



In 2023, Thailand's wellness tourism sector recorded a remarkable growth of 120%, reaching USD 12.34 billion, positioning it as the 2nd fastest-growing wellness tourism market in the world

This growth surge allowed wellness tourism to overtake healthy eating and nutrition for the first time in six years (since 2017), becoming the largest segment of Thailand's wellness economy.

This rebound signals more than a market recovery — it marks a structural realignment of wellness as a primary driver of tourism-led GDP.

**AUGUST 2025  
STUDY**

# THAILAND WELLNESS SNAPSHOT

Global Wellness Institute - Wellness Tourism  
Initiative

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**GLOBAL WELLNESS  
INSTITUTE™**

WELLNESS TOURISM INITIATIVE



Wat Po, Bangkok





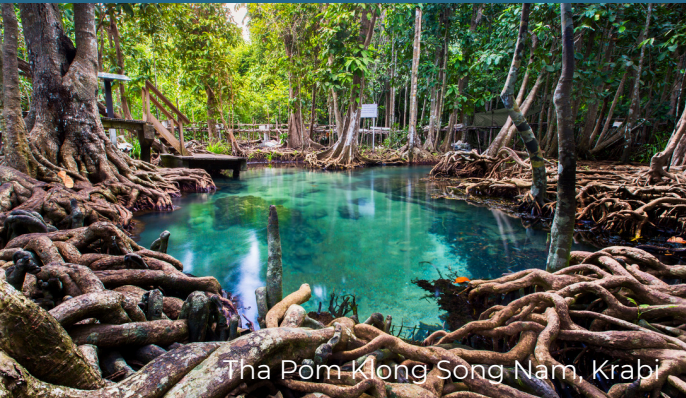


“The morning alms-giving ritual practiced by Buddhist monks.”



*“Nuad Thai is part of the art, science and culture of Thai traditional healthcare... rooted in the Thai way of life and local wisdom.”*

UNESCO Listing: Nuad Thai – Thai Traditional Massage



Tha Pôm Klong Song Nam, Krabi

Thai Traditional Medicine (TTM) is more than a system of healing — it is a worldview. Rooted in centuries of lived wisdom, TTM approaches health as a dynamic balance between the body, mind, soul, nature, and community. Rather than treating symptoms in isolation, it nurtures the wholeness of life through herbs, massage, diet, breath, and soul care.

In Thailand, wellness has never been a trend — it is a way of life. Thailand’s spa and wellness industry is not only culture-driven, but also policy-driven. A coordinated public sector framework ensures that health, heritage, and hospitality work together to position Thailand as a trusted and transformative wellness destination.

Thailand’s Wellness Hub Strategy is embedded in national policy. With official endorsement of the Medical & Wellness Hub 2025–2034 framework, dedicated budget lines, and inter-ministerial collaboration, Thailand is executing a holistic approach . This positions Thailand as a leader among nations in treating wellness as an economic, cultural, and diplomatic engine.



# KEY SUCCESSES

Over the past two decades, international organizations such as World Health Organization(WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO), and WIPO have recognized Thailand for its holistic health systems, living cultural heritage, and leadership in wellness tourism.

Thailand's spa and massage sector comprises over 14,600 registered establishments, including 13,500 massage businesses and 1,100 spas. Concentrated in hubs like Bangkok, Chonburi, Phuket, and Chiang Mai, this regulated ecosystem reflects Thailand's deep cultural roots in healing touch. The sector's strong post-COVID rebound and compliance with the Health Establishment Act affirm its role as a world-class, health-promoting industry — distinctly separate from nightlife entertainment and aligned with Thailand's wellness soft power.

Thailand's massage and spa sector reflects not only technical skill but also a unique social healing function — empowering diverse groups such as the blind, formerly incarcerated women, senior citizens, and rural communities to become healers, creating a wellness economy that is deeply human and inclusive at its core.

TAT's 2024 Tourist Behavior Report found that wellness-related motivations — such as nature-based retreats, emotional rest, and holistic experiences — are rising among both luxury travelers and mass-market visitors. Thailand is increasingly seen as a destination for physical and emotional recharge, offering trusted services, cultural immersion, and natural beauty in one journey.

The wellness travel market is expanding beyond luxury segments, with mass-market travelers also seeking stress relief, mental clarity, and body-mind balance — often through Thai massage, herbal rituals, and cultural immersion.

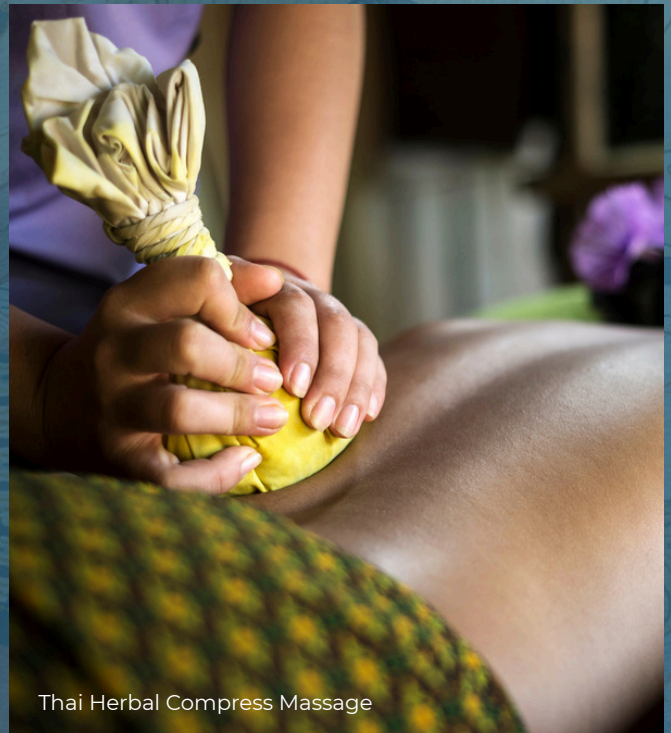
According to TAT'S 2024 Tourist Behavior Report, revisit intention rates exceeded 95% among wellness-inclined visitors, signaling strong emotional bonds with Thailand's wellness identity.

“Thailand's wellness policy evolution shows how traditional medicine became a modern public health tool — serving not just heritage, but households.”

From UHC to local healing networks, wellness in Thailand has been institutionalized for the people, not just for tourists.

## KEY LEARNING:

Despite its globally admired image as a wellness-friendly destination, Thailand's domestic and primary wellness tourism markets remain underdeveloped. In 2023, wellness tourism in Thailand surged by 120%, yet only around 850,000 visitors came specifically for wellness as the primary purpose. This means the vast majority were secondary wellness tourists — those who engaged in wellness as a side activity, not the reason they chose Thailand.



Thai Herbal Compress Massage

*“Thailand is a model of how traditional medicine can support universal health coverage.”*

**– World Health Organization – South-East Asia Regional Office, 2005**



## KEY LEARNING:

At the same time, the domestic wellness spend is relatively low compared to countries like the U.S., Germany, and Japan, where wellness has become an integrated part of national life. Although Thai people value traditional healing, few actively pursue wellness travel within their own country.

## Key Opportunity: Repositioning Thai Wellness Beyond 'Affordability'

To move forward, Thailand should focus on presenting wellness not as an indulgence or trend, but as a deeply rooted system of restoration. This means going beyond promoting spas and retreats as leisure activities, and instead positioning them as spaces of meaningful healing, emotional grounding, and cultural wisdom.

This approach creates space for both domestic re-engagement and for attracting more primary wellness travelers who are searching for depth, purpose, and reconnection.



Yam Khang Massage, Chiang Mai



Rather than competing on price, Thailand can lead by presenting its wellness experience as:

- Gentle but powerful: rooted in compassion, not aggression
- Accessible but meaningful: available to many, yet always rich in depth
- Local but universal: grounded in Thai culture, but resonant with global human needs

*"We aim to enhance integrative Thai wellness tourism — combining science, wisdom, and sustainability — to position Thailand as a leading premium-quality wellness destination."*

– **Miss Eurblarp Sriphiromya,**  
Exclusive Director Tourism Product  
Department  
Tourism Authority of Thailand



## Repositioning Thai Wellness Beyond ‘Affordability’

Thailand has long been admired for offering high-quality wellness experiences at accessible prices. While this affordability has helped attract large volumes of secondary wellness tourists, it also limits Thailand’s potential to be seen as a world-class healing destination — one chosen for its depth, meaning, and transformative value.

The opportunity now is to reposition the Thai wellness identity:

From being “affordable” to being “valuable in the deepest sense” — emotionally, spiritually, and culturally.

*“Thailand’s wellness journey is making important strides toward becoming a global wellness hub.”*

— **Dr. Tanupol Virunhagarun**  
Chief Executive Officer, BDMS Wellness Clinic

## Thailand’s Wellness Model — Healing That Regenerates People and the Planet

*“Personal Well-being and Planetary Well-being are inseparable.”*

— **Win Rojanastien**,  
Board of Director,  
Chiva-Som International Health Resort



Suan Mokkh, Garden of Liberation

Rooted in centuries of cultural wisdom, Thailand’s wellness practices respect the natural world, work in harmony with seasonal and ecological rhythms, and rely on locally sourced, low-impact materials. From Thai massage and herbal steam therapies to postpartum yu fai and forest meditation, these practices use minimal resources.

Thailand’s wellness model positions nature not as a backdrop, but as a co-therapist — whether through temple gardens, forest monasteries, coastal detox practices, or village herbal rituals. This approach minimizes carbon footprints, reduces reliance on synthetic or imported materials, and preserves biodiversity through the sustainable use of local herbs and natural resources.

This case study contributes to the broader dialogue on how wellness tourism can serve as a bridge between health, culture, and sustainability — an area where emerging frameworks, such as the concept of a Soul Economy, may offer further exploration and value.

*“Thailand’s vision unites nature, culture, community, and care into unique healing models — inspiring future frameworks like a SoulEconomy.”*

— **Sunai Wachirawarakarn**  
President, Thai Spa Association



# OPERATOR EXCELLENCE



Thailand offers world-class wellness ecosystems — where travelers can access everything from advanced, technology-based medical innovations to contemporary wellness retreats and soul-based healing journeys rooted in centuries-old cultural and traditions.

**BDMS Wellness Clinic**

<https://www.bdmswellness.com>

**Chiva-Som International Health & Wellness Resort**

<https://www.chivasom.com>

**Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage**

<https://www.suanmokkh.org/>



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