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A Spa Retreat That Gets It Right: Terranea Resort



The cliffs of Terranea, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Several key elements contribute to creating a positive resort spa experience: gorgeous surroundings, gifted masseuses, flavorful healthy food, thoughtful amenities and a myriad of wellness activities.

[Terranea Resort](#), a mega-wellness center and peaceful respite just beyond the bustle of Los Angeles, unites these qualities in a seemingly effortless way.

Standing high on rocky bluffs that overlook the deep blue waters of the Pacific, Terranea is a resort spa spread over 102 acres in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. The upscale resort tends to feel like a luxury park: there are several light to moderate hiking paths that wind along the coast amid wildflowers and succulents that line the entire property.



A red tile roof and stucco Mediterranean-style edifice at Terranea

The classic SoCal Mediterranean-style aesthetics are tasteful and well-suited to the resort with minimalistic yet wide open interiors. Terranea is a large property, consisting of 582 guestrooms and suites, bungalows, casitas, villas, and three large swimming pools. Locals, vacationers and LA natives visit Terranea largely drawn to its varied selection of restaurants, spa, hiking trails, golf course.

As part of the 'Wellness Retreats at The Bungalows at Terranea' package, I stayed in an airy and spacious spa bungalow, which came equipped with resistance bands, yoga mats and foam rollers. Fresh pour-over iced tea with a light snack was delivered every afternoon, as well as a series of spa-themed gifts: exfoliation kits, L'Occitane lotions and other bathing amenities. Fireplaces present in every spa bungalow made the room feel welcoming and intimate, as did the outdoor fire-pits.



The Movement Studio

On my first day, I had a personal fitness consultation with fitness trainer Marsela, who gave me a thorough interrogation of my fitness background. She showed me a few exercises to target specific areas for my body type and recommended fitness regimens to try post-Terranea. The consultation, three private or semi-private fitness sessions and three spa treatments are included in the 'Wellness Retreat' package.

The fitness facility has views of the Pacific ocean and the spa pool, which makes working out more enjoyable – I opted for TRX CORE circuits and took a morning coastal hike. The Seaside Cycle class sounded particularly appealing and other classes include Pilates, Flexibar Fit, Aquatic Conditioning and Nature's Gym, a combination of resistance training and cardiovascular drills performed outside on the expansive Terranea property.



The Spa Pool, with views of the Pacific

I wouldn't be surprised if incorporating fitness with spa experience is psychologically strategic, since a spa treatment feels like reward after a long workout. The spa menu is lengthy and thorough: Terranea recommends the most opportune times of day for specific treatments, offering a carefully selected list for 'early morning and afternoon', or 'late afternoon and evening' appointments. I had the 'Power of Stone' quartz mineral enhanced hot stone massage and reflexology. If you haven't tried reflexology before, Terranea is the place to do it. To start, your feet are bathed and lightly massaged in a copper tub on a balcony that overlooks the ocean. The sounds of waves crashing and quiet spa music is so tranquil, and the environment was so unbelievably comfortable, I fell asleep midway through my treatment. At one point the spa therapist gently tapped my shoulder to wake me up and show me a whale that was swimming in the distance. Terranea is known as a favorite spot for whale watching.



A seaside luncheon: fresh fruit juices and an organic menu

Spa goers can arrange for a luncheon by the sea with deliciously healthy and lite fare. The place settings displaying a colorful assortment of fresh fruit and vegetable juices brightened up the table, alongside sparkling cucumber water, farmhouse quiche and a piquant green crunch salad. The olive oil poached albacore tuna was impeccably prepared and for dessert, raw chocolate avocado pudding – a decadent vegan concoction of dark chocolate with a slight avocado flavor.



Oil oil albacore poached tuna, served during a Spa Bungalow luncheon

There are eight restaurants for dining or snacking on the premises. Morning coffee your way, organic teas and freshly baked pastries are found at Sea Beans, which doubles as a small convenience store for guests. Try Nelson's for comfort food and microbrews (hot pretzels with sweet beer mustard and waffle fries), the impressive brunch at Catalina Kitchen and the Spa Café, for protein shakes, smoothies, juices, wraps, salads and delicious frittatas. Many of the ingredients incorporated into Terranea's restaurants are locally sourced and organic.

Terranea goes beyond the 'resort' epithet. If you ask me, every city needs a Terranea nearby. It's an upscale, athletic, organic, well-being hideaway.

This experience was part of an all-expenses paid trip, courtesy of Terranea Resort.