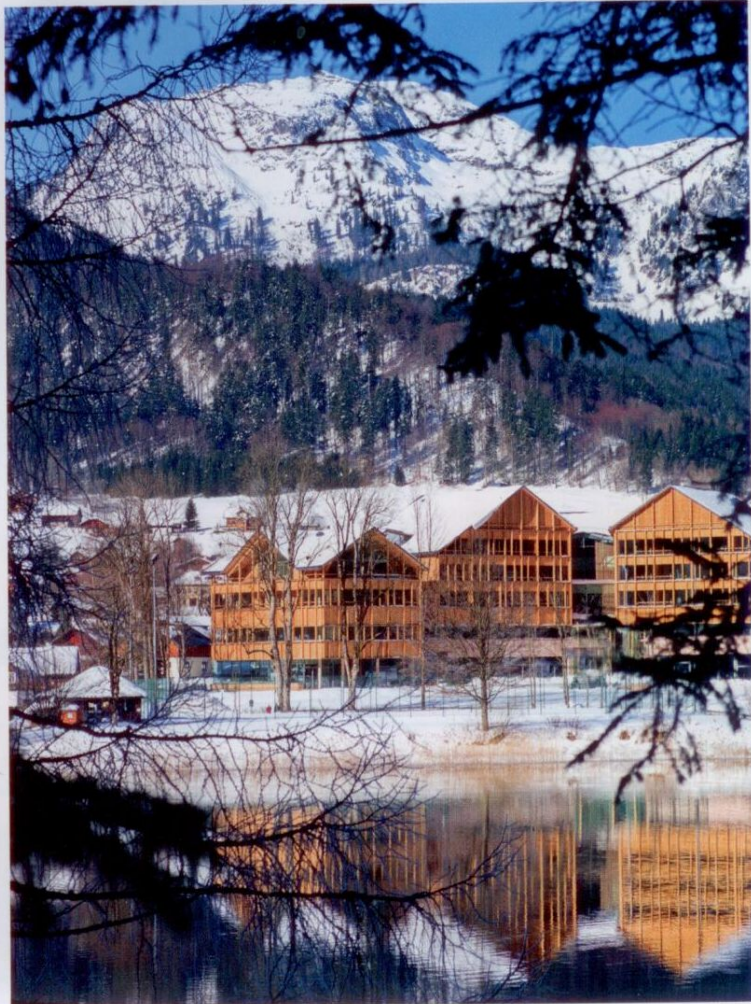




**2018  
WINNER**  
BEST FOR  
TARGETED  
HEALING



**VIVA MAYR**  
ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA

**WEIGHT  
LOSS**

THE MAYR CURE MADE MODERN AND INVIGORATING

The poster boy for the Mayr method is no longer Dr FX Mayr, its bearded founding father, who first observed the surprising health of the people drinking the salt-rich thermal waters in Karlsbad. Fast-forward 100 years and the extraordinarily youthful Dr Sepp Fegerl is the big draw at this clinic on the shore of Lake Altaussee. The principles of the cure – taking Glauber’s Salts, eating a restricted diet, participating in detox-encouraging therapies – are aimed at repairing the delicate lining of the intestine and returning the body to an alkaline state. In the extreme, this can cure type-2 diabetes; as well as reducing high blood pressure in just seven days. And, of course, weight loss – the reason so many sign up for it – is a happy by-product. A doctor’s appointment on arrival will set out the rest of the bespoke programme, including kinesiology food testing to pinpoint allergies and intolerances before your diet is prepared. Breakfast is encouragingly plentiful: grain porridge, small portions of protein (poached chicken breast, smoked salmon, avocado) and goat’s or sheep’s cheese. Lunch is more spartan – a small bowl of vegetable soup and, if you’re lucky, some boiled potatoes – while supper is broth and ‘training’ bread (a solid buckwheat roll, to be chewed 40 times each mouthful). All meals are washed down with a personalised cocktail of supplements, vitamins, bitters and, for some, worming tablets, to get rid of intestinal parasites. It sounds severe, but the camaraderie inside the glorious, light-filled dining room – with its crisp white tablecloths, lake views and pinkish salt crystals from the nearby hills – is cheering and its regime doesn’t feel too punishing. There is a ‘no phones’ rule but it’s flouted, as is the request for silence. Guests are young, old and everything in between – chattering in English, French, German – all

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in their towelling gowns or sports kit – there’s no dressing for dinner here. Some are swapping spa stories (Kamalaya vs Vana). Others share restaurant tips (Is Coya too noisy? Do you prefer the original Roka?) or compare deprivation-induced headaches and other more grizzly side effects. The odd rebel even admits to asking the driver to stop at McDonald’s on their way from the airport, and smuggling in contraband peanut butter. Elements of the detox range from relaxing algae wraps and bizarre nasal reflexology to the peculiar Ayurvedic practice of mouth oil pulling (to draw out toxins). Massages tend to veer towards the functional, so head downstairs to the beauty department, where star London facialist Teresa Tarmey has just launched a range of treatments. There is also a menu of more holistic offerings, including sleep-inducing singing bowls and a sensational watsu body therapy in warm water. However

deep you delve into the process (ideally three weeks but most stay for one), you’re guaranteed to leave feeling rested, with bright eyes, clear skin and rosy cheeks. And outside

there’s the pretty village of Altaussee, a glossy weekend retreat for Austrians, who flock here to breathe the pure air and walk around the lake. There can be few more comfortable places to endure the discomfort of detoxing.

**INSIDER TIP** Come in winter to enjoy the sharp thrill of snow – the 5pm dinner time feels less punishing in the dark, too.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers a seven-night retreat from £1,638 per person, full board, including flights, transfers and all treatments and activities as per the Basic Medical Package. Valid for travel 1–28 February. Healing Holidays is the only UK tour operator that works with Viva Mayr, Altaussee.