

An aerial photograph of the Blackberry Mountain Resort at sunrise. The resort buildings, featuring stone walls and dark shingled roofs, are nestled among lush green trees. Below the resort, a thick layer of mist fills the valley, with rolling mountains visible in the distance under a soft, golden sky.

ACROSS THE MAP



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Stone Labyrinth at Blackberry Mountain Resort
Credit: Ingalls Photography



D E S T I N A T I O N

WELL NESS

BY MARY BEMIS

As modern life moves at an ever-quickening pace, wellness travel has become a cherished way to restore balance, reconnect with oneself and recharge on every level. At its heart, wellness travel embraces a holistic approach to health, blending practices like yoga, meditation, spa therapies, energy work and nourishing cuisine. This thriving global movement beautifully underscores the growing importance of self-care and the power of preventative wellness.

According to a 2023 study released by the Global Wellness Institute, wellness tourism spending was projected to soar from \$868 billion in 2023 to \$1 trillion in 2024, and to \$1.4 trillion by 2027. This surge is fueled by a collective yearning for connection, healing and escape from daily stress, as well as a shift toward health-conscious lifestyles.

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EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF WELLNESS: A LOOK AT THE LATEST SPA TRENDS

IV DRIPS: INNER WELLNESS, DELIVERED

IV drips are fast becoming a spa staple, offering a quick and efficient way to restore balance by directly delivering nutrients like vitamin C, magnesium or B12 into the bloodstream. These therapies bypass the digestive system for maximum absorption, making them particularly appealing for those seeking hydration, recovery or an immunity boost.

While effective for certain conditions such as nutrient deficiencies or severe dehydration, their benefits may be less pronounced for those already maintaining a healthy diet. Administered safely by trained professionals, IV drips are generally low risk, though overuse or improper administration can lead to complications. Many spas pair IV therapy with complementary treatments, such as infrared saunas or lymphatic massages, to create a holistic wellness experience.

BIOHACKING: OPTIMIZING THE BODY

Biohacking has made its way into spa menus, combining technology and wellness for measurable, science-based results. Cryotherapy chambers, infrared saunas and pulsed electromagnetic field (or PEMF) therapy are becoming go-to options for reducing inflammation, improving recovery and boosting energy.

Advanced diagnostic tools like body composition analysis or metabolic testing allow spas to tailor these therapies to individual needs, adding a layer of personalization. While these innovations hold promise, many lack large-scale studies to fully validate their long-term efficacy. These treatments are generally safe when used responsibly, though individuals with certain conditions — such as pregnancy or heart issues — should proceed with caution.

RED LIGHT THERAPY: HEALING WITH LIGHT

Red light therapy has gained widespread attention for its ability to rejuvenate skin, reduce inflammation and promote cellular repair. This non-invasive therapy uses low-level red wavelengths to stimulate collagen production, alleviate chronic pain and enhance tissue recovery. While backed by promising research, multiple sessions are typically required to see significant results.

Spas have increasingly incorporated red light therapy into facials, post-workout recovery protocols and anti-aging treatments. It's safe when used as directed, but overexposure or improper use may pose risks, particularly to the eyes or sensitive skin areas.

ROBOT MASSAGE: THE FUTURE OF TOUCH

Robot massage is an emerging trend that marries precision technology with traditional massage principles. These machines provide consistent, deep-tissue pressure, making them ideal for repetitive muscle work. However, they lack the intuitive adaptability of human touch, which remains critical for addressing complex tension patterns. Spas are positioning robot massage as a complementary service, offering a unique experience while reserving therapists for more personalized, hands-on treatments.

BALANCING INNOVATION AND SAFETY

As exciting as these trends may be, it's important to remember that not every treatment is necessary — or suitable — for everyone. For example, IV drips can offer rapid relief but are best reserved for those with specific deficiencies. Similarly, biohacking therapies like cryotherapy and PEMF require careful consideration and professional



Soundbathing at Blackberry Mountain Resort
Credit: Sarah Rau

oversight to ensure safety and effectiveness.

What unites these trends is their focus on delivering measurable outcomes that blend science with the spa's nurturing environment. By thoughtfully and safely combining these innovations, spas and wellness centers are creating a new paradigm for wellness, which prioritizes not only how you feel in the moment but also how you perform and thrive long after you leave.

SPA GETAWAYS: DESTINATION WELLNESS

Today's travelers seek more than luxury. They crave immersive, transformational experiences like integrated fitness programs, Indigenous healing rituals and cultural exploration. In an increasingly complex world, wellness travel has become a lifeline that offers equilibrium and renewal.



To help inspire your next journey, Air Chicago has curated four destinations rich in wellness opportunities. Whether it's a beachfront retreat in Mexico, a chic spa in Paris, a working farm in Tennessee or an iconic resort in Arizona, a wellness experience awaits, with each offering a unique path to restoration and rejuvenation.

SCOTTSDALE

Three iconic resorts perfectly embody Scottsdale, Arizona's reputation as a world-class spa destination. Each resort brings its unique spirit to spas and wellness, making this desert destination east of Phoenix a beacon for those seeking transformation and restoration.

At **Sanctuary Camelback Mountain**, wellness feels deeply personal. Perched on the majestic Camelback Mountain slopes, this tranquil retreat combines breathtaking desert views with a

curated menu of holistic therapies. The award-winning Sanctuary Spa invites guests to embark on a transformation journey with treatments rooted in Eastern traditions such as tok sen vibrational therapy and soul connect therapy, alongside modern wellness practices. Outdoor yoga sessions, fitness classes and a soothing meditation garden enhance the serene experience.

The **Phoenician Spa**, nestled within the opulent **Phoenician** resort, offers a contemporary oasis for those seeking tranquility. Its sleek design — inspired by the surrounding desert — welcomes guests with wellness offerings including invigorating body scrubs, signature facials and healing massage therapies. The rooftop pool and relaxation area provide a stunning space to unwind, while the spa's integrated fitness center and Drybar services make it a one-stop destination for holistic self-care.

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Meanwhile, the **Fairmont Scottsdale Princess** redefines wellness with its innovative spa. From aerial yoga to acupuncture, the spa offers an array of therapies designed to energize and restore. Signature treatments include Havasupai Falls Rejuvenation, using desert minerals, as well as botanicals for ultimate hydration and renewal. Guests can also enjoy the private rooftop pool or join guided fitness sessions to ensure a wellness experience tailored to their needs.

TENNESSEE

Drawing on its rich natural beauty, soulful culture and a growing emphasis on holistic well-being, Tennessee is fast becoming a haven for wellness travelers. From the serene landscapes of the Smoky Mountains to the vibrant energy of Nashville and to the rolling hills of Franklin, the Volunteer State offers a unique blend of renewal and inspiration.

Blackberry Mountain, which is perched in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains near Knoxville, is a sanctuary for those seeking both adventure and deep restoration. This wellness retreat seamlessly blends luxury with nature, offering activities like forest bathing, mountaintop yoga and guided hikes that connect guests to the healing power of the land. The spa at Blackberry Mountain, known as the **Nest**, provides personalized treatments inspired by the rhythms of nature, such as bodywork using wildcrafted oils and soothing therapies tailored to each guest's needs.

In the heart of Nashville, **1 Hotel Nashville** brings eco-luxury to the city's wellness scene. With sustainability at its core, the property features thoughtfully-designed spaces that evoke nature and promote a focus on holistic wellbeing. Guests can enjoy farm-to-table dining, rooftop yoga sessions and curated wellness workshops. Additionally, the hotel's **Bamford Wellness Spa** offers treatments crafted with organic botanicals that include restorative facials, body scrubs and aromatherapy massages, all of which are designed to recalibrate and renew.

South of Nashville, the **Spa at Southall Farm & Inn** in Franklin provides a deeply immersive wellness experience inspired by the land itself. Set on a picturesque working farm, the spa draws from the surrounding area's natural bounty to create treatments that honor the cycles of the seasons. Guests can indulge in signature rituals featuring freshly-harvested botanicals, hydrotherapy experiences and grounding therapies designed to restore balance. The farm-to-spa approach reflects Southall's deep commitment to sustainability and creates a seamless connection between the wellness journey and the earth.

TULUM

Situated in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula not far from Belize, Tulum has long been a sought-after destination for wellness travelers, and is renowned for its serene beaches, lush jungles and deep connection to ancient traditions. Among its many wellness properties, three stand out for their unique offerings and commitment to rejuvenation. Together, these properties highlight Tulum as a premier destination for holistic renewal and self-care.

Yaan Healing Sanctuary, which is nestled within the luxurious **Be Tulum** resort, is a haven for the senses, with this holistic wellness destination drawing from Indigenous healing traditions to offer deeply restorative experiences. Guests can indulge in energy therapies, ancient Mayan healing rituals and personalized treatments. The sanctuary also features healing water circuits, including purified crystalline pools, a steam room and a sauna — all set in a lush jungle environment that makes it an ideal choice for those seeking to harmonize with nature.

Renowned for its eco-chic vibe, **Amansala Yoga & Wellness Resort** blends simplicity and wellness. Programs of this beachfront retreat include yoga retreats, fitness bootcamps and detox cleanses. Guests can enjoy daily yoga classes with views of the turquoise sea, organic meals designed to nourish and spa treatments that incorporate natural ingredients. Nurturing a supportive and grounding atmosphere for guests, Amansala is a favorite for solo travelers and groups alike.

Located between the beach and the jungle, **Kore Tulum Retreat & Spa Resort** offers an adults-only, all-inclusive wellness experience that combines relaxation with luxury. Its spa menu features therapeutic massages, hydrotherapy and beauty treatments, while yoga and meditation sessions are held in peaceful surroundings.

PARIS

Long associated with beauty, art and culture, Paris is also emerging as a destination for wellness travelers seeking refinement and renewal. From opulent spas to transformative treatments, the rich history of the City of Light is blended by practitioners with a modern approach to wellbeing. And three standout properties are redefining the concept of luxury wellness in this iconic city.

The **Dior Spa Hotel Plaza Athenea** offers an unparalleled experience where haute couture meets holistic care. Set within one of Paris's most elegant hotels, the spa draws inspiration from the legacy of the late

The Lodge Pool at Blackberry Mountain

Credit: Ingalls Photography



designer Christian Dior, creating treatments that are as cathartic as they are indulgent. Signature facials and body therapies are customized to each guest, and are paired with state-of-the-art techniques and luxurious Dior skincare products. The atmosphere is intimate and serene, and embodies the essence of Parisian sophistication.

The **Akasha Spa at Hotel Lutetia** is an oasis in the heart of Paris where wellness is reimagined through the harmony of the four elements — earth, water, fire and air. This expansive sanctuary invites guests to unwind in its tranquil 17-meter indoor pool, rejuvenate in the soothing saunas or energize in the state-of-the-art fitness center.

Rooted in principles of Eastern philosophy and enhanced by contemporary wellness practices, Akasha offers a truly holistic experience. Treatments are thoughtfully designed to nurture balance, while personalized options like invigorating massages and mindfulness workshops provide moments of deep renewal. A visit here is not just an escape from the city's pace, but an immersion into a realm of calm and connection that blends Lutetia's timeless elegance with wellness.

The **Chi Spa at Shangri-La Paris** is a holistic sanctuary that merges traditional Asian healing philosophies with Parisian elegance. Tucked away within the grandeur of a historic palace, the spa is devoted to restoring balance and harmony through personalized therapies. The Chi's signature aroma vitality massage combines ancient techniques with modern luxury, designed to release tension and revitalize the body. Completing the experience is a dip in the serene, light-filled pool, which offers a tranquil escape where renewal and inner calm take center stage.

Spa Day
Credit: Prostock-Studio



Blackberry Mountain Wellness
Credit: Ford Yates

