

Travel



12C(B,W,X,F,L-13C,Ra-70,P,C-G,R-11C)

O&E Thursday, March 1, 1984

Want a different vacation? Try a health spa

By Iris Jones
special writer

TARPON SPRING, Fla. — Most of us go on vacation to indulge ourselves. We eat too much, drink too much, stay up too late and otherwise abuse our already neglected bodies.

When we come home we take a deep breath, step on the scales and go to work: try to take off five pounds, jog around the block, go to bed early.

It may amaze you to learn that some people go on vacation to jog, swim, bike, exercise and eat 1,000 calories a day. They pay several thousand dollars to spend a week at an expensive spa, where the door is locked and the key is thrown away. No booze, no fattening food, but lots of pampering.

My muscles, underachievers all, went on a fitness vacation recently. It was great fun, even if I started limping slightly after the first aerobic dance workout. That has more to do with my lazy thigh muscles than it does with the fitness program I attended at Innisbrook Resort in Tarpon Springs, Fla.

INNISBROOK OFFERS one of many moderately priced fitness programs available around the country this year, as more and more of us pay vacation money to look after our bodies. If good health makes you high, or you spend too much time sitting behind a desk, a fitness vacation may be just your cup of herbal tea.

Innisbrook Resort is best known for its golf courses, one of which is included in Golf Magazine's 100 top golf courses in America. John Hall and Dean Cosgrove, director and assistant director of the new fitness program there, are trying to design packages that will accommodate fitness buffs and convention spouses as well as travelers who like to play tennis and golf on the side.



At Innisbrook Resort in Florida, the days are filled with such activities as yoga. Here the director of fitness, John Hall, leads some of the women visiting the health spa in yoga exercises.

The Innisbrook program would be of no interest to someone who wanted the intensely and luxuriously of a \$5,000 spa. There is no elegant spa building, no real pampering here amid the lagoons and condominiums of Innisbrook's 1,000 acres.

THE SPA Experience, as Innisbrook describes it, is a program that takes advantage of the massage rooms, swimming pools, fitness center, jogging trails, bicycle trails and par course already on the grounds.

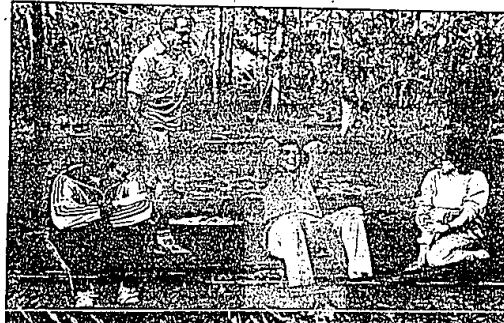
A group of 10 to 15 men and women, mostly women, spend three, four or seven days together, walking, biking, doing aerobics, yoga, water exercises and weight lifting, eating 1,000-1,200 calories a day and purring through a daily massage.

It is a good educational program for someone who has just discovered fitness, or wants a

few days of fitness tucked onto another vacation. If you really want to break training, and go out to dinner, or play golf or tennis on the side, nobody will stop you.

A DAY in the life of the Spa Experience goes like this: meet at 7:30 a.m. to walk or jog the 15-minute trail past wooded lagoons to a breakfast of fruit, egg, milk — or maybe oatmeal and raisins. A one-hour lecture follows breakfast. John Hall may talk about aerobics and your heart; Dean Cosgrove will tell you how to eat properly.

Your group will then hike down winding roads to the exercise classes, where you move briskly through beginning or advanced aerobic dancing. John Hall will lead you through Body Movement Awareness, emphasizing the various ways in which you have probably been using your body badly; he may even lead you out-



Learning how to stay in shape all year around is the key ingredient in a stay at a health spa. Learning can be difficult as travel writer Iris Jones (center) learns as she attempts to do one more situp.

side to a yoga session and a Salute to the Sun on a warm patio.

After a lunch of fish or chicken, with vegetables and fruit, you take a break for napping and tennis, and then you spend the afternoon doing water or weight-lifting exercises, or following the exercises stations on the par course.

At this point, your resort impulses may be saying "drink before dinner" or "let's order the steak rare." You will have to sneak the drink in your room and forget the steak unless you leave the group; they'll be eating the diet dinner.

IF YOU go to Innisbrook for a four-day program, this schedule will be repeated with minor variations daily. On the final morning, you

will be given a notebook telling you how to continue your fitness program at home. The resort literature says that the spa program is individualized for every participant, but in most cases it is a group experience.

For information on the Spa Experience at Innisbrook, write to Innisbrook Resort, P.O. Drawer 1088, Tarpon Springs, Fla. 34286 or telephone toll-free (800) 237-0157. Prices range from \$351 single for three nights June-August to \$1,370 for seven nights January-April, with many variations in between.

Accommodations are in spacious rooms with kitchen and seating areas; rates include all meals. Air fare is not included. Republic, Delta, Eastern and Northwest fly from Detroit to Tampa; a resort van will take you the 30-minute drive to Innisbrook.

For those who would be fit

There are several moderately priced spa programs in various parts of the country. Here are some of those listed in Slimmer Magazine's February issue.

Midwest: The Spa at Olympia, Silver Lake, Oconomowoc, Wis. 53066. Toll-free (800) 558-9573. \$204 to \$947.50 for two to seven days. "A relaxing place and a caring staff. Programs are designed for the individual. Spouses are welcome. "Gentle discipline; are the bywords."

Kerr House, Grand Rapids, Ohio 43522. (419) 832-1733. \$1,500 a week. "... a little more expensive than some, but the standards of luxury are so high that it sounds like a bargain at twice the price. Top-of-the-line experience for women who want the ultimate spa treatment."

Fifty-Eight Facets, P.O. Box 304, Bittersweet Road, Horseshoe Bend, Lake Ozark, Mo. 65049. Toll-free (800) 325-8638. \$250 a week. A new complex in one building on Lake of the Ozarks. "Designed for women who've always wanted to go to a spa but felt that they couldn't afford it."

East: The Spa at Prospect Bay, Lands End, P.O. Box 610, Grasonville, Md. 21638. (301) 827-8080. \$600 double occupancy and up. "A diet-oriented health retreat housed in a French chateau."

The Vermont Fitness Spa at Cortina Inn, Route 4, Mendon, Vt. 05701. Toll free (800) 451-6108. \$150-a-day single. Won the Taste of Vermont culinary competition. Open to men and women who enjoy active sports (formerly a ski resort) or for those who simply want to relax and enjoy the beautiful green mountains of Vermont.

West: Canyon Ranch, 8600 L.E. Rockliffe Road, Tucson, Ar. 85715. Toll-free (800) 742-9000. \$105-per-person double occupancy in summer, \$170 in winter. "Canyon Ranch combines the relaxation of a vacation resort with the pampering and exhilaration of a fitness spa."

The Natural Environmental Health Center, P.O. Box 11, Brookdale, Calif. 95007. (408) 338-4973. Near Santa Cruz. \$35 to \$50-a-day. Special plans for those with low income. Programs for the disabled. In beautiful mountain setting.

South: The Shangri-La Natural Health Resort; Route 3, Box 1, Bonita Springs, Fla. 33923. (813) 992-3511. Rates vary according to housing; \$82 single at the Hilton Terrace. Men and women, smoking and drinking absolutely prohibited.



Tourists in the Tarpon Springs area can enjoy such sights as the fishing fleet which sails into the gulf and deep sea divers. This diver is employed to find sponges.



Visitors to Innisbrook Resort have ample opportunity for such vacation-like pastimes as shopping for sponges in an open air mart in nearby Tarpon Springs. It is a town of 8,000 on the Gulf of Mexico just north of St. Petersburg and west and north of Tampa.

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