



ASIA: SAUDI ARABIA

What is making news in your country when it comes to spa and wellness?

The only spas that operate in Saudi Arabia are Day Spas. Even those are considered a taboo for traditional (so-claimed religious) reasons. Moreover, there are no formal licenses for day spas. They currently operate under five categories:

- Day spas associated with hospitals, which are licensed by the Health authorities as physical therapy centers.
- Day spas associated with fitness centers that are regulated by the Sports authorities, again as part of physical therapy.
- Female day spas that are part of women beauty salons. They are considered illegal but are left to operate with a blind eye.
- Male day spas that are part of barbershops. They are also considered illegal and are also left to operate with a blind eye.
- Hotel day spas that are in hotels. Also considered illegal, and also left to operate with a blind eye.

Recently it was announced that day spas, which offer massages and body scrub (Moroccan bath) services, will be regulated only by the Sports authorities. However, female fitness centers are still not permitted.

“Wellness” in Saudi Arabia is an ambiguous word. It is either associated with the medical or sports field. Any reference to the “soul / spirit” is considered a taboo, again for tradition (so-claimed religious) reasons. However, public awareness about Wellness (healthy lifestyle) is on the rise due to the increase in diabetes and obesity nationwide.

What is happening in your country when it comes to wellness tourism and/or medical tourism?

Considering the restrictions on regulating spas in Saudi Arabia mentioned above, in addition to the scarcity of qualified resources, both wellness and medical tourism are practically non-existent in Saudi Arabia.

Please give us one sentence to describe the latest developments in your country for each of these spa categories:

What is happening with hotel spas?

Currently operate illegally, lack regulations, but could have potential.

What is happening with destination spas?

Not available due to lack of regulations.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

No hot springs in Saudi Arabia.

What has been the general attitude about investing in the spa/wellness arena in 2013?

Investment is mainly done by owners themselves. Enaya Care Co. is one of first and only salon & spa businesses to secure bank financing in Saudi Arabia.

Looking back at the past four decades of spa and wellness, what would you consider “a defining moment?”

No defining moment yet, but easing the restrictions and regulations on the industry would open up the market to more players.

Note : Saudi are part of GCC which include other counters like UAE and city like Dubai which can be the real hub for all kind of tourism spas & wellness in the region and the world by 2020 if such summit take place in Dubai by 2020 which Enaya Care Company will be already there and can help to work closely with Dubai professional authorities to make such summit take place within Dubai during 2020 .

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