



FROM MEXICO TO TANZANIA: EMERGING GLOBAL WELLNESS & HOSPITALITY TRENDS



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As global wellness boundaries expand, people are seeking out unique experiences that cater to a diverse range of preferences.

The global wellness industry has been going through a profound transformation over the last few years, driven by a renewed focus on holistic health and wellbeing. In 2024, wellness trends reflect a deepening commitment to sustainability, personalization, and cultural immersion, as individuals around the world seek to integrate these elements into their daily lives.

From the serene spas of India to vibrant wellness festivals in Saudi Arabia, the industry is embracing innovative approaches and ancient practices to meet the evolving needs of a health-conscious world.

As boundaries expand, people are seeking out unique experiences that cater to a diverse range of preferences. Advanced technology is playing a crucial role in this evolution, enabling personalized health plans and enhancing the accessibility of wellness services, while authentic cultural traditions and indigenous healing practices are also popular for their timeless wisdom and holistic approach.

We asked a selection of top wellness and hospitality leaders around the world about what people are seeking out in their locales. Here's what they told us about the global wellness trends they're seeing in 2024.

INDIA: A DEEPENING EMPHASIS ON HOLISTIC WELLBEING



Rajesh Padinhakkara,
Spa Manager, Grand
Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty,
Kerala, India

In India, I have seen a deepening emphasis on holistic wellbeing, sustainability, and cultural immersion. Wellness retreats continue to proliferate across the country, offering travelers opportunities to rejuvenate through practices like yoga, meditation, spa treatments and alternative therapies. There's a notable shift towards eco-friendly and sustainable travel options, with travelers increasingly seeking out stays at eco-resorts and engaging in low-impact activities such as cycling and community-based tourism initiatives. Digital detox retreats are also gaining traction as individuals seek respite from constant connectivity, providing them with opportunities to reconnect with nature and themselves.

Moreover, wellness tourism expands beyond traditional destinations, with Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities emerging as new wellness hubs, offering unique experiences and promoting tourism in lesser-known regions. Medical tourism remains strong, with India's healthcare infrastructure attracting travelers seeking both traditional medical treatments and alternative therapies like Ayurveda, Naturopathy etc.

Personalization becomes paramount in wellness experiences, driven by advancements in technology, enabling travelers to access tailored fitness plans, dietary recommendations, and wellness coaching.

Mainstream travel integrates wellness amenities seamlessly, with hotels, airlines, and tour operators incorporating wellness offerings such as in-room fitness equipment and healthy dining options etc. catering to the evolving preferences of conscious travelers.





LATIN AMERICA: EMBRACING INDIGENOUS WELLNESS



Sara Jones, Managing Director/Editor, Spa & Wellness
MexiCaribe, Solidaridad, Quintana Roo, Mexico

In recent years, sound healing and vibrational therapies have gained significant traction in spas across Mexico and Latin America. The utilization of various sound and vibrational modalities, such as singing bowls, tuning forks, gongs, and sound baths, has become an integral part of spa services. These therapies are offered in dedicated sound therapy spaces within the spa or wellness facility, or even integrated into the hydrotherapy area. Furthermore, sound and vibration elements are now being incorporated into treatment protocols, with the inclusion of bowls, chimes, and ancestral instruments during massages, facials, and body treatments. The market for vibroacoustic spa beds has also expanded, leading to an anticipated increase in the integration of sound and vibration therapy into in-room spa and wellness treatments.

Spas in Latin America have embraced indigenous wellness practices and energetic healing modalities to create truly authentic and culturally enriching experiences for guests.

These practices draw upon the deep roots of indigenous traditions and wisdom prevalent in the region. Shamanic healing sessions, for example, encompass rituals, plant medicine ceremonies, energy work, and guidance from experienced healers.

The goal is to restore balance and harmony by addressing physical, emotional, and energetic imbalances within individuals. Additionally, indigenous herbal medicine is widely utilized, leveraging the healing properties of local plants and herbs in a variety of treatments like herbal massages, wraps, and baths. Indigenous healers (curanderos), drawing from ancestral knowledge, are often responsible for the preparation and administration of these remedies. Sacred ceremonies, such as the temazcal, hold significance in indigenous traditions and spirituality. These ceremonies pay homage to ancestral energies through offerings to Mother Earth, utilizing fire ceremonies and traditional musical instruments like drums and rattles, to foster a profound spiritual connection and promote healing on a soul level.

The wellness real estate market is witnessing dynamic growth globally, and Latin America is no exception. Numerous developments across the region are intentionally designed to prioritize people's health and wellbeing. These spaces are thoughtfully created to incorporate nature and sustainability, foster meaningful connections with others and create community, offer extensive wellness programming, and prioritize hygiene and safety through architectural features. Health-optimizing environments are achieved through air and water purification systems, circadian lighting, smart devices for medical data collection, and AI-powered technology. Expansive fitness and recovery facilities are also opening in the region, catering to large retreat groups, wellness travelers, extended stays, and individual and family vacations with a focus on fitness and wellness, boasting never-before-seen installations and stunning designs.



TANZANIA: SUNDOWNING & SOUND HEALING



Islam Mahmoud,
Spa Manager, Four
Seasons Hotels
and Resorts,
Serengeti, Tanzania

Star Grassing has become a trend here in Tanzania particularly in our zone, allowing people to immerse themselves in the night sky in pursuit of a better headspace. It's totally immersed in nature, allowing for utter relaxation and a sense of rejuvenation.

Safaris are also popular. It's very noticeable that the guests really resonate with the experience of being out on a game drive and stopping in the middle of nowhere, participating in a balloon safari or long ride discovery journey, and just listening and reconnecting with nature.

And the sundowner tradition in Tanzania, of stopping at a stunning view or our water hole to watch the sun set on another day and to relax with a favorite beverage, and to sit and reflect on life and the day's activities.

Finally, sound healing has become an increasingly popular form of treatment, combining different healing sounds and music to trigger a relaxation response, reduce chronic stress, and balance the whole being. It is a non-invasive way to restore the natural frequencies within the body.





THAILAND: A GROWTH IN WELLNESS TOURISM & PREVENTATIVE HEALING



Christaya Rodphongsa, Director of Wellness,
Rosewood Phuket, Thailand

Thailand is one of the world's top destinations and, after COVID, wellness came to the forefront and it influenced where guests chose to travel. We have seen a growth in wellness tourism throughout the country with a variety of preventive healing practices; especially with the uniqueness of Thai massage techniques coupled with the ancient knowledge of Thai medicine.

The Thai Government has supported education to raise awareness for more practitioners in physio, modern medicine or traditional Thai medicine, along with the combination of Thai herbs. Ancient Thai knowledge and practices, such as the Thai herbal heat treatment from Phao Ya (burnt herbs to let their ointment benefit heal the aching body through heat) or steam herbal compress, herbal pouch, and acupuncture have been reintroduced to a new generation.

Guests are looking for more therapeutic results from these alternative therapies. Phuket is one of the best tourist destinations with huge potential in the medical/wellness sector with the utilization of advanced technology and professional resources. In late 2022, the Thai Government approved the Andaman International Medical Center project aimed at transforming this leading resort island into a world medical hub. Aside from serving as a training center for doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel, the center will also function as a research & development base for healthcare and wellness. In a new term of long life span, Thailand will be a good choice to visit for both short and long term.

SAUDI ARABIA: WELLNESS FESTIVALS ACROSS THE KINGDOM



Laura Lishman, Director of Spa: multi-site, St Regis & Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Red Sea, Saudi Arabia

With the boom in tourism, conferences, sporting events and music festivals across Saudi, the wellness industry too is booming. We are seeing wellness festivals being hosted across the Kingdom now, wellness destinations being developed and built and individuals from all age groups taking an interest in their overall wellbeing. We can see this from the amount of new fitness facilities being opened, holistic classes being held, and spas that are being built, even standalone spas outside hotels. There is even a Saudi Arabian Wellness Association (SAWA) that has been created to connect and bring together wellness professionals and wellness enthusiasts.

There has been, and always will be, a market for the 'quick fixes' with regards to aesthetic wellness, however, what we are seeing more of now is people wanting to combine this with longevity treatments, body analysis, and mental wellbeing awareness

This is what is driving people to sign up to gym memberships, study their mental health, and book retreat-style vacations where they want to feel reenergized and rebalanced. The difference now is that they don't have to travel abroad to seek this, they have everything they need now, right here in Saudi, and this is just the beginning, there is plenty more to come.

With that said, professionals now need to look at their businesses and plan for longevity of their wellness spaces and offerings. Professionals need to be thinking 3-5 years ahead and build for growth, build for adaptations, and build for an ever-changing industry. Be creative with the designs that will allow for an easy change in the future.

INDONESIA: DEEPER, TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES



Kim Herben,
Wellness Director,
Desa Potato Head,
Bali, Indonesia

Nestled in Indonesia, Bali has been for a long time a unique haven known for its strong energy and deep ancestral connections. It's like a pharmacy for the soul, where visitors come to reconnect and rejuvenate. And it is already renowned for its spa centers and wellness retreats.

Lately, a new trend has emerged: seasoned wellness enthusiasts are now seeking deeper, transformative experiences. They crave a stronger connection with the island and its traditions. This interest has sparked a rise in age-old Indonesian healing practices like Jamu herbal medicine, sound healing, breath-work, and traditional Balinese healing.

Bali seamlessly blends traditional practices with modern wellness trends, offering various options for self-discovery. The focus is on balancing physical health, mental clarity, and a deep connection with Bali's lush, natural surroundings.



LONGEVITY IS BOOMING IN THE US & EUROPE



Anna Bjurstam,
Wellness Pioneer,
Six Senses, Global

Countries are becoming more and more proud of their own indigenous wellness treasures, such as TCM in China, Ayurveda in India, or other healing modalities in South America. That's something in which we're seeing a big surge. We're also seeing a strong trend where guests are seeking out native healing traditions. On the complete other end of things, longevity is booming much more in Europe and the US compared to Asia. Asia and that side of the world is more spiritual and connected to nature in everything they do. They're smarter than we are, because if your connected with nature, have community, and feel that you have a purpose, you're happier and healthier, and live longer than people who do IVs and injections and stem cells while stressing about it. But biohacking is obviously still something that's really happening.

China is also very focused on beauty. Beauty is booming and they're moving through beauty trends at super speed. They're really into natural cosmetics and cosmetic supplementation.



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