Water | Water Usage: Drinking and Washing

‘The hammam played a key role in the social and religious life of Muslims.’

Since the Qur’an stresses the importance of personal hygiene, public baths (hammams) have traditionally played a key role in the social and religious life of Muslims. Although these structures owe some debt to Roman and Late Antique baths, the emphasis from Umayyad times onwards was more on the hot rooms than on the frigidarium favoured by the Romans. The hammam ordinarily contains a changing room, which is an unheated room, a warm intermediate room, and a steam room.



Name:
Hammam Nur al-Din

Dynasty:
Hegira 549–67 / AD 1154–72 Atabeg

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The Hammam Nur al-Din in Damascus, founded in the mid-to-late 6th / 12th century, is well preserved and still in use.



Name:
Hammam Nur al-Din

Dynasty:
Hegira 549–67 / AD 1154–72 Atabeg

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Hammam of Nur al-Din, interior view of vaulted area.



Name:
Small bucket

Dynasty:
Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Nasrid

Details:
National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:
Metal buckets such as this were used to throw water over the hot-stone floor of the hammam in order to produce steam.



Name:
Eski Kapl#ca (Old Spa)

Dynasty:
Reign of Sultan Murad I (r. hegira 761–91 / AD 1360–89); the changing area hegira 917 / AD 1511 (under Sultan Bayezid II, r. AH 886–918 / 1481–1512) Early Ottoman

Details:
Bursa, Turkey

Justification:
The Old Spa of Bursa, a hammam built near healing springs said to be good for skin diseases. The building has a changing room, warm-water room and a hot-water room.



Name:
Eski Kapl#ca (Old Spa)

Dynasty:
Reign of Sultan Murad I (r. hegira 761–91 / AD 1360–89); the changing area hegira 917 / AD 1511 (under Sultan Bayezid II, r. AH 886–918 / 1481–1512) Early Ottoman

Details:
Bursa, Turkey

Justification:
Entrance to the Eski Kaplica or Old Spa.



Name:
Tuqan Soap Factory

Dynasty:
The end of hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Late Ottoman

Details:
Nablus, Palestine*

Justification:
The manufacture of soap is an ancient local tradition in Nablus; the factory produced soap that was used in both private homes and in public baths.



Name:
Hammam (Arab Baths)

Dynasty:
Fatimid / Norman

Details:
Cefalà Diana, Italy

Justification:
A very important Arab hammam in Sicily located near a hot-water spring, dating to the Arab-Norman period in Italy (around 11th–12th century).
