



# ARABIAN DELIGHTS

Pampered, rested and oh so glowing, Emilie Goldstein discovers three luxurious spas worth searching for. . .

## CASA SPA

147 Seymour Place, London, The UK  
+44 (0) 20 7724 2030; [www.casaspa.co.uk](http://www.casaspa.co.uk)

Tucked away behind London's bustling Edgware Road lies Casa Spa, a haven of peace and tranquility – the perfect place for some much-needed pampering.

I am greeted by owner Helen Murphy – who comes from Tunisia – and led down a candle-lit staircase where my journey to relaxation begins.

The north African-influenced decor – all the marble flooring and products were sourced directly from Tunisia – oozes opulence; the cushion-strewn interior invites you to kick back and relax.

First I enjoy a detoxing sweat in the natural steam room, which has a soothing, intimate and authentic atmosphere. Then a therapist

applies a natural honey masque to my hair and uses an organic olive soap to clean my body before leaving me for another 10 minutes in the steam room.

Next it's time for a body scrub, which north Africans refer to as "shedding snake skin"; Rasoul, a Dead Sea body mask, and a massage where my therapist kneads away all my aches and pains.

At the end of the 90-minute treatment my body is as smooth as a baby's bottom. As I sip mint tea in the relaxation area, it's hard to believe that such a busy city lies beyond the spa's walls.

**WE LOVE** The Rasoul treatment – excellent after a scrub, it'll give tired skin a lasting glow.

## SHERAZADE HAMMAM & SPA

165/3 Moo 3 Paknampran, Pranburi, Thailand  
+66 (0) 32 630 771 [www.villamarocresort.com](http://www.villamarocresort.com)

Just an hour-and-a-half away from the capital Bangkok and I am in north Africa – well The Sherazade Hammam and Spa, at Villa Maroc resort in Pranburi, Thailand, to be exact.

I am told this is the place to indulge in an authentic hammam – Middle Eastern-style steam bath – and after slipping into my fluffy bathrobe and shown into the Moroccan-inspired hot room, little doubt remained.

Thanks to a beautiful central glass, the small room is flooded with light. The heat relaxes my muscles and joints and even helps me breathe easier. I'm also told it stimulates the immune system by increasing the production of antibodies.

After 10 minutes of sweating the hammami, or masseuse, takes me for a gommage (scrub), using a kese glove (similar to a loofah) and black olive soap. Her powerful strokes leave my skin smooth and glowing.

Back in my fluffy bathrobe, after being lightly doused in rose water, my hammam experience sadly comes to an end.

Smelling like a summer garden in full bloom and feeling like a million dollars, I head back to the hustle and bustle of the city with a spring in my step.

**WE LOVE** The gommage – If you have dry skin, this is just what the doctor ordered.



## JUMEIRAH BAB EL SHAMS DESERT RESORT & SPA

Somewhere in the desert (a 45-minute drive from Dubai), The UAE  
+971 (0) 4809 6100 [www.jumeirah.com](http://www.jumeirah.com)

ADDITIONAL REPORTING: MI GRACHANGNETARA IMAGES SUPPLIED

Rising from the desert dunes, Bab El Shams, meaning Gateway to the Sun, is one of the most luxurious destinations in the Gulf region. Famous for its stunning setting and authentic ambience, it's the perfect escape from the towering skyscrapers of Dubai. It's exclusive and private – so it's best to book early.

The four Arabian-style treatment rooms are decorated with mosaic tiles, colourful pillows and large lanterns. After a short stint in the steam room, I am treated to a scrub made of finely ground olive pits blended with a body wash, which helps eliminate unwanted toxins and exfoliate the skin. I'm now all prepped for the oriental massage, a combination



between a dry acupressure treatment and aromatherapy massage.

During the first half of the session the therapist applies various degrees of pressure on the body's meridians, or energy points, to release tension and stress; the sensation is pleasant and energising.

The second half an hour is dedicated to relaxation. Rose-scented massage oil is sprinkled onto my skin and I abandon myself to the expert hands of my therapist, who lulls me into bliss with her smooth even strokes sending me off into an extreme state of relaxation. Heaven!

**WE LOVE** The rose-scented aromatherapy.

## ORIENTAL NOTEBOOK

Hammams around the world

### ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Amrita Spa & Wellness  
Swissôtel The Bosphorus  
+90 212 326 8118  
[www.swissotel.com](http://www.swissotel.com)

The new spa houses a traditional Turkish hammam and offers treatments such as mud and moss baths, salt vapour baths and herbal vapour baths, as well as steam aromatherapy and a wide range of massages.

### CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Dheva Spa, Mandarin Oriental  
Dhara Dhevi  
+66 5388 8888

[www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com)  
Indulge in the Calming Radiance treatment: relax in the Arabian steam bath of the Dheva Hammam; select your choice of body scrub and top it all off with an invigorating 80-minute body massage.



### NEW DELHI, INDIA

The Spa, Aman New Delhi  
+91 11 4363 3333  
[www.amanresorts.com](http://www.amanresorts.com)

Begin your traditional hammam experience in the heated chambers with warm and cold dip pools. Move on to the heated Jaipur Kandi marble slab for a scrub with a kese glove and olive oil soap before being refreshed with a splash of eucalyptus water.

### ABU DHABI, THE UAE

Anantara Spa, Emirates Palace  
+971 2 690 9000

[www.emiratespalace.com](http://www.emiratespalace.com)  
Try the Gateway to Arabia experience, which includes a soak in the Moroccan hammam, a loofah scrub and a rigorous massage. Then relax in the Majlis with sweet cookies and herbal tea.

