

# A Hamam & Spa for Buenos Aires

*Transferring the concept of Entre Cielos, Mendoza, to a major city*

---

## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Objective

This study shows in what form the success of the first traditional hamam in South America, operated by Entre Cielos in Mendoza, can be adapted to Buenos Aires.

We believe that a holistic approach to physical and spiritual health answers a deep personal longing, and that the combination of physical and mental well-being, delivered through our mix of services and products, can be a success in Buenos Aires as well.

The growing awareness of a healthy lifestyle and a good life/work balance creates demand for places to relax and exchange, to buy and eat healthy food, and to enjoy company in a harmonious environment.

We plan a holistic place with wellness, sports and training courses, healthy shopping, and places to meet and eat healthy food. We envision it as different services and products arranged around a courtyard in the style of a *medina* (the old Arab quarter of a North African city). Together with a Swiss-style service and organisation, the concept that proved successful in Mendoza can be replicated in Buenos Aires.



#### The medina concept

Six offers around one open courtyard:

- Hamam
- Fitness & Yoga
- Beauty
- Kids
- Shop
- Restaurant

*First concept sketch.*

## 2. Products and Services

### 2.1 Hamam

Enjoying a hamam has long formed a central part of the social life of many of the most cultured oriental societies. It has evolved into something social: a place to do business, or simply an opportunity to sit and dream. It has always been seen as a hedonic ritual bringing great benefit to the body.

The steps of the hamam are designed to purify body, mind and soul. Water, and how it is used, plays a fundamental role: water cleanses, stimulates, restores and preserves life. Steam is one of the simplest ways to clean and renew. A mix of water and essential oils benefits the skin, clears the airways and stimulates the heart. The varying ways in which water is applied allow each visitor to choose how exactly they wish to benefit from the experience. It rinses off the old and makes space for the new.



*The hamam of Entre Cielos, Mendoza, Argentina: the reference for the concept.*

#### 2.1.1 The classic hamam circuit

The hamam centre consists of a heated swimming pool and a heated stone that invite rest, relaxation and reflection. From there, visitors move on to a cosy relaxation room for tea, fresh and dried fruits and oriental snacks. The classic circuit passes through each space in a sequence that supports health, skin, body and soul.

| # | Stage             | What happens                                                                                                                          | Duration  |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | <b>Sogukluk</b>   | Dressed in a pestemal (cotton towel), the visitor starts in the steam room at 38–40 °C to warm up and prepare the body.               | 10 min    |
| 2 | <b>Kese</b>       | The pestemal is put aside and the skin is rubbed with a silk glove (kese), then rinsed with lukewarm water from the sink (kuma).      | 5–10 min  |
| 3 | <b>Sicaklik</b>   | In the heart of the hamam, a warm-water pool aids relaxation, rest and circulation.                                                   | 10 min    |
| 4 | <b>Bingöl</b>     | Detoxification with a herb-infused steam bath at 55 °C.                                                                               | 10–15 min |
| 5 | <b>Lif</b>        | The skin is rubbed with black olive soap for a deep clean, then rinsed with lukewarm water.                                           | 5–10 min  |
| 6 | <b>Gobek tasi</b> | Lying on a heated stone (navel stone) relaxes the body and stimulates the immune system, raising body temperature by just one degree. | 10 min    |
| 7 | <b>Camekan</b>    | In a robe, the visitor relaxes, reads, talks quietly, has a snack and tea. This final stage leaves the body calm, fresh and renewed.  | 15–20 min |

**Included in the classic circuit:** black olive oil soap, pestemal, kese silk glove, water bowl, one pair of flip-flops or hamam clogs, one bathrobe or bath towel, water and tea, and a small international snack in the Camedkan.

**Additional services:**

- **Oil massage:** two or four hand massages of 20, 40 or 60 minutes with oils enriched by natural essences
- **Soap foam massage:** a massage in the wet area of the hamam, performed with foam-filled linen pillows
- **Rhassoul:** whole-body cleansing with a clay pack
- **Cretaceous:** nourishing whole-body chalk treatment
- **Packages:** some pampering packages include a facial; the day-spa package includes a meal in the restaurant

## 2.2 Physical health

Another part of the medina is dedicated to physical and mental health:

- Classic fitness studio
- Yoga classes
- Pilates classes
- Tai Chi
- Meditation classes

All courses are held by well-trained teachers and training programmes and can be accompanied by a personal trainer. The training equipment is up to date.

## 2.3 Hamam shop

In the hamam shop, guests can buy all the products used in the hamam for use at home (home spa) or as a gift, in different varieties and sizes. The shop is planned next to the hamam reception.

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Black olive soap  | • Small souvenirs             |
| • Kese              | • Massage oils                |
| • Pestemal          | • Room spray and sticks       |
| • Hamam clogs       | • Essences                    |
| • Cosmetic products | • Incense                     |
| • Water bowl        | • Yoga mats and Pilates items |

The shop could be extended with healthy food: fresh organic vegetables and fruit, seasonal and from the region; organic dried fruits and pulses; homemade pastries and olives; local specialities such as chimichurri; as well as sports and yoga clothing and selected Asian souvenirs and jewellery.

## 2.4 Hamam restaurant

Another place in the medina is the restaurant: wooden tables, chairs and décor in a second-hand style, and design items arranged into a cosy whole. Fresh products are presented on a large counter, and quality restaurant equipment is essential. In good weather, guests are served outside, overlooking the inner courtyard. Non-alcoholic drinks and pastries are also available to take away.

- Mezze and oriental food
- Fresh cakes and pastries, sweet and savoury
- Coffee and tea
- Fresh juices, smoothies and homemade lemonade
- A small selection of wines

## 2.5 Beauty corner

The beauty corner is decorated in Asian/oriental style. A visit is a holistic experience of perfect service, beautiful surroundings and outstanding products. Treatments are celebrated, not just done: the experience is paused by serving herbal tea or a glass of champagne.

Offers for men and women: hairdresser, mani-pedicure, hair removal, facials, make-up and different packages.

## 2.6 Childcare

To make a stay in the medina stress-free, we also offer childcare. The children's stay-care is open to all children from their third birthday up to the age of eight, for a maximum of four hours. Parents must be on site during this time.

# 3. Market and Positioning

The spa and wellness market in Argentina has grown strongly over the past decade, and consumers keep looking for value in the products and services they buy. In this environment, the combination of spa, beauty and fitness with the unique selling point of a traditional hamam offers a very positive outlook.

The study found no direct competitors, and only few related ones, offering this product combination in the greater Buenos Aires area for the key product, the hamam, and none in the downtown area. The ideal location would be a high-income suburb close to a private school or community centre, such as Pilar, and/or a popular high-income neighbourhood such as Recoleta or Palermo.

## 3.1 Market segments

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hamam / Spa</b> | Classic circuit, rhassoul, massages, body wrap with chalk, soap foam massage, packages                                                                              |
| <b>Beauty</b>      | Manicure, pedicure, hairdresser, facials, make-up, waxing                                                                                                           |
| <b>Fitness</b>     | Yoga, Tai Chi, fitness classes and equipment, Pilates, meditation                                                                                                   |
| <b>Restaurant</b>  | Coffee and tea, homemade lemonades, smoothies, fresh juices, wine, warm and cold dishes, homemade cakes, quiches and cookies                                        |
| <b>Shop</b>        | Hamam utensils, yoga and Pilates equipment and clothing, incense, Asian antiques and jewellery, organic fruit and vegetables, olives, preserves, local specialities |

Our target market is divided into spa, beauty and fitness customers. Spa customers come from every age group and gender; because spa and fitness are closely linked, we expect the fitness segment to support the spa segment, with the exception of the hamam, which is a unique selling point and attracts people independently. The core target group is women and men, professionals and retirees, from the age of 25.

### **3.2 Competitive edge**

The project aims to stand out through a higher level of customer contact and service than competitors tend to offer, through the combination of services and products, and through its unique selling point, the hamam. By providing a holistic, integrated spa, beauty and fitness experience, we build relationships of trust and satisfaction through a contemporary combination of sustainable health and relaxation. Well-defined work processes ensure consistent service and strengthen word-of-mouth marketing and networking.

### **3.3 Marketing and sales strategy**

- Emphasise the name and the unique services through advertising
- Focus on the convenience of the location
- Build community relationships through unique, high-quality service, a friendly and caring atmosphere and absolute dependability
- Present the hamam and spa as a uniquely desirable destination that enhances people's lives
- Sell through each employee's skill, courtesy and warmth, creating a trusting impression that builds loyalty and return visits

## **4. Management**

The management philosophy is based on respect for every employee, respect for every customer, individual responsibility and a Swiss-style service. The success of the Hamam & Spa depends on the warmth and uniqueness of its atmosphere, created by a fun-loving and caring team, and on the impeccable delivery of a unique experience and quality of service.

The management team consists of a general manager and, where needed, an assistant manager, supported by a team that grows in step with the business. We hire true "people persons" who are willing not only to meet but to exceed the expectations of our customers.

---

*This document is an excerpt from a feasibility study. It describes the concept, offer and positioning only; the project was not realised.*