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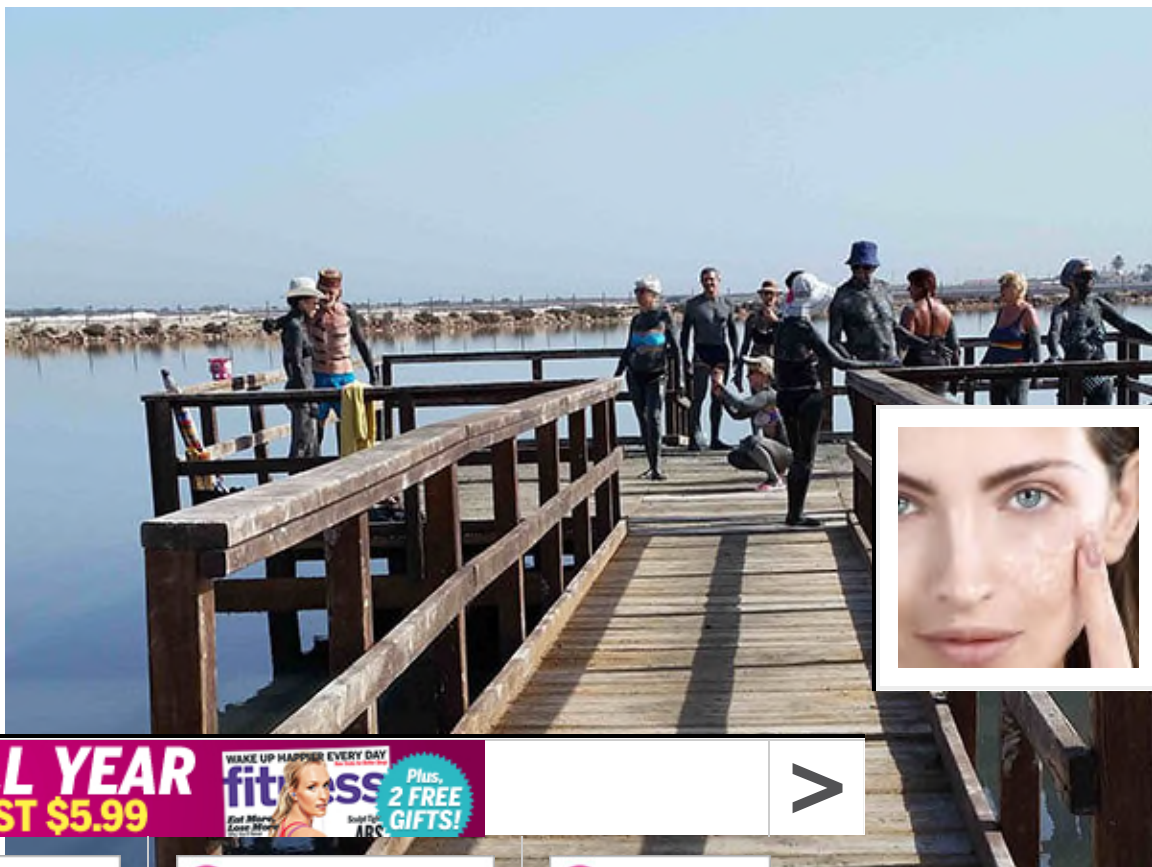
Go for a Soak: 5 Destinations for Natural Beauty Treatments

From the muds of Mar Menor in Murcia, Spain, to the waters of the presumed Fountain of Youth near Sarasota, Florida, these aquatic beauty treatments are as natural as they come.



By Kate Silver

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...he M... d rav... aling mud at Mar Menor ("smaller sea") and had to check out the beauty treatments there for myself. T... or ar... city of... natar and La Manga, is a popular spot for Spaniards, Brits, and French and German visitors to vacation or own second homes. The calm waters here are sheltered from the waves of

the Mediterranean Sea, thanks to a rocky, 13-mile ridge that creates a serene kind of lagoon.

Here, the sun shines more than 300 days a year, and the water is rich in salt—as you can tell by the salt mounds that sit in the distance and the gourmet salt sold in spas and [gift shops](#) around town. Walking around San Pedro del Pinatar, is like entering another planet: Men and women of all shapes and sizes meander the streets while slathered in black mud, which turns gray as it dries. No one is self-conscious. We're all here for the same thing, after all: Therapeutic mud said to heal skin, detox systems, help with arthritis, rheumatism, tendinitis, nervous disorders, and, of course, a beauty treatment.

Surrounded by people speaking Spanish and Russian, I climbed out on a wooden dock and down [the steps](#) into an area of Mar Menor called Las Charcas. Once in the chilly water, I leaned down low, grabbed a handful of mud, and started spreading it across my arms, my neck, my chest, my back. I wish I'd known to grab a bucket, as the locals do, and coat it on really thick. But it turns out it didn't matter. After about 30 minutes, I washed off the thin layer I'd spread, and I'll admit it: My skin had never felt so soft. I even brought some mud home with me to keep up the glow.

Mar Menor is just one of the spots around the world known for its healing waters. Looking to roll in the mud or just sit and soak? Here are some other therapeutic travel options.



The Blue Lagoon, Iceland

The Blue Lagoon may be the most bizarrely beautiful place on earth. Created by seawater run off from a neighboring geothermal plant, this cerulean blue lake on the outskirts of Reykjavík is a surreal oasis in the lunarlike landscape of Iceland. Since 1976, visitors have been floating in the lagoon, exploring its varying temperatures, and applying the silica-rich mud to their skin to help [psoriasis](#) and other maladies. The algae and minerals are also revered for their nourishing, anti-aging effects. A true spa-like experience, saunas, steam baths, and massages are also available, and there's food and drink on-site so you can make a full day of it.



The Dead Sea, Israel

One of the most famous destinations for a salty float is the Dead Sea. It's located at the lowest elevation on earth (more than 1,300 feet below sea level), and it's so salty—more so than any other body of water—that no creature can survive in it. That's good news: You won't need to worry about anything nipping at your toes. The salts and minerals of the Dead Sea are known to benefit people with arthritis and skin conditions and leave your skin feeling soft and dewy.



Széchenyi Baths, Budapest, Hungary

Budapest is known as the City of Baths, and that soaking culture dates back to the Romans, who took advantage of the

thermal springs below the surface of the city. For a true taste of Hungarian culture, head to Széchenyi Baths, where you'll find 15 pools indoors and three outside in this gorgeous, sprawling, neo-classical complex. They range in size (tiny to huge) and temperature (near-freezing to hot hot hot). The water comes from two different thermal springs, and while there's no mud or clay here, the minerals in the water make your skin feel fabulous, especially if you spend the better part of the day here, as the locals do. Bonus: There's a chess table at the outdoor pools, so you can enrich your mind as you relax.



Warm Mineral Springs, North Port, Florida

Legend has it that the fountain of youth Ponce de Leon sought is near Sarasota, Florida, in this 87-degree, mineral-filled spring. What appears as a pond is actually more of a sinkhole: It's one acre across and more than 200 feet deep in the center, likely because of an earthquake that caused the area to cave. Residents and visitors come here to soak in the rich minerals of the springs—surrounded by lawn chairs—and to enjoy the sunshine of the Sunshine State.

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