

Lifestyle

RELAXING INTERLUDES

FOR WEARY WANDERERS

Travel has this way of seeming more romantic and relaxing than it sometimes really is. If you've just spent hours crammed on an Airbus with a toddler kicking your seat, you might land back in Bangkok in need of some serious post-landing recovery. Here are our recommendations on where and how to beat the travel blues.

by Mandy Smith



LET'S RELAX ONSEN

You may have heard of the architecturally marvelous Hungarian public baths and notorious, steamy Russian Banyas. The concept of nude public bathing might raise some eyebrows, but this activity dates back to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire and is especially popular in Japan today, where it is praised for many health benefits.

In the heart of Bangkok, the newly-opened Grand Centerpoint Hotel has unveiled authentic Japanese-inspired onsen public baths — perhaps one of the most exhilarating spa experiences you'll ever encounter. Set aside your inhibitions (and your towel) and repeat after me: "When in Rome..."

Upon arrival, you'll be given your onsen welcome bag containing comfy

kimono-style clothes for the common public areas, which include hot stone beds (imagine lying on the warmth of your driveway as a child in the heat of summer); a cool down room comprising cushioned benches in a cosy nook, and the relaxation room boasting lounge mats and pillows where you can nap and rest between bathing sessions.

The welcome bag also contains a large towel for showering, and a small towel — the only thing you're permitted to take with you into the baths. Men and women have separate bathing wings, and your privacy is protected with strict enforcement of no cameras or devices (or anything at all, actually) allowed with you past the locker room.

Step into your birthday suit and make your way into a hall of pristine

baths surrounded by waterfalls, bamboo, plants and rocks. Five pools of varying temperatures await you, each offering specific benefits to your mental and physical health:

- ➔ The White Ion Silk Bath is infused with powerful antioxidant properties to hydrate your skin
- ➔ The Cold Bath is great for increasing your basal metabolism and circulation, which is recommended between hot baths
- ➔ The Gero Hot Springs contain sulfur to alleviate muscle pain as well as physical and mental tension
- ➔ The Soda Bath's waters have carbon dioxide purported to improve circulation, reduce fatigue, and leave skin soft and glowing
- ➔ The Whirlpool Jacuzzi Bath offers hydrotherapy by way of pulsating jets

Best of all, your traditional onsen experience comes with no time limit, making this a fantastic mini-retreat for travel weary wanderers.

A session at Lets Relax Onsen costs 650 baht per person. Or, you can buy 10 vouchers and get one free. Six-month and one-year memberships are also available for the true enthusiast at 25,000 to 40,000 baht, respectively.

Address: Centre Point Sukhumvit 55, 300 Sukhumvit Soi 55
Telephone: (02) 042-8045
Website:
www.letsrelaxspa.com



DIVANA DIVINE SPA

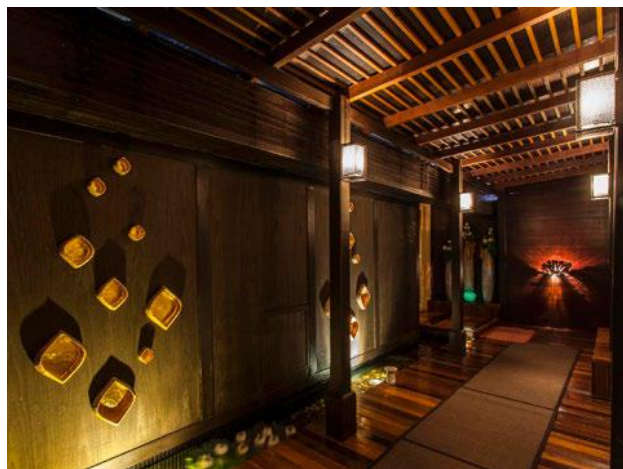
Cloistered just off a traffic-jammed Thonglor street is a true oasis. An authentic refurbished Thai home surrounded by a quaint garden and tropical trees welcomes you to leave your shoes and worries at the door and step into a columned foyer, where you're greeted with a delicate rose aroma — Divana Divine Spa's signature scent.

Sip an iced tea while filling your intake forms, which alerts therapists of your specific aches and pains to guarantee customized service. It's attention to detail like this which sets Divana Divine a head and shoulders above other generic massage parlors.

The wellness retreat is currently running a promotion for their 210-minute White Orchid Wholistic Package which, if you can spare the time, comes with our highest recommendation. It begins with a foot soak and toner before a pearl body scrub complete with a hot ozone steam treatment.

Melt under the agarwood resin, warm honey and beeswax mud mask and snuggle up in warm blankets that aid detoxification. Following a tranquil nap in your dimly-lit cocoon, enjoy the steam room and shower before you are treated to a light meal and hot tea. Your treatment concludes with a warm white-orchid oil massage with hot stones for the ultimate treat. Add-ons such as a collagen facial and white-orchid milky bath are available at request.

Divana is one of Bangkok's oldest and most respected spas and has several locations in the city. Their website frequently updates with current specials and offers discounts for booking online. In addition to superior facilities and various themed locations, they provide gift shops at each location selling their signature scents, oils, body butters,



room fragrances, lotions and pampering products, which make wonderful gifts for your friends and family at home.

For rates, head to www.divanaspa.com, where you'll find the latest information as well as details on Divana's latest deals and offers.

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