

Chilling out at Cancun resort's spa

By Eliza Krpoyan / April 07, 2016

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The wet area for the 10-step hydrotherapy ritual at the Gem Spa at the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun.



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I had just spent a wonderfully warm 10 minutes in a sauna with a cool towel on my face when I was handed a cup of crushed ice and instructed to rub it over my body. "How is this a good idea?" I thought.

"It will close the pores," said my therapist at the Gem Spa at the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun. She added reassuringly, "It will only be a minute."



It was about halfway through the 10-step Hydrotherapy Ritual, and she had guided me well so far, so I trusted her. I handed her my towel, grabbed the ice and stepped into what was basically a bedazzled freezer. I tested a little bit on my arms, and before I knew it I had turned the cup upside down and was pouring the ice into my swimsuit bottom.

At this gem-themed spa, the Hydrotherapy Ritual is arguably the crown jewel. It began in an aromatherapy steam room, where the scent of eucalyptus oil was strong, but after a matter of seconds it was beyond soothing. A cold (and thankfully quick) shower followed.

Next, I was given a soft, copal clay mask (made from tree resin indigenous to Mexico) and instructed to slather it everywhere on my body except my face. Above me, a formation of twinkling lights illuminated the dome-shaped, dark-tiled room.

Another shower followed to wash off the clay. After the dry sauna and ice room, the ritual ended with a series of dips in tubs, first in one that was heated to 89 degrees, followed by another at 39 degrees.

Finally, I walked through a pebbled maze where the stones beneath my feet and the varying water temperatures in it are supposed to boost blood circulation. Though this wasn't even the actual treatment, I was already feeling like mush.

The spa offers signature treatments such as the Mayan Emperor facial with amethyst as well as the Diamond Dust body exfoliation and massage. I opted for the four-hands Mayan Massage.

In keeping with the gem theme, the treatment uses jade, said to bring relaxation. The therapists would place the warm stone on various points on my body.

The treatment began with one therapist scrubbing my feet in a rose-petal-filled copper bowl while another rubbed aromatherapy oils on my forehead and in the center of my scalp.

The massage itself started face down, with a therapist on either side of me, stretching my limbs simultaneously.

Throughout the treatment the therapists either mirrored each other or one kneaded while another isolated pressure points. At least three times during my massage, one therapist was massaging my scalp while another was at my feet, which aroused a sense of spiritual tranquility.

The 80-minute, four-hands Mayan Massage is priced at \$263. For more information on the Gem Spa and the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun, visit www.coralbeachcancunresort.com.