

NORTH AMERICA: BARBADOS

Barbados has an established tourism industry and is a leading Caribbean destination for travel. The hotel spectra include a range of accommodations, including a number of 4 and 5 star hotels. The island offers numerous excellent restaurants and attractions. Over 67% of visitors stay for between 4-14 days, most commonly for 8-14 days, allowing plenty of time to use such attractions and to engage in wellness/spa treatments.

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

Barbados has long been a destination choice for those wishing to relax .. the standard image portrayed is sun, sea, sand etc. For the vast majority of tourists they chose Barbados to relax and enjoy themselves. As the spa industry globally has expanded, so have the expectations, so most people booking an even moderate hotel expect spa services. The development of spas within the hotel industry has been huge over the last decade, mostly of hotel based spas.

Medical tourism has also been developed on the island - most significantly by Barbados Fertility Centre where over 85% of patients treated, travel specifically for medical care. There has also been development of axillary medical services for example of Sils Dialysis which treats local patients but also facilitates patients on holiday who need dialysis, thus allowing Barbados to be a destination option for a holiday or cruise, for a patient with renal disease.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: All of the top hotels in Barbados have onsite spa facilities to meet their visitor's demands. The range of treatment offering has developed considerably and clients can chose from a single treatment to day plans.

Wellness Tourism: The concept that holidays incorporate wellness such as spa, fitness and healthy eating choices - is increasing. However, the idea that packages / holiday retreats specifically grouping for example yoga or mind body as the sole or primary reason for travel is not that developed. Barbados Fertility Centre does focus on incorporating stress reduction and treatments such as acupuncture and

reflexology alongside traditional IVF and in some cases this may be why a patient chooses Barbados.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: Not currently developed.

Beauty: Yes of services typically linked with spas.

Fitness: Gyms and fitness options have expanded on the island. Certainly hotel gyms are common, and some offer a very good range of services way beyond what historically was the one treadmill and bike in the corner! These attract local membership and often offer classes or personal training within the facility.

There have also been significant developments in the area of sports and fitness with a number of events like 'run Barbados - international marathon and 10K' or the "open water festival - which includes a variety of water based competitions". Sports tourism for football, tennis, hockey and surfing has also developed considerably over the years.

Nutrition: Undoubtedly people are more conscious of healthy eating and its importance to wellbeing. This has influenced our many fantastic restaurants to include choices that follow current healthy eating trends.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

Local awareness of the importance of health and wellness is present with a number of entities endorsing corporate fitness programs. This can vary from simple after work employee fitness sessions in the car park (given the lovely climate in Barbados) to more formal gym membership.

There is also support for preventative wellness, with some corporate entities offering health insurance which does cover basic preventative health assessments.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

Within the established industry the attitude to development and investing in spa services has been good as it is recognized that it is expected! Barbados offers an established tourism platform and has in place the Barbados tourism investment division to assist investors considering Barbados as a destination. The Tourism Development Act aims to provide taxation incentives to potential developers who add/improve tourism products including hotels and attractions.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

The ultimate responsibility lies with the individual who makes life choices but it is up to the industry to make this easy and attractive!

SUBMITTED BY:

Name: Dr Juliet Skinner MRCOG MRCPI

Title: Medical Director

Company: Barbados Fertility Centre

Email: jskinner@barbadosivf.com

Phone Number: (+1) 246 435 7467

