

Canada's spa connection

# SpaInc.

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beyond  
the bar  
of soap

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# Boost clients' wellness through nutrition

Incorporate nutritious treats from sips and snacks to extravagant meals

From complimentary fruit and signature herbal teas to a five-star menu designed to please any palate, the nutritional services a spa offers are an important element in the whole body wellness experience for clients.

"Spas are an ideal place to encourage healthy living and provide clients with nutritional information that will work in harmony with the treatments they are receiving," says Lori Stryker, founder and president of the Organic Make-up Company.

Stryker believes knowledgeable professionals can complete the spa experience with sound guidance in health and nutrition by adding a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, plant proteins, and water-rich foods. These provide the essential ingredients to maintain optimal cell function—the foundation for healthy, beautiful skin. It only makes sense, then, that spas encourage their clients to follow a healthy diet on-site as well as between spa visits.

To provide guests with a complete experience, Heather MacKay, spa manager at the Spa at Windsor Arms, says that all the senses must be engaged. Calming scents touch the nose, soothing music fills the ears, and a flavour-rich menu blesses the taste buds. "It's really all about providing an experience—not just a service," says MacKay.

## Keep it fresh and flavourful

The menu options provided at the spa should both complement the wellness experience of the treatments and services, as well as help teach clients how to match their diet to their wellness goals. At Ste. Anne's Spa in Ontario, a milk and sesame stone wrap is a popular treatment. Executive Chef Christopher Ennew

also uses the seeds to make a sesame seed-flaxseed cookie. "We try to make people aware that there are many things that go together," says Ennew.

Fresh, local ingredients are a staple in the kitchens of Canada's top spas. Chef Ennew prefers to work with items he can get the same day. Fresh food contains no additives or preservatives, and buying locally supports farmers in the area and is environmentally friendly. When chefs develop relationships with local farmers they also know exactly where the food comes from and the food's condition. Executive Chef Eric Edwards at Grotto Spa's Treetop Tapas & Grill likes to partner with local farms to provide fresh quality ingredients when possible. Tapas are Spanish-inspired appetizers. Because the portions are small, diners can properly digest what they are eating. Tapas are prepared in a short amount of time, which allows the foods to retain their nutrients.



Cheese boards aside, many spas try to eliminate as much fat as possible from the dishes they serve. However, getting rid of the fat does not mean sacrificing flavour. "Everyone thinks fat is flavour," says Ennew, "but there are lots of spices out there. There are lots of marinades, lots of fresh herbs to mix in with any item and using fresh herbs offers a better visual appearance while being more fragrant."

At Elmwood Spa, the ingredients are fresh, seasonal, and incorporate flavour with natural food items. "There are many great flavours that exist naturally in spices, herbs, fruits, and vegetables," says Kathryn Merei, manager of social media and marketing at Elm Spa Group. Since healthy items have a

1. Signature Granola at Ste. Anne's Spa
2. Red Beet Carpaccio Salad at The Spa at Windsor Arms
3. Marinated Winter Kale Salad at The Spa at Windsor Arms
4. Assorted Tapas at the Grotto Spa



The Juice Bar at Elmwood Spa



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reputation for being bland or boring, retaining flavour encourages healthy eating.

### Super snacks

Spa clients need to stay hydrated during and between services, so plenty of liquids should be made available. Beyond that, spa-goers sometimes need to recharge between services. The Juice Bar at Elmwood Spa serves deluxe smoothies made with non-fat yogurt, fresh-pressed juices, sandwiches, and snacks such as muffins and croissants. The items at the Juice Bar are available for purchase, but the spa also offers complimentary water, herbal tea, and fruit. The Spa at Windsor Arms' snack station offers complimentary organic loose-leaf teas, fresh-baked-in-house cookies, and fresh fruit. However, the organic smoothies and the lunch menu items must be purchased. Owners must determine what they're able to provide complimentary and what they need to charge for. The cost to provide apples is not high and can be offset if you raise the price of spa services by a dollar or two. Clients will notice and appreciate snacks available at no extra cost.

### What's your signature style?

There are many ways to bring nutrition into your spa's offerings. Not all spa menus focus solely on nutrition—some are created to add to the luxury of the spa experience. Many spas incorporate edibles into treatment packages. The Couple's Retreat at the Spa at Windsor Arms comes with a glass of sparkling wine. Grotto Spa's Signature Experience package includes endless tapas at the Treetop Tapas & Grill, and Elmwood Spa gives clients the option to add a three-course gourmet lunch. Whether you are serving tea or tapas, keep nutrition at the forefront and be inventive while complementing the spa experience. ❖

Chef Christopher Ennew, Ste. Anne's Spa

