

Kamalaya in Koh Samui: Mama's ultimate SOLO escape

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At the beginning of this year, I was *feeling pretty burnt out* — I'd had my second baby, moved countries, and felt in a bit of a post-partum slump, needing a bright spot to look forward to. So I jumped at the chance when the wonderful [Nealy Fischer](#) told me she was running a mini yoga retreat at **Kamalaya** in Koh Samui and I booked my flights and made my reservations. The months passed by and I had a sleeping-through-the-night baby, and life was looking rosier — did I still really need to pack myself off for a wellness retreat? Was it not just a selfish indulgence, not to mention being a terrible mama? Despite the guilt as the date crept closer, and feeling reluctant to leave my girls, I put myself in a taxi and headed off for Changi. ALONE. On the plane, I read a book, ate my meal and reveled in not needing to change anyone's dirty nappy. After a 40-minute car journey, I arrived at Kamalaya and was whisked off to my villa where a thermos of delicious, comforting pumpkin soup and a salad had been set out as a late-night supper.



The accommodation at Kamalaya isn't uber-luxurious; it's quite simple and pared-down, which might not wow on arrival, but later grows on you and is definitely restful. Some guests grumbled a little about the hardness of the beds (it's a Thai thing), but you can ask for an extra mattress topper if you wake up with aches and pains. I was lucky enough to get a room upgrade so ended up in Villa 52 which I'd definitely recommend — gorgeous views of green jungle leading down to the beach and the sea, and even your own little courtyard swimming pool for a quick dip.

My main reason for needing to head off on a restorative holiday was that I needed to catch up on lost sleep, but my eyes still popped open at 6am the first morning. Drat. Try as I might, I could not catch any more zzzzs, so I dragged myself up the hill (there are a lot of hills at Kamalaya!) to enjoy breakfast. Now, if you're accustomed to chowing down on cheeseburgers and slurping on sodas, Kamalaya's cuisine might be a bit of a shock to the system... If you're anything like me though, and rather enjoy big salads, smoothies and wheatgrass shots, *you'll be in healthy heaven*. There are two sections to Kamalaya's menu — firstly, there's a special Detox selection for guests who really want to take a transformative step, and then there is the regular part of the menu, which is still super-nutritious, but where you can have various proteins and heartier fare. While I was there I ordered freely from both sides of the menu, and with the exception of a couple of less-successful curry dishes, everything was lip-smackingly amazing. *I'm still dreaming about certain dishes*, weeks later!



The breakfast buffet offers up a cereal bar (with nuts, seeds, dried and fresh fruit and nut milks), salads, the aforementioned wheatgrass shots, juices and lots, lots more. You can also order organic eggs and buckwheat pancakes from the menu. I have to confess, I had two breakfasts a couple of days I was there, both before and after my morning yoga classes! I would definitely recommend signing up for their full-board package so you can eat to your heart's content (the *Miem Kam* shown above is particularly yummy!) without worrying about price.



On your first day at Kamalaya, you'll be scheduled in for a Wellness Consultation with one of Kamalaya's resident Naturopaths. First though, a nurse will weigh you, measure you and hook you up to some electrodes for some fancy tests which are then printed out and given to you so you can check your health across various different measurements, like BMI and cell hydration. My results generally showed a need for a bit more sleep (tell me something I don't know) and that I was a bit run down — nothing that some massages, rest and healthy eating couldn't fix! Your naturopath will talk you through the various treatments on offer, including TCM and acupuncture. I picked a Thai massage, an Ayurvedic massage (hint: if you're uncomfortable with full nudity and boob massage maybe don't pick this one!) and an Asian Hand Massage. It was quite difficult to schedule in spa appointments as the resort was VERY busy, so I would definitely recommend either signing up for one of the packages in advance, or just making sure that you book appointments before you arrive.



As well as your spa appointments, Kamalaya keeps their guests busy with a daily schedule of optional activities, from yoga classes to pool aerobics to movie nights and talks from visiting experts and practitioners. As so many people come to Kamalaya on their own, joining these activities helps you socialize with others and feel a sense of community, as well as improving your wellbeing. I planned on doing more activities than I ended up at (and didn't hit the gym once to my shame) as I was so enjoying just reading and being peaceful. I also steered away from the "Community Table" at dinner and chose to eat alone, but if you're a more social soul you can seek out new friends.



Definitely by the last day I was more than ready to leave to get back to my girls, but I felt a hundred percent better in myself. I was totally well-rested for the first time post-kids, had eaten yummy nutritious food, been pampered and prodded by masseuses and just spent a lot of alone time with good books. Of course within about three days of being back in "normal mama life" again, some of the effects had already disappeared, but somehow I'm finding that if I think, "Kamalaya", it brings me back to my peaceful state... *Roll on next year's trip?* Next time I might even bring my husband with me to get a little taste of Kamalaya's magical restoring properties!

A three day detox programme at Kamalaya starts from 56,100 THB including 3 meals a day, treatments, wellness consultation and holistic activities. Be sure to email info@kamalaya.com as they run special packages and rates at different times.

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