

The light, futuristic-looking hammam at the Amrita Spa

AMRITA SPA & WELLNESS, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Where toxins—and troubles—are washed away.

Those with energy levels permanently set to snooze are in the right hands at Swissôtel The Bosphorus Amrita Spa & Wellness (swissotel.com/hotels/istanbul) in Istanbul. Strip down for a full-body scrub and shampoo, a.k.a. hammam or Turkish bath, the ancient Turkish delight borrowed from the Byzantines, who, in turn, took the practice from the Romans.

It's a ritual so sacred that traditional Turkish brides bathe their every wedding guest—a treatment so luxurious that North American copycats are popping up across the pond—but for newbies (mostly brave travellers at this Swissôtel) the antiquated hammam remains largely the same.

Start with five minutes of pore prep in a single-sized warm salt bath, and then move along Amrita's candlelit corridors, past 14 treatment rooms in 4,000 square metres, to an oversized marble sanctuary. Here, and all in dignified silence, is the women's bath, with room for two hammam-goers and their masseuses, who begin a 30-minute exfoliation like no other: With help from a firm hand and a soft glove, you will literally shed your skin. A soothing organic shampoo follows: A half-hour cleanse includes not just your hair but your whole body—tops of ears, backs of knees—engulfed in suds. A rinse of alternating warm and cool water, poured over your head by hand with ornate porcelain bowls, completes the best bath you'll ever have. Cozy up in a crisp white towel and retreat to Amrita's silent relaxation room, where waterbeds look up at a starry ceiling for meditative thought—like how lucky you are to find yourself in Istanbul, where a traditional Turkish bath at the cutting-edge Amrita Spa is the perfect juxtaposition of old world and new.

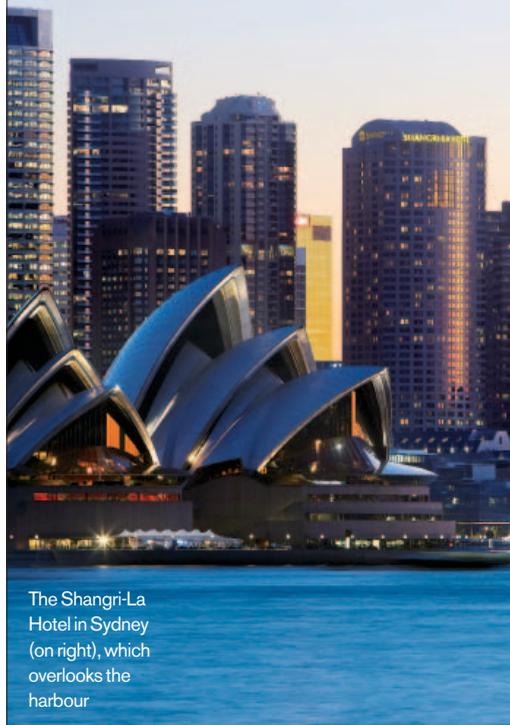
ROSEMARY COUNTER

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CHI THE SPA, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Where finding balance is a breeze.

Radiance can fall off the radar when you're a sleep-weary new mom or a jet-lagged traveller. Help comes via the award-winning Chi spa at Sydney's Shangri-La Hotel (shangri-la.com/sydney/shangrila)—a denizen of calm with its enchanting views pitched at the foot of the city's iconic Harbour Bridge. Even a quick read of the treatment menu (rituals are based on Australian healing techniques or the Five Elements Theory of balancing water, wood, fire, earth and metal to harmonize energy in the body) evokes a hazy feeling of bliss. Within the soothing surrounds of dark-wood latticework and soft, moody lighting, guests are coddled in one of six suites, where an aroma steam shower is adjusted to preferred temperature and an infinity spa tub quietly bubbles. The Bush Honey and Macadamia Body Wrap (from \$215) packs a revitalizing punch. A fragrant body scrub with lemon myrtle and eucalyptus, Australian native plants, is used to buff away dull skin. Then, warm, luscious goblets of bush honey, macadamia and pink clay are layered on, and the body is wrapped up to absorb the indigenous actives. After rinsing, lashings of regenerating cardamom lotion are massaged into the skin until it's buttery soft and bouncy. **STEPHANIE EPIRO** ▷



The Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney (on right), which overlooks the harbour

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