



Tasteful Pampering

FRESH ORGANIC AND BOTANICAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES HAVE ARRIVED ON THE SPA AND SALON SCENE. CHAMPAGNE MASSAGES, STRAWBERRY FACIALS, SUGAR SCRUBS—SOME OF THESE TREATMENTS SOUND GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT. BY TRISHA MCMAHON

If organic foods, plants and herbs are good to put in one's body, it seems logical that they'd be good to put on one's body as well. That, at least, is the reasoning behind the current wave of services being offered at New York City's beauty meccas. Farm-to-massage-table (or salon chair) treatments feature ingredients that are not only natural, but sound positively edible. These good-for-you skin, body, nail and hair treatments are nourishing—minus the calories.

COMPLEXION DIRECTION “More women, men and teens are coming in for facials. But even before they book, they want to learn about the natural products we use in our services,” says Grace Macnow, owner of Graceful Spa 56 (240 E. 56th St., Suite 2W, 212.755.5589). One option, the Nuskin Facial, includes milk, which is not only a great source of skin-strengthening vitamins A and D, but also acts as a gentle exfoliant, thanks to its alpha hydroxy content. This natural acid works to penetrate the outer layer of skin to help lessen fine lines and wrinkles.

Most fruits also contain alpha hydroxy to some degree. One particularly rich source, strawberries are a sought-after ingredient in skin-care products. First applied with marshmallow in a



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“cocktail” serum, then with rhubarb in a mask, the red berry figures prominently in the Strawberry Sweet Cheeks Facial at White Tea Med Spa (104 W. 14th St., Suite 2C, 212.647.8919), an ideal treatment for those with large pores. Like their cousin, the blueberry—which features in the facial’s cleanser—strawberries are also laden with vitamin C, a natural antioxidant, which helps the complexion achieve a beautiful balance between dry and oily.

Overly oily or acne-prone skin can benefit from the balancing properties of beta-carotene—and a prime source is pumpkin, which is featured in the Youth Accelerator Facial at Exhale Spa (420 Park Ave. So., 646.380.5330). The active cell-stimulating pumpkin enzymes replenish and restore suppleness, banish fine lines and imperfections.

TOUCHING BASES In addition to olive and coconut oils, a wider range of flavorful ingredients—sugar and salt (both exfoliants), soy milk (a collagen stimulant), honey (an antiseptic), wine (an antioxidant)—are appearing in body-wrap, massage and polishing sessions these days.

Soothing jasmine scents the air at Auriga Spa at The Setai Fifth Avenue (400 Fifth Ave., 4th fl., 212.613.8720), setting the stage for Sowing the Seeds: A Nourishing Wrap, a 60-minute treatment in which the body is exfoliated with salt and sugar, slathered with honey and jasmine and gently wrapped in cotton towels to facilitate the absorption of nutrients. The session ends with an application of jasmine and rose oil to lock in moisture. Another luxurious offering is the Green Coffee Body Sculpting therapy, which combats cellulite and water retention. Problem areas are massaged twice: first with coffee oil to heat skin and rev up circulation, then with a cooling body sculpting gel. “The hot-to-cold process stimulates the entire lymphatic system to dispel toxins,” says Samuel Hunley, spa director. “Clients are invigorated and amazed at the slimming results.” (p. 92)

Squashes such as pumpkin are a prime source of beta-carotene—ideal for replenishing and restoring skin’s suppleness, as well as banishing the appearance of fine lines and other imperfections.



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At Go Green Organic Spa (365 Broome St., 212.966.3898), the Divine Massage Therapy features a concoction of Champagne (the yeast boosts cell regeneration) and apricot oil (high in fatty acids, which plump up cells to increase moisture retention). Downtown health and beauty oasis Great Jones Spa (29 Great Jones St., 212.505.3185) offers the Pure Fiji Coconut Sugar Glow, comprised of a cane-sugar scrub followed by a massage with macadamia nut oil and coconut milk—a combination that strengthens skin’s elasticity. And Serenity Spa’s (776 Sixth Ave., 212.481.7898) Wine Wrap treatment swaddles clients in vino-soaked cloth to lessen age spots.

EXTREMITY REMEDY Ingredients once associated with candy counters and Japanese restaurants, such as mint, green tea and seaweed, are now commonly used in pedicures. During the Peppermint Sea Twist Pedicure at Dyanna Body & Nail Salon (40 E. 21st St., 212.995.2355), feet are massaged with peppermint and seaweed oils, providing antibacterial, antifungal and deep hydrating effects on the skin.

Natural ingredients also give a hand to the hands. At Shizuka New York Spa (7 W. 51st St., Suite 6, 212.644.7400), the Nagomi Manicure involves bathing hands in sake-kasu, a nutrient- and antibiotic-rich byproduct of the brewing process for sake (fermented rice wine), followed by a massage cream containing yuzu—a Japanese citrus fruit high in vitamin C.

MANE INGREDIENTS For thousands of years, argan oil—made from the kernels of Moroccan argan trees—has been used in the pursuit of health and beauty. Often packaged as Moroccan Oil, argan extract is a major contender for the crown of best scalp and hair remedy on the market today. State-of-the-art hair salons, such as Salon Ziba (200 W. 57th St., 212.767.0577), recognize the many benefits of the oil. “Our scalp treatment with Moroccan Oil turns around damaged hair,” says Co-owner Alonso Salguero. “Although it’s an oil, it’s not oily and doesn’t weigh down the hair.” A natural bacteria fighter, Moroccan Oil also exfoliates, aids in cell repair and fortifies hair against breakage.

Jane Webb, owner of Grace Heaven Salon (226 E. 3rd St., 212.253.5490), incorporates cacao and other herbs and plants into her treatments and styling products. “High-quality essential oils, from florals to herbs, are powerful and incredibly healing,” she says.

By offering these mouthwatering organic and plant-based services, New York City spas have “carved out a unique identity that makes traveling to them worthwhile,” says Susie Ellis, president of SpaFinder, Inc., a marketing and research company for the salon and spa industry. And the benefits don’t have to end when the spa or salon visit does. Clients can continue to keep hair, scalp, skin and nails healthy and beautiful by purchasing take-home products containing everything from honey and cranberry to grapefruit and salt, coconut oil and papaya puree to ground walnuts and figs. Staying on a natural path once home is easy. Just don’t nibble the pumpkin scrub en route.

PHOTOS: BATH, SALTS AND CANDLE: JOHN BLOCK/GETTY IMAGES; MARBLE BACKGROUND: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/HDAGLI

