

# GREEN TRAVEL BLOG ([HTTPS://GREEN-TRAVEL-BLOG.COM/](https://green-travel-blog.com/))

== green pearls® – unique places ==

11. April 2025

## TAKING A SAUNA IS HEALTHY – BUT IS IT SUSTAINABLE?



©Hotel Das Rübezahl

People go to a spa hotel with a sauna to relax and do something good for themselves. But can we also switch off our sustainable conscience, when taking a sauna? We talked to sustainable Green Pearls® hotels about how to do sustainably. We also introduce you to the zero-energy sauna and take a look at the "wacky wellness ritual" infusion.

## IS TAKING A SAUNA A SIN OR IS IT HEALTHY?

A traditional Finnish sauna has a dry heat of about 80 degrees and only 10 percent humidity. As you can imagine, the sauna heater has to provide a **considerable amount of heat**. According to one [energy company](https://www.enbw.com/blog/wohnen/energie-sparen/sauna-fuer-zuhause-tipps-fuer-den-kauf-und-betrieb/), (<https://www.enbw.com/blog/wohnen/energie-sparen/sauna-fuer-zuhause-tipps-fuer-den-kauf-und-betrieb/>), you could work on your laptop for 300 to 400 hours for the electricity used in a single sauna session. (Of course, the more people who use a sauna, the "better" the ecological balance becomes).

In 2022, during the energy crisis, the topic of saunas even made it onto the German political agenda. In an interview with Welt am Sonntag, Schleswig-Holstein's state premier Daniel Günther (CDU) argued that saunas should be turned off. He said they belonged to a **category of luxury** that people should “**voluntarily do without**”. Martin Niederstein, head of the German Sauna Association, countered that saunas are a **beneficial way to take care of one's health**.

## TAKING A SAUNA FOR YOUR HEALTH

Several studies (<https://www.swr.de/video/sendungen-a-z/marktcheck/gesundheit/wie-gesund-ist-die-sauna-104.html>), show the positive effects of sauna on the immune system, skin and cardiovascular system. Sauna master Manuel Greifenberg (<https://www.my-arbor.com/de/blog/manuel-greifenberg/my-saunameister/>), agrees that “health is the number one priority”. But it can be achieved in a sustainable way. His employer, the Green Pearls® Hotel My Arbor (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/my-arbor/>), in South Tyrol, is committed to sustainable operations and produces part of its energy needs through a large solar system on the roof.



Sauna Master Manuel Greifenberg ©Hotel My Arbor by BP

## ZERO ENERGY SAUNA

A few years ago, the University of Stuttgart caused a sensation with its “zero-energy sauna”. It is operated without a power connection and runs solely on solar energy (with a thermal energy store).

It shows that energy-hungry luxury is possible without fossil fuels and harmful emissions. Or, let us say: with a lot less.



# HOW TO MAKE A SAUNA SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Above all, energy is the key** to an environmentally friendly sauna. The “Zero Energy Sauna”, which the University of Stuttgart presented as a world first in 2022, is now a reality. And it can be found, among other places, in the **OLM Nature Escape** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/olm-nature-escape/>), of the Green Pearls® network in South Tyrol.

“Our guests sauna in an energy neutral way, as our saunas are powered by geothermal and photovoltaic energy.” – *OLM Nature Escape*

The circular aparthotel in Sand in Taufers is the first energy-independent hotel in the Alps and is completely self-sufficient in terms of electricity and heating thanks to geothermal probes and solar panels. What's more, you can enjoy a sauna in complete privacy, as some of the aparthotel suites have their own private saunas.



“Zero-emission sauna” in the suites of the aparthotel ©Hannes Niederkoffer | OLM Nature Escape

## SURVEY: 43% OF WELLNESS HOTELS USE NATURAL GAS

The situation is different in a large proportion of wellness hotels. According to a [survey of wellness hotels](https://www.tophotel.de/umfrage-so-reagieren-wellnesshotels-auf-die-energiekrise-159411/) (<https://www.tophotel.de/umfrage-so-reagieren-wellnesshotels-auf-die-energiekrise-159411/>), 43% use natural gas to heat their spa areas. This means that if you simply check into a wellness hotel, there is a good chance that a fossil fuel will be burned for your sauna session, which in its entirety has a negative impact on the environment.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WOOD

Another environmental aspect of saunas is the wood. Wood is a natural and biodegradable material. However, anyone who uses wood should take care to preserve the forests. This is why OLM relies on an FSC-certified supplier. The saunas are made of spruce, the apartments of larch.

**Excursus: Seal for wood from sustainable forests:** When it comes to sustainable certification of wood, the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** is currently the “only credible seal”. This is the view of Greenpeace and the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU). Even though Greenpeace left the FSC in 2018 and there are also criticisms of the FSC seal (<https://www.prowildlife.de/aktuelles/hintergrund/fsc-herkunftssiegel-fuer-holz/>), it is still the best functioning seal for forest protection and species conservation (<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wissen/artenschutz-fsc-tropenholz-tropenwald-verbraucherschutz-forstwirtschaft-tiere-tierschutz-1.6538579?reduced=true>). worldwide. The main point of criticism is that FSC also certifies tropical timber. Therefore, FSC-certified wood that is NOT tropical wood is the best. The PEFC label is considered less strict and is also criticized for allowing the use of pesticides.

## HERE YOU CAN ENJOY AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SAUNA

The wellness hotels in the Green Pearls® network are characterized by the fact that they all rely on renewable energies (albeit to varying degrees). In addition, you can often experience fantastic views, natural materials and other special features.

## NATURRESORT GERBEHOF: WOOD FROM THE HOTEL'S OWN FOREST AND GREEN ELECTRICITY



An eco-friendly sauna followed by a Kneipp treatment ©Naturresort Gerbehof

**Naturresort Gerbehof** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/naturresort-gerbehof/>) is located near Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance, on the edge of its own forest property and surrounded by fruit tree plantations. The wood used for the hand-carved saunas comes directly from the resort's own forest. Only green electricity is used throughout the resort (including the saunas). To avoid wasting electricity, the saunas are operated by appointment only.

## HOTEL DAS RÜBEZAHL: EVENT-BASED ENERGY BOOST AND SELF-GENERATED ELECTRICITY

The weekly calendar of the **Hotel Das Rübezahl** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-ruebezahl/>) in Füssen in the Allgäu region of Germany lists the dates for "**Event Infusions & Meditation**" (<https://ruebezahl.guest.net/activity-calendar>). The infusions by **sauna master Istvan** (who also teaches yoga and meditation classes at the hotel) depend on the mood.

Sometimes he comes in a Rastafarian cap as Bob Marley, sometimes in a Scottish skirt and bagpipes. "Sauna should be fun," says Istvan.

In addition to the saunas in the spa area, the hotel has rooms with private infrared saunas. According to the hotel, the saunas are heated "primarily with self-generated electricity". If the electricity





from the solar panels is not enough, the romantic wellness hotel also purchases green electricity from hydropower. Automated sauna technology also ensures that the sauna is only heated when necessary.

Sauna Master Istvan in a traditional Scottish kilt during an infusion show. ©Hotel Das Rübezahl

## HOTEL BELLA VISTA ZERMATT: NEW SAUNA SAVES WATER



©Hotel Bella Vista Zermatt

The family-run **Hotel Bella Vista Zermatt** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-bella-vista-zermatt/>) in Switzerland built a new panoramic sauna in its spa area in 2024 – for sustainable reasons. Where there is now a sauna with a spectacular view of the Matterhorn, there used to be a hot tub that each guest could fill with 280 liters of fresh water at the touch of a button. “The water consumption was immense,” says host Fabienne Anthamatten. Zermatt is located right next to the **Gorner Glacier** (<https://green-travel-blog.com/glacier-retreat-a-look-at-the-gorner-glacier-and-the-oeztal-valley/>), so you can see for yourself how the planet’s largest freshwater reserves are disappearing due to climate change. The sauna (powered by 100% green hydropower) is therefore more sustainable than the hot tub. It is only used on request during the summer.

## NATURHOTEL OUTSIDE: ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES



©Dragan Dok | Naturhotel Outside

For a true nature vacation, the **Naturhotel Outside** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-outside1/>) in East Tyrol is the place to be. The hiking hotel is located in the middle of the Hohe Tauern National Park. The spa area was built with regional materials and only expanded in 2024. Now, in the summer of 2025, an extended outdoor area at the natural swimming pond awaits you. The sauna is powered exclusively by green electricity. There is an in-house photovoltaic system as well as external green electricity from hydropower.

## PARADISO PURE.LIVING VEGAN HOTEL: ROOMS WITH PRIVATE SAUNA



©Paradiso Pure.Living Vegan Hotel

The Hotel **Paradiso Pure.Living Vegan Hotel** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/paradiso-pure-living/>) on the Seiser Alm, 2,000 meters above sea level, works with a green energy provider. 90% of the electricity comes from hydropower. In addition to the various saunas in the spa area (steam sauna, Finnish sauna, straw sauna and infrared sauna), there are also “JS Wellness” rooms with their own infrared sauna right next to the bed. According to the hotel, these rooms are especially popular during the ski season. The ski slope ends right in front of the hotel – so after a sauna (and shower) you can fall right into bed 😊



## BIRKENHOF\*\*\*\*\* SPA & GENUSSRESORT: TECHNOLOGY FOR LUXURY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Tower sauna overlooking the Upper Palatinate Lake District ©Der Birkenhof\*\*\*\*\* Spa und Genussresort

As a 5-star hotel and operator of a 2-star restaurant, the Hotel **Der Birkenhof\*\*\*\*\* Spa & Genussresort** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/der-birkenhof-spa-genussresort/>) surprises with its commitment to sustainability. The resort operates three photovoltaic systems and two combined heat and power plants to generate electricity and heat. The electricity for the various saunas (including a tower sauna, a panorama sauna and an ice lounge) is generated as far as possible by the resort's own solar panels. In addition, an advanced sauna control system heats the saunas sequentially, ensuring that there are no power peaks.

## HOTEL WEIHRERHOF: GREEN ELECTRICITY SAUNA WITH LAKE VIEW



The boathouse sauna overlooking Wolfsgruben Lake @ Hotel Wehrerhof

The **Hotel Wehrerhof** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-wehrerhof/>) is located directly on the shore of Lake Costalovara on the Ritten in South Tyrol. From the “Bootshaus Sauna” you have a wonderful view of the lake. In summer, young and old swim in it, and in winter it is a huge ice rink where you can watch ice skaters while sitting comfortably and warmly in the sauna. “Our saunas are energy-efficient, run on green electricity and are turned down during off-peak hours,” says host Klaus Pichler, summarizing the sustainability aspects.



## APIPURA HOTEL RINNER: A ROUND BARREL SAUNA SAVES ENERGY



Energy saving sauna ©APIPURA hotel rinner

The **APIPURA hotel rinner** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-rinner/>) is also located on the Ritten. The hotel is committed to certified organic agriculture and the “Bio Fair Südtirol” seal. The senior owner is a beekeeper and so you will find (besides the wide range of organic honey) Apiwellness in the hotel, where you can breathe the air of the beehive. For the sauna, the Rinner family deliberately chose a barrel sauna because it is very energy efficient. The energy itself comes from a district heating plant. This plant converts waste from local wood production into energy.



## INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL: TRADITIONAL ANDEAN SAUNA IN PERU



©Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

In the Peruvian Andes, the **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/inkaterra-machu-picchu-pueblo-hotel/>), offers the “Andean Sauna”, which combines wellness with local traditions. The sauna is made of granite stones and is heated by heated stones. Fresh eucalyptus leaves provide a pleasant steam. Eucalyptus is widely used in Peru. The Inkaterra Hotel Group is a pioneer in sustainable tourism in Peru (<https://green-travel-blog.com/50-years-of-inkaterra-holidays-that-benefit-peru-and-its-nature/>). The hotel is particularly committed to biodiversity and species protection, but also relies on renewable energy sources from hydropower.

## LIFESTYLEHOTEL SAND: ROOF TOP SAUNA



©Lifestylehotel Sand

At the adults-only **Lifestylehotel SAND** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/sand-lifestylehotel/>), the sauna is a real highlight. The hotel is located in the popular Baltic Sea resort of Timmendorfer Strand, right on the beach. The hotel's roof terrace is a wonderful place to end the day. And that's also where you'll find the sauna. Essential oils such as lavender, lemon and alpine herbs create a relaxing or refreshing atmosphere, and the hotel also provides sauna-goers with shower bombs, loofah sponges and fresh, homemade iced tea. Book your sauna visit in advance as a private spa. Not only will you have the sauna to yourself (and your companion), but it will only be heated when you need it.



## GUT SONNENHAUSEN: ENJOY A SAUNA WITH A VIEW OF THE PADDOCK



©Gut Sonnenhausen

**Gut Sonnenhausen** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/gut-sonnenhausen/>), south of Munich, is a converted stud farm in the midst of nature. Here, environmental pioneer Georg Schweisfurth has realized his dream of building a hotel in a listed building, surrounded by organic farming and gardens. The sauna is located outside and, like the entire complex, is powered by green energy from Green Planet Energy.



## ECO-HOTEL OKELMANN'S: SAUNA BY APPOINTMENT IN A CONVERTED SHEPHERD'S HUT



©Hotel Okelmann's

In the small town of Warpe in Lower Saxony, Germany, **Okelmanns Eco-Hote** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/okelmanns/>) is a place of peace and relaxation. People come here for yoga retreats, mindfulness exercises, or gentle nature experiences with biking and easy hiking. The hotel has a combined heat and power plant and a photovoltaic system. An old shepherd's hut has been converted into a sauna by the Okelmann family. A special feature is that you always have the sauna to yourself. The hosts rent the sauna exclusively per room and it is only heated for the time booked. In addition to the sauna, there is also an outdoor whirlpool to complete the wellness experience.

## HOTEL KLOSTERBRÄU: SEVEN THEMED SAUNAS



Hand Carved Sauna ©David Johansson für Hotel Klosterbräu

Seven themed saunas await you at the Green Pearls® **Hotel Klosterbräu** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/hotel-klosterbraeu/>) in Seefeld, Tyrol. The highlight is the completely hand-carved “Heart Sauna,” but the “Bread Sauna” with the scent of freshly baked bread is something you won’t find anywhere else. The hotel, built on the site of an old monastery, has many other fairytale features. For example, there is a “beer fountain” in the wellness area. For families, there is a non-nude sauna where children feel comfortable both in terms of temperature and dress code. The hotel heats with wood chips and optimizes its energy consumption with a digital solution in cooperation with Siemens.

## SHOW INFUSION: A CRAZY WELLNESS TREND TAKES OVER EUROPE

If you are among those who find the silence of a sauna uncomfortable, there are now hotels that have turned the infusion into a real theatrical production. Damien Gabet, an Englishman, visited several saunas in South Tyrol this year for **Conde Nast Traveller** (<https://www.cntraveller.com/article/aufguss-the-wacky-wellness-ritual-taking-over-european-spas>). The so-called show infusion is said to have been invented there.

For example, Damien has seen performances by reigning **sauna world champion Michael Niedermair and his partner Kasia Klajn**. The performances are tailored to a 20-minute sauna session. In one sauna scene, for example, a red devil climbs out of a chest; there are costumes, wigs, and lots of silliness with waving towels.

*“There’s something a little Eurovision about it all: embracing the art and aphorisms certainly requires you to park your Britishness (read: sarcastic, snooty) at the door – next to your pants. But it’s an impressive show and I’ve (sadly, perhaps) never had more fun in a sauna.” – Travel Journalist Damien Gabet*

## SHOW INFUSIONS IN MY ARBOR

Sauna master **Manuel Greifenberg** of My Arbor also plans to compete in the sauna championships (he already has a world bodybuilding title). However, he plans to compete in the “classic waving” category at the sauna championships. “I prefer the classic version, where the infusion is an infusion and not a performance,” he explains.

*“Our infusions are a place of tranquility and reflection. My show infusions are a blend of music, scent and body graphics. The guest is always the focus.” – Saunameister Manuel Greifenberg*

## OUR OPINION: WE LIKE SHOWS AND HEALTH – BUT ONLY WITH GREEN ELECTRICITY!

So, have you changed your mind about taking a sauna? As you can see, not only is it good for your health, but there is also a lot to see and experience. However, the question of how the sauna is powered is not insignificant. **“Burning fossil fuels for energy is the main cause of climate change,”** says the German Ministry of Economic Development (<https://www.bmz.de/de/themen/klimawandel-und-entwicklung/energie-und-klima>).

That’s why we say: your health is important, and if you want, you can enjoy a show sauna. But going to the sauna doesn’t have to be at the expense of the planet! If you power it with (self produced) renewable energy sources, you can have the same fun in a green way!



**Author:** Laura (<https://green-travel-blog.com/author/laura/>)

**Filed Under:** Allgäu (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/germany/allgau/>), Austria (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/austria/>), Berchtesgaden (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/germany/berchtesgaden/>), Bodensee (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/bodensee-2/>), Germany (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/germany/>), Health (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/health-2/>), Italy (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/italy/>), Lifestyle (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/lifestyle-en/>), Nachhaltig Reisen (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/nachhaltig-reisen-2/>), Ostsee (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/ostsee-2/>), Reise-Tipps (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/reise-tipps-2/>), Rhoen (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/germany/rhoen-en/>), South Tyrol (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/italy/south-tyrol/>), Timmendorfer Strand (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/timmendorfer-strand-2/>), Tirol (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/tirol-2/>), Travel (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/travel-en/>), Uncategorized (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/uncategorized/>), Wellness (<https://green-travel-blog.com/category/wellness-2/>)

**Tags:** APIPURA hotel rinner (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/apipura-hotel-rinner-2/>), APIPURA hotel rinner (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/apipura-hotel-rinner-3/>), Birkenhof\*\*\*\* Spa und Genussresort (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/birkenhof-spa-und-genussresort-2/>), Eco Hotel Okelmann's (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/eco-hotel-okelmanns-2/>), Gut Sonnenhausen (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/gut-sonnenhausen-2/>), Hotel Bella Vista Zermatt (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/hotel-bella-vista-zermatt-2/>), Hotel Klosterbräu (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/hotel-klosterbraeu-2/>), Hotel Wehrerhof (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/hotel-wehrerhof-2/>), Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/inkaterra-machu-picchu-pueblo-hotel-2/>), Lifestylehotel SAND (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/lifestylehotel-sand/>), My Arbor (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/my-arbor-2/>), Naturhotel Outside (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/naturhotel-outside/>), Naturresort Gerbehof (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/naturresort-gerbehof-2/>), OLM Nature Escape (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/olm-nature-escape-2/>), Paradiso Pure.Living Vegan Hotel (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tag/paradiso-pure-living-vegan-hotel-2/>)