

# Serious Treatment



Riadh Mosque, Jerba



The Residence, Gammarth

*Morocco and Tunisia may be well-known for their bustling and exciting atmospheres, but with so much to see and do, relaxation sometimes gets overlooked. Communal bathing and associated treatments have always occupied a key role in North African society, providing a time and place to gather and discuss all manner of issues. Deals are thrashed out here, friendships strengthened and problems solved. Alongside the mosques, they are amongst the most important buildings in any city. Generally, public ones are a bit earthy for most peoples' tastes so our specialists have selected some good alternatives.*

Marrakesh, Morocco





Radisson SAS Resort, Jerba



Pool area, Riad Maison Bleue, Fez



Hammam at Kasbah du Toubkal, The High Atlas Mountains

## Moroccan Hammam

Part of any trip to Morocco has to include a visit to a traditional hammam. A modern day descendent of the Roman bathhouse, hammams still resemble the traditional Roman design of three rooms. The first, which is the least steamy, is for bathing. The second and third, which are progressively hotter, are for massage and relaxation. A rub down with a kassa, coarse mitten, after the steam room and a vigorous massage combine to provide a distinctly Moroccan take on spa treatments. Many riads that we recommend in Morocco have private hammams, which are usually more luxurious than the public ones (which are not all for the feint-hearted). Private hammams also sometimes allow men and women to bathe together, which is never allowed in a public hammam.

### Les Bains de Marrakesh, Marrakesh

If you are looking for a chic and stylish hammam experience in a public spa, then Les Bains de Marrakesh is the place you should not miss. Hidden away in a narrow alley on the fringe of the medina, its beauty and tranquility are a welcome contrast to the hectic activity outside. The range of available treatments is extensive and spans from a 45 minute hammam and body scrub to a full day of relaxation. One further advantage is that couples can enjoy a private mixed hammam.

**Megan Shaw:** 01993 838 427

### Kasbah du Toubkal, the High Atlas

After a day trekking in the mountains, your aching muscles will thank you for pre-booking your time in the Kasbah's hammam. This is a small affair, just for the use of guests and without the modern array of treatments and massages on offer. It's just you and the relaxing, soothing steam, easing your joints and cleansing your skin. A welcome retreat after a long day's exploration.

**Natalie Humphries:** 01993 838 422

### Riad Maison Bleue, Fez

Fez is an enigmatic, bustling city with an intense medina full of hidden quarters, fondouks, medersas, souks and mosques. So after a full day of sight seeing I find the best way to unwind is with a traditional body scrub. My favourite hammam is in Riad Maison Bleue and by far my preferred traditional treatment is the Saboun Beldi scrub. This is unique to Riad Maison Bleue hammam and I recommend it to anyone travelling to Fez. The treatment is based on olive and eucalyptus oils which are applied to the whole body before being scrubbed using the traditional kassa. The overall feeling is of relaxation and rejuvenation leaving you set to take on the Fez medina once more.

**Donna Piccini:** 01993 838 419

## Tunisian Thalassotherapy

From the Greek word 'thalasso' meaning sea, Thalassotherapy refers to a selection of spa treatments that combine sea water and sea weed to promote general wellbeing. The healing qualities of seawater were acknowledged by the Greek poet Euripides as long as 4,000 years ago. The medical discipline of thalassotherapy was developed in France, but quickly spread to many parts of the world including Tunisia, where when combined with the Roman heritage, sun and sea it provides a unique therapeutic experience.

### The Residence, Tunis

Ever since the Romans finally claimed the Carthaginian shores as their own, the bath complexes have formed a focal point of daily life here. Five minutes along the coast from the remains of the Antonine Baths, once the largest in the Roman Empire, is one of my favourite spas, Les Thermes Marins de Carthage. The highlight for me is the beautiful heated swimming pool bathed in natural light, which is extremely welcoming, especially in the winter months. Behind the pool lie several treatment rooms dedicated to wellness treatments and massages.

**Mark Patterson:** 01993 838 407

### Radisson SAS Resort & Spa, Jerba

During my stay at the Radisson SAS I found the best way to completely unwind was to head for the hotel's beautiful spa! For a small fee you can spend a half day relaxing in their heated infinity pool which is half indoors and half outdoors and contains fresh sea water. Make sure you pay a visit to the hammam while you're there for the afternoon, which is absolutely stunning and features the traditional Roman cold bath to help you cool off.

**Natalie Humphries:** 01993 838 422

### Tamerza Palace, Tamerza

I love the Tamerza Palace, hidden away in the southwest of Tunisia, but I always felt it would be greatly improved by the addition of a spa. Obviously, great minds think alike and in November this year, they will be opening one. With the ambition to be the greatest spa in Tunisia, it will cover an area of more than 1,000 square metres, with 12 treatment rooms, traditional hammams and a therapeutic pool with two jacuzzis. I for one can't wait to go back!

**Charlotte Clark:** 01993 838 402

## FACT FILE

A seven day trip to Tunisia including return flights starts from £1,000 per person, whilst a seven day break to Morocco including return flights starts from £1,100 per person. For further details please contact our specialists on 01993 838 400.

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