



## FOUR SEASONS THE NAM HAI

HOI AN, VIETNAM

POWERFUL EFFECTS IN AN UNEXPECTED CORNER

Vietnam perhaps doesn't spring to mind quite as quickly as Thailand, or India or China, when it comes to healing heritage, but its traditional medicine practice is just as heavy hitting. And on an emotional level it excels, too, particularly at the Four Seasons just outside pretty Hoi An. If you are suffering from a broken heart, feel mildly depressed or are reeling with existential despair, hope will be rekindled here. Sitting by a lotus-flower-filled lake with eight floating treatment rooms, this spa – called The Heart of the Earth – is stupendous. Inspired by the Buddhist teachings of the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, treatments are grouped into the three wellbeing categories of Stability, Creativity and Non-Judgement, with home-made massage oils to match. They are considered and unique, ensuring that you cannot fail to have a profound experience – reconnecting with yourself, and unearthing sediments of sadness along the way. All feature crystal singing bowls tuned to 432 Hz – the harmonic intonation of nature – to align your internal rhythm to the heartbeat of the Earth. It sounds kooky but the angelic sound healing is very potent. The signature ritual, the two-and-a-half hour Nam Hai Earth Song, is worth the flight alone. First you are smudged with Vietnamese agarwood to clear your aura. After a body scrub and bath spent sipping fresh liquorice tea, you have a bespoke massage;

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then suffer the itchy burning of ginger paste on your spine for the inner glow of heat that melts long-held tension. Gem-tipped tuning forks are placed on your acupuncture points, using vibrational resonance to shift blocked energy. Experiencing this reverberation through the soles of the feet and palms of the hands is extraordinarily uplifting. All processes work on the subtle energies of the body, releasing old emotional wounds and sloughing off current anxieties. When you eventually leave the tender hub of the treatment room, the staff floor you with their sweetness. Each evening they perform a Good Night Kiss to the Earth ritual in the reception. While they flood the space with the sound of the singing bowls and a moving Vietnamese song, you are encouraged to write a blessing or prayer for yourself or a loved one and put it in a floating lantern with a candle to send it out on the lake, back to Mother Earth. Most guests perform this silently weeping; the surge of emotion this simple ritual evokes is staggering. Daily yoga and meditation classes are world class. The spa is a hidden gem amid this cracking Four Seasons, with three tiered swimming pools, swaying palms and the thunderous roar of the South China Sea. Bedrooms are in sleek feng shui-designed villas, and there are four restaurants with open kitchens, supplied by the impressive vegetable garden. Foodies should definitely book a day in the cooking academy to master Vietnamese food. Thich Nhat Hanh would be proud. This place is truly mindful, creating a connection with compassion, rare in today's frenzied world.

**INSIDER TIP** Don't miss the Lau Viet evening and learn to make your own Vietnamese super-food broth.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers seven nights from £2,875, including flights and transfers.

