



CHOCOLATE TEMPTATION

SIX SENSES SPA, GREATER NOIDA

MOST PEOPLE WHO CAN RESIST THE COFFER OF A SPA reopening, but in my case, there is one particular treatment that turns me into a sort of kid in a candy store. The Turkish Hammam. The fact that it is available in just a few luxury spas across the country increases its appeal. Greater Noida's Six Senses, attached to Jaypee's five star property, being one of them.

So imagine my excitement when I am offered not just a Turkish Hammam experiential, but one with chocolate. Yes, you read right. The new 'Royal Hammam with Cocoa Sesona and Shea Butter' is as indulgent as it sounds.

The treatment is very much like a typical hammam (dependent on your version of a typical Hammam is something you experienced in Istanbul) - but in luxury hotels have toned down on the rough, hard brusqueness one often encounters in Turkey), featuring steam, hot and cold water drench and a clay body wrap. It escalates into a land of ultra pampering once you get into the actual massage on the heated stone. The hammam soap applied has extracts of Shea butter, cocoa extracts, olive oil and coconut. This is followed by a exfoliant and mist scrub, and concludes with the application of a firming mask made of cocoa beans and mint extract, followed by a moisturiser made of shea butter, almonds and cocoa beans.

|| ASHLEKHANNA

COST: The whole treatment lasts 100 minutes and costs ₹ 6,200 (taxes extra), while the couple's treatment costs ₹ 10,000.

WHERE: At the Jaypee Golf & Spa resort in Greater Noida; call 0120-232 9900



PARADISE REGAINED

SHAMANA SPA, GOA

A RELAXING THERAPY AT A LUXURY SPA OVERLOOKING THE SEA in the heart of Goa. Now, does that sound a wee bit like paradise regained? I guess it would be for most people, but also, not for me. Unlike those who descend on this gannet state with fun and frolic as their winds, drive and work hard, which means, there is a premium on my time.

Quite the wrong attitude with which one should step into a spa, I know, but all I could do was make the best of a 'golden' situation. So, at this expansive spa (35,000 sq feet, and a few feet away from the lapping waves of the Arabian sea), I opt for a Holistic Balinese massage, and that too, the classic version. Quality, not quantity, I tell myself.

Purposeful, strong and intense are the spa's main key words for this therapy, and I soon find out why. This is not a treatment for those looking for sensual, non-anatomical pampering. The massage movements are long and vigorous at many points using even her elbows to release pressure points. The aromatic oils infuse a fresh energy to my rarely awakened blood vessels, I sense.

I opted for the one-hour version which costs ₹ 3,800, but for those with time, I strongly suggest going the whole hog of 90 minutes. And if you can spare time (and money), then, nothing like it.

|| SOUMIA

COST: Shaman's signature June Jacobs Signature ₹ 1,000 for 70 minutes

WHERE: At Grand Hyatt Goa, on Bambolim beach; call 0332 301 1904



SPAA...AHI

SHILLIM SPA, NEAR PUNE

BY ANYONE'S MEASURE THE HILTON SHILLIM nestled within the Sahayadi mountains near Lonavala and Pune, among Maratha forts and ancient Buddhist caves must count as one of the most beautiful spa retreats in the country. The fact that it's just 100kms outside Mumbai, and a mere 80kms from Pune, only adds to the allure. The scenic drive from Mumbai holds views of conical road, streams and the majestic Sahayadi Mountains. Monsoon is the best time to be here as Shillim comes to life around this time.

There's a lot to be excited about at Hilton Shillim. You could hike and explore the sounds that woke you up in the morning, meander through the fields that abound all around, set off to explore the various historical monuments or soak yourself in your private pool. Set if time is a priority, it's the spa that you should spend your hours at.

Embedded in lush rice fields and surrounded by seasonal creeks, the spa at Hilton Shillim is located on the part of the estate that has the highest concentration of amethyst and quartz crystals. The energy from these crystals is said to revitalise the 17 therapy rooms. There is also a meditation cave and yoga pavilion for those

seeking peace and calm.

The soothing palette of browns and white keeps the focus on the treatment and the gorgeous views of the private garden through floor-to-ceiling windows. The various treatments on offer are a careful blend of Ayurveda, with reflex, acupuncture, aromatherapy and naturopathy.

If you're looking for some paradigm-shifting spa experience, go to the Vaidhiki Massage which uses herbs and flowers organically grown at Hilton Shillim's own gardens. The hour-long treatment starts with jasmine mist spray and aroma massage (activating the pressure points on the face). The warmth of the sesame oil, scented eye pillow and dim lighting helps you float into oblivion. The massage is followed by a full body scrub with local rice and sesame seeds. The therapist works slowly deliberate massage to the fine anatomical of Indian classical music, an electric incense burner pipes a light aroma into the room. Slowly the massage loosens parts of the body you (don't even know) were tense to begin with. The treatment wraps up with a linac grass tea infused with ginger and honey. Just what you need to soothe the senses while catching your cool.

|| HIRVORA-WAN

COST: ₹ 3,800

WHERE: Pwara Nagar, Taluka Masai; call 02114 712 466