths, juices and fruit and veg) and daily yoga and meditation sessions. The setting for all this good health is the unspoilt shores of Mandrem Beach on the Arabian Sea. www.jivahealing.com



Jirung Health Village, Thailand

Set over 28 acres of lush gardens, the Jirung Health Village is a peaceful hideaway full of peaceful prospects. The philosophy is to find your equilibrium and there are plenty of activities to help you achieve this, from Thai yoga to hatha yoga, tai chi, Vipassana meditation and reflexology. A variety of wellness programmes are on offer including Ayurvedic detoxification and de-stress retreats to restore balance to your life. Health assessments before and after treatments help to keep a mindful eye on your goals and achievements while personalised nutrition plans and health food cooking classes ensure your diet is given the overhaul it needs. www.jirungresort.com



Anantara Si Kao, Thailand

Perched on the peaceful Andaman Sea, this boutique five-star resort offers a seamless mix of style, pampering and wellness. If you're looking to shed some kilos, sign up for the six-day weight loss programme. In the hands of experts, you'll design nutrition, relaxation and fitness goals to help cut your weight and build a healthier you. You'll also be guided through tailored menu planning sessions to help you transition your diet seamlessly from resort life to home life. Resort chefs weave their magic with a focus on raw foods and only the freshest, mostly organic ingredients, often plucked straight from the resort's organic kitchen garden and Thai herb garden. www.anantara.com



Kahanda Kanda, Sri Lanka

As one of Sri Lanka's newer boutique resorts, Kahanda Kanda is a chic, private and peaceful addition to the hotel scene. The wellness focus is very strong with yoga and Pilates retreats, massage and spa therapies, and nutrition-based programmes on offer. Open your mind to new health approaches as nutrition experts share their knowledge of macrobiotics, healthy weight loss, detoxification, cleansing and alkalising. If you want to calorie count your meals, the resort chefs are happy to provide this service. Fruit and vegetables are grown organically on the property (that means just-picked fresh fruit juices for breakfast!), while other fresh produce is sourced locally to reduce food miles and support local businesses and farmers. www.kahandakanda.com



Ritz Carlton, Guangzhou

In terms of location, the Ritz Carlton in Guangzhou combines the best of all worlds – the exhibition centre, opera house, national museum and commercial hub are all within short walking distance. When it comes to food, the resort also has its finger on the pulse with in-house nutritionists on call to explain the benefits of food combining, healthy eating patterns and menu planning. Private spa consultants are also available to design spa wellness packages to suit your needs. Book the luxury Pearl Suite for a truly indulgent experience – it is complete with double lazy beds and a private pool. www.ritzcarlton.com



Chiva Som, Thailand

If you're serious about improving your diet and eating patterns but don't want to skimp on luxury, head to Chiva Som for some expert advice. The beachside health resort certainly knows lavish – whether with its bed linen or breakfasts. Multi-day retreats cover all aspects of healthy living, including weight loss, detoxification, inner peace, fitness and natural healing. A team of nutritional consultants, detox experts, naturopaths and other specialists is on call to help overhaul your diet and lifestyle. While all cuisine is cleansing and super tasty, expert chefs can further tailor dishes to cater to your detox or weight management needs while on retreat. www.chivasom.com

