

Strength and balance for body and soul

Discover the world's most beautiful beaches and leave all your worries behind with the help of meditation. Counteract negative influences and regain inner balance by harnessing the positive effects of Indian yoga teachings on your body and soul.

SpaDreams Yoga Guide



In Western Europe and North America the term yoga often brings to mind bodily contortions. In reality, the traditional Indian philosophical teachings are about following a pure, spiritual path on the search for enlightenment through a combination of body poses, meditation and breathing techniques. Negative influences are dispelled in favour of harmony and inner balance, and intellectual potential is maximised.

The traditional healing art of yoga consists of a combination of physical exercises (Asana), breathing exercises (Pranayama) and different meditative exercises. The body is activated and brought into equilibrium. The aim to rediscover inner balance, which not only strengthens physical health, but also re-establishes harmony and wellbeing.

Yoga can be practiced by anyone searching for inner peace and harmony. Even just a short yoga holiday can help you to be more focused and to deal with everyday situations better.

All yoga programmes offered by our hotel partners are led by extremely well-practised yogis. We offer a variety of courses at different levels of difficulty, so that both yoga beginners and advanced yoga enthusiasts can learn and practice the art of yoga.

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Yoga - What Is It?



What is yoga?

The traditional teachings of yoga originate from India and translates as “unity and harmony”. Just like Ayurveda, the oldest records of yoga can be found in the Upanishads. This is not surprising as yoga is also part of the concept of Ayurveda and was used by ayurvedic doctors as a therapeutic measure to support the treatments and prevent the development of disease.

Around 1500BC spiritual practices took precedence in India and were described as the practice of magical sacrifices and ecstasy techniques. It wasn't until approximately 800BC that yoga began to follow the path of meditation and self-knowledge. The primary goal was to strengthen the body enough to remain in the meditative pose for as long as possible without discomfort. As time passed, people began to recognise the positive effects of physical exercises on overall well-being. For this reason the Asanas were continuously developed further and physical exercise took on an increasingly important role in yoga.

Yoga is one of the “six classic schools”.(Dashanas) of Indian philosophy. There are many different forms of yoga, which often have their own philosophies and practices. Some focus more on physical activity (Asanas), others on mental concentration or asceticism.



What is yoga good for?

Positive energy and harmony in life

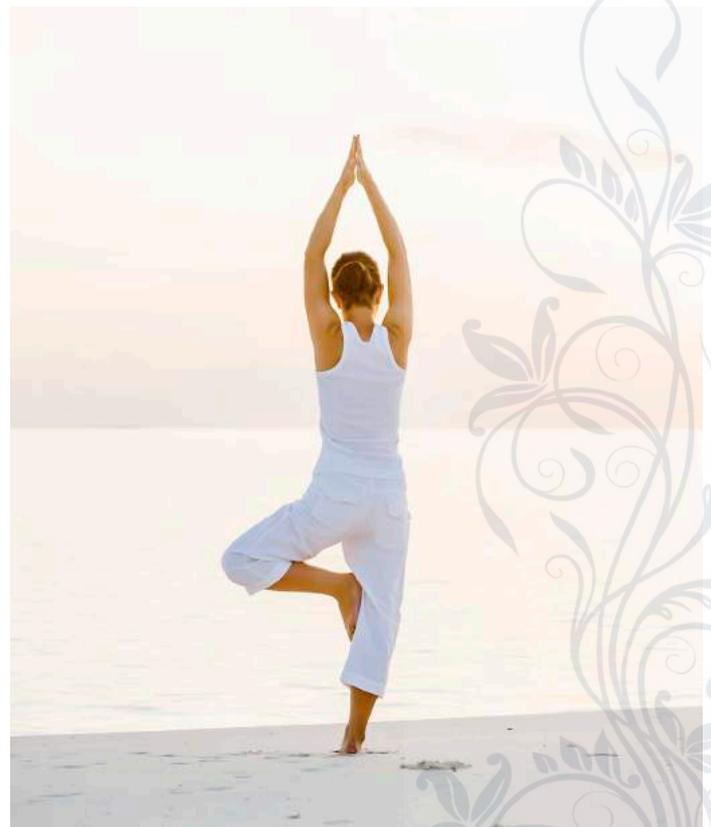
The exercises lead to many wonderful experiences and effects: complete relaxation and exuberance, more energy, clarity and reduction of health complaints such as migraines, back pain and tension.

Discovering hidden talents and skills

Some exercises inspire creativity and artistic skill or can strengthen charisma. The internal reflection required for yoga allows access to other levels of consciousness.

The true self and the cosmos

In yoga, the quest for unity with the true self and with God can be achieved through good discipline and patient practice.



The Classic Types of Yoga



The classic Indian texts describe five different types of yoga:

Raja: Yoga of Mental Abilities

Raja means king or ruler. This form of yoga is a spiritual discipline which is practised through mental training and meditation and gives the sense of controlling the spirit and thought waves. Through intense concentration, complete control of the mind and profound meditation, this sense can be perfectly harnessed. The goal of the exercises is to improve thought control and strengthen the intellect - an aim traditionally associated with opening a "third eye" (Ajna Chakra).

Jnana: Yoga of the Pursuit of Enlightenment

Also known as the "path of knowledge", this type of yoga focuses on the quest to understand the ultimate truth and attain salvation from the cycle of rebirth. According to Hinduism, Avidya or "unknowing" is the cause of rebirth.

Ideally, this yoga practice is divided into three alternating phases: Shravana, the listening phase, during which the guru shares their knowledge with the student, Manana, reflection and internalisation of the knowledge the student has just absorbed and Nididhyasana, serious, sustained meditation.



Bhakti: Yoga of Love and Devotion to God

Bhakti is the Yoga of Love and describes the path to God. It is a particularly spiritual form of yoga and has been influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism to a greater extent than other forms of yoga. In Bhakti, one devotes oneself to God and a sense of inner completeness.

Kharma: Yoga of Actions and Selfless Behaviour

Karma Yoga is easy to practice right from the start, can be practiced throughout the whole day and is applicable to all human actions. It is based on the principle that each person takes full responsibility for every action in every moment of their lives and has the freedom to choose what decision to make.

Hatha: Modern Yoga

Modern, or more body-focused, yoga practices are grouped together under the umbrella term Hatha Yoga. This type of yoga primarily aims at physical and psychological stability. One branch of Hatha Yoga in Europe and North America is Iyengar yoga, a type of yoga which focuses on physical movement and which uses simple tools and aids when necessary. This is particularly advantageous for beginners as they can use such aids to support their exercises and improve the precision of their poses.



Living by the Philosophy of Yoga



Nutrition

In yoga, healthy eating is seen as something that strengthens the soul as well as they body. It is important to drink up to 3 litres of liquid a day, preferably water and herbal teas. What, how and when you eat can have a huge influence on the state of your body and spirit. For this reason, it is advisable to eat slowly and in a relaxed fashion whenever you can, and to eat fresh, untreated food when possible. As a rule of thumb, you should fill half of your stomach with food, one quarter with water and the remaining quarter should remain empty. This prevents drowsiness and heaviness. The motto of a healthy lifestyle is “eat to live, don’t live to eat”.

The vegetarian diet advocated by yoga is due to the fact that one should live in harmony with nature. The maxim “do not torment or kill animals for food or unnecessarily hurt other living creatures” belongs to this way of life.

In the teachings of yoga, nutrition is generally divided into three different forms:

Tamas (idleness), Rajas (restlessness), Sattva (lightness) which denote the three spiritual qualities of humans which take effect in the whole universe.

TAMAS: “Tamasic” food has no vital force and is considered unhealthy. The body is deprived of strength and energy. Ready meals, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, meat and fish fall into this category.

RAJAS: “Rajasic” food is understood to be everything that makes one restless. This includes food and drinks such as coffee, spicy foods, sugar and white flour. Eating too quickly or not chewing enough is also “Rajasic”.

SATTVA: “Sattvic” food is the ideal form of nourishment. This includes products such as vegetables, salad, fruit, nuts, whole-meal and milk products.

Clothing

When practicing yoga you should wear whatever you feel comfortable and happy in. Clothing should be light and breathable. Loose trousers and t-shirts are suitable. Anyone who wants to live entirely by the philosophy of yoga should pay attention to themselves and their surroundings - buy organic cotton textiles and breathable natural fibres as yoga places great value on the conservation of natural resources

Effect

Improve your health with yoga and immerse yourself in a world of mental and physical balance. Many of the exercises present a physical challenge, particularly in the beginning, but are peaceful and rhythmic nonetheless. The exercises focus on different areas of the body and activate specific bodily regions. By doing so, the circulation is stimulated in order to improve wellbeing. Fundamentally, yoga has a positive effect on the body and soul, provided that it is practiced correctly. It helps build all body muscles and can, under certain circumstances, lead to alleviation of some diseases, such as circulation problems or chronic headaches and back pain.



The Best Yoga Destinations



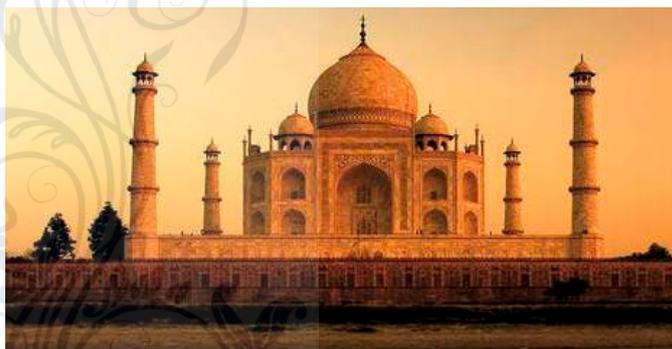
Yoga holidays offer more than simple relaxation - they combine activity and recuperation with a temporary new life in a different culture to create a unique experience. Make new friends during your travels and explore your surroundings together. A diverse yoga programme will ensure that you get your money's worth. Whether you're planning an intensive yoga course or looking to learn some simple exercises for general relaxation, there is something for everyone on offer. Beautiful weather, dreamlike scenery and warm temperatures make practicing yoga even more joyous. White sandy beaches, the sound of the sea and a fresh breeze...the perfect place to relax and refuel.

...Thailand

The most popular Thai islands Phuket and Koh Samui offer shady spots directly on the beach. Healthy cuisine and beautiful landscapes provide the optimum conditions for a relaxing yoga programme. The crystal clear waters and palm-fringed islands of the south and the fascinating alpine world of the north tempt yoga enthusiasts in. Another advantage of the north is its low humidity, which makes it bearable even at high temperatures.

...India

With its long sandy beaches, private bays and the Taj Mahal, the land of a thousand colours and spices is the perfect travel destination. But it has far more to offer than charming landscapes and breathtaking buildings: it is the birthplace of the traditional teachings of Ayurveda. India is a country that enchants and fascinates. In the heart of this beautiful land lies the Yoga Mecca Goa, the smallest Indian state located on the central west coast of the country. Here, you can experience traditional Ayurveda treatments and yoga in their original form. Forget everyday life and let yourself be enchanted by this country and its unique atmosphere.



...Sri Lanka

Picturesque beaches, crystal clear blue sea, colourful coral reefs, coconut trees and secluded coves: Sri Lanka is the epitome of a tropical paradise and is known as the Pearl of the Indian ocean. In addition to a stunning 1330km coastline, tea plantations fringed by mountains and ancient cities, over 2000 years of a rich cultural heritage of ruined cities and fascinating temples are waiting to be discovered in Sri Lanka.



...Europe

For everyone who does not want to travel too far to create unique yoga experiences, many hotels in Europe offer their guests the chance to find the path to inner peace and harmony, with the help of experienced, traditionally educated yogis. There is no need to take a long flight or adapt to a new climate to enjoy the benefits of this traditional, Indian philosophy. Gain unique insight into the path to inner balance, strengthen your body and mind, and learn how to get more joy out of life.

Essential Yoga Exercises



The Wheel

- Sit on the floor and angle your legs at a hip's width apart
- Place your hands behind your back with the palms laid on the floor
- Inhale and lift your hips up until your thighs and torso are in a horizontal position.
- Return to the initial position whilst exhaling



The Boat

- Lie on your back and keep it straight.
- Place your arms alongside your body keeping your palms up.
- Breathe in and lift up both legs and the upper body simultaneously.
- Bring your hands and feet together.
- Lower your legs slowly whilst exhaling.



The Dog

- Lie down with your stomach on the floor and position your hands so that they are below your shoulders.
- Set your legs hip-width apart from each other.
- Breathe in and simultaneously straighten your arms and lift your upper body up.
- As you breathe out, lift your hips up whilst pulling your chin to your chest.



The Camel

- Kneel down with your legs together on the floor and let your arms hang beside your body.
- Breathe in and let your chin fall on to your chest.
- Now, lift your chin and lean your upper body back until your head touches your neck.
- Touch your ankles with your arms
- Go back to the initial position whilst exhaling.

