

One-Of-A-Kind Spas
Sarah Reeder
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Middle Eastern Hammam

Miraj Hammam Spa
1495 W. Sixth Ave. (604-733-5151). mirajhammam.com.

As we well know, exotic and spiritual spa experiences that emphasize health and overall well-being over primping and plucking are growing in popularity. Such is the case at this Middle Eastern-style hammam spa, which is unique in Canada. Its concept is based on the original meaning of spa (the word is an acronym for the latin phrase salve per aqua, which means healing through water). Known in Middle Eastern cultures as "the spreader of warmth" and in Europe as "the silent doctor," the hammam comprises a glassed-in steam room where one detoxifies, and Jerusalem gold marble benches in a mosaic-tiled room, where one experiences gommage, a body exfoliation treatment with loofahs and black moroccan soap. After being rinsed in extremely cold water (don't say we didn't warn you), exit the hammam for a gentle massage. Such hammams are common in Paris, the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe, and are often attended as a mother-daughter routine. Careful who's looking your way: Because hammams are thought to encourage fertility, women in some Islamic cultures seek suitable wives for their sons there.

What to wear: Moroccan slippers and sarong provided.

Cost: \$120 on average.

When to go: Before your wedding.

Don't Miss: The Middle Eastern sweet cakes and Moroccan mint tea in the lushly decorated lounge.