

# fit women's **ess**

JANUARY 2016

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any skin  
issue*

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# Coast with THE MOST



WF's Samera Kamaledine takes a fit tour of Santa Monica, California

**THE DUSTY AIR THAT SMACKS YOU IN THE FACE** when you step outside LAX, or the criss-crossing of concrete highways that rule the views once your journey begins, aren't the most accurate depictions of what awaits you beyond one of the world's busiest airports.

What awaits you just a half-hour cab ride away is smog-free, palm tree-filled Santa Monica – LA's seaside city, where the laidback Southern California beach vibe meshes with a spot of glam. It's a city that's mastered the art of fitness, wellness and recovery (and not just because it's home to the original Muscle Beach). There's more than just beach-bumming and sunset-Instagramming to be done on this stretch of coastline, I discover, over three days of SoCal goodness...

Checking into **Shutters on the Beach** ([shuttersonthebeach.com](http://shuttersonthebeach.com)), I'm fairly certain I've just kicked off the ultimate summer vacay. The reality is, I'll probs never live a high enough life to buy my own private beach house, but in these digs I can totally fake it. Almost instantly, the beach house setting of this hotel positioned literally on the sand (the front of the hotel opens onto the promenade of Santa Monica State Beach) has filled me with I-never-want-to-leave feels.

But there are post-flight spa goodies to treat myself to, yo! My goodie of choice?

The Red Flower Hammam treatment at **ONE Spa at Shutters on the Beach**, which has a menu packed full of organic body delights to relax, revive and energise.

The detoxifying treatment starts with a citrus coffee exfoliation (don't make my mistake of turning up to the appointment hungry...), moves into a rhassoul clay wrap (the aim: to draw out impurities), and ends with a heated deep-tissue massage.

Ninety minutes of bliss has me chilled and ready to see Santa Monica as the locals do – on a bike! Cars may be what put this city on the map (the "end of the trail" of the famous Route 66 can be found on Santa Monica Pier), but this is one bike-loving populous. As well as bike rental centres at every turn, the citywide **Breeze bike share program** ([santamoncabikeshare.com](http://santamoncabikeshare.com)) makes 500 bikes available at 75 pick-up spots. Santa Monicans are so serious about

this biking thing that the local farmer's market even has bike valets.

I just have one teeny problem with this... I can't ride a bike. As in, I lack the basic pedalling skills that most other adults have. There's no way, however, that I'm missing out on this way to get around town so I've hired myself a three-wheeled trike. And yep, it's for adults!

My three-wheeled adventure on the **South Bay bicycle trail** – the longest beach path of its kind in the world at more than 35km – has me cruising beside the Pacific Ocean, past the historic Santa Monica Pier and many admirers of my trike (pretty sure I've started a cool new trend). A breezy ride north of the Pier and I'm at the **Annenberg Community Beach House** ([beachhouse.smgov.net](http://beachhouse.smgov.net)). While I *could* have chilled poolside at this public beach club, I choose instead to take advantage of the stand-up paddleboards

they have for hire and test out the Pacific waters. Lucky the views of Santa Monica Mountains and Malibu are prettier than my attempts to get out past the waves...

There's no rest for the legs the next day when a famous **SoulCycle** ([soul-cycle.com](http://soul-cycle.com)) class is on the morning menu. This straight-outta-NYC fitness craze has transformed indoor cycling to deliver one helluva experience with your core workout. Let me set the scene: Candlelight. Pedalling to (very loud) Kanye. Choreography reminiscent of a hip-hop nightclub. Be prepared to bounce. And sweat. And have so much fun doing it that 45-minutes goes like *that*.

Because I love sweating so much (pfft!), I follow up the best cycle class ever with a visit to urban sweat lodge **Shape House** ([shapehouse.com](http://shapehouse.com)). Did you know that sweating is an ancient wellness practice that dates back to 6th

Shutters on the Beach is quite literally on the beach!



Samera hits Santa Monica on three wheels



Palm trees and blue seas... Cali doesn't skimp on pretty views



## PIT STOPS

Want to get off the tourist track? You'd best be heading to the 10 tree-lined blocks of Montana Avenue, where all the cool kids live...

**1 Kye's** The signature 'KyeRitos' aka superfood burritos are wrapped in leafy greens or nori instead of tortillas with fillings like bean taco and brown rice blend. [kyesmontana.com](http://kyesmontana.com)

**2 Yogaworks** Where you might just find yourself in downward dog beside a Victoria's Secret model (great for bragging rights, not so great for body confidence!). The awesome beginner's class makes yoga super casual. [yogaworks.com](http://yogaworks.com)

**3 Bellacures** Pop in for an all-natural, soy-based, non-toxic mani or pedi. Tack on a sea salt or walnut scrub for extra deliciousness. [bellacures.com](http://bellacures.com)

century Greece? With some modern tech, Shape House is bringing this ancient tradition to the people because, well, the benefits are crazy good.

A one-hour sesh involves being zipped into a heated infrared blanket (with your face outside the blanket so you can breathe fresh air) and the process, which heats you from the inside out, makes you sweat, baby. My eyes were blurred by the sweat beads dripping down my forehead and into my eye sockets. It's a sweat of the super-cleansing kind, though – it detoxifies, boosts your metabolism, shortens muscle soreness and can even improve sleep. Added bonus: super-glowy skin!

From the moment I arrived, I've been eyeing off the run scene in **Palisades Park** – a 26-acre stretch that overlooks the ocean and the Pier and is bustling with local runners, picnickers and some very tempting Mexican food trucks. I know it's *the* place to pace up on my last day. I'm a sucker for a picturesque running view, and weaving through these sky-high palm trees does not disappoint.

As my trip comes to an end so too do any muscle aches and pains I've gained with one last stop at the Slow Your Roll class at fitness studio **Cyclepathic** ([cyclepathicfitness.com](http://cyclepathicfitness.com)). The ultimate recovery class, Slow Your Roll is one hour of you, a foam roller, some boy band slow jams and a lovely instructor called Shallamar. Not only have I now prepped for tomorrow's Sydney-bound flight, but I'm leaving with a few tricks up my sleeve for my neglected foam roller at home.

So does this final stretch-out mean I'm ready to depart sunny Santa Monica? Battling the chaos of LAX is one thing, but saying goodbye to this little slice of health-conscious heaven is another. In the words of former Californian governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, I'll be back...