



## SHA WELLNESS CLINIC

WEIGHT  
LOSS

ALICANTE, SPAIN

### IMPRESSIVE RESET VIA THE PHILOSOPHY OF MACROBIOTICS

Health by stealth: that seems to be the secret of SHA's success. Deceptively, this low-lying, modern, white building, with its entrance flanked by palm trees and a waterfall wall, and its big, multi-pooled sun-trap of a terrace, looks like any another smart Spanish hotel, albeit one a mile or so inland. But SHA has a powerful backstory. It was set up by Alfredo Bataller Parietti, who, after years of battling cancer, saw his illness disappear when he switched to the vegetarian diet promoted by George Ohsawa, the Japanese macrobiotics master. Ohsawa launched the movement in the 1960s after witnessing how sickness levels soared in Japan following the introduction of Western foods. Inspired by this, Parietti and his family founded SHA with the aim of fusing the best of Eastern and Western approaches to health and wellbeing. Cleverly, though, they have been subtly evangelical. On arrival, no great fanfare heralds the fact that you're going to live primarily on vegetables, fruit, whole grains, seaweeds, nuts, legumes and seeds during your stay, nor that the overriding aim is for you to continue eating like that after you leave. No dairy, no eggs, no meat, no sugar, no caffeine, no alcohol. Everything fresh. Everything natural. Breakfast might be three miniature glasses containing chia porridge, mashed avocado and apple puree, preceded by a bowl of miso soup: rich in amino acids, protein, essential oils, vitamins, minerals and enzymes, it's a complete food and makes frequent appearances on menus here. Lunch might be udon noodles or lentil burgers followed by a dessert that tastes like chocolate but isn't; dinner, soup and perhaps a little fish. The use of herbs and spices and

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the exquisite presentation mean every dish is delicious – honestly. As the restaurant opens for just three meals a day, no snacks, it's easy to stick to consuming only what you're served, too. And it takes just a few days of eating like this before you start to feel different. Really, noticeably, well. More than anything else – the massages, watsu, acupuncture, colonics, cheerily encouraging sessions with Robson in the gym, the stress-management lessons, or even the potent session with Dr Bruno Ribeiro, a specialist in cognitive improvement, or dementia prevention – it's this absolutely outstanding food that makes a spell at SHA worthwhile. The resident nutritionist, slim, energetic author and mother-of-seven Melanie Waxman, has followed Ohsawa's diet for 38 years. Radiating cheerfulness and aged in her late 50s but looking 45, she provides living proof of the benefits of not eating meat. Reports in previous years of therapists and doctors not speaking enough English seem to have finally been addressed. And a decade after it opened, SHA is better than ever. An all-singing, all-dancing medi-clinic with the added bonus of those two most healing of elements: sunshine and sea views.

**INSIDER TIP** Children can join in yoga, meditation and healthy-cooking sessions, making the new adjoining 11 villas appealing for guests who don't want to leave their family behind during a life-changing stay, or who are keen to introduce them to more balanced habits.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers a seven-night SHA Detox programme from £4,550 per person, full board, including flights and transfers.

**HEALING HOLIDAYS EXCLUSIVE** Book a seven-night programme and receive a free room upgrade and one 50-minute complimentary massage.

