



SUN, SEA & SPA

Combine the Greek island fantasy with a new health spa for the ultimate feel-good break, says Alicia Miller

During the pandemic, my healthy routines slipped. An extra glass of wine here, a dozen missed gym visits there. I needed a reset, but after two years without a holiday abroad, I felt I deserved a lazy sunshine getaway. What I needed was a trip that would get me into shape, but with a beachy indulgence. Daios Cove was the perfect fix...

Wow-factor setting

Perched on sun-drenched Cretan coast, an hour east of Heraklion, Daios Cove

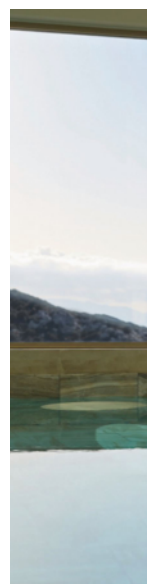
has everything you'd want in a luxurious Greek resort. I arrived late at night, and woke the next morning to a spectacular view from my hillside suite: a panorama of rugged tree-lined peaks, rolling down to sparkling sea. And, before me, my own private deck and plunge pool – ideal for the R&R I'd been craving.

I resisted the urge to kick back with my book, and explored the resort first. After a quick funicular ride to the main building, I discovered a series of levels nestled into the cliffs. Multiple pools, shops, restaurants and a couple of bars for sundowner hour. And, beneath it all,

a golden beach. I had officially reached sunshine holiday heaven.

High-tech healing

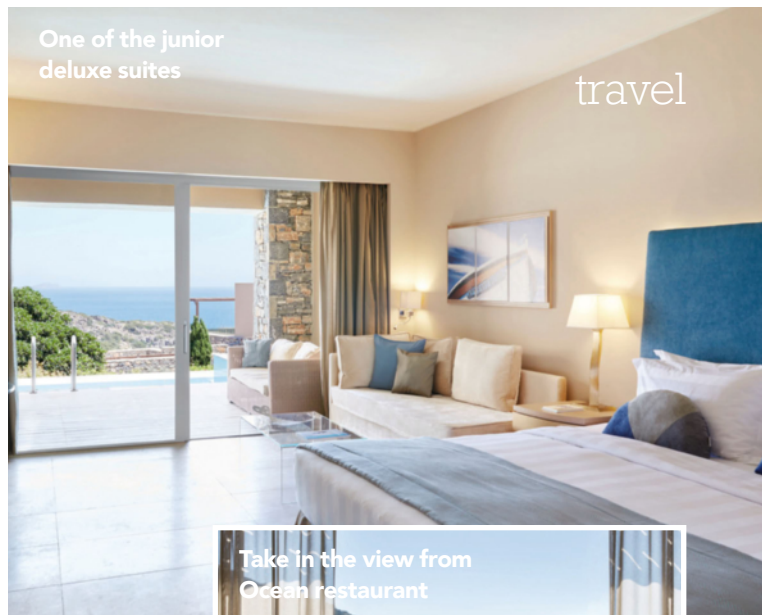
But Daios Cove's real highlight? Its new Kēpos by Goco spa. The space is spectacular – an entire floor of the resort, lined in windows overlooking the cove, complete with indoor pool, hydrotherapy facilities and thermal suites, including infrared sauna. Massages are expertly tension-busting, while a facial from acclaimed brand 111SKIN left me with a fresh-faced glow lasting a week.



The gorgeous golden beach



One of the junior deluxe suites



travel

Take in the view from Ocean restaurant



What really sets Kēpos by Goco apart from a normal resort spa, however, is its techy wellness offerings. These include doctor consultations, colon hydrotherapy, vitamin drip infusions and a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, promoting healing for a host of conditions (staff here have had success with a long-Covid patient, for example).

But given my healthy-reset goals, I met George, the in-house dietitian. Our hour-long session involved 3D-scanning my body, then testing my resting metabolic rate (RMR) with a special mask. The combined results would not only reveal my body mass index (BMI), but also gauge my metabolism speed and how effective my body is at converting nutrients to energy.

The good news: I have a healthy BMI (that is, height to body-mass ratio). The bad news: my metabolism is woefully

slow and I am extremely inefficient at burning fat. I needed, said George, to increase muscle mass through exercise. My past two years of inactivity (and extra wine) had added up and were written right there on the report. There was nowhere to hide. If I needed motivation to make a change, I had it.

First-rate fitness

It's just as well that Kēpos by Goco has a comprehensive gym – some of it outdoors – under the BXR Gym brand from London. Armed with George's report recommending I build muscle, my trainer Vagelis created a bespoke routine I could replicate at home, without fancy equipment. He encouraged me through adapted push-ups, squats and weightlifting.

Then he steered me towards the cryotherapy chamber – another of the spa's unique offerings – for a two-minute immersion in -87C. Among other benefits, this ultra-cold, dry environment is said to repair muscles (in my case, avoid post-workout soreness). I was nervous, but it wasn't nearly as chilly-feeling as I feared. And once I emerged, I experienced a boost of energy, like a natural high.

Healthy balance

When I wasn't at the gym, I spent my time at Daios Cove doing exactly what you should on holiday: relaxing. I read by the pool, snoozed on the beach and tried on stylish kaftans in the shop.

And I ate. Daios Cove takes food seriously, with four excellent restaurants, regular chef residences and gourmet collaborations. While I'd follow

George's advice to eat fewer carbs at breakfast and lunch – I'd choose omelettes over pancakes, say, or grilled octopus over lobster linguine – come evening, all bets were off. I indulged in a multi-course menu with wine pairings at the elegant Ocean restaurant, feasting guilt-free on the likes of fried ravioli with feta. Afterwards, I sat under the stars sipping sublime cocktails designed by Athens' award-winning The Clumsies bar and listening to live jazz until late. With George's advice in my mind, I also kept active. Besides the gym, I hiked and rose for early morning dips in the sea. I left Daios Cove rested and sunkissed – and also motivated for a healthy restart back home. Win-win.

HOW TO DO IT

✦ **Sovereign Luxury Travel** (sovereign.com) has a **seven-night stay at Daios Cove Luxury Resort and Villas from £1,595pp including flights from Gatwick, private transfers and half-board accommodation.**

✦ **For further information on Kēpos by Goco, including treatments and consultations visit daioscovecrete.com/wellness.**

The new spa pool is nothing short of spectacular

