



Spa Catcher



Cleansing Time

Colonic cleansing. Herbal detox. Raw food. Do these represent new directions for the spa industry? Peter Myers visits pioneering Rasayana Treat in Bangkok, and braves the most invasive treatment of his life.

I had been quietly dreading it for days, but I was determined to ascertain whether colonic irrigation lives up to the ever-growing hype. There seems to be two distinct camps on the colonics question. Many point to the appalling diets we all live on these days: refined foods and too much meat and dairy products. We are walking tanks of toxins which, the wellness experts say, is why we're apathetic, sick and generally uninspired most of the time, with a growing number of us becoming worryingly overweight.

Many victims of generation-next lifestyles also endure constipation (we should ideally eliminate waste two to three times daily, after every meal - like babies do), and to remedy this, over-the-counter laxatives are often consumed in dangerous quantities. Laxatives might force your bowels to eliminate the meal you just ate, but what, ask cleansing enthusiasts, about the 'ancient' meals still encrusted in your colon walls, which may be putrefying, even poisoning, your entire system. Incredibly, as many as one in six people suffer from intestinal parasites.

However, another argument made by concerned doctors, contends that colon cleansing is a potentially harmful procedure, which not only gets rid of encrusted badness, but a lot of goodness too; robbing the intestines of their natural protective layers. Disagreement over this issue still splits the medical establishment. Yoga/healing experts also find fault with such a procedure; far better, they argue, to deal with the lifestyle routines and mental stresses which cause such a congested end result through yoga, reiki and meditation, than suffer indignity at the end of a tube.

Healing retreats, like Bangkok's **Rasayana**, will tell you that the advantages gained from colonics far outweigh the negatives. Regular cleansing, they claim, can lead to the cleansees re-evaluating their lifestyle habits, while their thoughts will become more clarified, a greater alertness and luminosity felt, and better sex enjoyed. Rasayana runs day-long, week-long, and even longer programmes pairing the irrigation procedure with a herbal drink diet of varying intensity.

Taking a holistic approach to cleansing, a typical one-day programme at Rasayana might start with an hour-long yoga session; where breathing, stretching and basic postures are covered. Then, feeling relaxed and nimble, one dons a robe, and enters a 'hydrotherapy' room.



A sophisticated ‘bed’ incorporates a clever toilet/tunnel shaft in its centre and a tank at one end, from where warm water peppered with various herbs and a coffee solution travels by tube into your rear end to wash out the colon and flush out harmful bacteria. Now, I will not pretend that an hour (the more hydrated you are, the less time each session will take) spent on this bed is at all pleasant or without a certain level of discomfort. In fact, it is probably the most invasive procedure that many people will ever undergo (especially men, who are lucky enough to escape from things like giving birth and gynaecological examinations), but it is also rather liberating.

The first hurdle is the hardest to cross - evacuating liberally while a nurse gently massages one’s lower abdomen, adjusting taps and possibly replacing the tube that can get blocked. I found the nurses at Rasayana highly professional and very sympathetic; and any embarrassment quickly dissipates after the second or third advisory comment: “You must release now, Sir... very good, well done!”



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Upon completion of the procedure, one may well feel a sense of buoyancy, even jubilation; or, in my case, hunger. Raw food best accompanies a cleansing regimen through the combined action of its ‘bio-energetic’ properties and easily-digestible components like vitamins, minerals and amino acids. However, a raw meal is notoriously time consuming to prepare. Fortunately, a gourmet raw food experience can be had at Rasayana’s restaurant.

I guzzled delightful, crunchy Mexican Taco’s - filled with mixed vegetables, before negotiating the scrumptious Eggplant Lasagne; and for pudding, a slice of Carrot Cake (more carrot-y than any I’d ever tasted). The restaurant opens from 9 am to 8 pm and does takeaways to nearby locations. This may well save me from my regular, disgraceful fast-food-at-the-desk routine.

After lunch, I was led up to a massage room for a way-above-average oil massage and a quick session in a medieval-style ‘steam bed.’ All in all, set aside seven hours for the whole package. Rasayana recommends you get through at least three colonic sessions for the most effective results. According to Ms Varaporn, Rasayana’s MD, you will not believe the gunk that comes out the third time!

Apart from a heinous chest infection that I developed a few hours after my session, I am glad that I underwent the treatment, and although I still haven’t plucked up the courage to return; I will, one day. 🍀



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