

Laveda Spa at The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul

The **Laveda Spa** at [The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul](#) features 100% natural Sodashi products, traditional Turkish Hamam and innovative therapies.

As frequent travelers, we truly enjoy the luxury experience of making time in our day for some pampering spa treatments while traveling to nourish and refresh the body and the spirit. The Laveda Spa at The Ritz Carlton Istanbul knows all about pampering, which begins when you enter the Spa. After slipping into Spa robes, our therapists invited us to relax in their relaxing rooms, which we entered through beaded curtains and bolstered up on comfortable divans, we enjoyed a cup of herbal tea before our treatments began.



The Laveda Spa has 9 treatment rooms, with "2 Couple's Suites", and a wide selection of treatments available including facials, body wraps, massages, as well as body and facial treatment machines. One of their more traditional spa treatments is their authentic Turkish Hamam, and as the saying goes, "when in Rome..." or in this case, Istanbul, we decided to experience Turkish Hamam. If you have never experienced a stimulating Turkish Hamam, which we had not, it is definitely a unique experience. We began by going to the steam rooms where we steamed our bodies for five minutes to prepare the skin for the Hamam. Our bodies steamed, our pores opened, we were now ready for the next step. We entered the Hamams, which were beautiful marble rooms embellished with ,znik tiles. Our therapists instructed us to recline on the marble dais in the center of the room that was covered with a large bath sheet, and then true relaxation began. For the next 50 minutes, our therapists massaged our bodies with essential oils, stimulating the soft tissue and muscles that we had completely forgotten about, but somehow our therapists found them all the same. After the massage, the therapists scrubbed our bodies for a full body exfoliation, to increase our energy and our circulation. Relaxed and content, with our skin glowing, we left the Hamams somewhat dazed with pleasure, as we went to the cool down room, (So ukluk), to recline on red banquettes with red pillows, and noticed the pretty blue ,znik tiles with red floral designs on the walls.



After taking showers, we continued our Laveda Spa experience by seeking different exotic treatments, Shiatsu Massage (Edward) and Sacred Stone Therapy (Debra). If you have never had a Shiatsu Massage, prepare yourself for this description. Shiatsu Massage uses the pressure points of your body for a deep and relaxing treatment, which is achieved via the therapist's hands and feet. I entered the treatment room, Bi Si Yu "Kitty", my therapist, instructed me to lie on the massage table face down which had a strange looking bar over the table, and made me wonder if I was supposed to try to exercise during the massage treatment. She quickly allayed my suspicion explaining to me, as her nimble fingers and hands found all the pressure points around my neck and the base of my skull, that the bars would be used later in the treatment, and for me to just relax and breath. She explained the relevance of each pressure point as she came upon it, "This is to relieve headaches," "This will relieve tension," "This one is to relieve stress," and on she moved along my neck and base of my skull massaging in the menthol oil. Now that I was relaxed she climbed onto the massage table and holding onto the bars proceeded to walk on my back hitting all of my pressure points, moving along my upper back, through the shoulder blades muscles, the lower back, the gluteus, thighs, and calf muscles, and finished with a hand massage on my feet. The magic part of the Shiatsu Massage is that she was able to hold a constant pressure (ex. two minutes on the shoulder socket muscle) using her feet.

The next phase required that I roll over onto my back; the massage starts with a hand massage of your upper chest muscles before starting the foot massage to the pelvic muscles, again with constant pressure applied for two minutes. The treatment concludes with a hand massage of your arms and fingers.

This is the type of massage that really works out the tension of your body, is supposed to help restore balance and harmony, but while it is occurring you may be a bit leery of the "step-by-step" process. This was my first Shiatsu Massage and in the right hands, and feet, of a professional it really removes knots, relieves stress and tension and does establish a balance and harmony; I felt great.

Bülent, my therapist, explained Sacred Stone Therapy as a combination of massage, warm essential oils applied to the body and sacred stones that are glided along the body to relieve stress, calm the body and release blocked energy pathways, to "bring a balance of the mind, body and soul," it sounded fabulous to me, and it was. For the next 50 minutes, my mind drifted into contentment, as the stones were almost magically slid along my body gently massaging each of my muscles. I may have even purred in contentment.

After another shower to remove the massage oils, our bodies were relaxed, energized, stimulated and we were ready to go and explore Istanbul. Ah, what a few incredible spa treatments will do to restore the body!

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