



VIVAMAYR

**WEIGHT
LOSS**

ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA

STRIPPED-BACK APPROACH TO RETUNE THE BODY

You can, of course, pace up and down Harley Street searching for a solution to a long-niggling health issue and come up stumped – or you could be lucky enough to stumble into the VivaMayr London clinic at number 15. This city outpost of the Austrian mothership is a brilliant place for the curious to dip their toes in, or for the converts to get a quick top-up without flying to Innsbruck. But no mid-week acid-alkaline lab test can really touch the sides compared to a recommended seven- to 10-day stay by the lake in Altaussee. Here, at the edge of the quiet village, is a turbo-modern medical centre, softened with limed-wood panelling, a roaring log fire, delightful dirndl-dressed staff and a cossetting welcome. For anyone used to the Mayr cure, the programme is reassuringly familiar, barely deviating from the tenets of gut regeneration: very light food portions, salt waters, herbal teas and a regimented timetable of hay compresses, colonic irrigation and foot baths. Elements of the detox range from the highly enjoyable mud wraps to the bizarre nasal reflexology to the downright disgusting oil pulling. Treatments tend to veer towards the functional rather than the pampering. But all serve to calm the intestine, reboot your ability to digest food and absorb nutrients, and refocus attention on other parts of the body that need it. Alongside stress, diabetes is one of the main concerns addressed here – fascinatingly, type 2 can be totally alleviated in a week, as can high blood pressure. Weight loss is a satisfying by-product, but not the aim of the cure, which is to return the body to an alkaline state. And the key to the process is to determine which foods you particularly struggle to digest. If you drink five double espressos and a bottle of wine per day, you are going to feel horrific when the detox starts. But everyone is in the same

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boat, so grumbles can be shared in the dining room. Some guests will be sipping carroty broth and nibbling buckwheat bread, scored as though it were a miniature piano to indicate portion size. Others could be dissecting goat's cheese salad with corn crackers, or spooning up spinach soup as green as the forest. You can go as hard and fast as you like, but you can also ask for seconds. Rumour has it that someone once tried to order lobster. The physical outcome of a stay here is excitingly visible. Break through the barrier of day three or four and, on the other side, your eyes are whiter and brighter, stomach is flatter, skin rosier – though that could be from all the absurdly pure mountain air – and energy levels soaring. What's also interesting is VivaMayr's new focus on mental healing. Not digesting

food properly can make you feel depressed; you don't absorb enough of the mood- and sleep-boosting amino acid tryptophan, which in turn impairs production of serotonin. Psychologist Claudia Kohla is cur-

rently spearheading the Emotional Detoxing programme at sister property Maria Wörth, with a keen eye on the intrinsic link between psychological and physical wellbeing. And she will also be rolling out therapy and mindfulness sessions here. What you have now is Mayr for the mind, too.

INSIDER TIP Time your arrival carefully. Turning up on Sunday morning when all is fairly quiet is perfect for those who want to break into the rhythm gently, but frustrating for others who are raring to get started.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a seven-night Mayr Detox retreat from £2,160 per person, full board, including flights and transfers. Healing Holidays is the only UK tour operator that works with VivaMayr Altaussee.