

RUSSIAN HOTEL TURNS TO MUSLIM GUESTS TO BOOST PROFITS



Enjoy a Muslim breakfast, Quran at your bedside, and a prayer room just for you. These are some of the amenities of a hotel in Moscow that recently launched a 'halal' service as a way to attract Muslim clientele.

The Aerostar hotel reported that around 70% of their guests are international and 13% of them are from Muslim countries,

especially Iran. Thus, a lot of their Muslim clients ask them a separate room where they can meditate and pray; and a special menu for them because of their strict diet.

To make the facility more comfortable to this clientele **the Aerostar hotel went into a painstaking procedure before it was even certified Halal by the Muslim community.** Despite the extra effort they exerted, the hotel marketers believe that it's definitely worth it, especially now, since Russia is facing a tough time in the tourism industry.

The amount of Western visitors is not the same anymore and this was the main reason why most of Russian hotels try new strategies to attract guests from different parts of the globe. These include Muslim nations in Asia, as well as the Mideast.

According to the marketing director of Aerostar hotel, they've equipped around 20 rooms out of the 308 with a ritual basin, and a prayer mat. Also, the prayer rooms for men and women are separated, with separate kitchen, allowing them to cook their halal meal.

Likewise, Muslim guests who have a specific kind of accommodation would also find a copy of Quran provided for them. For bath essentials, everything is halal. None of these contain alcohol nor animal fat.

According to the chef of this hotel, Vitaly Ukhanov, all of their meals don't contain pork or ham. In fact, the hotel kitchen has a sign, where 'halal' is written in a green star. Likewise, all of the crockery used for halal meals has never been utilized before, added the cook. However, discretion is maintained. Muslim clients have a separate group of tables that are away from the main buffet and they're tended by a different set of waiters too.

Even though this feature is fairly new, it's slowly starting to pay off, especially because it hosts a lot of high-level Iranian executives.

In Russia, hotels that are catered for Muslims are quite limited, but more than 20 million Muslims visit the country every year - which only implies that there's a great demand for hotel accommodation.

Likewise, although there's a hotel in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi that's applying for the halal status, they still don't have enough facilities to meet Muslim needs.

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