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Wellness is the new mantra

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It's no longer about the best hospitals only. South Indian medical pioneers are all working towards ensuring that there's a holistic touch to the idea of 'well being'. This is why the most renowned faces in the world are looking towards these retreats in Karnataka and Kerala as hot destinations to recharge their senses.

One of the biggest such destination is Bangalore's Soukya Holistic Health Centre situated in Whitefield. Run by homeopath Dr Isaac Mathai, Soukya has become a destination that draws big names from India and abroad. Rajinikanth, Prince Charles and wife Camilla and even Desmond Tutu have stayed at this wellness centre, which is no less than any boutique five star resort.

"We focus on ensuring every guest is treated according to their personalised needs. For us, it doesn't matter who drops by. Be it the most powerful person or someone humble, we look at them as business as usual. This is what makes us all the more credible. Our packages such as anti-ageing and rejuvenation are quite popular and sought after," says Dr Mathai.

Another interesting destination in Bangalore is Shreyas Retreat. This specialised yoga retreat located inside the city limits is a vegetarian and no alcohol zone, which draws many international tourists. In fact, Shreyas has been hand-picked into an elite list of 500 getaways across the globe.

It features in the 2011 Relais & Châteaux Guide. The people behind selecting the retreat says, "If you want to recharge your batteries through meditation and Ayurveda, what better place than Shreyas Retreat in Bangalore: only 25 guests at a time go there to gently practice yoga in its myriad forms."

The Dharmasthala Nature Care for holistic wellness set up by Veerendra Hegde in Shantivana is another popular retreat. In fact, many of the famous Bangaloreans look at this as a destination to detoxify and return to the city all charged up. Actor-producer Rakshitha Prem says, "A lot of my friends swear by this place. It has helped them restructure their lifestyle. It is a great initiative and something that I recommend myself."

Apart from the destinations in Karnataka, there are a couple of places in Kerala, which have gained equal fame. Located on the picturesque Chowara beach, near Kovalam, Somatheeram Resort has gained international popularity as the world's first ayurvedic resorts. Baby Mathew, the mind behind setting up this resort in as early as 1985, says, "Kerala is known for its immense stronghold on native medicine and alternative practices. We wanted to combine this with tourism, which we've been quite successful in."

Another interesting destination is Kalari Kovilakom, which is a ayurvedic getaway set inside a palace. This brings in a majestic touch to yoga and ayurveda experience. So, are you all set for a wellness vacation this holiday season?

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