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Traveller



JULY 2013 £3.99

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Health trip

EDITED BY
DAISY FINER



Jakes, Jamaica

STAR SPA

'Just melt like rum-and-raisin ice cream in the hot Jamaican sun.' The instruction to relax into your mat from yoga teacher Maureen is not hard to follow after an easy-flowing morning session by the ocean's edge. The setting for yoga classes at hippy-chic hotel Jakes is on a deck cooled by Caribbean breezes on top of the seafront Driftwood Spa. Jakes is a charming place, quirky, offbeat. No grandeur, no fuss – this is Jamaica, after all, not Barbados. It's impossible not to feel relaxed. Classes are run year-round for guests, but new yoga and wellness retreats are also now big in the calendar. From next month, there are eight week-long programmes, each with a different focus, including Ayurvedic sessions, HoopYogini (a mix of yoga and hula-hooping – Halle Berry's a fan), and an autumn equinox celebration, with practices on the beach and by a bonfire. The schedules are packed, but there's still plenty of downtime. Fill it by returning to the spa along a bougainvillea-flanked path for treatments with a distinctly Jamaican flava. The aromas from the coco-mango body buff are mouthwatering, and skin is scrubbed till it's baby soft. Chill-out time post-treatment, sipping (OK, guzzling) icy watermelon juice on the terrace inches from the water, beats any urban spa relaxation pod. Yet after some virtuous yoga classes, what was all that wicked talk about ice cream? It's homemade and available to sample in many flavours (including rum-and-raisin), but not before you try savoury dishes such as vitamin-packed pumpkin soup and fresh lobster. Jakes is all about supporting the community, with as much produce as possible sourced locally. Body rejuvenated, mind at ease, appetite sated, sleep comes easily in your shell-studded villa on the rocks. **GRAINNE McBRIDE** *Virgin Holidays and Hip Hotels* (+44 844 573246; www.vhiphotels.co.uk) offer a four-night trip, including accommodation, Virgin Atlantic flights and transfers from £1,399 per person. Five-day wellness retreats at Jakes Hotel, Villas & Spa (www.jakeshotel.com) cost from about £645 per person