

SPA SPY

Our health sleuth investigates the curative claims of wellbeing retreats worldwide

THE BEACH HOUSE, GOA, INDIA

The spa: Right on Sernabatim beach in southern Goa, the Beach House prefers to be called a "wellness centre" rather than a spa. There's a doctor, nutritionist and hypnotherapist on the staff, and treatments take place in thatched huts in the well-tended grounds.

The symptoms: A stressful lifestyle and general burning of the candle at both ends had left Spy lacking lustre, with dull skin, sluggish digestion and an unwanted bloated feeling.

The prescription: The seven-night Total Body Rebalancing package, a complete MOT for both body and mind that claims to leave the recipient cleansed and rejuvenated.

The procedure: Spy was mildly alarmed to learn her supposed spa holiday involved a strict detox - no solid food all week,



Goa way: the beach, beds and staff made up for a tough week

just fruit and vegetable juices and clear broth, accompanied by 28 different supplements and aloe vera shots. More shocking were the twice-daily enemas, thankfully self-administered, and designed to cleanse the colon. There were also two obligatory daily treatments at the spa, as well as sessions with a nutritionist and hypnotherapist, life-coaching and talks on wellbeing. As part of the package, Spy was tested for various diseases and conditions; bone-mass density, acidity levels and visceral fat were also measured.

The verdict: Not an easy week. It's a bit of an emotional roller-coaster,

with the first two days a particular struggle, involving headaches and weird dreams. Perfecting the enema technique took Spy a while, too. After the third day, however, things picked up, and by the end of the week Spy found her skin was clearer, digestion was back on track, she had shed a few pounds and felt much more energetic and positive. Visceral fat was revealed to have dropped over the week, too.

The medical opinion: "When doctors speak of detoxification, they usually mean coming off dangerous medication or poisonous substances such as excessive alcohol," says Dr

Eric Asher, medical director of Third Space Medicine in London. "Detox in this case means lightening the body's metabolic load by change of diet, gentle movements, massage and assistance with bowel-emptying. Some doctors think this is a waste of time, but patients pay good money for it because they feel better."

The feelgood factor: What made the week bearable was the location right on the beach, the spa treatments, and the dedication of the staff. The resort suites are luxurious, mostly spread over two storeys, with two bathrooms and the comfiest beds in the world. The main house has a vast open-plan sitting area, a terrace for morning yoga, and floor-to-ceiling glass doors looking out on to the ocean.

Details: Seven nights on the Total Body Rebalancing programme at The Beach House (www.thebeachhousegoa.com) costs £1,375 per person. Kingfisher Airways (www.flykingfisher.com) flies to Goa from London Heathrow from £520 return.

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