



Sakha Cab, a cab service run by women with women drivers, for reliable airport transfers and local transportation



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Safe & Sound

Hoteliers are going the extra mile to make hotels safe, especially for single women travellers, as they pull out all stops for women to be secure.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

Women who travel solo have a sense of apprehension, especially if the city or the country is new. This is why hotels can make the difference when they have a space that women feel is both safe and secure.

WOMEN FIRST

The approach towards women-friendly measures is primarily guided by their safety and comfort and includes aspects like room allocation, servicing, and amenities as well as security features like cameras.

Swati Srivastava Executive Assistant Manager, The Oberoi, Bengaluru, says, "All room allocation is done on higher floors and closer to the elevators to avoid long walks in the corridor and away

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Swati Srivastava, Executive Assistant Manager, The Oberoi, Bengaluru



Jagdeep Guleria, General Manager, The Orchid Hotel Manali

from the lobby level restaurant and banquet infrastructure. Call screenings are done for all guests in our hotel to maintain privacy and the same is also applied for single lady guests. All our elevators only operate with legitimate room key cards thus ensuring access to room floors only by residential guests. All servicing of the rooms is only done by lady members." In fact, rooms at the Oberoi Bengaluru, have a special single lady amenity for resident guests that includes a facial cleanser, bubble bath, lip balm, nail cutter, emery board and a pouch of safety pins.

Jagdeep Guleria, General Manager, The Orchid Hotel Manali, says, "Additionally, we maintain a hygienic and welcoming environment throughout the premises to ensure a comfortable stay for all our guests, especially women. Special amenities are provided in female guests' rooms before their arrival to cater to their specific needs and preferences. Moreover,



our well-trained female staff members are dedicated to attending to the requirements and concerns of our female guests, ensuring they feel cared for and valued throughout their stay. Our well-trained security staff are vigilant and focused on prioritizing the safety and security of our female guests, with specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in place to handle any situation."

WOW WOMEN

The ITC Hotels EVA program is pioneering a women-centric approach to hospitality by designating an entire floor exclusively for single lady travellers. Accessible through special keys designated for women only, this initiative enhances security and provides a tailored and secure environment, catering specifically to the unique needs and preferences of female guests.

"The Eva floor at ITC Windsor stands as an exquisite haven, meticulously designed, and crafted to cater to the discerning solo female traveller. Situated conveniently close to the lobby, it ensures accessibility for travellers to meet various requirements seamlessly. Exclusively open for bookings to solo female travellers or groups, this initiative reflects ITC Hotels' commitment to providing a secure and tailored experience, setting a new standard in hospitality for women travellers," says Deepak Cedric Menezes, General Manager, ITC Windsor.

The rooms are equipped with special safety features like video door phone visualizer, in-room iPad, call screenings, and in-room checks by female Responsible Luxury Ambassadors and lady butlers. Dedicated airport assistance adds an extra layer of convenience. During Happy Hours, a unique Knock-Knock feature includes a beverage trolley serving female travellers exclusively. The entire floor is serviced by women from all departments, ensuring a secure and comfortable environment.

SAFETY MATTERS

At Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, the team has a range of women-friendly measures to ensure a remarkable and secure stay for all their female guests. Apart from dedicated floors and rooms which are designed to provide a tranquil and safe environment for the solo women guests, the guest relations team, led by proficient female managers, ensures a friendly meet-and-greet experience.

"We are also proud to have launched the Single Lady Traveller program that introduces additional security measures within the



Deepak Cedric Menezes, General Manager, ITC Windsor



Respecting guests' privacy is crucial



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hotel. Within this program, we've partnered with Sakha Cab, a cab service run by women with women drivers, for reliable airport transfers and local transportation. This helps in building an additional layer of trust amongst women guests when travelling within the city by themselves. We have also curated a special menu emphasizing healthier and smaller portions. Within the hotel, all services provided to women guests, from room cleaning to restaurant assistance, even security, are exclusively handled by our skilled female staff. In case anything is forgotten, our curated list offers essentials like hair straighteners, curlers, nail polish removers and some key items available for purchase as well. Empowering women, for women, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida has partnered with a female run NGO called Jhola Makers, which provides a sustainable souvenir for our guests upon departure," says Sharad K Upadhyay, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida.



Sharad K Upadhyay, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida



Ashley James, General Manager, Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort Bengaluru

TRAINING STAFF

Most hotels have a comprehensive training approach when it comes to maintaining a high standard of service and prioritising the safety and satisfaction of women guests. Team members need to be educated on cultural differences and diverse guest needs, promoting respect for various backgrounds and preferences.

"Our training program includes modules on safety protocols, emergency response, and effective communication with guests. We train our staff to be observant, responsive, and respectful towards all guests, and to promptly report any issues or concerns to the management. We also conduct regular refresher courses and workshops to keep our staff updated on the latest safety practices and protocols to ensure that they are well-prepared to handle any situation that may arise," says Ashley James, General Manager, Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort Bengaluru.

In addition to their 24/7 security



Maintaining a hygienic and welcoming environment throughout the premises

surveillance, including surveillance cameras in all common areas and near guest rooms, they also have trained security personnel patrolling the resort grounds. All rooms are equipped with secure locks and peepholes for added privacy and safety. Sessions on understanding and addressing the unique needs and concerns of female guests, which involves scenarios, and role-playing exercises to enhance empathy and responsiveness are also conducted.

“Our associates are trained in first aid and in handling any natural calamity like earthquakes or manmade external attacks. These trainings are also conducted by external agencies who are specialists in their field. Beyond physical safety measures, we believe in fostering a culture of respect and empowerment for women. We actively promote diversity and inclusion within our workforce and strive to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected,” says Malvika Sahay, Director of Operations, The Westin Mumbai Garden City.

BEING INCLUSIVE

With an ordinance comprising 40% of the workforce of women, Raffles Udaipur is not only emphasizing on the basics of women empowerment but also prioritises creating a welcoming atmosphere from the moment guests step through their doors.

“Beyond these equally important however temporal measures, our ethos is deeply rooted in fostering a culture of respect and empowerment. Through strict adherence to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) policy and empowerment programs, we strive to create an environment where every guest feels valued, respected, and empowered. A hallmark of our commitment to women guests is our personalized approach to hospitality. Each guest is assigned a dedicated hotel lady butler who serves as their point of contact throughout their stay. From providing personalised assistance within the hotel to accompanying them outside for leisure activities like shopping and sightseeing, our butlers offer genuine warmth and empowerment at every turn,” says Rajesh Namby,



Malvika Sahay, Director of Operations, The Westin Mumbai Garden City



Anuj Chaudhry, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru

General Manager, Raffles Udaipur.

PRIVACY CUES

Many hotel organisations around the world have recognized the importance of creating a safe and comfortable environment for female guests.

Anuj Chaudhry, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru, says, “We have invested in advanced security systems, well-lit parking areas, and secure access to rooms to ensure the safety of all our guests, including women. Providing round-the-clock concierge and security services enable our female guests to feel more secure during their stay. Respecting guests’ privacy is crucial. We prioritise discretion in services and respect for personal information. Providing access to wellness facilities such as gyms and spas with additional security measures is appealing to female travellers.”

These measures are in place to uphold hotel’s commitment to guest safety and satisfaction, especially for the single woman traveller. Naturally, women guests are not just appreciating these interventions, but are also returning for additional stays as they come to understand that hotels are walking the talk as far as making women feel safe and secure. 