

Sauna or oven? Sweating next to cooking eggs

In New York City, there are some very hot saunas. But none of them come close to the heat you can find inside the Bul Hanzung Mok room at King Spa Korean Sauna in nearby New Jersey.



A Korean tradition for over 500 years, this brick room gets its heat from wood burned in a fire each morning. The brick holds so much heat that spa workers put cartons of eggs inside the room to cook (they're later sold in the spa restaurant). The spa says the heat helps remove impurities from the body and is also good for **aches and pains**.

Inside the sauna, I sit on a mat to stop my legs from burning. What can I say? Nothing. It's too hot to talk. Opposite me one Korean woman (or is it a man?) is **wrapped in** a heavy **blanket** and has a **handkerchief** around her face for protection.



Sitting on the floor, slowly breathing the hot and humid air, I see a thermometer near where the eggs are cooked. As I stand up to look at it, I feel the heat on my **scalp** and nose. I look to see how hot it is but I can hardly see because so much sweat is **dripping** into my eyes. Finally, I can see the temperature: 220 degrees – an ordinary sauna is only 70–100 degrees! Like most people, I manage to stay inside for only a few minutes, but others last longer. But I definitely feel lighter, as if I've lost a few kilos, and more relaxed. Maybe I'll have to go back.

Glossary

1 _____

/'hæŋkətʃɪf/ noun

a small square piece of cloth used to blow your nose

2 _____

/ræpt/ verb

covered in

3 _____

/skælp/ noun

the skin on the top of your head

4 _____

/'blæŋkɪt/ noun

a cover made of wool that people have on beds to keep them warm

5 _____

/drɪpɪŋ/ verb

falling in small drops

6 _____

/eɪks ænd peɪnz/

continuous bad feelings in your body, e.g. because you are ill

Adapted from nymag.com



Big chill: the medical benefits of cryotherapy

I've come to a spa in Austria to experience temperatures more than 100 degrees below zero – and while wearing just shorts and a T-shirt.



The reason? Because experts say that spending a short time in an enormous freezer – or cryotherapy, as it's called – can help people with chronic pain or skin problems, and can even improve sporting performance.

Cryotherapy was invented in Japan and later perfected in Poland. It is also good for anyone suffering from stress, depression or insomnia. This was the part that appealed to me most. Nearly 40 and a mother of three, I haven't slept well for the whole night since the birth of our first child nine years ago.

The treatment lasts only three minutes. (Any longer than eight minutes in the -110°C room and you'd be dead.) When the time comes to enter the **chamber**, I'm truly terrified. First I have to put on a pair of special trainers and socks, because if you fall over during cryotherapy, you'll stick to the floor. Then I open the door.



My first feeling is **relief**. It's deeply freezing – my arms **sting** immediately – but somehow it's **bearable**. It's not like any cold I've ever experienced before – nothing like a really cold day, for example. There's no wind, and the air is dry. It's easier to **put up with** than a cold shower.

After just two minutes 40 seconds, I'm finished. The next morning, I'm looking forward to doing it again. After three sessions, my skin looks really healthy and I feel energized. I also sleep deeply for the first time in years.

Glossary

1 _____

/ˈtʃeɪmbə(r)/ noun

a small room used for a special purpose

2 _____

/pʊt ˈʌp wɪð/ phrasal verb

accept something that is annoying or unpleasant

3 _____

/rɪˈliːf/ noun

a feeling of happiness that you have when something unpleasant stops or doesn't happen

4 _____

/stɪŋ/ verb

make someone feel a sudden, sharp pain, e.g. after being bitten by an insect

5 _____

/'beərəbl/ adj

that can be accepted or tolerated

Adapted from www.telegraph.co.uk

Bill Bryson

The Lost Continent

On another continent, 4,000 miles away, I became quietly seized with that nostalgia that overcomes you when you have reached the middle of your life. I wanted to go back to the magic places of my youth – to Mackinac Island, the Rocky mountains, Gettysburg – and see if they were as good as I remembered them...



I drove to Gettysburg, where the decisive battle of the American Civil War was fought over three days in July 1863. There were over 50,000 casualties. I parked at the visitors' centre and went inside. It contained a small museum with glass cases containing **bullets**, brass buttons, belt buckles and that sort of thing. There was little to give you any sense of the battle itself.

One interesting thing was a case devoted to the Gettysburg Address, where I learned that Lincoln was invited to speak only as an afterthought and that everyone was taken aback when he accepted. It was only ten sentences long and took just two minutes to deliver. I was further informed that he gave the address many months after the battle. I had always imagined him making it more or less immediately afterwards, while there were still bodies lying around. The truth, as so often in this life, was disappointing.



I went outside and had a look at the **battlefield**, which sprawls over 3,500 acres of mostly flat countryside, fringed by the town of Gettysburg with its gas stations and its motels. The battlefield had the great deficiency common to all historic battlefields. There was nothing much to distinguish this stretch of empty fields from that one. You had to take their word for it that a great battle was fought there. There were a lot of **cannons** scattered about, I'll give them that. Through my dad's old binoculars I could clearly see how troops had advanced from the direction of the town, a mile or so to the north, sweeping across the Burger King parking lot, skirting the Tastee Delite Drive-in and re-grouping just outside the Wax Museum and Gift Shop. It's all very sad. Ten thousand soldiers fell there in an hour, two out of every three Confederate **soldiers** didn't make it back to base. It's a pity, that so much of the town of Gettysburg has been spoiled with tourist tat and that it is so visible from the battlefield.

When I was little, my dad bought me a Union cap and a toy **rifle** and let me loose on the battlefield. I was in heaven. I dashed about the whole day crouching behind trees, **blowing up** parties of overweight tourists with cameras around their necks. Now, however, I found it difficult to summon any real excitement for the place.

Glossary

The Gettysburg Address

a famous speech made by President Lincoln after the battle

The Confederate army

the army of the southern US states

The Union army

the army of the northern US states