



DETOX DIARY

Isolated at an insider wellness retreat for five days of fasting, **Viaa Beaumanis** finds a lot more on the menu than juice.

“I’m not sure what I miss more,” I muse, sipping a bowl of organic miso broth, “wine with dinner, or food with dinner.”

“I’ve always felt that water with meals,” replies Liza, an old-school Rosedale girl still adjusting to our suffering, “was for people in orange jumpsuits.”

Welcome to Day One of detox. Five days of fasting. This is the plan. Liza and I have checked

in to the 13-room Grail Springs Health & Wellness Centre, perched on a lake outside Bancroft, Ontario. In the dining room around us, guests on low-fat, white sugar-free, all-natural “alkaline” diets tuck into salads, beet- and cauliflower-stuffed kamut lasagna, and scoops of hemp ice cream. Dismissing them as lightweights while coveting their food, we request a glass

of the Master Cleanse drink, the famed faster’s blend of hot water, maple syrup, lemon juice and cayenne pepper, which reportedly got Beyoncé into *Dreamgirls* shape.

Though its services are comprehensive, Grail Springs, whose clientele includes everyone from *Canadian Idol* judges to Jim Carrey, is less a spa than a wellness retreat. The founding principle is, essentially, healthy body, healthy mind, healthy you. Yoga, Pilates, strength and circuit training, with seasonal outdoor activities from hiking to cross-country skiing, make up the fitness program; breathing, meditation, reiki, stress management and relaxation classes tackle inner wellness. Finally, if you’re eating at all, the Grail’s signature diet balances the body’s pH levels with an alkalizing menu of vegetables, low-sugar fruits, plenty of water and green drinks to filter toxins and acidity from the body. The theory is that too much acidity may impair cellular function, which could result in low energy, poor digestion, excess weight or even more serious disorders.

The Grail offers something for whatever ails you. With two children under age five, Liza, who leads a healthy, organic, red meat-free lifestyle rich in vitamins, supplements and regular sleep cycles, is looking to doff a few baby pounds. With no children, a full-time job, most meals eaten in restaurants, and an epic social life, I’m stressed out and vain, fond of cocktails, cigarettes and rib-eyes, and seeking a well-earned, weight-dropping rinse cycle. While booking our treatments the week before, we’d perused the detailed list of prep tasks to accomplish in the days preceding our arrival. Liza cut back admirably on sweets and fried, baked and starchy foods, popping the advised twice-daily, digestion-enhancing acidophilus and detoxifying chlorophyll »

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tablets. I failed miserably in a flurry of steak frites and cabernet.

Collecting me on the morning of our trip, Liza hands me a fat-free, sugarless latte. “I haven’t been alone in ages,” I sigh, rooting around in my purse for a bag of trail mix. “I haven’t been alone in four years,” replies Liza, hitting the gas, clearly relishing the chance to sleep in as much as starve herself.

We arrive three hours later and kick things off with an organic apple-carrot juice (lunch), followed by a yoga class and a deep tissue massage. Day One goes well. We have a little trail mix in our tummies and negotiate an extra bowl of miso at dinner. We make for our cozy suite for an after-dinner cigarette on the terrace, accidentally missing the nightly fireside lecture as our chatter devolves into an hour of side-splitting anecdotes about idiots we’ve fallen “madly” in love with and Liza’s first wedding, when she decided that “till death do us part” somehow included marrying a guitar player.

The next morning, having downed our breakfast protein shakes, we check the schedule: a yoga class, then colonics. Lunch is a 12-ounce protein shake in a parfait glass. “Don’t chew your cuticles,” Liza scolds me. “I’m hungry,” I snap back. Forty hours and counting without solid food—I’m cranky and Liza has a headache. It’s par for the (starving) course, apparently. Soldiering on, we manage a Body Sculpt class, after which Liza falls asleep reading *Vogue* by the fireplace as I investigate a mineral detox wrap—a two-hour procedure that sees me swathed head to toe in Ace bandages, soaked in hot mineral water and tightly girded to my flesh, before I am instructed to “march.” On the spot. For 45 minutes. Liza wakes up, finds me and hits the “video” button on her camera, howling with laughter. She who »

HOLY GRAIL
THE LABYRINTH
AT GRAIL SPRINGS
WHERE GUESTS
PRACTISE
MEDITATION





HOLISTIC HAVEN
GRAIL SPRINGS
FOUNDER MADELEINE
MARENTETTE LEADS
THE DAILY MORNING
MANTRA

The next morning, we feel quite smug when it's revealed that **another guest lost all control** and returned from a mad dash to the store with **a bag of Doritos.**

laughs last? It works. Overall, I lose 27 inches, much of it water weight, but who cares? My skin is firmer, and what cellulite I have is smoothed—a pre-Big Night treatment ~~never~~ there was one.

Over the next two days, we chug Master Cleanse, juice, soup, protein shakes, herbal tea and intestinal tract-cleansing, chlorophyll-infused water. We are detoxified with salt rubs, acupuncture, blasts of infrared light, and daily sessions in the steam room. We are purged in tubs of hot moor mud and—quite literally—with colonics. Staying busy keeps our minds off things like breakfast, lunch and dinner. Nighttime is a grind. Idling in our rooms reading and watching TV, we endure commercials where even pepperoni pizza starts looking tasty to ravenous vegetarian Liza. Every movie contains a dining scene. Magazine ads for food and, worse, entire food sections torment us. We beg for fruit: “Apples?” “Sorry,” says the lady at the front desk. “The kitchen is closed.” I sneak down to purloin bananas; the door is locked. I fall asleep to Liza’s detailed recounting of an opulent breakfast we once enjoyed at Langdon Hall. On Day Three, we break down, drive to town and score a bag of contraband almonds (roasted, unsalted), chewing them guiltily into paste so as to not “really” break our fast. The next morning, we feel quite smug when it’s revealed that another guest lost all control and returned from a mad dash to the store with a full-sized bag of cheese Doritos. That night, we’re allowed rations of unbuttered popcorn. »

REVLON
Midnight Swirl