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WELLNESS &amp; SPAS

## Struggle with sleep? This wellness trend could be the answer to your slumber problems

If your idea of great nightlife is uninterrupted REM, you'll love these nine hotels, glamping sites, and sleep spas

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Sleep tourism may sound like a fluffy concept, but this is a wellness trend that is well and truly taking off. How many times have you booked a holiday with the intention of snoozing by the [pool](#) or utilising the break from work to catch up on your [beauty](#) sleep?

Sleep tourism goes one step further than encouraging guests to simply switch off and relax, offering [wellness](#)-led experiences focused on making long-term improvements to sleep. From a basic level of offering pillow menus and sleep-inducing herbal teas to more specialist programmes, sleep-specific spa treatments, partnerships with leading sleep experts, and even smart beds designed to reset your circadian rhythms, hotels are tapping into a growing trend for sleep retreats.

"There is no doubt that sleep-focused holidays are one of the biggest trends in the travel industry," muses Jules Perowne, CEO and founder of [Perowne International](#). "It is no longer enough for a hotel to just offer wellness on the side; they need to embrace it by offering a more holistic approach to wellness, with a specific goal in mind – and the most in-demand goal currently is improved and enhanced sleep".

The quality of our sleep can affect everything from our mood to our physical health; it's essential that we get enough of it for our basic day-to-day functioning. Sleep consultant at Beyond Insomnia, Sarah Wilde, explains that "sleep is one of the key pillars of good health and performance, and both will suffer with prolonged lack of sleep. Two big potential problems of persistent lack of sleep include low mood developing into depression and weight gain due to hormonal effects."

Snatching forty winks isn't enough. We (adults) need a solid seven-to-nine hours of uninterrupted sleep each night – something few of us achieve. [The results from a survey of 2,000 UK adults carried out by Opinium on behalf of the Mental Health Foundation](#) suggest that the average UK adult only gets three days a week of good quality sleep, with one in seven adults saying they don't get the sleep they need to function well on any day in a typical week. It's little wonder that the [Global Sleep Tourism market is forecast to grow by over \\$400bn by 2028](#).

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Malminder Gill, Harley Street hypnotherapist and sleep expert, attributes the growing trend for sleep tourism to a desire for wellness-based travel with long-lasting effects. “Guests want more than just a bed for the night; they want an experience and something that enhances their wellbeing. Better sleep has numerous positive effects on the body and psyche.”

Sarah Wilde adds, “The rise of sleep tourism is a fascinating result of our newfound interest in getting good-quality sleep. Whether you are going to have your sleep monitored or ensure you have the optimal surroundings for sleep, it shows how much we have finally started to value it.”

## What is a sleep retreat?



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A sleep retreat is a stay at a hotel, spa or wellness clinic centred around helping you to get the best night's sleep. This could be as simple as offering a variety of bed sheets and pillows to choose from, but there is now a wide variety of sleep-focused stays all around the world providing comprehensive multi-day programmes guided by specialists and clinicians, aimed at improving your sleep long-term, not just for a couple of nights.

## How do sleep retreats work?

**Hotels** with dedicated sleep programmes allow guests to focus more intently on improving their sleep and sleep health away from the distractions of everyday life, often over several days or weeks. Those with a diagnostic component to their programmes will work to determine the root cause of a guest's sleep difficulties, investigating everything from barriers to drifting off to how deeply you sleep, before suggesting treatments and therapies unique to you.

Although everyone is different, there are common denominators that are frequently the culprits of bad sleep. “Typically, stress and poor sleep are associated,” Malminder notes. “Stress may impair the quality of your sleep and your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. Insufficient sleep increases stress, producing an unbreakable cycle.” Simply removing yourself from everyday stresses by taking a holiday can help, but sleep retreats tend to focus on digging a little deeper and tackling the source of the issue.

Services beyond diagnostics may be offered, including low-intensity activities such as yoga and walking, alongside meditation, reflexology and massages. Bathing rituals, hydrotherapy, acupuncture and other holistic treatments are often included in sleep tourism packages. Meanwhile, some hotels have kitted out their bedside tables with sleep trackers (or other forms of wearable smart tech) to allow guests to measure their breathing and movements throughout the night.



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## Are sleep retreats worth it?

With all this in mind, taking the time to get a handle on one's sleep and identify and tackle one's own personal sleep issues is certainly something worth prioritising – and is perhaps best addressed outside of one's own bedroom.

"I think holidays that focus on wellbeing can be really helpful to destress from a busy life. And if you can do so in a bed that is at least as comfortable as the one at home, so much the better. Being in a luxurious setting and learning more about your sleep could be really enjoyable and helpful", offers Sarah. "However, if you are suffering from insomnia, it is unlikely to help in the longer term. This is because you need to address your sleep problems at home, in the context of your everyday life. The gold-standard approach to treating insomnia (as recommended by sleep doctors internationally) is using cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBTI), which addresses sleep-defeating habits and beliefs so that you sleep better for the long term."

Presumably, a key factor regarding how much a sleep retreat will benefit you is dependent on your own individual sleep issues. A more medical-led sleep programme led by experts in their field is more likely to help with long-term, complex problems than a hotel that simply provides a restful environment. For those suffering from restless sleep, the following retreats could be a good starting point in your pursuit of a full, undisturbed eight hours rest ...

## The best sleep retreats to try

## Euphoria Retreat, Mystras, Sparta, Greece

Leading wellbeing spa hotel, Euphoria Retreat, is tucked away in the Peloponnese mountains, surrounded by private forests and ancient archaeological sites. The [Euphoria Optimal Sleep Programme](#) offers an advanced medical sleep retreat, focusing on diagnosing and addressing the causes of sleep problems, subsequently restoring your body's natural sleep rhythms for long-term solutions. Retreats last a minimum of seven days, guiding participants through sleep assessments and medical diagnostics before presenting you with personalised action plans that include everything from nutritional advice to therapeutic treatments.

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