

TATLER®

A woman with freckles is lying on a white towel, wearing a black headband with gold patterns. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

SPA GUIDE 2019

IN ASSOCIATION WITH Healing  Holidays AND ESPA



THYME
Oxfordshire, England

Gorgeous Thyme – a former Cotswold cookery school turned country-chic bolthole – has another trick up its sleeve: the Meadow Spa. Past clusters of cottages, the yoga barn and the outdoor pool, this sunny outbuilding has charm in spades, with pea-green walls, Mediterranean tiles and blousy foliage spilling from vases. Therapists wearing linen aprons chop herbs pulled straight from the soil for teas and infusions; rooms are charmingly named (a facial in ‘Queen Bee’ takes on a new significance). It’s also the first spa to offer cossetting Aurelia treatments, packed with natural ingredients. Probiotic-based skincare calms sensitivity and restores skin to former happiness; prescriptive massages are intuitively performed, promising clarity of mind for the weary or relief for expectant mothers. Thyme’s newest restaurant, Ox Barn, serves local produce in light dishes such as pea and kefir hummus with crudités, or berries steeped in elderflower. The house speciality – prosecco with home-grown rhubarb cordial – will be your downfall. *Double, from £300, including breakfast (thyme.co.uk; 01367 850174).*



HÔTEL
CRILLON-LE-BRAVE
Provence, France

Ah, Provence. Swaying cypress, powder-blue shutters and bric-a-brac buildings all tumbling down the steep streets of Crillon-le-Brave. So mount a *velo* and get exploring. Mont Ventoux, famous for hosting the Tour de France, is on your doorstep, and nothing beats a bicycle for getting acquainted with the local attractions (the domaine of Châteauneuf-du-Pape is 20 miles away). Back at the hotel, the Bamford Spa beckons: a former stable has been remade in creamy stone, its original troughs filled with lavender. Try the signature



Crillon Douceur, which sees your skin polished with shea butter and sugar before you’re given a top-to-toe frisk using rosemary-scented oil. The hotel’s two restaurants serve Mediterranean food with a light touch (salade Niçoise, homemade compotes and detoxifying juices). Meditation comes at *apero*, where you can sit at a table on the terrace as the sky turns pink, watching the sun set with a bottle of the palest Provençal rosé. *Double, from £300, including breakfast (crillonlebrave.com; +33 490 656 161).*



THE TAMARA KODAI
Kodaikanal, India

You might not imagine a foodie awakening in a 160-year-old Jesuit monastery, but there’s more to the Tamara Kodai than meets the eye. It’s the first ultra-luxe resort on the green-mantled hills of Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu, its spartan spaces turned into stylish suites with pretty patios. Breakfast is served in the erstwhile library: fluffy naan with local cheeses and tart jams made from orchard fruit (spy the plum and pear trees from the terrace). The spa, with its lotus-shaped pool, is rooted in Ayurveda – cue marmapoint massages and oily Shirodhara rituals. But local flavour can also be found outside the old walls. Excursions, led by suave former Greenpeace campaigner Syed Mehaboob, range from treks along the former colonial courier-dispatch path – where leopards lurk – to forest visits to discover medicinal flora and fauna. *Double, from £210, including breakfast (thetamara.com; +91 807 107 7701).*

THERAPISTS WEARING LINEN APRONS CHOP HERBS PULLED STRAIGHT FROM THE SOIL

ANDRONIS CONCEPT
Santorini, Greece

Andronis Concept is the hot ticket in Santorini: walls carved from sandstone, infinity pools at every turn, shocks of pink bougainvillea ablaze in the sunset. It’s impossible to take a bad picture. But the newest property from Andronis Exclusive (there are five further hotels dotted around the island) is all about living well. The recipe is simple but effective, with good food, soporific treatments and endless sea views. The food (prepared



without salt and sugar, not that you’d know) sings with local herbs, and breakfast brings just-baked bread, juicy figs and honey. The cool stone spa follows suit: a powerful deep-tissue massage with olive oil melts muscles; a yogurt mask leaves limbs strokeable (that’s the skin-smoothing lactic acid). And nothing sharpens the mind after a night drinking the local red like an iced espresso and a Vinyasa session overlooking the cacti-studded fields. *Double, from £315 (andronisconcept.com; +30 2286 036737).* □