

3

Typologies of Health and Wellness in Hospitality and Tourism

This chapter looks at the spectrum of health and wellness in hospitality and tourism that exists across the globe. Some types of wellness tourism are focused on physical well-being, while others seek to fulfill spiritual and psychological needs. In recent years, as tourists have begun looking for a multitude of offerings to improve their physical and mental wellness, defining and understanding the variety of health and wellness tourism offerings has increased. It will continue to do so in the future.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to do the following:

1. Define and discuss the full spectrum of health tourism.
 2. Define spas and thermal/mineral springs.
 3. Define yoga and meditation practices.
 4. Define spiritual tourism and holistic tourism.
 5. Define and discuss occupational wellness.
-

Case study: Canyon Ranch

Canyon Ranch was founded in 1979 as a luxury high-end health and fitness destination, with its first location in Tucson, Arizona. The company uses an “integrative professional approach featuring board-certified physicians, registered dietitians, exercise physiologists, licensed therapists, and other highly-skilled, caring staff who work together to provide a 360° approach to wellness” (Canyon Ranch, 2019a). Staff at Canyon Ranch are professional, trained practitioners and certified physicians who incorporate both Western medicine and alternative therapies into their programs. The employees are knowledgeable about treatments used around the world and use this knowledge to identify the best plan for each guest. The company believes in combining fitness and movement, nutrition and food, health and healing, mind and spirit, and spa and beauty into one beautiful offering to give guests a single destination to reach their wellness goals (Canyon Ranch, 2019b).

A second location was opened in Lenox, Massachusetts, in 1989, and these two properties are billed as Wellness Resorts, which also includes Canyon Ranch Living® residential communities. The Canyon Ranch brand also includes a day spa and fitness center found at The Venetian® Resort in Las Vegas and can be found on board Cunard’s Queen Mary 2® in addition to over 20 other ships, including Celebrity Cruises. Most recent to open (in 2019) is the Canyon Ranch Wellness Retreat location in Woodside, California. This center offers “three- and four-day customized, transformational and experiential paths for like-minded individuals or groups”, (Canyon Ranch, 2019a) demonstrating Canyon Ranch’s continued leadership in the wellness tourism arena. Canyon Ranch has gone beyond lodging and self-contained day spas and retreats. In 2018, the company announced a partnership with Singapore Airlines, intending to make the almost 19-hour non-stop flight (the longest flight in the world) between Singapore and New York (Newark, New Jersey) a healthier route. Canyon Ranch’s contribution includes science-based balanced meals and activity recommendations to promote rest and relaxation and maintain healthy circulation and movement in-flight (Singapore Airlines, 2018; Canyon Ranch, 2019a). As the company continues to grow, they have stayed true to their mission of “creating environments and products that promote health and the highest enjoyment of life for all people.”

Discussion Questions

1. How has Canyon Ranch become a leader in the wellness tourism industry?
2. What does Canyon Ranch offer its guests?
3. What does Singapore Airlines gain from partnering with Canyon Ranch?
4. What is a natural extension of the Canyon Ranch brand that still stays true to its mission statement?
5. What can we learn from this case study?

The spectrum of health and wellness tourism

Based on their current situation and motivations, customers can select from the variety of health and wellness offerings available to them from around the world. Primary wellness customers may have different desired outcomes from their wellness-focused trip than secondary wellness tourists, who are more likely to add components in a la carte manner. **Health tourism**, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is “using services to improve physical or psychological health with the help of mineral water springs, climatic conditions, or medical intervention in an area outside one’s place of residence for more than 24 hours and less than one year” (Amouzagar et al., 2016, p. 88).

Developing countries can benefit from implementing health tourism as a part of their tourism and economic strategies. According to a qualitative study on health tourism by Amouzagar et al., the benefits of health tourism to Iran include national development, economic growth, and changing the attitudes of other nations. They also found that the health tourism sector in Iran is challenged due to insufficient marketing, political instability, lack of insurance coverage, lack of qualified employees and managers, not having international standards and lack technology (Amouzagar et al., 2016). Developing countries across the world have similar benefits and challenges as Iran when it comes to health tourism.

Table 3.1: A spectrum of health tourism (Smith & Puczkó, 2008).

Physical Healing	Medical spas/baths	Mofetta (1)	Surgery trips	Rehabilitation retreats
Beauty Treatments	Cosmetic surgery trips	Hotel/day spas		
Relaxation/ Rest	Pampering spas/baths	Wellness hotels	Thalassotherapy centers	
Leisure/ Entertainment	Spa resorts with ‘fun waters’	Sport/ fitness holidays		
Life/Work Balance	Holistic centers	Occupational wellness workshops		
Psychological	Holistic centers	Workshops, e.g., Hoffman (2), psycho-drama		
Spiritual	Meditation retreats	Yoga centers	Pilgrimage	

(1) Derived from Mofette, volcanic vent whose vapors can be used in spa treatments (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2006).

(2) 7-day soul searching, healing treat of transformation and development for people who feel stuck in one or more important areas of their life (Hoffman Institute, 2020).

As presented in Table 3.1, Smith and Puczkó offer a spectrum and subcategories of health tourism. In health tourism, the body, mind, and spirit work together to satisfy a full range of wellness needs. Medical (therapeutic and surgical) tourism primarily focuses on the body, and spiritual tourism is mostly targeted toward mental health