Topless at the spa: the rule, spa by spa

I wrote to 18 spas in and around Montreal to find out one thing: can you enjoy the spa topless, whatever your body or identity? Here are their written answers, summed up in one line, with what their website says. For spas that did not answer, the summary comes from their website. The spas answered in French; summaries are translated. — Kim Maurice

● Topless allowed for everyone ● Choice of swimsuit, or rule to be clarified ● Top required for some people ● No answer: from the website

SPA	THE RULE, IN SHORT	REDUCED MOBILITY
Spa William Gray Old Montreal	● **Topless allowed for everyone** Women and men may go topless: the same rule for everyone. Bring a swimsuit and sandals.	Little or no access
Rainspa Old Montreal	● **Choice of outfit** Swimsuit required in the hammam. The spa first recommended a top for women, then wrote that it leaves “the choice of outfit” to each person.	No information
L'Orangerie Old Montreal	● **Swimsuit of your choice, topless not specified** Each person wears the swimsuit they are comfortable in and that matches their identity. The spa does not say whether topless is allowed. Bring a swimsuit.	No information
AWU (formerly Skyspa DIX30) Brossard	● **Swimsuit of your choice, topless not specified** Choice of swimsuit with no distinction by gender or body; a “suitable swimsuit” is required for everyone. Bring a swimsuit and sandals.	Partial access
Bota Bota Old Port of Montreal	● **Women topless once settled** Men topless. Women topless once settled, with a top when moving around. For other bodies, the spa trusts the person. Any swimsuit is accepted, even full coverage.	Little or no access
Spa Nordic Station Magog	● **Swimsuit required, top not specified** Swimsuit required, same rule for all clients; the spa does not say whether bottoms alone are enough. Swimsuit and sandals.	No information
Spa Bolton Bolton-Est	● **Top required if you have breasts** Men topless; a top or one-piece for women. Trans and non-binary people: swimwear by their identity, but a top is required if the chest “requires” one. Swimsuit, sandals and water bottle required.	Partial access
Spa le Finlandais Rosemère	● **Top required for women** Women must cover their chest at all times. Nothing specified for men or for other bodies. Swimsuit required.	No information
Balnea Bromont	● **Top required for women** Men topless; a top is required for women. The spa invites you to tell it about any “particular situation”. Swimsuit required at all times.	Little or no access
La Source Bains Nordiques Rawdon	● **Top required for women** Men topless; top and bottoms required for women. Nothing specified for other bodies. Swimsuit, sandals and ID.	Little or no access

SPA	THE RULE, IN SHORT	REDUCED MOBILITY
Spa Carré St-Louis Plateau-Mont-Royal	● **Top required for women** Women: one- or two-piece swimsuit, no topless. Men: shorts. Swimsuit and sandals required.	No information
Förena Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville	● **Policy under review** According to the spa, its policy is under review. Its website asks guests to bring a swimsuit. Nothing about the chest.	Partial access
Strøm spa nordique (3 spas) Île-des-Sœurs, Saint-Sauveur, Mont-Saint-Hilaire	● **No answer** The website asks for a swimsuit and sandals “for reasons of hygiene and safety”. Nothing about the chest.	Partial access
Scandinave Spa Mont-Tremblant Mont-Tremblant	● **No answer** The website says: swimsuit required, sandals suggested. Nothing about the chest.	Little or no access
Spa Eastman Eastman	● **No answer** The website suggests bringing a swimsuit. No written dress rule.	Partial access
Amerispa Spa Nordique Morin-Heights	● **No answer** The website invites guests to bring a swimsuit. No written dress rule.	No information
Spa Ofuro Morin-Heights	● **No answer** The website says: swimsuit and sandals required. Nothing about the chest.	No information
JOY Wellness Club Downtown (rue de la Montagne)	● **No answer** The website asks for a swimsuit in the sauna and baths. Nothing about the chest.	No information

Sources: the spas’ written replies (emails, Nov. 1–18, 2026) and their websites; accessibility: websites and Kéroul’s assessments.
Rules can change: call the spa before you go. All details, filters and links: kimmaurice.com/sansetiquette

Did you know? A bit of history



The Tepidarium, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1881. Public domain.

Less than a hundred years ago, men had to cover their chests too. The rule changed for them. Not for women.

Ancient Rome. Cold bath, warm room, hot bath: our spa circuit already existed. Emperor Hadrian banned mixed bathing… and it didn't last.

Paris, Middle Ages. The city had several dozen *étuves*, public steam baths, much like a hammam.

Finland. People generally go to the sauna naked, and have for centuries. Women and men separately in public saunas.

New Jersey, 1891. A man is fined for an "indecent" bathing suit. In 1910, tops are still mandatory for men.

1930s. Men fight for the right to go topless at the beach. By 1939, 67% of the public approves.

Saint-Sauveur, 1960s. Quebec's first Nordic spa begins in the sauna of a private house.

Today. More than 100 Nordic spas in Quebec. And the swimsuit-top rule is written on none of the 18 websites checked.

Sources: History.com; Georges Vigarello, Le propre et le sale; Visit Finland; Historical Society of Ocean Grove; Strøm Nordic spa; Tourisme Montréal.