



## SPA VILLAGE TEMBOK BALI

**IN BRIEF** A relaxed way to realign and reassess your life

**THE LOWDOWN** Not to be confused with Alain de Botton's School of Life in London, the programme of the same name here, on the island's north-east coast, is all about recharging and rebooting. Guests not only learn how to untangle the problems, stresses and worries hampering their lives, but also how to avoid tying themselves in knots. Relaxation and rejuvenation are the twin pillars, so optional activities are centred around a daily massage, detoxifying clay mud wrap or body scrub. Get up early for group meditation on the black-sand beach at sunrise, facing the thumping, frothing Java Sea as the sky brightens and the sun's warmth slowly spreads across your face. Sharron Hopley, the School of Life's 'headmistress' who radiates calm and charm in equal measure, teaches 5 Element Form, an energising combination of yoga, ta'i chi and qigong. There's also reiki, stress-busting breathing techniques, healthy cooking classes, mountain biking, creativity classes (drawing, traditional palm-leaf weaving, wood carving) and, at night, stargazing while lying on a floating platform in the pool, surrounded by candles as soothing music plays in the background. But for every guest signing up for a wellness workshop, there is another reading, swimming or sunbathing. Meals are eaten on a sun-drenched terrace overlooking the infinity pool where charismatic Austrian chef Martin Büchele – who arrived via a professional stint at a Buddhist monastery in Nepal – serves up banana-flower salad with charred shrimp satay, and gorgeously plump papayas and mangoes. The healthiest choices are clearly marked on the menu. Mackerel, tuna and snapper straight from the ocean make regular appearances and 'raw', 'fresh' and 'wholefoods' are keywords. Coconut juice, herbal teas and rejuvenating shots flow freely. For rebels there's plenty of the naughty stuff available too: steak, chips, egg-fried rice and a seemingly endless supply of apple strudel. Great emphasis is placed on quality sleep (so no watching television tucked up in bed), and guests are packed off early each evening to Balinese-style rooms with private balconies overlooking the pretty garden. Sip on fresh herbal tea and add hot water to the already prepared restorative bath, before soaking up the goodness. It's a picture-postcard spot to mute the volume button on your mind – and gradually figure out how it got so loud in the first place.

**INSIDER TIP** Visiting guest experts, ranging from shiatsu masters and kinesiology specialists to life coaches, change on a monthly basis – so plan a trip to coincide with whoever best suits your needs.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [www.healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://www.healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers a four-night School of Life package from £1,149 per person full board, including flights, transfers, daily creativity classes, movement-awareness practices and wellness experiences.