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If there was ever a time for Taking the Cure, it's now. As we move headlong into uncertain economic territory — rollercoaster Dow, layoffs, foreclosures — isn't it tempting to just yourself in a terry-cloth robe and pretend the world has vanished, if only for a few days? As counterintuitive as it may seem to spend your dwindling assets on a vacation, some vacations can actually be an asset — to your peace of mind.

This winter, destination spas close by are offering deals that soothe even before you walk in the door.

How to choose

The word "spa" means different things to different people, so consider what type of experience you're craving.

Do you want a boot camp or a pamper palace? Almost anyone can display a "spa" shingle these days — even those ubiquitous nail salons are doing it.

A "spa" is technically a "resort with mineral springs," according to Webster's Dictionary, but that definition has been expanded to include an establishment devoted to health, weight-loss, beauty and fitness.

Rule of thumb: If you crave facials, wraps and massages (not to mention a Cosmo or a nice glass of wine at the end of the day), many hotels with spa components offer these indulgences. If changing your lifestyle, losing weight or getting in shape is paramount, check into a destination spa.



Left, a facial at Canyon Ranch in Lenox, Mass.

ON THE COVER
Taking time for yoga at New Age Health Spa in upstate Naversink

SPA retreats

Six places where you can **unwind** this winter



WOOD AT WOODLOCH PHOTO

The Daylight Pool is one of the bright spots at the Lodge at Woodloch in Hawley, Pa.

what's in a day?

6:30 a.m.	Silent meditation
7 a.m.	Aerobic walk
8 a.m.	Yoga
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
10 a.m.	Body conditioning
11 a.m.	Cardio class
Noon	Stretch class
1 p.m.	Lunch
2 p.m.	Educational seminar
3 p.m.	Aquarobics
4 p.m.	Tai chi, chi kung or yoga
5 p.m.	Guided meditation
6 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	Educational seminar
9 p.m.	Movie

SOURCE:
New Age Health Spa

Destination spas

Deerfield Spa

East Stroudsburg, Pa.
800-852-4494
deerfieldspa.com

COST \$800 a person, based on double occupancy, for a 10-day stay

This spot in the Poconos opens for the season on April 3. During April, the "stay 10 days, pay for 7" package includes all meals, one \$75 massage, an unlimited number of exercise classes (including Pilates and guided hiking) and accommodations in a homespun-style shared twin room with shared bath.

New Age Health Spa

Neversink, N.Y.
800-682-4348
newagehealthspa.com

COST \$209 a night per person, based on double occupancy.

You'll find more bells and whistles than other spas that charge twice the price. Meals are prepared with fresh greenhouse herbs, lettuces and wheatgrass. An extensive list of fitness options include some unusual classes — belly dancing, "aquarobics." Take on a 50-foot outdoor climbing tower, set off on a bald-eagle watch, go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Evening events include lectures, movies,



COPPERHOOD INN AND SPA PHOTO

Copperhood Inn and Spa

Shandaken, N.Y.
845-688-2460
copperhood.com

COST \$350 a night per person, double occupancy (two-night minimum)

The spa's ethos, "guests are never burdened by strenuous exercise" and "starvation is not our philosophy," sums up a decidedly European way of thinking. Fitness classes here include fencing, and the dining room offers a nice wine list. A stay includes multicourse meals,

fitness classes (including cross-country skiing and snowshoeing), indoor pool, modern dance and a stay in country-pine rooms.

Lodge at Woodloch

Hawley, Pa.
866-953-8500
thelodgeatwoodloch.com



Yoga and dance classes are available in the Big Rooms at the Copperhood Inn and Spa in Shandaken, N.Y., where breakfast greens, above, are among the nutritious items offered on the menu.

COST From \$445 a night per person, double occupancy (two-night minimum). Voted one of the "Top 10 most luxurious spas in the U.S." by Forbes magazine, the two-night "Awaken to a New

See SPAS on D8

Spa retreats



Warm up to hot stones at the Deerfield Spa in Pennsylvania.

SPAS from D7

Your package includes three daily meals, snacks, one spa service a day, fitness classes and a private session in your choice of personal training, nutrition, meditation, Pilates or yoga. Among the "mind-expanding" activities available — indoor cross-country biking, geocaching, painting classes, cooking demonstrations and guided hiking in the Delaware Valley. Valid for stays through Feb. 28.

Canyon Ranch

Lenox, Mass.
800-742-9000
canyonranch.com
COST From \$640 a night per person, double occupancy
On the cutting edge, Canyon

Ranch brings fitness experts, physicians, nutritionists, mind and body specialists, master chefs and alternative health practitioners together in one place. Luxurious rooms, gourmet dining — with demonstration kitchen, dozens of fitness classes and treatment options are offered and coordinated by your personal Program Advisor. Pricey? Yes, but Canyon Ranch, Lenox's winter two-night special (\$1,280) includes a room, three daily meals, a \$260 spa credit and your choice of more than 225 all-inclusive programs and services. (Rates at peak season are almost double this.) Valid through March 31

Hotel spas

**Hotel Hershey
Chocolate Spa**
Hershey, Pa.
717-520-5888
chocolatespa.com

COST From \$501 a night for two people
The spa's most popular treatment, a 15-minute Whipped Cocoa Bath (\$45), is an experience comparable to sitting in a cup of hot chocolate. It's just one of many treats in the three-day, two-night "Chocolate Spa Getaway" package, which includes a \$350 spa service credit, a trademark "Spa Rain Shower" and massage, a room at the Hershey Lodge, lunch, fitness classes and admission to Hershey Gardens.

Gideon Putnam Hotel
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
866-890-1171
gideonputnam.com
COST \$462 a night for two people

Located in the country's very first spa town, health seekers have been coming to Saratoga Springs to "take the waters" since the 1800s. And this hotel has been a presence here for nearly as long. As part of the "Spa Retreat" overnight package, a couple can enjoy breakfast, dinner, a one-hour Swedish massage and time in the Roosevelt Bathhouse, where you can indulge in a warm and tingly effervescent mineral soak.



A facial in the Roosevelt Bathhouse across from the Gideon Putnam Hotel in America's first spa town, Saratoga Springs

spa FAQs

What should I bring?

For the most part, think "exercise" when stuffing your suitcase. Yoga pants, sweats, jogging bras, bathing suits, aqua shoes, hiking shoes. During the winter...you will be outside quite a bit, whether snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, so pack warm socks, boots, a warm coat and lots of sunscreen. Do not bring the family jewels or couture clothing. Even the most luxurious spa is casual when it comes to dining and downtime.

Will I starve?

No. Three meals a day, plus snacks, are included daily in most destination spa packages, though the food tends to correspond to the level of accommodations. Artfulness of preparation increases with each uptick in price, so expect fresh but basic meals at budget spas such as Deerfield and New Age Health spas, and gourmet cuisine at luxury spas like Canyon Ranch and Lodge at Woodloch. Generally, spas are "health conscious," which means no alcohol on the premises. There are exceptions, however. European-style Copperhead Spa has its own wine list.



A kitchen demonstration at Canyon Ranch in Lenox, Mass.



Guests do a chi, total body strengthening and relaxation, in the pool at the New Age Health Spa.