

Arabian-style Bathhouses

During your busy city escape take time out for a soak. These hammams are three of Europe's most exclusive



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MEDINA CALIFAL

CÓRDOBA (FLY TO MÁLAGA)

www.hammamspain.com/cordoba

Córdoba, about 150km inland from Málaga, was once the capital of Moorish Spain, and in its prime had about 600 bathhouses or hammams. Today, there are only a handful, but the majestic Medina Califal—recently built inside an old Moorish house—is considered the best; it's also the largest bathhouse in Europe. Once inside the hammam, you'll be taken to the first of three baths—icy and invigorating, and it makes the other two (lukewarm and hot) all the more enjoyable! The baths are mixed sex, so make sure you take your best bikini. Scented pools, flickering candlelight, a beautiful domed ceiling and mosaic-covered walls complete the Arabic atmosphere. Reservations are essential.



CAGALOGLU HAMAMI

ISTANBUL (FLY TO ISTANBUL)

www.cagalogluhamami.com.tr

Public bathhouses were part of daily life in Turkey for thousands of years. There used to be around 14,000 in Istanbul, but now the city has less than 150. Still regarded as one of the best, Cagaloglu Hamami, near the underground cistern, is a 300-year-old Turkish bath that has cleansed and soothed a host of recognised names throughout its history—from Florence Nightingale to Harrison Ford and more recently, Cameron Diaz. Opt for the Oriental Luxury Service with bath, massage and exfoliation.



CASA SPA

LONDON (FLY TO LONDON)

www.casaspa.co.uk

Owner Helen hails from Tunisia—and spent a stint honing her hammam skills in the country's exclusive Hammam Bourguiba—so expect an authentic Arabian experience. The treatment, at this unique London spa lasts around 90 minutes and takes place in a candlelit natural-stone steam room. Organic soap cleanses your body then a traditional glove exfoliates your skin (shedding your dead skin like a snake, as Moroccan women say). Additional benefits include a medicated Dead Sea body mask and a honey hair treatment. Mint tea completes the session.

