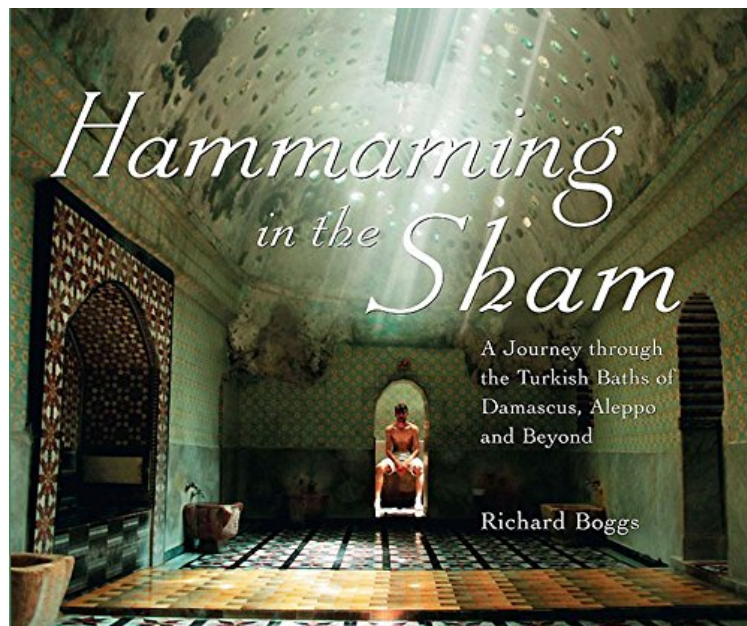


[Mobile book] Hammaming in the Sham: A Journey Through the Turkish Baths of Damascus, Aleppo and Beyond

Hammaming in the Sham: A Journey Through the Turkish Baths of Damascus, Aleppo and Beyond

Richard Boggs

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Richard Boggs : Hammaming in the Sham: A Journey Through the Turkish Baths of Damascus, Aleppo and Beyond before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hammaming in the Sham: A Journey Through the Turkish Baths of Damascus, Aleppo and Beyond:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Book-travelling with Mr. Richard Boggs is fantastic! By Rick von Baden Baden I bought this book for two reasons: 1) I am a huge fan of SPA's, saunas, hydrotherapy, massage, jacuzzi and all kinds of relaxation techniques; 2) I love travelling to totally different cultures and experience the exotic, the surreal. And reading Boggs's narrative made me fascinated about the hammam experience. This is because the author tells, in every single detail, his journey through many hammams, the way they work, the time they have been built, their inside and outside design (with lots of pictures, including the people who go to those places), the history behind it, the rituals, the Syrians habits, behavior and their culture mainly towards purification, nudity and other issues related. Also, it's interesting to know that in spite of men and women having separated hammams, going completely naked is not well accepted. You have to wear the "futa", a kind of "table cloth" around your waist. Even when getting a massage and a body scrub by the "mukeyyis" (the Hammam's masseur). All these Syrian words are in a little glossary in the beginning of the book, so you can enter the hammam's world before start reading about it. In conclusion, this book is a must have for anyone who is visiting the middle east and wants to experience a millennial tradition which lasted until our times and still is a magical journey. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Birthday Gift By Discerning Reader I bought this book for a friend who has travelled widely in the Middle East - already unusual - and who likes to go off the tourist trail and has visited many Hammam - so he was delighted with

this beautifully photographed evocation of his previous trips. I can't wait to borrow from him when he has finished reading it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. good book
By hex_messer
Interesting information about what is the hammam, the traditions, how it looks inside and outside in the country of hammams. What people work in hammams. Good book.

Legend has it that Damascus once had 365 hammams or Turkish baths: one for each day of the year. Originally part of an ancient Roman tradition, hammams were absorbed by Islam to such an extent that many became almost annexes to nearby mosques. For centuries, hammams were an integral part of community life, with some fifty hammams surviving in Damascus until the 1950s. Since then, however, with the onslaught of modernization programs and home bathrooms, many have been demolished; fewer than twenty Damascene working hammams survive today. In *Hammaming in the Sham*, Richard Boggs travels the length and breadth of modern Syria, documenting the traditions of bathing in Damascus, Aleppo and elsewhere, and his encounters with Syrians as they bathe. In his portrayal of life in the hammams he reveals how these ancient institutions cater for both body and soul, and through his conversations with the bathers within he provides insights into the grass roots of contemporary Syrian society. Approximately 140 color photographs accompany the text, portraying the traditional neighborhoods of Damascus and Aleppo, and the almost religious feel of the hammams. The authors intimate portraits of the baths employees and bathers show a unique side of Syria rarely exposed to the outside world.

Hammaming in the Sham by Richard Boggs is a rather interesting compendium of the hammams, or Turkish Baths, or Roman Baths, across Syria. He visits every kind and bathes in most of them, telling the elegance of their architecture or the derelict nature of each. He gives honest assessments of their cleanliness and hygiene (or lack thereof) along with some very interesting conversations and encounters with locals, who almost always welcomed him with open arms and offered whatever food and drink they had. Boggs obviously enjoyed the research for this book in a climate and atmosphere in which he had always felt comfortable. This is an interesting and informative survey with lots of history and interpersonal encounters, especially if you are going to the Middle East and want to understand this centuries old treasured custom of communal bath houses, for relaxing and gossiping, and learning the news, and generally keeping up with your friends. In most cases the men's hammams were separate from the women's. -- Bonnie Neely, Real Travel Adventures, 2011/04/25