Thailand and Bali are Top Destinations in Asia for Wellness Travel

From learning to make your own Thai herbal ball to meditating with a shaman, Airbnb guests are finding one-of-a-kind ways to increasingly prioritise wellness while traveling

In 2018, international tourist arrivals reached 2020 projections two years ahead of schedule, with growth being driven by global trends such as wellness tourism. Wellness travel is worth US$639 billion globally and Airbnb have seen wellness related Experiences spike more than 500% from 2017 to 2018, globally, with notably strong growth among seniors (ages 60+) and Gen Z and millennials (ages 18-24) with more than 800% growth in both age groups.

In Asia, cities experiencing the most significant growth in wellness Experiences are Bali, Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Bali tops the list for cities prospering with wellness Experience supply with more than 7,400% year-over-year growth*. Following closely after Bali, Thailand is one of the top 20 global destinations dedicated to providing a holistic and rejuvenating holiday and recently Thai authorities advocated that traditional Thai massage receive world cultural status.

Thailand's drive to become a 'Wellness Hub' were recognised in Travel Weekly UK's Best Destinations in The World survey when Thailand was named number one for Best for Spa & Wellness in the world.

As visitors to Thailand look for more authentic experiences and a healthier way of travel away from areas of over tourism, the popularity of wellness tourism is growing, evidenced by the growth of Thai massage and wellness Experiences on Airbnb, especially in urban centres such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai where travellers are looking for a more wellness-oriented travel experience.

Airbnb Experiences also provide an opportunity for wellness entrepreneurs who are finding innovative ways to be part of the tourism economy, and sharing their knowledge of the cultural traditions behind Thai wellness with guests from around the world.

"We are excited to support a new wave of entrepreneurs in the local community and as the travel industry continues to grow, Airbnb promotes local tourism that is authentic, diverse, inclusive, and sustainable. Our Airbnb hosts are creative entrepreneurs passionate about their local culture, and Airbnb Experiences are a great way to unleash economic opportunity for people to monetise their passions and talents. Our greatest assets are time and potential, and Experiences is a way to unlock that," says Mike Orgill, General Manager of Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

For Kanokwan, she took over her mother's massage centre after taking a business degree and wanted to find innovative ways to engage her customers and help them understand the Thai culture better. Her Airbnb Experience, Make your Own Thai Herbal Ball, lets her impart her knowledge around various infused oils and their properties as you learn to make your own Thai herbal ball. Guests will end the session with a herbal hot compress massage.

"This type of hospitality is unique and can support the local people by providing another stream of income. I enjoy sharing about the ingredients and raw material we bring from local and made by local people," she quips.

In addition to Thailand's popularity as a wellness destination, Airbnb has found some trends that are rising above the rest:

Wellness Experiences grew among all age groups, but grew the most with seniors
In the past year, it has become more clear that wellness travel is resonating with more than just the millennial demographic, and is a movement spanning all age groups and regions. In fact, seniors (ages 60+) are the largest growing consumer base of wellness Experiences, with bookings increasing by 887% from 2017**.

Guests from France are booking the most wellness Experiences
In addition to trending markets, we're also seeing spikes in wellness travel interest based on heightened guest demand from countries like France, Canada and Germany over the past year***.

Mysticism is in with females across the board
In 2019, wellness travel is not just founded upon fitness and diet, but on the mind and and spirit, as we discovered with our female travelers. Experiences like Meditate with a Shaman cracked the top 15 most-booked wellness Experiences among women, with the Bali Healer and Holy Bathing Tour also ranking highly with women from nearly all regions. For male guests, biking is the wellness activity of choice, with the Exclusive Quality Sunset Bike Ride making the top 15 most-booked list with men from all regions****.

Here are just some of the wellness Experiences available on Airbnb in Thailand and Bali.

Make your Thai Herbal Ball, Chiang Mai
Kanokwan will teach you the history and properties of the Thai Herbal Ball. Whether you like it fresh or dry, the benefits of the herbal ball includes relaxing your muscles and stimulating the blood flow with the properties from the medicinal herbs use. You'll get to bring your herbal ball home, and also enjoy a massage after the class.

Make your own Thai Cosmetic from Natural, Bangkok
Learn from Watinee, owner of Peony.K Studio and a social influencer. She will share more about Thailand's natural ingredients and how to customise your own makeup and skin care. With a creative background, she will share local tips on how you can create and design your own makeup brand.

Blend your Aroma Oil for Massage, Bangkok
The workshop will share more about Thailand's local perfumer, "Nam-Prung" which is made from flowers and Thai herbs, leaving a fragrance that is natural and lasting. Once you learn to make your own aroma oil based on your scent preferences, enjoy a 90-minute massage that is exclusively for you.

Meditate with a Shaman, Bali
One of the top Airbnb Experiences globally, Luh will drive you to Mengening, a water temple known for "stillness" where she will immerse you in a cleansing ritual, helping you relax and witness a local ritual with a Shaman. The Shaman will also read your palm and tap into the energy of your soul to give you personalised advice. Patricia K, an influencer highlights "I really think it's a once in a lifetime experience that you have to try out. I'm not a very spiritual or religious person but I loved the whole experience and learning how they meditate and pray. Plus the temple wasn't touristy which made me the most happy."

Private Massage at your Villa, Bali
Gwen is a trained spa therapist committed to providing a relaxing experience. Beyond a Balinese full

body massage, you'll enjoy a five-star divine protocol that includes a sound bath, aromatherapy, foot reflexology and active isolated stretching.

Bali Healer and Holy Bathing Tour, Bali
Agung will take you to the Spring Water Temple, known for curative powers to heal and connect spiritually. Following the session, he will share more about the local Balinese history and stop by a plantation where you can enjoy local herbal teas and coffee.

*Based on internal Airbnb data for year-over-year growth for bookings made for wellness Experiences from 2017 to 2018.

**Based on internal Airbnb data for year-over-year growth by age group of guests booking wellness Experiences from 2017 to 2018.

***Based on Airbnb internal data for guests from which country have seen the most year-over-year growth in booking wellness Experiences from 2017 to 2018.

****Based on Airbnb internal data for top 15 wellness Experiences booked by female and male guests, by region of origin.

All Homes and Experiences referenced are intended purely to inspire and illustrate. Airbnb does not recommend or endorse specific Home or Experience listings on the Airbnb platform.