“Allow your senses to be healed by the beauty of your surroundings”

There’s nothing quite like good old nature to heal the soul. The sight of a canopy of trees stretching out into infinity, the sound of the wind whispering secrets, or majestic mountains rising to snow-covered peaks and vanishing down towards colourful valleys can fix a broken heart and cheer up a melancholic soul. It’s not just nature’s sights that heal; her offerings, too, can do a world of good. So if nature and natural products are swapped in one, wouldn’t the complete rejuvenation of the mind, body and soul be guaranteed? We went on a trek of some top spas and found that while the treatments, varying from massages, scrubs and wraps to reflexology, all use natural products and do a world of good, even the landscape that surrounds beyond these spas is just as therapeutic.

The Khyber Spa by L’Occitane
Gumla, Jammu and Kashmir

Take the wellness quotient to its peak at 6,263 ft above sea level. The Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa in Gumla’s serene setting, tucked in a thick forest of pine trees, while the Alhambra Peak towers above. The landscape around wouldn’t look out of place in the Chronicles of Narnia.

We began our journey at the Khyber Spa by L’Occitane, gazing, as we entered, at the winter wonderland that lay beyond. It’s exquisite even in spring and summer, when wild flowers blossom till the horizon. We were welcomed with hot and cold towels infused with lavender and offered a detoxifying drink of ginger, lime, honey and mint that traced a warm path down our gullets. In the tranquil treatment room, our pillows, too, were soothed in the goodness of nature—sprayed with a mist enriched with lavender, geranium and tea tree perfume. The spa offers French-inspired

Natural therapy
FOR THE SOUL
LET ORGANIC PRODUCTS WORK THEIR MAGIC ON YOU AS YOU GONG IN THE LONG DAYS. ENJOY THE LANDSCAPE AT THESE LUXURY HOTEL SPAS, WHERE THE SETTING IS A VITAL PORT OF THE HEALING PROCESS. GUSTAVO AND JEROO DRAI TAKE YOU ON A TOUR.

The snowy peaks of the Himalaya that reflect the colors of the most beautiful of the trees at the Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa in Gumla.

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Therapies like the Revitalising Aromatherapy Massage for which Swedish, Lomi Lomi and Balinese techniques are also used. A special oil, enriched with a blend of mint, pine and rosemary, was moisturised to our skin. Soon we began to feel like scented blossoms floating in the forest! The spa’s Almond Detoxifying Balance is said to be ideal for people undergoing stress or jet-lag, while the vitamin D detoxifying Balance is a facial that combines spring water from Provence with organic plant extracts. The heated waters of the glass-enclosed swimming pool served as a great relaxation post treatment. For more information, visit www.khyberhotels.com

Omä Spa • Bandipur, Karnataka

Omä Spa is nestled in theSilai Bandipur, a luxury resort on the fringes of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Nestled in a baha of forested green, with the misty hills of mist, rising like a rippled wall of granite, nature is the supreme therapist and its delicate touch strokes further enhance the spa’s wellness quotient.

A delight to stream in the sun rays, timber floors underfoot and the woody colours in the decor add to the natural appeal. At the spa, we found that nothing comes out of a bottle and all the ingredients are directly slathered on. We opted for the Omä Signature Massage and found ourselves floating in a fragrant cloud of coffee extracts blended with the fugitive scent of nourishing oil.

On another occasion, we relaxed with an oats, citrus and honey scrub, which was energising after a dusty and tired game drive. The freshly created scrub emitted a fragrance that was as potent as the therapy itself! Oats and almond served as cleansing, wild ginger and sandalwood make for a scrub, while hot volcanic stones do a tango on your back... and a breezing fennel tea at the end serves as a pick-me-up. All this while, the forest passes in its healing vibe. For more information, visit www.themasti.in

Suján Spa • Jaigarh, Rajasthan

The stark, even unrelenting dawn embraces this spa created by Laiue and Eto. Enclosed in a walled garden at The Suján Jaigarh, with the imposing Thar Desert surrounding it, beyond the iconic Jaigarh Fort, this Relais & Chateaux hotel property has been inspired by the royal caravan sites of Rajasthan and occupies just 20 acres of the 100-acre private wilderness.

Swish tented suites with private spas, an infinity swimming pool, and luxurious lounge and dining tents notwithstanding, one can hear and feel the primal desert as it whispers to itself, the sands shifting and rippling in a hushed sinatra. The spa has four treatment rooms under a canopy. Luxurious touches like wood floors and artefacts give this oasis of wellness an Arabian Nights feel.

This spa uses organic Ayurvedic products sourced from the Thar that are mixed with herbs. During the Sand Scrub and Suján Massage, for instance, a blend of raw sand, organic honey, tea leaves, chamomile, ginger and essential oils softly exfoliates the skin. This is followed by an indulgent Suján massage. If you opt for the Sand Scrub and Wrap, after your body has been thoroughly cleansed, you will be wrapped in a mixture of raw...
PRANA

Our spa session commenced with a foot bath of coconut milk followed by a foot scrub with natural cane sugar. We lay down on the massage table, listening to the hypnotic soundtrack of fifty surf lapping champagne-coloured sand. While the pure Fiji body butter worked its wonders on our skin, glimpses of paradise floating before our eyes worked its magic on our soul. Pure Fiji products combine nut and floral extracts with coconut oil and milk in a secret formula known only to the Pacific Islanders. The highlight on the spa menu is the Fijian Bombo massage, a technique handed down over generations. The body is expertly kneaded and pummelled by the masseuse’s elbows, knees and even feet!

If this is too much to handle, try the tropical massage, which fuses Fijian and international techniques, or the Dilo Rescue Whip which hydrates and repairs sun burnt skin. And in the deep seclusion that the spa and resort offer, feel your stresses and worries unfurl and absorb the beauty around you through every pore. For more information, visit royaldavui.com.

petals, rose oil, vetiver, black pepper and sandalwood.

To combat the anity of the desert, we savoured a soft oil massage that combined tulsi, basil, saffron and honey, melded into a sesame-based oil.

After the spa sessions, allow your senses to be healed by the beauty of your surroundings and the melancholic melodies of the Mangape'akea tribewomen, whose songs have floated on the desert air for centuries. For more information, visit www.sajjauray.com/the-sashkap.

Royal Davui Spa • Viti Levu, Fiji

Royal Davui Island Resort is perched on a rocky island and draws upon the dreamy beauty of the Fijian archipelago.

This is an Adult Only retreat—so you can have the kids behind—the Fiji’s stunning Bega lagoon off the main island of Viti Levu. The boutique resort is sculpted into a hill and perched over the shimmering lagoon. The Royal Davui Spa makes the best of its magical location, with vast suites overlooking an expansive deck and open to the shifting colours of the sea.