



Spa hopping

Let the elements of nature work their magic on you this festive season. By Amrita Mukherjee and Lubna Salim

The festive season is on its way and your body could do with some serious pampering as that glow you do the rounds of the party circuit. The spas in the city are offering luxury treatments (some of which you've probably not heard of before) based on the four elements — Fire, Water, Earth and Air. They are sure to keep you looking great and feeling chilled out as you go party-hopping.

Fire and Water

What's the buzz: Let some fiery hot water lava shells and the therapeutic power of thermal water combine to de-stress your body and mind.

Drilling an air Ocean Room — a body massage followed by a facial — is one of The Oberoi Group's in-house therapies. For this, well-heating tiger clam shells from the southern Pacific Ocean are filled with a mixture of natural minerals including algae, dried sea kelp blended with Dead Sea salt and essential oils. This blend of ingredients creates a chemical reaction that generates heat which lasts for approximately one or two hours.

The warm shells are held in the palms of the hands while using light Swedish massage strokes to ease away persistent muscle stiffness.

This is followed by a thermal healing water facial using Osmosis products from Hungary. The thermal water used in the products is imbued with iodine and gases that cleanse out the pores and tones the skin. The session ends with rose quartz crystal therapy in which the crystals are gently placed on pressure points.

How much: This two-hour ritual costs a whopper of Rs 5,800.



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Air and Earth

What's the buzz: The air around you is cleansed and balanced while a blend of natural oils representing the healing qualities of the earth leave you refreshed.

For those who are stressed and looking for relaxation, Akyra's Aromatic Awakening is the one to go for. The therapy begins at the very discovery of the spa. As you enter, the therapist washes your feet for a calming effect and rings Buddhist prayer bells to create positive vibrations.

The focus is on the air around you and a lamp made from rock salt is lit. The therapist massages the body with light, long strokes with an essential oil of your choice (that could be rosemary, lavender or peppermint). This rejuvenates the entire system and activates the senses while the massage aims to refresh the body and mind.

How much: This one-hour session costs Rs 2,800.



Earth and Fire

What's the buzz: The earth takes on a therapeutic role in the sand bundle that is heated to heat you.

Go for a complete relaxation with the Sand Bundle Massage at Hyatt's Club Point. The treatment begins with a body massage with an aromatic oil (rose or geranium) with special emphasis on the pressure points. After the massage has opened up the pores, the therapist begins tapping the body with a sand bundle made of about 250 grams of warm, distilled sand. The sand is heated on a burner at a temperature of 30-40 degrees centigrade. This sand deep-penetrating heat to the bones and tissues and gradually soothes the aches and pains. The treatment is finished with a steam session.

How much: This treatment costs Rs 2,500 for 45 minutes and Rs 4,000 for 90 minutes.



Earth and Air

What's the buzz: Herbal steam provides the air while essential oils representing the earth offer a holistic treatment.

Would you like to balance the Kapha or the element of stability in your body? Then a visit to Kaya Kalya — The Spa, at ITC, The Sonar, should be on the cards. We recommend a treatment called Nasyam, which must be done early in the morning on an empty stomach. This is because Kapha is at its highest on an empty stomach and a massage at this time will work the best (especially on a sluggish mind).

You begin with a herbal steam inhalation. Eucalyptus or lemongrass is added to water which is then boiled. The steam is inhaled and helps relieve the cold.

After this you can sit back and enjoy an invigorating head massage followed by a face massage using Ayurvedic oils. Even as you let the beneficial properties of the therapy seep in, the treatment results off with medicated oil being poured into the nostrils.

How much: This 30-minute therapy will cost Rs 1,200 (plus taxes).



Photographs by Roshni Das