



W E L L N E S S

# SPA TREK

Kamalaya's new gut programme can set you on a path to a happy tummy – and mind, says *Lucy Cleland*

Changing a habit for good is probably the most difficult obstacle people have to overcome when it comes to improving your health. My bad habits? A daily latte (or two), a weakness for Dairy Milk of an evening, and because I feel tired most days and my office is a repository for salty snacks, it's all too easy to munch my way through an afternoon, while my little head devil rubs his hands with glee.

The only hope of resetting things (at least for a while) is to remove myself entirely from my daily rituals – and so late last year, I stepped into the lemongrass and citrus-scented air of Kamalaya on Koh Samui to try out their new gut programme.

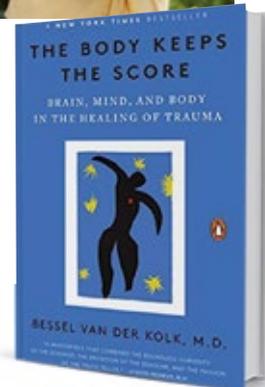
When we are stressed our body is in fight or flight mode, enlisting hormones such as cortisol to keep us on high alert; these in turn draw on the strength of glands such as the thyroid and adrenal that – during prolonged periods of stress – then tire and deplete. As the hormonal cavalry tries to keep up with this stressed state, it means that other areas get neglected, digestion being one of them. The symptoms of this can be anything from IBS to sudden food intolerances.

Kamalaya's programme can offer the first steps to reversing this (to properly heal a leaky gut can take three months or more). Firstly, cutting out any potential aggravators such as wheat, gluten, dairy, alcohol and caffeine helps calm the digestive system. Thankfully, the food at Kamalaya is so delicious, you'll never know what you're missing – heaped bowls of fresh or steamed vegetables (fruit is best avoided) for breakfast, dolloped with pumpkin houmous and drizzled with apple cider vinegar (a great digestive aid) and extra virgin olive oil; lunch might be a garden salad with Thai herbs and a side of grilled tuna; supper, you might fancy an emerald green silky soup of green veg spiced up with coriander, lemongrass, ginger and lime.

The treatments are all devised to stimulate the gut and rid it of anything that's just been sitting there, so there's lots of colon massages and stretching; yoga helps rinse the organs; pranayama classes help focus the mind and teaches you tricks to use when you're stressed; acupuncture calms the nervous system. Though, to be honest, I did miss a few more of the nurturing, hands-on type treatments such as full body massages with ladles of warm oils.

Did I kick my bad habits for good? No, not entirely, but a week is never long enough. I have though switched to skimmed milk and dark chocolate. Small steps, but worthy ones, plus seven days of resting, swimming and time out in a jungle paradise is worth its weight in Kamalaya gold.

**BOOK IT:** Healing Holidays offers a seven-night Enriched Gut programme from £3,995pp full board with flights and transfers. 020 3372 6447. [healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com) ■



## IT TAKES GUTS

**PACK** Jet Candy, a homeopathic remedy to stave off jetlag (£19.99. [jet-candy.com](http://jet-candy.com)). **BRING** Loose yoga-type clothing and flipflops.

**READ** *The Body Keeps the Score*, about how unresolved trauma can physiologically affect us. **MAINTAIN** Order a food delivery from Kurami, specifically designed for gut health (from £41.50 per day. [kurami.co.uk](http://kurami.co.uk)).