

PSYCHEDELICS, PSYCHOBOTICS AND SMART CLOTHES

SIX SPA & WELLNESS TRENDS FOR 2020

As we near the end of 2019, it's time to look ahead and make our predictions for the spa and wellness trends we'll be seeing everywhere in the coming year.

In 2019 we saw, as predicted last year, the rise of weed-infused edibles (in areas where it's legal, and even where it's not), an increasing backlash against weight loss culture, and a growing acceptance of bodies of all shapes and sizes.

What's going to be big over the next 12 months? Read on for six of the buzziest spa and wellness trends for 2020.

01 PSYCHEDELIC ASSISTED THERAPY



People have always called cannabis a “gateway drug,” and in the case of wellness it looks like they’re right. In the past few years, the plant’s use has gone through various states of decriminalization around the world and the cannabis compound cannabidiol (CBD) [took over spa, wellness, skincare](#), and more. Now we’re seeing an uptick in attention around hallucinogenic substances like psilocybin, the psychedelic compound found in more than 200 species of mushrooms, and DMT (N,N-Dimethyltryptamine) the chemical substance known as the “spirit molecule,” often used in ayahuasca, a South American entheogenic plant brew made with the Banisteriopsis caapi vine, which is commonly found in the Amazon Basin. There’s evidence that both have been used as spiritual medicines for thousands of years, and both have recently been the subject of increased interest from the public, and from researchers looking into their potential applications as treatments for [mental health conditions](#), including [depression](#), schizophrenia, and dementia. Johns Hopkins University recently announced the launch of the [Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research](#), established with \$17 million in private donations. The Center will be the first of its kind in the United States, while the [Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College London](#), which opened earlier this year, is said to be the first in the world. Expect to hear more about psychedelic compounds and psychedelic assisted therapy in the coming months and years.

02 ENERGY HEALING

Sound baths, reiki, crystal healing, shamanic sessions; we're seeing an increase in spas and wellness retreats, and even hair salons, offering services like these. Sound baths, which were marked as a top wellness trend to watch in the coming year by [Harper's Bazaar](#), are believed by devotees to "create the space and conditions for healing to occur on many levels." This includes stimulating circulation and the immune system, cleansing energy meridians, helping to release negative emotions, and promoting deep relaxation. Meanwhile, Six Senses has teamed up with Dr. Alberto Villoldo, a doctor and Shaman, to provide Energy Medicine programs, such as "[Grow a New Body](#)", at selected resorts, and Six Senses [CEO Neil Jacobs](#) also mentioned "energy medicine" to Spa Executive recently when asked what trends he is excited about in wellness. Shamanism is also gathering celebrity attention, thanks in part to the raised profile of Shaman Durek and his connection to Gwyneth Paltrow and romantic relationship with the Princess of Norway. Shamans are also connected to psychedelic ritual healing. Expect to see more focus on energy healing and growth in its popularity as curiosity grows.



03 PSYCHOBIOLOGICS

Psychobiotics are bacteria that may have a mental health benefit when ingested. The idea that the trillions of bacteria in our guts (a.k.a. our gut microbiota) could have a drastic affect on our mental health is not a new one, but it's been gaining in popularity and credibility, with a growing body of research, in recent years. An article in Canada's [Post Media](#) recently stated "No area of psychiatry is as hot, or controversial today as the idea of manipulating the gut to alter the mind." Gastro-intestinal problems are common in people with anxiety and depression, and believed by many to lead to an array of mental health issues, including psychosis, while certain probiotics have been associated with improved mood. This means a growing interest in fecal pills and transplants, as well as in fermented foods and psychobiotic nutrition. Sean C Anderson, author of [The Psychobiotic Revolution](#), has even created a psychobiotic food pyramid, heavy on plants, whole grains, fermented foods, fish, seafood, and eggs. These bacteria will, predictably, come to be regarded not just as a treatment for existing conditions, but as a preventative measure, and are being integrated into the diets of early adopters as we write this.

A circular inset image showing a close-up of purple lavender flowers with green foliage in the background.

04 NEXT GENERATION AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy is hardly new. The practice of turning to scents and essential oils for their purported healing properties is probably thousands of years old, and though there is little solid scientific evidence as to its efficacy, aromatherapy's popularity continues to grow. The Global Wellness Institute recently named "[Aromatherapy 2.0: Scent as Medicine](#)" as a trend to watch, citing many examples of how aromatherapy is moving into a new era, thanks to technological advancement and neuroscience studies. Among the examples cited was [Aeroscena](#), a company based in the Cleveland Clinic's Innovations Lab that has created a line of plant-based aromatherapeutics formulated to specifically treat symptoms like pain, nausea, and anxiety with the guidance of a medical advisory board. Another company, eScent, has combined [aromatherapy with AI](#) to create a system that diffuses a localized bubble of scent when 'smart sensors' detect incipient increases in stress and other physical parameters in the user. These indicators include changes in voice and body odor. At the same time, researchers continue to study aromatherapy's affect on [pain](#), [anxiety](#), [sleep](#), [memory](#), cognition, and more. Aromatherapy will continue to interest researchers and entrepreneurs looking for viable natural alternatives to pharmaceutical interventions.

05 ELEVATED ETHICAL STANDARDS

More and more people are waking up (getting woke) to the global impact of their every decision, and it shows. Riding the wave of the Great Plastic Straw Ban trend of 2018, more municipalities, states, and countries are saying "enough" to plastic pollution and implementing bans. Meanwhile, consumers of all economic strata are being forced to acknowledge the environmental and human impact of their purchasing decisions. This is leading to people avoiding plastic and seeking packaging alternatives in food, skincare, and health products, and even reducing their buying as a whole. Fashion is another area where consumers are being confronted with the reality of their choices as images of the [impact of fast fashion](#) on both the environment and its inhabitants are becoming unavoidable – leading to movements and waves of consumers avoiding buying new clothes altogether and looking for more environmentally friendly options, like buying second-hand clothing. And while the "death of fast fashion" that was widely hailed with the news of Forever 21's bankruptcy [might be just a tad overstated](#), it is true that savvy, sophisticated buyers are choosing to make more ethical statements with their purchasing. These



choices apply to everything -- no product or service is immune. "Healing crystals" have [come under scrutiny lately](#) for mining practices that exploit child labour and impoverished populations in developing countries. And essential oil companies will also presumably be expected to account for their farming and disposal practices, as will the companies that use them. Spas will be increasingly called upon to deliver ethical product and service options, eschew plastics, and to be transparent about the source and manufacturing of their products and packaging.

06 SMART CLOTHES

When it comes to wearables, [consumer adoption](#) hasn't quite lived up to the media hype. Fitbit and Apple Watch are really the only wearables to have been somewhat widely adopted by the public, though applications of the technology for B2B users and in the medical and healthcare sectors are [more promising](#). However, the early failure of many first gen consumer wearables hasn't dampened the enthusiasm of researchers and developers searching for new ideas, particularly in the areas of health and wellness. One example is smart jewelry that can act as an activity tracker and sleep monitor, and even measure one's emotional wellbeing. Another is smart fashion, clothing made from smart materials that may speed healing, improve sleep and wellbeing, clean itself, reduce body odor, moisturize skin, and more. According to the [Global Wellness Institute](#), this "dizzying array of new technologies" that ranges from "Internet-of-Things hardware/software to body-mapping technologies" may have numerous wellness benefits. Examples include Under Armour's Athlete Recovery Sleepwear, which is said to capture heat and reflect it back onto the body as far infrared rays to improve circulation and muscle regeneration. Others are Nadi X Yoga Pants, which come with built-in haptic vibrations that encourage the wearer to move and/or hold positions, and the Supra Powered Sports Bra, which uses a heart rate sensor and AI to create a smart bra that keeps track of workouts and UV levels. And Rosie Broadhead's Skin II is a fabric with encapsulated probiotic bacteria intended to reduce body odour, encourage cell renewal, and improve the skin's immune system. It remains to be seen whether the public will eventually embrace futuristic fashion, but expect to see lots of media buzz around its development.

