

Heal Thyself – Discover The Magic of Dominican Waters

By Martha Cuffy

Without water there is no life. Masaru Emoto, an incredibly serene Japanese man with a healing presence wrote a book called “The True Power of Water” and researched its powers. He learned that at human conception a fertilised egg is 96% water, stabilising at 70% in an adult.

So the more we know about water, the more we may know about the essence of being human. And on this lush island of Dominica where we are surrounded by stunning sea water and with more than 360 mineral-rich rivers it is easy to overlook this simple fact.

Some say it is one of the main reasons why we have enjoyed a world record number of centenarians, like the famous Ma Pampo. The healing waters just flowed endlessly through their veins.

So what are these sources of joy and healing? Where can you experience waters that on a Caribbean island said to be the only one that Columbus would still recognize?

Sea Water – from sinus soaks to sea spas

If you are like Ursula Andress or Halle Berry in a James Bond movie, you may enter this island by emerging out of its stunning aquamarine sea waters.

Your sinuses will be grateful if you then inhale the sea water, a practice well known by the Victorians. The salt-water ratio provides a natural anti-bacterial lotion to rinse out those clogged-up painful sinus cavities. Not only will your sinuses feel renewed, but your mind will have greater clarity and balance as there are over 60 millions autonomic nerve endings in your nostrils...

Many hikers swear by a post-hike soak in the sea, to draw out the waste acids released by the muscles which have been tensed and stretched by some of the highest mountains in the Caribbean. The dreaded stiff leg or muscle hangover is then a thing of the past.

Or you could opt for a sunrise sea spa treatment and opt for the unusual but sensuous experience of treating your hair and body using the yummy natural products of Gina of Red Rock Haven which actually work best with sea water.

Sulphur Water – a natural path to smoother skin, and sound sleep

The multiple warm and cold sulphur water sites and spas dotted around the island have earned Dominica an enviable reputation of being a place to relax, heal skin ailments and meet interesting people, and that includes the spa owners!

Many medical skin treatments for conditions such as eczema contain sulphur-based ingredients so modern medicine is simply affirming a secret that Dominicans have known and used for hundreds of years. And there is the distinct added advantage of the

healing stage being set in the stunning wild outdoors of nature rather than a sterile treatment room. And once you understand that the colour of sulphur water varies because of the different minerals it contains, you no longer have any hesitation about soaking blissfully away in a tub.

So take a visit to sulphur water rock pool in the sea in front of the church at Soufrière. Or you could hike up to the mountain village of Wotten Waven and you will not be surprised why it has earned itself the name of the spa destination of Dominica. It contains a broad selection of sulphur water spas where you can soak, gaze, chat, alternate between warm and cold sulphur water, and finish off with a sulphur mud massage.

For those who have difficulty sleeping, you may well save yourself a prescription by choosing to spend some time at a warm sulphur spot before going to bed. I introduced my cousin to the joys of sulphur bathing and she rang me the next day to remark on how well she had slept.

Rolling Back Time

Sulphur not only helps the body to resist bacteria but actually destroy it. Sulphur exists in your haemoglobin and connective body tissue. Some of what it does is to disinfect the blood and is used in the synthesis of collagen - one of the main proteins needed for your skin to stay firm. It slows down the aging process because of its ability to protect against the toxic effects of pollution and radiation. And if you need any more convincing, drop by the Rainforest Shangri-La Resort, Wotten Waven to see the effects sulphur bathing on its owner. Anyone who knows Fred will testify to how the greying of his hair has reversed since living there and his energy levels have improved.

River Water

Stepping into the silky smoothness of the White River is an unforgettable experience. Its cool caressing torrents flush away any negativity, smooth the skin, pummel the inexcusably wobbly parts and leaves your mind calm, the body relaxed and your spirits rejuvenated for the day or evening ahead. According to Dominican pathologist Gail Defoe, drinking mineralized water will enable you to live up to twelve years longer so bring a bottle to take some of that precious juice home.

And if you can, arrange your visit around a full moon. It is a mystical experience to sit back in a tub and watch the moon light up the water.

Waterfalls

Or if you prefer a water feature that has drama, then you would do well to cleanse your soul by standing under one of the many hidden and known waterfalls which are found throughout the island. One of the most popular sites is Emerald Pool which has a modest fall to test whether you can brace the force and temperature of a forest

waterfall. Or if you are feeling adventurous, there are times when it is safe to stand under Middleham Falls, a towering majestic fall.

If all else fails, start a water-tasting tour

As you drive home or to the airport, look out for spring pipes that stick out onto the road from the mountain-side. These can provide some of the tastiest water the island has to offer. I have memories of my mother stopping on the way up to Grand Bay and quenching her thirst from one of these pipes.

But beware, this water-tasting tour will take you past a well-known flavoured source of water, Dominica's own Kubuli beer. So bring a driver.