

THE AUSTRALIAN 

TRAVEL+ LUXURY

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10

WELLNESS
EXPERIENCES
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THE NEXT FRONTIER

Transformative experiences for a healthier you

CARLA GROSSETTI

From a dedicated naturopathy island in the Maldives to a longevity clinic in Singapore and hot spring trail in Japan, these 10 experiences reveal how wellness travel is evolving in 2026. The wellness industry has never been short on inventive ideas about how to help us feel better, look younger, move faster or sleep more soundly. We've dipped our toes into tanks of garra rufa fish that nibble away dead skin across Asia. We've submitted our faces to snail mucin, bee venom and leeches in the name of skin regeneration. But lately the conversation around wellness has shifted from novelty treatments to long-term health optimisation. And according to Global Wellness Summit's Future of Wellness report, released early in 2026, the \$6.8 trillion wellness economy is reshaping the way we travel. Here are 10 ways travellers can tap into the new wellness frontier.

1 Reset at Kuda Huraa in the Maldives

Kuda Huraa is best known as the main surf hub in the Maldives. But Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa – which has undergone several thoughtful renovations over the years – also draws wellness devotees in their droves. Add everything from acupuncture to antigravity yoga to your itinerary after a visit to URJA Naturopathy Island, a short dhoni ride from your beach villa and private pool on the North Male Atoll. Rooted in naturopathy's philosophy that the body has an innate ability to heal itself, URJA, which means vitality in Sanskrit, is led by a team of health professionals that designs personalised pathways for guests using tools such as micronutrient analysis, 3D postural scanning and analysis of organ function to achieve optimal health.

fourseasons.com



2 Build firm foundations in Canggu, Bali

Do your thoughts run wild long after your body has slowed down? A new co-ed retreat founded by the team behind Bali's Escape Haven might help you switch off. At Mana Sanctuary, the island's first performance-led recovery retreat, the focus is on restoring sleep, regulating the nervous system and rebuilding mental stamina using a mix of structured, science-backed practices and traditional healing methods. Start with a six-night Foundation Reset pathway, then move deeper into mindfulness with guided meditation to calm the mind. Instead of picking up a lolok (phallus-shaped carving) as a souvenir, leave Indonesia with a nervous system that knows how to regulate.

manasanctuary.com

3 Embrace traditional Chinese medicine in London

Traditional Chinese medicine has underpinned the offering at Mandarin Oriental since the brand opened its flagship hotel in Hong Kong more than six decades ago. This ancient wisdom is now being embraced as part of a wider framework of cutting-edge science at Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London. These days, the guest register at the hotel reads like a list of attendees from a biohackers convention thanks to the lure of the hotel's Longevity Reset Retreats led by Professor Song Ke. Tailored therapies include acupuncture and herbal remedies designed to restore balance to the body's qi.

mandarinoriental.com

4 Forest bathe in Kyushu, Japan

In Japan, wellness can be as simple as stepping mindfully through a forest carpeted in moss. Walk Japan embraces the practice of shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing, inviting travellers to slow their pace along the Oita Hot Spring Trail. Oita prefecture has the largest concentration of hot springs in Japan, with waters that vary from clear to murky, pungent and fizzy. This six-day, five-night gentle guided walk links the hot springs, following trails through farmland and forest toward the onsen towns around Beppu. Hikers will pass through valleys, hillside temples and wetlands rich with birdlife in the foothills of the Kuju Mountains before luxuriating in the onsens of an evening.

walkjapan.com



Chi Longevity; Bungo Ono Gorge, left; URJA Naturopathy Island, above

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Uga Prava; Samanea Wellness Resort, top right; Six Senses Fiji, below right; Asa Maia, bottom; Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, above left

5 Mindfulness and sound healing in Sri Lanka

Expect the closing soundtrack to your morning reverie at Uga Prava to be a looping medley of gongs, chanting and blessings, with sonic vibrations that travel from the belly to the chest. Set on a brilliant blue curve of coastline near Tangalle, this boutique retreat recently launched a signature Mindfulness and Sound Healing Journey led by a Buddhist instructor. Guests begin with slow breathing before surrendering to waves of resonant sound that ripple through an open-air pavilion. Forget crystals and hi-tech gadgets, it's back to basics with ancient rituals that celebrate this centuries-old practice aimed at resetting the nervous system.

ugaresorts.com

6 Book a longevity consult in Singapore

As populations age and chronic disease rates climb, a new kind of medical practice is emerging – one that treats ageing itself as a risk factor to be measured, managed and, where possible, slowed. Chi Longevity is Singapore's first private clinic focused on precision geromedicine, or longevity medicine. Founded by Professor Andrea Maier, the clinics in Camden and at the Four Seasons Hotel Singapore offer evidence-based diagnostics and personalised programs designed to slow biological ageing. Instead of waiting for people to get sick and then patch them up, the clinic aims to intervene before a disease is diagnosed.

chilongevity.com



7 Enjoy sweet dreams in Costa Rica

Hotel Belmar is perched like a resplendent quetzal's nest above the cloud forests of Monteverde, where the views stretch all the way to the Gulf of Nicoya. Mornings at this rural retreat begin with the swishing sound of wind through the trees as the sky spills colour on to the clouds and the light slowly unfurls across the forest canopy. Forget pillow menus, the hotel's Sleep Ritual program pairs herbal infusions, breathwork and gentle wind-down practices that will support your circadian rhythms better than a cloud-soft cushion.

hotelbelmar.net

8 Food as medicine in Fiji

Enjoy dining tied to your nutrition needs at Six Senses Fiji on Malolo Island. The resort offers personalised wellness screenings for guests who want to leave feeling better than when they arrived. The tailored longevity-led programs align menus with personal health and fitness goals – whether better sleep, a detox or improved fitness. Those screenings shape each stay, while organic produce drawn from the resort's garden and surrounding waters underpins the farm-to-table, dock-to-dish philosophy embraced by the luxury resort.

sixsenses.com

9 Embark on a holistic journey in Cambodia

Watching the sky turn from peach to plum while cooed in the Cardamom Mountains is one way to reset body and mind at the Samanea Wellness Resort. Set across 40ha of pristine forest in Cambodia's Pursat Province, the nature-immersed retreat comprises 32 private villas designed around three pillars: nutrition, sustainability and restorative experiences. Days might begin with treatments in the wellness sanctuary and end with Khmer dishes crafted from ingredients sourced from the resort's organic river farm. Beyond the grounds, guests can explore jungle trekking trails and enjoy wildlife encounters, including an opportunity to spot the rare Siamese crocodile by night.

samanea-wellnessresort.com

10 Take the plunge in Uluwatu

Asa Maia is a boutique sanctuary in Bali built around contrast therapy, one of the most popular wellness rituals on the planet. Guests at the jungle-clad retreat in Uluwatu drift between a sauna, steam room and plunge pool chilled to 75C. The experience is equal parts shock and surrender – shifting from pressure-cooker heat to water so cold it steals your breath. Between plunges, guests linger by the communal pool, share nourishing meals and watch the light filter through the trees while ensconced in traditional Javanese gladak houses. Expect a rush of endorphins that sharpen the mood, improve sleep and leave your body buzzing.

theasamaia.com

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NORFOLK ISLAND

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