



150 SPAS

**YOU NEED
TO VISIT BEFORE
YOU DIE**

By Devorah Lev-Tov

Lannoo

As our world becomes increasingly hectic and our lives become more stressful, the importance of self-care increases. Taking time for ourselves to unwind and actively heal our bodies, minds, and spirits is both bold and necessary. Spas are some of the best spaces for healing, relaxation, and self-care, and fortunately, the world has thousands of them.

From a solitary sauna concealed in the woods to an urban oasis soaring above a city's hustle and bustle, from a bathhouse harmoniously built around a naturally occurring thermal hot spring to a massive, state-of-the-art wellness center, the concept of what truly makes a spa a spa is wonderfully multifarious. A spa serves as a tranquil haven that shields you from the relentless demands of the outside world. It's a space dedicated to healing and rejuvenating your body and spirit, offering you the opportunity to pamper yourself, cater to your wellness needs and desires, and even experiment with the latest advancements in health technologies. But how does a spa accomplish its goal of helping you unwind, reset, and replenish your energy, and prepare to rejoin the world feeling revitalized?

Countless nations and cultures around the world have their own unique spa traditions, some of which trace back hundreds, and even thousands of years. Whether it's Icelandic thermal bathing, Nordic hot and cold contrast therapy, Hawaiian Lomi Lomi massage, South Korean beauty regimens, Japanese onsen soaking and shiatsu massage, Indian Ayurvedic principles and practices, traditional Chinese medicine, or Turkish and Moroccan hammam rituals—to name just a few—these diverse paths to the spa all share a common objective: rejuvenation and healing.

However you may choose to define the term “spa,” it is indisputable that there are those that stand out among the rest. Below, you'll find a global list of the 150 spas that merit a visit before you die, be it for their exceptional design, opulence, historical significance, philosophical approach, size (large or small), location, expertise, or methodology. Regardless of your destination, I wish you rest and relaxation.

Devorah Lev-Tov

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01

THE SPA AT SANCTUARY CHOBE CHILWERO

Chobe National Park, Kasane, Botswana

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

Indulge in a lush African-inspired treatment amongst the trees of the bush.

Deep in the heart of the bush, at the edge of Chobe National Park, the riverside haven of Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero boasts the only full-service spa along the Botswana safari circuit—and it's a spectacular gem. Featuring a unique tree-top treatment room infused with African design and therapies influenced by local culture, you're in for an authentic and serene wilderness wellness experience. Using premium, organic Africology products crafted from African plants like rooibos, aloe ferox, and marula, alongside the luxurious French marine-based line by Thalgo, treatment options include the Soul of Africa Conditioning Body Massage and the Signature Salutation, a lavish treatment that uses antioxidant-filled rooibos and lavender mud culminating in a full-body massage. Post-treatment, immerse yourself in the split-level swimming pool area, complete with indoor spa bath, Vichy showers, and a relaxation area. While you bask in this serene atmosphere, keep an eye out for elephants, as this park is home to the world's largest remaining elephant population.





02

SPA AT LA MAMOUNIA

Avenue Bab Jdid, 40040 Marrakesh, Morocco

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

This is one of the best of Morocco's legendary hammams.

Follow the lanterns down to the renowned Jacques Garcia-designed Spa at La Mamounia, a sanctuary in the heart of Marrakech honoring Moroccan culture and wellness practices. Here, there are three Moroccan hammams (two traditional and one private) adorned with colorful mosaic tiles and marble benches, making it a must to experience at least one. Hammam treatments begin with the application of a moisturizing blend of Moroccan black soap made from plant essences and olive paste (a nod to La Mamounia's 700-year-old olive trees). This is followed by a deep exfoliation using a Moroccan kessa exfoliating glove. The treatment continues with the healing powers of a ghassoul (mineral clay from the Atlas Mountains) body mask, made with local neroli and eucalyptus essences. Don't forget to set aside time for a leisurely swim in the famed indoor pool, an ode to Moroccan architecture with its marble columns, vibrant tilework, and painted ceiling.



03 SPA ROYAL MANSOUR

Rue Abou Abbas El Sebti, 40000 Marrakesh, Morocco

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

Traditional Moroccan therapies are combined with modern products for ultimate healing.



The heart of the Spa Royal Mansour is the pristine all-white atrium, where intricate lattice-work iron walls, crafted in the tradition of Moorish-style moucharabieh, cast fragmented light and create a play of patterned shadows. Ten marble and wood treatment rooms surround the atrium, while a glass-enclosed pool and traditional marble hammam are off to one side. The spa offers hammam treatments that include black soap wraps, ghassoul (mineral clay from the Atlas Mountains) treatments, kessa glove exfoliations, aromatic orange blossom soaps, relaxing steams, and floral waters. In addition to these treatments, Spa Royal Mansour provides facials featuring Moroccan argan oil and skincare products from the Dr. Bergner line, marma massages, and watsu water therapy in the pool's hot basin. For those seeking a more holistic approach, several personalized wellness programs encompass everything from nutrition and fitness to therapeutic treatments guided by a professional consultant.

04

HOT SPA AT BABYLONSTOREN

Klapmuts - Simondium Road, 7670 Simondium, South Africa

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

The combination of farm-fresh ingredients and a hydrotherapy area is perfection.



Set in the center of a sprawling farm estate, the Hot Spa at Babylonstoren harnesses the natural botanical riches of the South African landscape to craft a range of treatments that feature Babylonstoren's own unique blends of oils, balms, and lotions. The spa's bamboo pavilion is situated amidst tranquil greenery, and as a fully operational farm estate, Babylonstoren grows its own native aromatics onsite. From waterblommetjies and roses to clivia and fynbos, these botanical treasures are meticulously transformed into essential oils in the spa's own floral distillery, infusing their essence into the spa experience.

Beyond the pampering treatments, guests can tour the botanical fields and try their hand at creating their own handmade soaps and scrubs. The spa's centerpiece is the aqua area, which features a large pool and two circular vitality pools—one hot, one cold. These pools are connected by a narrow central pool, allowing you to leisurely swim between the contrasting temperatures. As you reach the mosaic-lined alcoves, allow the invigorating flow of ice-cold water to cascade over you before reveling in the sauna or salt room, meticulously crafted from raw pink Himalayan salt blocks. Babylonstoren recently introduced hammam and rasul treatment rooms, inspired by the traditions of ancient Arabian public baths.

05 THE WATERS OF ROYAL MALEWANE BUSH SPA AT ROYAL MALEWANE LODGE

F5J7+RM 1380 Amanda, South Africa

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

You can indulge in Africa's finest therapies while surrounded by the magnificent South African bushland.

Surrounded by the stunning landscapes of Greater Kruger National Park, the Waters of Royal Malewane Bush Spa is a true oasis. Guided by a philosophy rooted in the therapeutic properties of water, the spa treatments are enhanced by mineral-rich water sourced from an underground stream that flows through the reserve, then meticulously filtered through limestone and granite. For instance, the signature Royal Face and Body treatment begins with a luxurious full-body scrub in the African baths, followed by a body wrap. After that, there is an hour-long full-body massage, culminating in the rejuvenating African Essential Facial. The spa's three treatment rooms are positioned around the central courtyard, which features a heated lap pool. Additional facilities include a steam room, hot and cold African Baths, and four pre- and post-treatment casitas to relax in.







06

THE SPA AT THE TWELVE APOSTLES HOTEL & SPA

Victoria Road, Camps Bay, 8005 Cape Town, South Africa

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

You can experience a massage in the salt-tinged air, surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of the ocean and mountains.

Perched at the very tip of the African continent, with Table Mountain as a majestic backdrop, the Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa offers magnificent panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean. The spa features a restorative indoor space, with seven elegant treatment rooms, a rasul chamber, hydrotherapy pool, plunge pool, a saltwater floatation pool, and a well-appointed relaxation lounge. For a truly indulgent experience, book one of two mountainside spa gazebos, where you can take in incredible vistas as you indulge in a treatment such as the Apostles Touch. This signature treatment includes a waterless scrub using calico bags infused with essential oils and fynbos, followed by a massage utilizing heated shells and stones, and a soothing scalp and foot massage. The spa uses a select range of products including Elemis and Tata Harper, along with B|Africa, a unique blend of indigenous African plant extracts and natural sea resources, utilized in all spas within the luxury Red Carnation Hotels group.



07 THE OCEAN SPA BVI

White Bay, Jost Van Dyke, British Virgin Islands

TO VISIT
BEFORE YOU DIE
BECAUSE

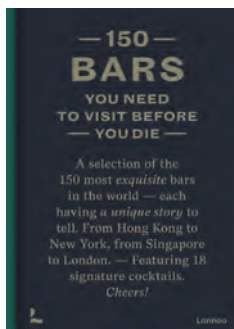
You can float amid the cerulean waters of the Caribbean while receiving a mindful massage.

Float your troubles away at one of the Caribbean's only floating spas, Ocean Spa BVI. Anchored in the turquoise waters of White Bay off the coast of Jost Van Dyke island, the spa is accessible by complimentary dinghy water taxi—or if you're feeling adventurous, you can boat, paddleboard, kayak, or swim there on your own.

Built primarily from salvaged lumber after Hurricane Irma in 2017, the floating wooden spa is a petite 550 square feet, but with salty ocean air and turquoise water in every direction, what else do you need? Best of all, rectangular windows under the massage tables allow you to gaze into the water and watch colorful fish swimming below during your treatment. Only one treatment is offered, but it more than satisfies: a seawater and herbal oil foot soak followed by a 60 or 90-minute massage, plus a rum cocktail.



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Devorah Lev-Tov

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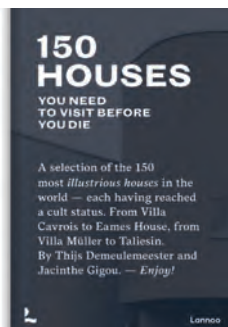
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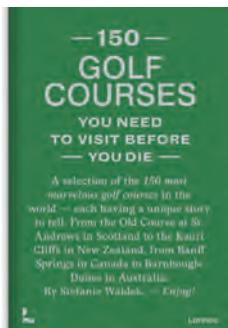
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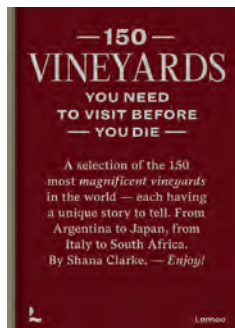
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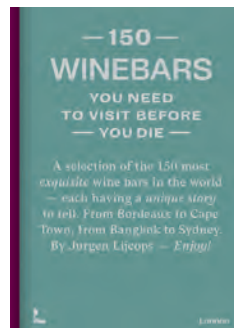
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