



# Mineral Springs Resorts in Global Perspective: Spa Histories

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Spa resorts were a favoured destination for affluent seekers after health and comfortable leisure in opulent surroundings from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, although in the railway age they began to suffer from competition from new fashions in leisure and tourism, especially the seaside holiday. During their heyday the leading spa resorts became hotbeds of political and diplomatic intrigue, and gathering-points for high society. As such, they also became important businesses, and distinctive, carefully-managed urban environments. 'Taking the waters' at a mineral springs resort fell into eclipse over much of the Western world in the mid-twentieth century, only to revive in more diffuse guise as 'health and wellness tourism' in the new millennium.

This book examines an important body of practices and experiences from the perspectives of health, pleasure, conspicuous consumption and display, urban governance, culture and politics across a quarter of a millennium, drawing its examples not only from the British Isles, France, Spain and Central Europe, but also from the United States and Australia. An international team of distinguished historians puts this neglected theme back on the historical map, at a time when spas and their treatments have never been so popular and visible in contemporary society.

This book was published as a special issue of the *Journal of Tourism History*.

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