

A TOUCH OF LUXURY
Indulge in a therapeutic massage
with personalized blended oil



COMO SHAMBHALA SPA RETREAT

COCOA ISLAND, MALDIVES

This private island resort located in the quiet South Male isle is as much about the serenity of the location as it is about the spa's facilities and therapists. There are three massage pavilions (each with an outdoor shower and Jacuzzi garden), an open-air Yoga pavilion, hydrotherapy pool and numerous meditation and relaxation corners. The COMO Shambhala spa rooms are special places for personal healing and discovery. Peaceful locations framed by nature's beauty encourage quiet meditation, reflection and a commitment to holistic wellness.

THE WELLNESS PATH

After filling out a questionnaire, my therapist set out to blend my oil using herb, spices and plants unique to my *dosha* (Ayurvedic mind and body type). Meanwhile, I enjoyed the outdoor shower in my spa villa before my Abhyanga and Swedana

Therapy. Abhyanga helps to rebalance mind, body and soul with all-natural treatments. A warm oil blend was poured on my back. For the next hour, repeated and specific strokes along the energy lines of my body helped revitalize my sore and tight muscles. To further ease my muscle tension, Ubtan powder was rubbed on my skin while a steam tent was draped over my body to detoxify. Cold towel was draped over my feet as I felt the warm steam blast through the tent. I could feel my pores opening and my body sweating out the toxins in my system. As I let the steam cleanse my body, my therapist lulled me to sleep with a relaxing shoulder and head massage.

SPA SPECIAL

The Ayurvedic Treatment came highly recommended. Ayurveda is an ancient system of healing that has been practiced in India for the past

5000 years. "Ayu" means span of life while "veda" means knowledge. It is deemed as a holistic and completely organic approach to healing; it rebalances the three *doshas* (vata, pitta and kapha) that make up the body's structure. After filling out a questionnaire, I was deemed to have a pitta dosha. My therapist set out to blend my oil using herb, spices and plants unique to my dosha. Meanwhile, I enjoyed the outdoor shower in my spa villa before my Abhyanga and Swedana Therapy—treatments that rebalance the mind, body and soul.

PRICE RANGE: Hydrotherapy Pool and Yoga are complimentary. Como Shambhala Massage and Abhyanga Rituals from US\$135++, Dhoni Suites from US\$800++/night

HOW TO GET THERE: Singapore Airlines has flights from Manila to Maldives via Singapore.

HYDRO THERAPY
Revel in the healing powers of water



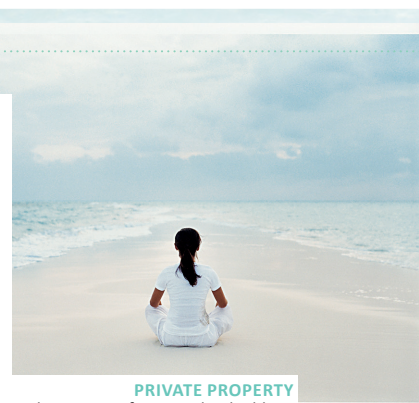
ROYAL TREATMENT

Wellness enthusiast and luxury adventurer Cecily Mabasa of Neo Day Spa and Sea to Summit Explorations, takes us to exotic locations in search of the best and most luxurious spas

"MY QUEST FOR THE BEST SPA TREATMENTS IS LIKE WHAT SHOE SHOPPING IS FOR MOST WOMEN.

While most set out to find their ultimate shoe from 5th avenue to Rue du Faubourg St. Honore, I venture out to find the most unique spa rituals where my adventures take me. I have had a bevy of spa mishaps in my quest but the best ones make up for all of those."

Photos courtesy of CECILY MABASA



PRIVATE PROPERTY
The privacy of Cocoa Island adds to the resort's luxurious appeal



HEALTH & WELLNESS

THE LIME SPA

HUVAFEN FUSHI RESORT & SPA, MALDIVES

Designed by award-winning architect Richard Hywel Evans, Lime Spa is the first underwater spa in the world. The glass walls surrounding the whole place, including the treatment rooms, allow a majestic view of Maldives' marine life. Most of the spa treatments use local ingredients such as lime, minerals and coconut for a truly indigenous experience.

THE WELLNESS PATH

As soon as I arrived at the spa, all my cares and stress gradually vanished. Glass walls surrounded me and through it I could see corals, fishes—even baby sharks swam by. For my underwater ritual, I chose the Marine Wave, an aromatic full body and scalp massage, tailored to the needs of the person. My therapist worked instinctively on the back of my body to target upper back tension. It's a truly bespoke and lavish massage. To finish off the ritual, the underwater space offers an exclusive

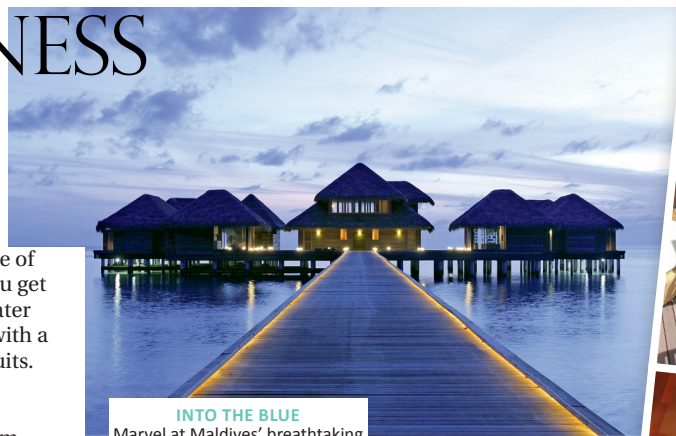
post-treatment experience of private reflection time. You get to unwind in the underwater surroundings, complete with a spa cocktail and island fruits.

SPA SPECIAL

Start off in the ice room to cool off the heat then allow yourself to be pampered in one of a kind underwater rituals—whether it be the Marine Wave on the Turquoise Explosion, a soothing upper body massage combined with a stronger, tension-releasing lower body one. Explore the essence of nature and allow yourself to discover a new level of awareness. Synergies of earth and sea elements create a sensory journey.

PRICE RANGE: Underwater Rituals start at US\$230++. Ultra-modern Lagoon Water Villas are priced at US\$1500++/night.

HOW TO GET THERE: Singapore Airlines has daily flights from Manila to Maldives via Singapore.



INTO THE BLUE

Marvel at Maldives' breathtaking marine life while indulging in an ultimate spa experience



FIRST CLASS
The Lime Spa is the first underwater spa in the world



JIVA SPA

TAJ EXOTICA RESORT, MALDIVES

The philosophy of Jiva Spa is inherently rooted in India's ancient approach to wellness. Inspired by traditional Indian healing wisdom, it is believed that a spa unfolds a holistic path of life that opens out channels to nurture one's life force. Jiva Spa embraces a deep understanding of mind, body and spirit, their individual needs and their interdependences.

THE WELLNESS PATH

A 30-minute consultation with the in-house Ayurveda guru prepared me for my Vishrama Deep Muscular Therapy. Hot compress infused with therapeutic Indian herbs were gently placed on my back to soothe my tired and sore muscles. Using palm and thumb pressure, the skilled hands of my therapist applied the fragrant signature oil blend all across my back. I felt my

muscles stretch and all the knots in my muscles fade away. I slowly drifted off to sheer bliss. Walking back to my villa, my body felt invigorated and energy flow restored.

SPA SPECIAL

If you can, start a conversation with the Ayurveda guru in Jiva Spa and bliss out on one of their Signature Therapies: a yoga journey with Samattva Balance Ritual or a two-hour Vishrama Deep Muscular massage, an invigorating fusion of different massage techniques.

PRICE RANGE: Massage therapies start from US\$150. Deluxe Lagoon Pool Villas priced from US\$1000++/night/villa.

HOW TO GET THERE: Singapore Airlines has flights from Manila to Maldives via Singapore.

ROAD TO HEALING
Breathe in newfound serenity with Jiva Spa's spa treatments inspired by Indian wellness methods



LE SPA

LA MAMOUNIA, MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

Le Spa pays homage to traditional Moroccan craftsmanship—a unique integration of local materials like mosaic tiles, marble, tadelakt and wood while infusing contemporary design elements. It is an impressive spa with over 2000 square meters devoted to wellness and beauty needs. Public spaces allow for traditional Moroccan Hammam or Turkish bath rituals. For those who prefer a more intimate experience, private treatment rooms, each with a hammam, and couples treatment rooms are available.

THE WELLNESS PATH

I was not prepared for the blissfully exotic rigors of Le Spa's private hammam. I was led to a sauna to detoxify and open my pores. A special black soap was applied on my body then I was showered off like an infant by my masseuse. After this cleansing ritual, she slathered on a lavish honey with orange scrub using an organic-made loofah. This was done twice over

and after the second round, my skin looked and felt invigorated. A pampering massage using the Tadelakt technique which uses circular movements followed and I had never felt more relaxed.

SPA SPECIAL

The Hammam Royal is a complete hammam deluxe experience. It is a relaxing massage treatment that makes use of rose, lavender or orange blossom essential oils, depending on one's preference. The ceremony of the hammam is an age-old ritual of purification and well-being, exemplifying the Moroccan art of living.

THE PRICE RANGE: Hammam Rituals and Massage are priced at US\$100++. Classic Rooms start from US\$ 650 ++/night. Suites start from US\$1050++/night.

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly with Qatar Air, Emirates and Cathay Pacific.

EXOTIC TREAT
Pamper yourself with age-old Moroccan massage techniques at Le Spa

COMMUNAL COMFORT

Right This public bath called Galatasaray is a must-try for the adventurous

The Çemberlitas Bath is located in Çemberlitas Square on Divanyolu Street, which is situated in the midst of some of Istanbul's greatest monuments. The bath was established in 1584, (making it the oldest Turkish Bath) in Istanbul. A word of caution: this is not for the faint of heart. If you expect a private, intimate experience, this is not for you. Privacy is definitely not what one can expect in this place but this is what an authentic traditional hammam is all about. Galatasaray is a double bath structure—one for the men and one for the women.

THE WELLNESS PATH

After undressing, I wrapped my body in a *pe tamal*, a traditional cotton body wrap. My reservation happened

to be at the busiest time at Çemberlitas. As I entered the main bath area, my body could feel the heat of the steam and my eyes were in awe at the sight of dozens of naked women scattered in every nook and cranny of the bath. No time to be modest. This hot area includes the heated marble platform in the center. The area, called the *sıcaklık*, consists of a large, hot marble platform which is surrounded by kurna (bathing basins) and halvet (private bathing cubicles).

After laying down on the hot marble platform and perspiring for a while, one of the attendants gave my body a vigorous scrub and a bubble bath. I added a much needed foot reflexology to relieve my tired feet from all the shopping and bargaining in the Grand Bazaar.

SPA SPECIAL

Opt for the service with an attendant. The Traditional Style Hammam experience includes a body scrub and bubble wash. It removes the dead skin from your body thus helping your skin breathe, cleaning your pores and regulating the blood circulation. After the scrubbing, the attendant will lead you into one of the rooms around the central marble platform to wash off the scrub and reveal silky skin.

PRICE RANGE: Each hammam is priced at US\$40. Massages start from US\$25.

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly via Qatar Air, Singapore Air and Turkish Airline ■

GALATASARAY
ISTANBUL, TURKEY