

LIVING TRAVEL

Austin's best wellness resort is a luxurious boot camp

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When you arrive at [Lake Austin Spa Resort](#), check your tightly held New York City tendencies at the door. Relaxation is a must at this idyllic wellness center, set on 19 densely forested acres at the lake's shore. Book a water taxi ride from downtown Austin, Texas' bustling tech and music scene for about \$100 and arrive at the resort's dock ready to chill. Land lovers can opt for car service or taxi for about \$95 for the 40-minute drive to the resort. Starting rates of \$595 per person per night includes accommodations, three daily meals, fitness classes and use of the spa facilities.

What to tell your friends

This all-inclusive resort offers a comprehensive class schedule (think TRX training to Drumming for Strength) , enhanced by a myriad of activities on and around the lake like Hill Country hikes and nature walks. The hotel features 40 rooms, a fitness center, a pool, a “treehouse” for yoga and wellness classes and a cozy dining room overlooking the lake. Mismatched chintz couches and wallpapers are inviting and homey, and every nook and cranny of the magnificently landscaped gardens are conducive to calm. Day visitors have access to the 25,000-square-foot spa featuring indoor and outdoor pools and the healthy, flavorful cuisine of the Astor Café.

Make time for meals



Expect healthy and delicious fare, courtesy of a Paris-trained chef.

Terry Vine Photography

Paris-trained chef Stephane Beaucamp heads the culinary program, debuting delicious and healthy choices with an elegant flair. Menus change seasonally to reflect local offerings, like blackened local redfish or rock shrimp with toasted Anson Mills green farro. The property’s walking paths are lined with organic gardens filled with herbs and vegetables that provide inspiration for the inventive cuisine. Chef’s philosophy of pairing fresh ingredients with balanced nutrition and flavor is expressed in both spa offerings and heartier choices. The wine-by-the-glass list

is excellent, so treat yourself to a great pairing. And don’t miss weekly cooking demonstrations and more intensive culinary experiences with a rotating calendar of visiting guest chefs.

Hope floats

The newly established Wellness of Water program incorporates more than 30 water-based classes to choose from. Start your day with paddleboard yoga at sunrise or mindful meditation on the dock, and work your way up to more challenging offerings like a boot camp. Meander through the lush paths to the “pool barn” for aqua Zumba or the incredibly challenging aqua mat fitness fusion class, where participants balance on floating mats during strength exercises. Or let the resort captain navigate a pontoon ride along the lakefront as you marvel at the stunning vacation homes of Austin elites like billionaire Michael Dell.

Pamper yourself

The spa menu boasts more than 30 treatment areas and over 100 treatment options. Don't miss the Muscle Melt, an 80-minute indulgence that uses warm herbal poultices to soothe sore muscles before a traditional oil massage. And the signature Tour of Texas includes an exfoliating scrub made with prickly pear (a cactus fruit that is the state plant) followed by an agave nectar wrap and massage. Make an appointment with master acupuncturist Aaron Rubenstein, whose Japanese techniques have soothed many an overworked guest.

Choose wisely

Rooms are generally small but well appointed with bright, simple décor and modern amenities. If it's water views you're after be sure to book a lakeview room; if space and privacy are your thing, splurge on a spacious cottage with a full private garden and a hot tub. Whatever your choice, don't waste too much time in your room — a nearby hammock by the lake awaits.

