



THE CRITIC | SEOUL

## Serious indulgence

Wellness writer *Gina Flaxman* selects the best retreats to unwind at

**FOR THE ULTIMATE** urban wellness hotel experience, you cannot get better than the Four Seasons Hotel Seoul. The luxury hotel chain's first foray into South Korea is located in the heart of the bustling capital. The 317 light-filled rooms are inspired by traditional Korean craft and design, and offer a five-star refuge from the city. Several of the suites feature stunning views over Gyeongbokgung Palace or the iconic

N Seoul Tower. In these rooms, even the marble bathtubs have a view, meaning you can create your own luxurious spa experience in-room.

For a seriously indulgent experience, however, head to the hotel's three-storey spa and fitness centre, which is a serene oasis of calm. Blending sleek contemporary design with a traditional Korean bathhouse, it boasts wet and dry saunas, a number of hot and cold baths,

a gym with personal trainers, a mosaic tiled indoor pool, a heated vitality pool and a plunge pool.

To get an insight into the world of K-beauty, try the signature Purifying Experience. It starts with a trip to the baths and saunas to boost circulation, and is followed by a traditional Korean body scrub, deep-tissue massage and hair and face mask.

[fourseasons.com/seoul](http://fourseasons.com/seoul)



### AROUND THE NETWORK



#### BALI

##### The Palm Tree House

Thousands flock to Bali, Indonesia – the Asian capital of wellness retreats – each year for a dose of spirituality and pampering with their sun and sand. Ultra-luxe, women-only resort Escape Haven is the jewel in the island's crown. The multi-award-winning surf-and-yoga retreat has recently opened a boutique "little sister" option, The Palm Tree House. The new offering hosts a maximum of 28 guests at one time across five contemporary villas on the island. Just down the road from Escape Haven, it is set in similarly lush tropical

grounds and also offers yoga, surfing, fitness and Ayurvedic healing treatments, but there is more flexibility with dates and less structure. It is also slightly more affordable – packages start at just US\$1,495 – and there are a few couple's retreats throughout the year, so men can now also experience this slice of luxury. Spa sessions are included in all retreat packages and there is plenty of pampering to be had. Fancy a petal-strewn bath drawn by your own butler? It is just one of the special, complimentary services on offer. [thepalmtreehouse.com](http://thepalmtreehouse.com)



#### CAPE TOWN

##### Bushmans Kloof

This eco-resort, just three hours from Cape Town, uses indigenous plants, such as fynbos and Cape aloe, for spa treatments. Make sure to try the outdoor Riverside Gazebo treatment room. [bushmanskloof.co.za](http://bushmanskloof.co.za)



#### TBILISI

##### Bioli Medical Wellness Retreat

Medical doctors work alongside wellness therapists at this beautiful mountain retreat, where fitness activities, such as Nordic walking and aqua biking, are offered alongside luxurious spa treatments. [bioli.ge](http://bioli.ge)



#### COLOMBO

##### Mount Lavinia Hotel

Overlooking the Indian Ocean, this historic hotel has direct access to an idyllic beach. When you are not lazing by the palm-fringed pool, you can work up a sweat in the gym or try a treatment in the salon. [mountlaviniahotel.com](http://mountlaviniahotel.com)