

# SPA-CELONA

Barcelona can be whatever you want to make it. Either you're an art fan getting your serious dose of Gaudi, a beach bum with a b-line for *La Barceloneta*, or a party animal who sleeps all day and tears up *Eixample* by night. Whatever your flavour, you'll definitely be needing some R&R, and we know just the place to get it. Words by **Sam Johnson**

The Mayan Secret Spa is a hidden haven of tropical showers, saunas and treatment rooms that take you from the busy Barcelona streets to the Mayan Riviera.

You'll find the spa in the Claris Hotel, in the heart of Barcelona, right round the corner from the *Casa Milà*. What's striking about the interior is this place has actual original architectural pieces which date back from 600-900 BC - and it's not only the art that is true to the Mayan name.

The spa uses traditional Mayan healing techniques in all of their treatments, from the massages with aromatherapy wax to release negative energies, to the purifying papaya facials. They even do a 'Mayan Rebirth' ritual, performed by a *Temazcaltzin*

(or *Chamán*) - where two people can together reconnect with their roots to purify the mind, body and soul.

Most will agree that being born once was enough for me, so went for a Tuukul-Mayan holistic massage on the recommendation of their expert therapists. On reading up on the benefits afterwards, this specific massage is intended to reduce stress and re-establish ones natural balance. Not sure how they established that I was both very stressed and severely un-balanced, but spot on.

I was in fear of a hot wax surprise during the 50min treatment (you can go for 80 should you wish), but the Mayan rituals were a botanical blend of aromatic oils and serums, as well as different sounds to keep you completely soothed.

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One of the best things about the Mayan Secret Spa is their pre/post treatment care that's typical from this kind of Mexican hospitality. To fully appreciate your massage, you are encouraged to visit the *Temazcal* (pre-Hispanic Sauna, not to be confused with *mezcal*, you alcoholics). Inside the sauna's dome, volcanic stones are heated and water with aromatic medicinal herbs is poured on them releasing steam that will blow your mind. Guests are also encouraged to bathe in the Chromotherapy shower, but we won't ruin the surprise there for you.

If you're not too relaxed that you've either fallen asleep or died, you've probably relaxed so hard you've worked up an appetite. Don't go far though, as the 5-star Hotel Claris has another surprise waiting for you, on the roof.



*La Terraza del Claris* is the hotel's luxurious rooftop restaurant. Barcelona is rife with rooftop terraces, and where Claris lacks in views, it more than makes up for in atmosphere. Listen to the bells ring in churches nearby as you watch the sunset over the rooftops in the distance - all whilst soaking up the smells from the kitchen of the food you're about to tuck into.

It's no secret I'm not a big fan of ordering stuff. Good chefs know exactly what they want you to have and it's apparent here in the form of tasting menus. €59 will get you eight expertly crafted courses, from the tuna belly tartare with oysters, to the *carabinero cannelloni* with truffle jelly, and the exquisite grilled sirloin with a thick mushroom 'Fricando' sauce.

Everything is expertly paired with wine, too, and a great selec-



tion may we add, particularly if you're into organic wines. In true #TeamCoco style we delved into the cocktail list - it's diverse but with all the classics, the Dry Martini Royale is top of our recommended list for a *digestivo*.