

Potentials and Challenges of Urban Wellness Tourism in Indonesia: A Practical Insight from Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud

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ABSTRACT

Urban wellness tourism is emerging as a significant sector in Indonesia, driven by global demand for health-focused travel and the country's rich cultural heritage. This study explores the practical potential and challenges of developing urban wellness tourism in three culturally significant Indonesian cities: Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud; designated as pilot destinations by Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Through a qualitative case study approach, involving interviews with 17 stakeholders, participant observations, and document analysis, the study highlights how each city builds upon its local traditions, cultural identity, and spatial conditions to shape wellness experiences. Solo demonstrates strength in traditional Javanese wellness heritage, Yogyakarta in community-driven creative wellness practices, and Ubud in globally oriented spiritual offerings. Despite these assets, common challenges persist—ranging from fragmentation of services to spatial limitations and overtourism. The findings suggest that leveraging cultural heritage, fostering regional collaboration, and enhancing community capacity can promote sustainable urban wellness tourism. This

study offers practical lessons for other secondary cities aiming to develop wellness tourism through local culture, regional collaboration, and adaptive urban strategies.

Keywords: Urban wellness tourism, cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Wellness tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments in global travel, driven by shifting consumer preferences toward health, balance, and meaningful experiences. The industry was valued at USD 650.7 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach USD 1.352 trillion by 2027, reflecting a robust annual growth rate of 16.6% (1). Unlike medical tourism, which focuses on curative treatment, wellness tourism emphasizes preventive, holistic approaches to well-being—spanning physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (2,3). Travelers are no longer seeking just leisure, but opportunities to reset, heal, and reconnect—often through cultural or traditional pathways.

Historically, wellness tourism has been linked to nature-based destinations—mountains, beaches, and forest retreats—where tranquility and ecological aesthetics offer an ideal backdrop for healing (4).

However, this association is beginning to shift. Increasingly, scholars and practitioners alike recognize that wellness can also be cultivated in cities, particularly those with strong cultural capital and creative resilience (5–8). Still, urban wellness development is not without its complications. Rapid urbanization often brings environmental degradation, loss of communal space, and commercialization of heritage—challenges that can undermine the wellness experience itself (9–11).

In Indonesia, cities like Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud present compelling opportunities to bridge the global wellness trend with localized, culturally embedded practices. These urban centers offer rich traditions such as jamu (herbal medicine), beksan (ritual dance), batik meditation, and melukat (spiritual purification)—each rooted in philosophies of balance, community, and connection. With government support and increasing interest in domestic wellness markets (12), these cities are well-positioned to pioneer urban wellness tourism models (13,14). Yet, they also face growing pressures: lack of zoning for wellness spaces, rising urban congestion, and risks of cultural commodification that may erode authenticity over time (15). What complicates the issue further is the fragmented nature of wellness initiatives in urban Indonesia. Stakeholders—ranging from cultural communities to small businesses and municipal governments—often operate in silos, with little coordinated planning. Meanwhile, academic literature in Southeast Asia continues to prioritize nature-based destinations like Bali (16–18), offering limited insights into the dynamics of wellness tourism in mid-sized cities. This disconnect between cultural potential and structural constraints calls for deeper investigation into the urban wellness landscape.

This study fills in the gap by examining how wellness tourism is emerging in Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud. Using qualitative fieldwork, thematic analysis, and comparative reflection, the research explores

how these cities articulate wellness through cultural practices, spatial experimentation, and institutional frameworks. The aim is not only to identify strengths and gaps, but to contribute to a broader understanding of how wellness tourism can support inclusive, sustainable, and culturally grounded urban development in Indonesia and similar contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wellness is a concept that emphasizes the lifestyle and holistic well-being of the body, mind, and soul with the environment that is considered to be able to affect a person's health(1). Specifically, when associated with tourism, wellness tourism is defined as a collection of all relationships and phenomena resulting from travel by people whose main motive is to maintain or improve their health (19). Global Wellness Institute defines Wellness tourism as a form of travel related to a person's efforts to maintain or improve personal well-being(20). Meanwhile, according to the World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission, Wellness tourism is a type of tourism activity, which aims to improve and balance all the main domains of human life including physical, mental, emotional, work, intellectual, and spiritual (21).

Wellness tourism has become a rapidly expanding niche within the broader tourism industry, propelled by increasing global interest in physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Different with medical tourism, which is curative and often clinical, wellness tourism is proactive, preventive, and holistic in nature (21,22). It embraces a spectrum of activities ranging from yoga, meditation, and spa services to locally grounded practices such as traditional herbal healing, spiritual rituals, and culinary wellness. (23–25)

A growing body of literature has addressed the intersections between wellness tourism and cultural heritage, suggesting that wellness is not merely a product or service but a culturally embedded experience (24–27). In many parts of Asia, wellness traditions such as Ayurveda in India (28) and

traditional Chinese medicine in China (26) provide indigenous models of preventive health. In Southeast Asia, wellness is often rooted in communal and spiritual practices such as rituals, ceremonies, and indigenous healing methods. These traditions offer authentic and place-specific wellness narratives that can differentiate destinations in a global market saturated with homogenized wellness offerings (24,27,29). Despite this, most wellness tourism research has historically focused on rural, remote, or nature-based environments—where tranquility and landscape are perceived as inherent to healing (4,30,31). Urban wellness tourism, particularly in secondary cities of the Global South, has been relatively underexplored. Yet, urban settings present unique opportunities: they are often centers of cultural production, creative industries, and community activism—all of which can serve as platforms for wellness experiences. Scholars such as Lee and Kim (2015) argue that in urban contexts, wellness tourism must adapt by leveraging cultural assets, creative programming, and community infrastructure rather than relying solely on natural amenities (32).

Furthermore, urban wellness tourism challenges the binary between modern and traditional, or between leisure and everyday life. As wellness becomes increasingly

integrated into daily routines and lifestyles, cities can offer more than just destinations—they can become lived environments of well-being. In Indonesia, where cities like Solo and Yogyakarta are rich in intangible cultural heritage, and where Ubud has been globally recognized for its spiritual wellness tourism, there is strong potential to reimagine urban space as wellness space.

Nevertheless, empirical studies focusing on how these urban wellness experiences are structured, promoted, and sustained remain scarce. This study contributes to filling that gap by providing grounded insights into how wellness tourism unfolds in three culturally vibrant Indonesian cities, examining both their potential and limitations in operationalizing wellness as a form of sustainable, culturally embedded urban tourism.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This research employs a qualitative, exploratory case study design focused on Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud. Solo, or known as Surakarta, is located in Central Java Region. Yogyakarta is a capital city of Special Region Yogyakarta, located in the South part of Central Java. Both cities are located in Java Island. Meanwhile, Ubud is part of Gianyar Regency, located in Bali Island.



Figure 1. Research Location

Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with total 17 stakeholders between 2024, including tourism officials, wellness practitioners, business owners, and community leaders. Participant observations were conducted at wellness sites (for example, Rumah Atsiri in Solo, cultural events in Yogyakarta, and Fivelements

retreats in Ubud), and they were supplemented by document analysis of tourism policies and advertising materials. Thematic analysis was used to uncover significant themes connected to potentials and problems, and the findings were presented in a comparative manner across the three locations to emphasize similarities and

differences. The qualitative method allowed for a more nuanced knowledge of stakeholder viewpoints and contextual aspects that influence urban wellness tourism development.

RESULT

Each of the three case study locations—Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud—presents distinct characteristics, resources, and challenges in the development of urban wellness tourism.

Solo, also known as Surakarta, offers a rich tapestry of cultural and historical assets that position it as a compelling candidate for urban wellness tourism development in Java. Rooted in Javanese royal traditions, the city is home to iconic heritage sites such as the Keraton Surakarta (Surakarta Royal Palace), Kampung Wisata Baluwerti, and Pasar Gedhe. These places provide not only cultural immersion but also wellness-oriented experiences deeply linked to traditional health philosophies. Pasar Gedhe, in particular, plays a unique role in Solo's wellness ecosystem. Far beyond its function as a traditional marketplace, it serves as a living archive of Javanese herbal wisdom. The market hosts numerous kiosks and vendors specializing in herbal remedies (jamu), medicinal roots, dried spices, oils, and ready-to-consume supplements tailored for preventive health and bodily balance. The diversity of herbal offerings—available in various forms and price ranges—makes Pasar Gedhe a practical and accessible wellness destination for both locals and visitors seeking culturally grounded health solutions. Solo also offers a variety of embodied wellness activities such as keraton-style spa treatments, traditional Javanese massage, batik therapy, and beksan (Javanese dance), which serve as mindful practices promoting harmony between body and spirit. Venues like Djampi Djawi, a heritage-inspired jamu café and wellness space, exemplify how traditional knowledge is being reimaged for contemporary wellness tourism experiences.

Despite these strengths, Solo still contends with challenges related to limited urban

infrastructure dedicated to wellness, fragmented promotion efforts, and relatively low international visibility. In light of this, strengthening collaboration across the Solo Raya region becomes strategically significant. Informant from Solo Tourism Government also mentioned “*Our strength is in collaboration with Solo Raya area, we alone have no natural landscape in city. But Karanganyar has. So we got to collaborate to create a more comprehensive wellness offers*” (Informant T - Tourism Government, Solo). The Solo Raya area, comprising nearby districts such as Karanganyar and Sukoharjo, is home to complementary attractions like Rumah Atsiri Indonesia, Atsiri Jawa, and the Hortus Medicus research center. These institutions emphasize aromatic wellness, phytotherapy, and scientific herbal research—broadening Solo's thematic appeal in the wellness tourism market. A regional collaborative approach could position Solo not merely as an isolated urban wellness destination, but as the nucleus of a wider Java Wellness Corridor. This would allow for the development of integrative wellness circuits, linking heritage, herbalism, sensory healing, and physical rejuvenation in one cohesive narrative.

To actualize this vision, inter-district coordination is essential—encompassing shared branding strategies, integrated transport systems, and harmonized policy frameworks. Such cooperation could enhance the inclusivity, scalability, and sustainability of wellness tourism in the region while honoring its cultural depth and indigenous health knowledge.

Yogyakarta, often regarded as the cultural soul of Java, occupies a unique position in Indonesia's wellness tourism landscape. Unlike nature-based destinations that offer forest retreats or coastal escapes, Yogyakarta's strength lies in its intellectual heritage, vibrant cultural scene, and socially engaged community networks. These attributes shape a distinctive model of urban wellness tourism—not dependent on scenic landscapes, but instead grounded in cultural

immersion, community participation, and creative reinterpretation of traditional practices.

A variety of cultural wellness activities are embedded within the city's everyday life. These include batik meditation, keris contemplation workshops, Javanese dance classes (beksan), jamu-making sessions, local herbal beauty treatments, and traditional Javanese spiritual cleansing rituals (ruwatan). A notable and culturally rich example is the Jemparingan community, which promotes traditional Javanese archery as a form of meditative, reflective practice. Jemparingan emphasizes stillness, breath control, and inner composure—qualities that align with wellness values of mindfulness and emotional regulation. The practice has been revitalized by local communities not only as a cultural sport but also as an embodied spiritual discipline, offering a rare blend of physical activity, heritage, and wellness.

Nevertheless, interviews with key stakeholders reveal spatial and institutional limitations. Yogyakarta lacks significant natural landscapes conducive to mainstream wellness formats, as mentioned by our informants from tourism government: *"We have no natural landscape in the city, so people usually go to Sleman or Bantul."* (Informant D – tourism government, Yogyakarta) As in Solo, the solution lies in regional collaboration—particularly with surrounding regencies like Sleman, Kulon Progo, and Bantul—which offer greener environments and complementary natural attractions. This interjurisdictional synergy becomes critical in creating more diverse and spatially coherent wellness experiences.

Another key constraint is the fragmentation of wellness-related businesses—including spas, jamu producers, and holistic treatment centers—which are dispersed across the city without zoning or clustering. This dispersal complicates destination branding and visitor navigation, reducing Yogyakarta's competitiveness as a coherent wellness destination. To compensate, the city has leveraged its strong tradition of community-

led events, such as the Jogja Community Wellness Festival (JCWF), which transforms urban spaces into temporary wellness zones and strengthens the participatory ethos of wellness tourism.

In terms of strategic orientation, stakeholder interviews indicate that Yogyakarta currently places greater emphasis on developing medical tourism rather than wellness tourism. This prioritization is driven by the perception that medical tourism—anchored by hospitals, clinics, and health insurance systems—is more structurally prepared, institutionally supported, and economically viable in the short term. Wellness tourism, by contrast, is viewed as more fragmented, less formalized, and requiring longer-term coordination across sectors.

Despite these challenges, there is an emerging opportunity for Yogyakarta to bridge its MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) infrastructure with wellness values. The city has a longstanding reputation for hosting cultural, academic, and governmental events. While wellness has not yet been institutionalized within MICE, there is growing interest in integrating wellness elements—such as post-conference yoga, jamu-based health kits, or cultural healing experiences—into business and academic tourism programs. This modular and event-linked approach may allow Yogyakarta to position itself as a hybrid destination, where wellness is not isolated but woven into professional and cultural routines.

To move forward, Yogyakarta needs to strengthen stakeholder collaboration, develop policy frameworks that support wellness innovation, and formalize cross-regional partnerships. Mapping and clustering wellness enterprises, empowering community-based practices like Jemparingan, and aligning wellness strategies with broader cultural and spatial planning will be essential steps toward building a resilient, inclusive, and culturally authentic wellness tourism ecosystem in the city.

Ubud has emerged as Indonesia's most prominent wellness tourism hub, renowned for its spiritual ambience, verdant landscapes, and deep-rooted Balinese cultural values. As a highland town in the heart of Bali, Ubud offers an ecosystem conducive to physical healing, emotional release, and spiritual reflection, attracting wellness travelers from across the globe.

A wide range of wellness-centered accommodation and facilities are concentrated in and around Ubud, including internationally acclaimed establishments such as Fivelements Retreat, Como Shambhala Estate, The Yoga Barn, and Radiantly Alive. These venues integrate wellness philosophies into their offerings through Balinese healing rituals, plant-based nutrition, yoga and meditation, natural spa therapies, and ecologically sensitive design. Many promote principles aligned with Tri Hita Karana—the Balinese cosmology that emphasizes harmony between people, nature, and spiritual forces.

The range of wellness activities in Ubud is vast and diverse. Daily yoga classes, mindfulness meditation, sound healing, Ayurvedic therapies, and detox programs form the backbone of commercial wellness services. Meanwhile, traditional Balinese practices such as melukat (ritual water purification), which can be done at temples such as Pura Tirta Empul, continue to draw both domestic and international visitors seeking spiritual cleansing and renewal. Pura Tirta Empul, located in Tampaksiring near Ubud, is one of Bali's most sacred water temples, where holy spring water is believed to purify the mind and soul. The integration of sacred rituals into the tourist wellness experience reflects Ubud's capacity to offer culturally immersive and spiritually resonant health practices.

Moreover, Ubud supports a growing number of creative and communal wellness offerings, including ceremonies, breathwork retreats, Balinese dance and movement workshops, herbal soap and oil-making classes, and

permaculture-based healing programs. Natural attractions such as the Campuhan Ridge Walk, Sacred Monkey Forest, and surrounding rice terraces provide restorative environments for walking meditation. However, Ubud's global success has brought increasing pressures. The destination now contends with overtourism, rising commodification of sacred traditions, and a growing presence of foreign-owned wellness enterprises, which sometimes marginalize local practitioners and dilute the cultural authenticity of wellness experiences. Concerns have emerged over the erosion of spiritual integrity and the transformation of wellness into a consumerist spectacle, as stated by our local community informant: *"The owners are mostly foreigners. And what would locals do? Be their employees."* (Informant C – Local Wellness Community, Ubud).

To preserve the sustainability and authenticity of wellness tourism in Ubud, stakeholders must balance international demand with local control. This includes strengthening community-led wellness practices, protecting sacred spaces such as Pura Tirta Empul from excessive tourism pressure, and developing policy frameworks that safeguard Balinese spiritual epistemology. Zoning regulations, training for local healers (balian), and inclusion of customary authorities in tourism planning are critical steps toward ensuring that wellness in Ubud remains a culturally respectful and spiritually meaningful experience.

This comparative profile analysis illustrates that while all three cities have viable cultural assets for wellness tourism, their pathways diverge due to differences in governance capacity, market exposure, and spatial dynamics. Understanding these distinctions is essential for crafting tailored strategies that support sustainable and inclusive wellness tourism development in urban Southeast Asian contexts. Table 1 shows the summary of four key themes that emerged from the thematic analysis process.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Potentials and Challenges in Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud

Theme	Solo	Yogyakarta	Ubud
Cultural Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jamu-making and herbal remedies; ○ Batik therapy, beksan (Javanese dance) ○ Keraton-style spa treatments ○ Wedhangan (traditional warm herbal drinks, different from Jamu) ○ Aromatic Wellness Practice in Atsiri Jawa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jemparingan (meditative archery) ○ Batik meditation, ○ Ruwatan (spiritual cleansing) ○ Jamu-making sessions ○ Javanese dance classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Melukat (water purification) at Pura Tirta Empul ○ Yoga, Balinese healing rituals ○ Sound healing, ○ Ayurvedic therapies ○ Balinese traditional beauty rituals (boreh, massage)
Community/Regional Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Baluwarti's storytelling-based jamu and batik packages ○ Solo Raya collaboration with Rumah Atsiri, Atsiri Jawa for aromatic wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jogja Cultural Wellness Festival creating wellness activity ○ Regional ties with Sleman, Kulon Progo, Bantul for natural attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community-led ceremonies, spiritual retreats ○ Natural assets: rice terraces, Sacred Monkey Forest, Campuhan Ridge Walk
Infrastructure Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited wellness facilities (e.g., yoga studios, green spaces) ○ Urban congestion restricting experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of natural landscapes ○ Dispersed wellness businesses without zoning ○ Urban Congestion restricting experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overtourism causing traffic congestion restricting experiences ○ Strain on sacred sites
Policy/Marketing Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fragmented promotion efforts ○ Low international visibility ○ Need for inter-district policy coordination ○ Definitions and policies related to wellness tourism are communicated among stakeholders, yet need improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development prioritization of medical tourism ○ Fragmented branding due to dispersed businesses ○ policies related to wellness tourism are communicated, yet need improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cultural commodification of sacred traditions ○ Foreign-owned enterprises marginalizing local practitioners ○ Definitions and policies related to wellness tourism are still poorly communicated to all stakeholders

Source: Data Processed (2025)

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that urban wellness tourism in Indonesia is not only viable but flourishing in ways that reflect each city's unique socio-cultural DNA. Wellness traditions in Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud are not recent inventions; they are evolving legacies that adapt creatively to modern travel expectations while staying rooted in local heritage. Far from being dependent on natural seclusion, wellness in these cities is shaped by narrative, place identity, and communal values—making them well-positioned to meet rising demand for holistic, culturally meaningful tourism. As

summarized in Table 1, cultural heritage emerges as a key competitive advantage, aligning with Huang and Xu (26) assertion that culturally rooted practices enhance destination appeal in Asia. Solo's jamu-making and Yogyakarta's Jemparingan are examples of authentic offerings that distinguish these cities from generic wellness products, while Ubud's established infrastructure positions it as a global leader, consistent with Koerniawaty & Sudjana (33) findings on Indonesia's wellness potential. However, the prevalence of overtourism in Ubud and infrastructure gaps in Solo and Yogyakarta echo Saari's (15) concerns about

urban wellness hubs, where high visitor volumes and inadequate facilities might threaten sustainability.

A critical finding is the role of community initiatives in driving innovation, particularly in Yogyakarta (Jemparingan) and Solo (Baluwerti Experience), fosters grassroots engagement. This aligns with previous research that emphasis on community-driven tourism for sustainable outcomes in the context of developing sustainable tourism (34). Conversely, Ubud's overtourism highlights a critical challenge: cultural commodification, as stated by Conell (29), where commercialized rituals erode authenticity. Stakeholder interviews underscore the need for regulations to preserve Balinese traditions, a lesson applicable to Solo and Yogyakarta to prevent similar risks as wellness tourism grows.

The findings offer several lessons for stakeholders. First, leveraging cultural heritage through storytelling, as seen in Baluwarti's jamu packages, can create memorable experiences while preserving traditions. This approach counters commodification and aligns with Lee and Kim's (32) call for authentic urban wellness offerings. Second, regional collaboration, such as Solo Raya's urban-rural wellness circuit, can diversify offerings and mitigate urban congestion, a strategy supported by Feng et al.'s (35) findings on stakeholder coordination. Third, addressing overtourism requires zoning regulations and community-led initiatives, particularly in Ubud, to balance visitor numbers with cultural preservation, as Saari (15) recommends. Finally, capacity building for SMEs, exemplified by Baluwarti's UKM empowerment, ensures economic benefits and sustains authentic practices, a lesson for all three cities to enhance local involvement. These findings have broader implications for Indonesia's wellness tourism sector. By prioritizing cultural authenticity and sustainable practices, Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud can position Indonesia as a global wellness hub, competing with established destinations like Thailand and India.

However, addressing infrastructure gaps and coordination challenges, as highlighted by stakeholders, is critical to scaling these efforts without compromising cultural or environmental integrity.

Thematically, this study affirms that urban wellness tourism is best realized not by imposing external models but by cultivating internal strengths. Each of the three cities provides an actionable example of how wellness can be integrated into the urban fabric—whether through ritual continuity, spatial adaptation, or market positioning. While challenges remain, especially in balancing tourism growth with cultural integrity, the overall trajectory is optimistic.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the potentials and challenges of urban wellness tourism in three culturally significant Indonesian cities—Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud. Drawing from field interviews, observations, and thematic analysis, the findings highlight that wellness tourism in urban contexts is not only possible but thrives when rooted in local cultural identity, adapted spatial configurations, and evolving governance structures. Each city illustrates a distinct pathway: Solo leverages its Javanese heritage and growing inter-district collaboration; Yogyakarta exemplifies the strength of grassroots civic energy and event-based wellness engagement; and Ubud showcases a globally recognized model of spiritual and ecological wellness, albeit with sustainability concerns. Collectively, these cases demonstrate that urban wellness tourism in Indonesia reflects more than just a trend—it represents an opportunity for cities to redefine tourism through cultural resilience and holistic well-being.

The implications of this study are threefold. First, cities should focus on nurturing existing local knowledge and traditions rather than importing external wellness frameworks. Emphasizing authenticity not only reinforces destination identity but also enhances visitor engagement. Second, regional and inter-sector collaboration—as

seen in initiatives like Solo Raya—can amplify wellness offerings by distributing access and diversifying experiences. Finally, formal policy support is crucial in transforming grassroots innovations into integrated urban wellness strategies. Encouraging inclusive planning and community-based tourism governance can expand participation while safeguarding cultural integrity.

Despite its insights, the study has several limitations. Its qualitative, case-based nature means the findings may not be generalizable to all Indonesian cities or international contexts. The research did not assess wellness tourist perspectives or economic contributions, nor did it capture quantitative health or sustainability metrics. Additionally, post-pandemic fluctuations in travel patterns may continue to reshape wellness tourism dynamics, calling for ongoing monitoring and contextual responsiveness.

Future research should extend this exploration by incorporating mixed-method approaches, including quantitative evaluations of wellness outcomes and spatial planning effectiveness. Comparative studies involving metropolitan centers like Jakarta or Surabaya could shed light on how scale and infrastructure affect wellness development. Furthermore, attention to digital wellness platforms, the role of younger generations, and intersectional concerns such as gender and accessibility would offer a deeper understanding of how wellness tourism can evolve equitably and inclusively.

Ultimately, this study contributes to reframing urban wellness tourism not as a niche, luxury-oriented activity but as a cultural, social, and spatial movement grounded in tradition and adaptable to modern urban life. Cities like Solo, Yogyakarta, and Ubud are well-positioned to lead this transformation—not only as destinations for healing, but as models for sustainable, human-centered tourism development in the Global South.

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