



Clockwise from left, Emma Kennedy greets an Arabian stallion; the hotel's 75-metre outdoor pool; the exterior of the Selman hotel. Below, Emma Kennedy



# Lean, clean...

# BUT NO TAGINE

Cold soup, sucking cups and a VERY intimate bath – a Marrakesh detox really did the trick for Emma Kennedy. If only Moroccan pancakes were included...



**I** arrive at the glorious Selman hotel in Marrakesh in a spatchcocked state. I've just come off a week-long birthday bender and the prospect of detoxing my battered body of booze and buttery buns is the bright shining light at the end of a bottle-strewn tunnel. Bring it on, I think. Let the cleansing begin.

I'm here to try the Henri Chenot detox, a mix of exercise, drainage and a 'Biolight' diet. It claims that anyone on a six-day programme can lose between six and nine pounds – I'm only here for three days, but the good news is that there are no intrusive pipes or buckets involved. I am overwhelmed with relief.

I've come with my other half Georgie, who's not on the detox and, while I am on a saintly course of denial and purity, she will be enjoying everything a holiday in Marrakesh has to offer. I hate her.

We've arrived late and it's time for my first

detox supper. The diet is supposed to be 'hypotoxic' – that's no fat, no salt and predominantly vegetarian to you and I. I love my food. And no salt is worrying me. 'I'll have a burger, please,' says Georgie, phoning room service. 'And a Biolight supper for Miss Kennedy.' There's a short pause. 'Oh,' says Georgie, shooting me a look. 'They don't know what Biolight is. But they're telling me they've got Marlboro Lights instead. Is that it?'

No. That is not it. Thank you. The meals break down as follows – you'll start your day with yoghurt and fruit. Georgie, on the other hand, is eating fried Moroccan pancakes with honey. They smell like fresh, warm doughnuts. I finish my yoghurt and sit staring at them. At this point, I start to wonder what the point is of coming to an amazing hotel in an amazing country and then denying yourself every single delicious thing that the country

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can provide. No matter! I am here to detox for you, dear *Tatler* reader! I shall not fail you!

Lunch starts with fruit, then a raw salad and finishes with a large plate of carbs – typically pasta served with slightly mysterious sauces. I have curry sauce one day. It is like a very posh Pot Noodle. Supper follows a similar pattern but includes a bowl of cold soup. I'm not madly keen on this. It is fine when it's tomato, but cold mushroom soup? No thank you.

'I wonder why cold soup is part of a detox?' I ask Georgie, who is tucking merrily into a delicious-smelling chicken tagine.

'Easy,' she says, popping an olive into her mouth. 'It's to depress you.'

Shoving cold mushroom soup to one side, I move on to grilled fish on a bed of vegetables for the evening main course. It's all perfectly lovely but I really struggle with the no-salt bit and I have to confess, on this alone, I cheat. My other niggle is that, while it's nutritious and delicious, it's a Western-style diet and I find myself longing for something a bit more exotic.

Exercise sessions are in the beautiful and sumptuous spa. I have three sessions with Simo, whom I adore. The first is aqua aerobics (lovely), the second finds me on a Vacu Power treadmill, where I seem to be wearing the bottom half of a dalek. It forces your core to exercise in negative air. I have no idea what this means but it's a peculiar tightening sensation that fools your body into thinking it's been running for

an hour when it's only been walking for 20 minutes. Ha! In your face, body! My third session with him is on a Power Plate, a vibrating surface that leaves you feeling like a just-mixed pot of paint.

Simo seems very pleased with me. I can tell he wants to praise me to the heavens. 'You know,' he begins, 'your body is not so bad.' I'm grinning from ear to ear. I'm 46. I'll take the compliments when I can. 'This bit is good,' he continues, pointing to my upper arms. 'And this bit is good,' he adds, gesturing towards my legs. 'This bit,' he ploughs on, sweeping a hand in the vicinity of my breasts, 'is also good. But this...' He stops and points towards my belly, 'this is not so good.' He then makes a face as if someone has asked him to eat a rancid prawn.

Fair dos, I think. He's got me banged to rights. Guilty as charged. But let's continue.

The spa detox treatments begin with a hydrotherapy session in a bath that has constantly changing LED lights and a showerhead in the centre of the tub. There's no way of putting this delicately: it points directly at your clacker. As you're massaged by the water, it's a bit like having sex with a bath at a wet rave. It's the greatest bath I have ever had. Ever. And we shall say no more about it.

My second session is an algae wrap. A softly spoken woman paints you with warm green goop, wraps you in clingfilm and towels and then presses a button and you're sucked downwards into a flotation tank

where you are left to ponder the meaning of life and whether or not you should give that bathtub your number.

The final treatment is a massage with an emphasis on the medicinal. I am reminded of the time Michael Palin went to a Turkish bath and they ended up going at him with what looked like garden brooms. No brooms for me, just sucking cups that really, really hurt. Softies need not apply. It's no pain, no gain with this one.

So I've had no sugar, alcohol or bread for three days and have been cosseted and pummelled in equal measure. Do I feel better? Of course I do. The hotel is beautiful (they even have Arabian stallions on site), the staff are amazing, I've slept on a bed that's like a cloud and I've had a holiday romance with a bathtub. I feel healthier – but am I happier? I've spent the past few days longing for a taste of Morocco and the feeling I've come all this way to deny myself the wonderful food this country has to offer has never shifted. So, next time, thank you, but I'll have the tagine. □

#### BOOK IT

Healing Holidays ([healingholidays.co.uk/tatlerspa](http://healingholidays.co.uk/tatlerspa); 020 7529 8551) can arrange a six-night Espace Vitalité Chenot Discovery package at the Selman Marrakech from £3,742 a person, full board, including British Airways flights, transfers and treatments. Exclusive to *Tatler* readers: a 10% discount on the Espace Vitalité Chenot Discovery package (included in price) and a traditional Moroccan hammam treatment.



Clockwise from left, Emma Kennedy; a ceramics shop; the indoor pool at the Selman