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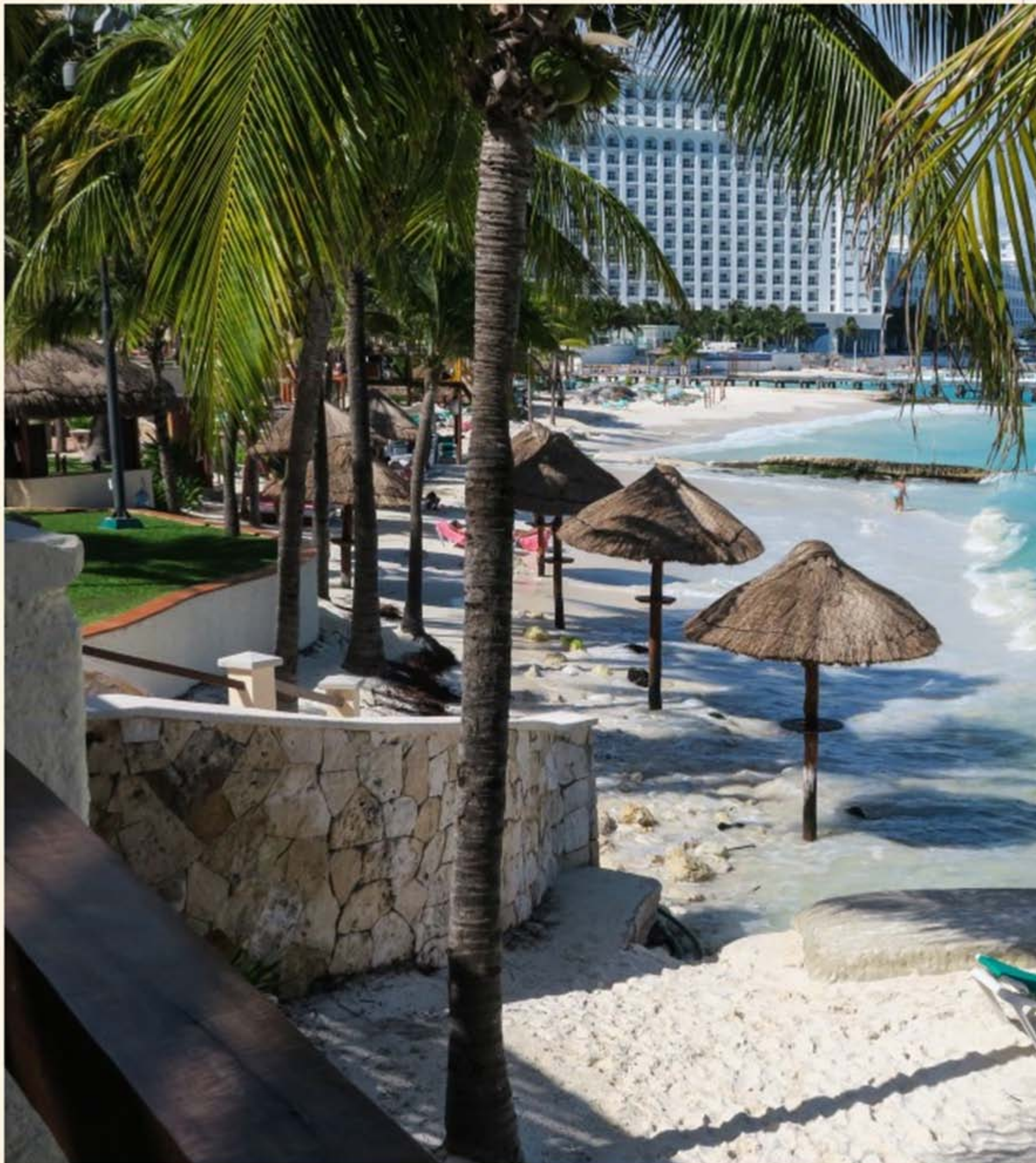
Gem Spa's 10-Step Hydrotherapy is a Jewel

January 6, 2016 by Debi Lander

Given the choice between spending a day exploring a new destination or indulging in a hotel spa, I'd pick the exploration. That doesn't mean I don't enjoy spa treatments; I just prefer basking in the local culture, people and food.



However, the Gem Spa's 10-step hydrotherapy ritual in Cancun was such a jewel; it made me reconsider. The sublime treatment takes about an hour, and I left feeling alive and ready to take on the world. Mind you, massages are wonderfully relaxing, but this treatment re-energized me. Because I never knew what was coming next, my mind escaped from all worries, and I allowed my body soak in the moment. The hour was bliss.



Coral Beach at the Grand Fiesta Americana.

The oversized Gem Spa, measuring a whopping 43,046 square feet, is located at the **Fiesta Americana Grand in Coral Beach, Cancun**. The hotel is staffed and run to the highest 5-star level. Their strip of white sand beach might not be wide, but it delivers everything you want on a Mexican vacation. Chaise lounges and palapas provide comfort, clear turquoise waves roll onto the shore, and the clock like sound of the surf can lull you to sleep. Those who prefer swimming pools will also discover happiness. The Grand's string of freeform pools cascade one into another via waterfalls, fountains, and swim-up bars provide amusement.



The beautiful freeform pool.

I signed up for Mayan Chocolate Scrub, but anyone taking a spa treatment is invited to arrive early for a complimentary hydrotherapy routine. Don't miss it.

I entered the Aromatherapy Steam Room in my swimsuit and sat down. The powerful scent of Eucalyptus filled the moist air. Soon, beads of sweat began to form on my skin and my lungs expanded. This room was pleasingly warm but not too hot; I stayed for ten relaxing minutes.



Aromatherapy Steam Room

Step two, I must warn, is rather unpleasant. I was lead to a cold water shower with multiple heads. Here, I was to withstand the chilling spray for a minute. Call me a wimp, but those 60 seconds seemed endless; I couldn't wait to get out. My skin, however, was certainly stimulated.

Step three involved the Clay Steam Room, much more to my liking. I was handed a container of soft clay to rub onto my body, but not my face. This treatment was to remove impurities from my skin and leave it feeling smooth. I took pleasure from the warmth and the essence of orange in the clay.

Step four had me standing in a rain shower, but this shower was not cold, merely cool to lukewarm and, at this point, the temperature felt right. I think I stayed under the shower for 2-3 minutes rinsing away all the clay.

Step five brought me to a hot sauna. The aromatic wood and dry heat produced more sweat and relaxed my muscles. I live in Florida, so can withstand heat. This ten-minute treatment was divine.



The Gem Spa's Sauna

Entering the Ice Room is step six. I feared this may be painful, but I was totally wrong; the ice room felt refreshing. I slowly rubbed pieces of ice all over my body and strangely, the sensation was delightful. The cold didn't seem to bother me.



Gem Spa Ice Room

Step seven includes ten minutes in a Jacuzzi. I lowered myself into a warm pool filled with bubbly water, and my body floated around in pure happiness. Who doesn't love a tepid soak and the gentle pressure of a Jacuzzi jet?



In the Gem Spa Jacuzzi. (That's me!)

Step eight was another "Oh no" moment: The Polar Pool. I was astonished again, this cold water treatment was not as unpleasant as I feared and my skin became tingly as blood circulation increased. I did not have to stay in long- just take a plunge or two under the icy water. Did I let out a muted scream? Yes, I did.



Warm and cold plunge pools.

Next came step nine, the Pebble Water Walkway to stimulate my feet. I lightly touched the side walls for balance as I carefully walked through a narrow zigzag course of knee-high water lanes lined with flat stones. Some of the paths included warm water, and others were cool. The friction created on the bottom of my feet felt like a foot massage- weirdly wonderful.



A plunge into the Pool of Sensations is the final step, number ten. To reach this pool, I exited the main hydrotherapy area and proceeded into a grand swimming pool size arena filled with fountains, waterfalls, cervical neck jets, bubble beds and floor geysers. I was free to wade around and test out each area, lingering as long as I desired. One section had a circular handrail with powerful jets (geysers) of water aimed directly upward. I entered, and the gush of air inflated by my bathing suit making me look like the Poppin' Fresh doughboy. The powerful sensation was almost strong enough to lift me out of the pool. I chuckled, then swam around and lazed along an incline zone relishing the champagne effects until my skin began to prune. I then climbed out, towed off and wrapped myself in a warm spa robe.



Honestly, I didn't need anything more; the chocolate treatment was almost overkill.



The Pool of Sensations



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