

# THE ORIGINS OF WELLNESS: SPA GUESTS ATTRACTED BY SHORTER BREAKS



Originally, the term wellness came from the U.S. Later on, it became popular also in the Old Continent where it is connected rather with pampering in spas than with alternative medicine.

Wellness, we hear this word almost every day but where did the concept come from? The term was first used by an American doctor Halbert Louis Dunn, who studied the trends affecting the health of population. He found out that as the life expectancy increased, Americans became more endangered by civilization diseases than by other types of health problems. **He then coined the term wellness as an opposite to illness.** Dunn's idea of wellness included not only the physical health but also social and spiritual wellbeing.

The concept gained popularity in 1970s when people emphasized the importance of one's own responsibility for the person's. New programs were created and offered to the clients who could there not only improve their physical condition but also learn suitable eating habits and simple relaxation techniques.

Wellness then reached Europe where it has been usually associated rather with pleasure and pampering than with alternative medicine. **Today wellness is here connected mostly with physical activities, beauty procedures and spas.**

As the time of the modern age seems to run faster than ever before, even European spas adjust to this new situation by offering wellness packages as well as shorter breaks. While in the past in the central Europe the term spas referred almost solely to medical and healing procedures and months-long stays, today the offer of rejuvenating weekend breaks is an essential part of any spa program. The popularity of short wellness packages is quickly increasing. For instance, Czech spas that are traditionally known for long-term therapies and effective medical treatments reported that only 10-20% of their guests opted for wellness stays five years ago. Today half of all spa guests come to the spas to enjoy several days of pampering and relaxation.

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