Way out there...

I think that at some point in our lives all of us will have heard about the 'Turkish sauna', but the Turkish hammam is really no ordinary sauna. Its renowned healing powers through steam mean you can relax after a tough congress day and finish off your event in the very best sauna that the Turkish capital can offer.
The Ayasofya Hurrem Sultan Hammam (Hürrem Sultan Hamamı) was built in 1556 for Süleyman the Magnificent and thoroughly renovated in 2012. Today it is known as one of the most authentic and unchanged hammams, one where men and women enter separately. Its symmetrical shape and perfect lines make it an architectural gem. The Hammam was open to the public for 350 years until 1910, when the space lost its glory and was used as a storage room for coal and later as a local rug market. In line with original plans, the Hammam was renovated in 2012 and the end result is a breathtaking space that captivates people with its atmosphere and mood. The sauna can be privatized for groups of up to 40 guests.

Way to Stay
This tidy part of the city centre has experienced no major construction intrusions and amazing boutique hotels are one thing that Istanbul can truly be proud of. The city has never really changed and it’s still possible to see reminders of the Hippodrome right next to Hotel Eresin. This hotel has two aces up its sleeve – a hotel terrace with views of the Sea of Marmara and the Mosaic Terrace Restaurant. Another jewel hides behind the facade of Hotel Levni, a luxury city hotel in the very centre of the Sultanahmet district, boasting elegance, an excellent location and a great overall offer. Guest comfort is well taken care of, as they offer an ostentatious wellness centre with a hammam and a series of different massages. Its location is a perfect starting point for every city exploration. Levni is suitable for smaller congress and incentive groups that are seeking direct contact with Istanbul’s historical heritage.

TIP: When choosing your accommodation in the Turkish capital, go for hotels that are partners of the Istanbul Convention Bureau, as they are usually your best bet. You can check out their members on the following link.

Meet in style
Unlike the Finnish sauna, where you can immediately feel the dry heat of the burning stove, Turkish saunas are milder and reach a maximum temperature of 50 degrees Celsius. What’s special about the oriental variant of the sauna is the 90-100 percent humidity, which can supposedly help with rheumatic diseases and even arthritis. Regular visits to the sauna have numerous beneficial effects on the body, from raising your energy levels, reducing stress, ridding your body of toxins, cleansing your skin and keeping your immune system strong and ready to fight colds, asthma or bronchitis. One of the side effects can also be losing a kilo of body fat here and there. A visit to the sauna is a unique and memorable experience for your congress guests, who will feel reborn after walking through the door. We believe it can be a great intensifier of bonds between members of the group.
Off the eaten track
In addition to the staggering mosques and colourful bazaars, one of Istanbul's biggest hallmarks is its cuisine. I know quite a few people (including myself) that keep returning to Istanbul because of its wide array of different flavours lurking at every corner of the city. The selection of restaurants in Istanbul is truly endless, but if you are roaming around the Hagia Sofia area we suggest trying one of the "eat like a sultan" experiences. Restaurant Mihri operates within the hammam, a coffee shop and restaurant offering good food and even better tea and coffee. Despite the fact that typical "Turkish coffee" comes from Turkey, the locals tend to drink tea served in traditional thin-waist tea glasses all over the city. Drinking tea is more of a social event than anything else, so when invited to a glass of tea, definitely don't turn down the offer.
TOP 3 INCENTIVE IDEAS

1. **Treasure hunt at the Grand Bazaar**

In existence for more than 500 years makes the Grand Bazaar one of the oldest covered bazaars in the world. It is also one of the biggest, spread across 60 streets with more than 5,000 shops, 60 restaurants, 18 water fountains, 12 mosques and even a school. Finding the treasure in the labyrinth like streets of the bazaar is a unique experience that can be organised in groups of up to 10 participants. First team to find its way to the treasure wins!