



**AYURVEDA  
PARKSCHLOSSCHEN**  
TRABEN-TRARBACH, GERMANY

I'm stepping into the lobby of a grand, historic hotel in Germany's lush Moselle valley. This world-leading ayurveda detox centre is immaculate – serene, furnished in understated shades of muted greens and soft taupes. Smartly dressed people wander about. I almost expect the elegant baroness from *The Sound of Music* to greet me. Not a hungry face or white dressing gown in sight.

Already the ayurvedic magic is at work. The purpose of this ancient practice is to rebalance, to achieve harmony in mind, body and spirit. They aim to achieve that here through panchakarma, a nine-day digestive-cleansing programme, which includes a vegan and organic diet, some gentle movement, and (extraordinary) massage and mind-clearing techniques.

For decades, Europe's most minted, afflicted and titled folk (yes, Madam, I spotted you at dinner) have made an annual pilgrimage

here, braving the laxatives (no wonder nappy/sanitary pads are left discreetly around – leak management) for the remarkable results. Others (like me) do a three-day 'taster' or a 'non-retox' plan, where you go vegan, shun caffeine, sugar and alcohol, and see if you'd be able to take the full nine-day colon cleanse.

**THE  
AYURVEDIC  
MAGIC IS AT  
WORK**

The ayurveda premise is that we are all a unique combination of three doshas (pitta, vata, kapha), which have different characteristics and susceptibilities. Poor nutrition, lack of exercise and mental and emotional strain knock these doshas out of kilter, contributing to health issues, weight


problems, hormonal imbalance and emotional woes. Ultimately, to burnout.

The beautiful and intuitive Frau Vanita Kansal assesses me (there are both ayurvedic and regular doctors here; no stone's unturned), reads my pulse and concludes I'm an equal pitta/vata mix, but warns that my kapha is sky high. Then the questions: am I perpetually sleep-deprived? Is my digestion slow? My skin dry or my hands cold? Do I have gnawing anxiety? Yes, yes and yes! Bang on the money. Plus, at 51, I can sense the long, gnarled finger of Dame Menopause beckoning me from the horizon and I want to evade her for as long as I can.

For three days I rebalance with glasses of warm or room-temperature water (cold is said to be bad for digestion). I eat delicious meals of baked corn cake with red cabbage and cranberries, and couscous with stewed figs. (What they can't do with a beetroot and some cumin isn't worth knowing.) The lovely staff work with zeal and live the talk. I do yoga and a breathing workshop. My legs are massaged with ghee. I have hot oil poured into a dough ring balanced on my navel. It makes me sleep and sleep. I love my tranquil room.

They say small wonders are achieved here – lifelong migraines are banished, diabetes eliminated, early menopause reversed and digestion harmonised. When I leave, the headache's gone, my palate feels recalibrated, my waistline's trimmer. A week later I'm sleeping through the night. I'm worrying less, breathing mindfully and my energy's good. The tide feels somehow... stemmed.

And I reckon that nine days of it would probably make a brand new woman of me.

 *Healing Holidays (healingholidays.co.uk/ tatlertspaguide; 020 7529 8551) offers five nights from £2,100, full board, including flights, transfers and all treatments and activities on the Take A Break programme.*