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Airport Hotels - The Right Way To Start A Short Break Holiday

By Mike Hanna

Unless you have the dubious pleasure of living right next door to an airport one of the biggest

downsides of going on holiday is catching a flight at an ungodly hour of the day. While driving half asleep at 4.00 am, with a nagging doubt you have forgot something may be some holidaymaker's idea of fun - for most it sounds like a bad way to start your holiday. However, help is at hand in the form of Airport Hotels, where you can spend a relaxed evening - and even afford an extra hour or two in bed before leaving.

Airport hotels may not enjoy the best of reputations. In many peoples mind they are ranked alongside train station pubs – filled with chain smoking business men in cheap suits. However, while there is certainly a convincing argument to avoid train station pubs (you have to pay to get in the toilet for starters), airport hotels are a long way from their cheap and not-so-cheerful roots. These days the savvy traveller can pick up a great value deal at some excellent hotel accommodation situated close to their airport of departure.

One hotel that certainly fits this bill is the 4-star Arora International Hotel near Gatwick (

<http://www.gatwickairport.com>

). Situated a mere 8 minutes from the airport, the hotel boasts a health

club, with state of the art facilities including a gym, jacuzzi, steam room and solarium. The quality of service and dining is also high with two bars, a deli and brassiere restaurant for those wishing to sample the culinary delights of this award winning hotel. For those using the hotel before they catch a flight there is every convenience with an Avis car rental desk within the hotel and an adjoining train station going directly to Gatwick.

Another big advantage of staying at airport hotels is many let you use their car park facilities - at often very reasonable rates. The Cottons Hotel and Spa situated near Manchester International Airport offers some excellent deals on up to 15 days parking for guests of their hotel. The hotel itself is also 4-star and comes equipped with pool, colour therapy sauna, steam room, gym, tennis courts and spa. While

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you may also be confused over what a colour therapy sauna is, you have to agree it sounds enticing and certainly beats crawling through Manchester traffic to catch an early morning flight.

If you really want to banish your negative image of airport hotels once and for all then you needn't look much further than the completely re-vitalised Sheraton Skyline near Heathrow (

<http://www.heathrowairport.com>

). Visually stunning the Al Dente Ristorante is the ultimate experience

of fine dining cuisine where Marco Di Tullio's menus combine tradition, creativity and flavours based on perfect cooking techniques and obsessive research of the best market and imported products available in the UK. In the past airport hotels may have meant chicken in a basket - at the Skyline this type of dish is very much confined to memory.

As the world of airport hotels is such a competitive area there are always great deals to be had for those looking for accommodation pre or post flight. Websites such as airport hotel specialists

<http://www.superbreak.com>

or

<http://www.hoteln.net.co.uk>

have an excellent selection of deals and are

worth looking at before planning a stay near an airport.

Overall, airport hotels have changed significantly over the past ten years and are no longer the realm of the odourly challenged. However, it is still recommended that the world of train station pubs is

avoided unless on the look out for recreational drugs - or at the very least have a 50p coin to get into the toilet.

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Turning A Trip Into An Experience

By Chic Retreats

Don't underestimate the difference that staying in a boutique hotel can make to your next journey.

How often do you hear someone say, "I can't wait to stay in the hotel"? Discussions about forthcoming holidays nearly always centre on the things we want to do, or the places we're looking forward to seeing, and the place where we're staying doesn't feature at all. All that changes once you've booked into a boutique hotel.

These hotels have been lovingly created by their owners in order to offer you an experience, not just a place to stay. The belief that your holiday or business accommodation should be well designed and provide great service is one that has resulted in hundreds of "boutique" hotels opening up around the world, to cater for the increasing number of travellers who want to stay somewhere special.

Anticipation

Anticipating your holiday is one of the things we all love. In the weeks before we leave home, we get increasingly excited and really look forward to taking a break from our everyday lives and having new experiences. This anticipation can often be flattened when we reach the hotel, which turns out to be impersonal and indifferent; unless you've booked boutique:

- Welcoming - boutique hotels are designed to be welcoming, so you are looked after from the minute you arrive.
- Different - you'll notice lots of differences from regular chain hotels as soon as you arrive. From the way you check in to the design of the rooms and the public spaces, and the facilities on offer, you'll know immediately that you are staying in an individual hotel.
- Design - all the things you want to do with your home but haven't had time to do. It might be polished wooden floors or spectacular artwork; Egyptian cotton bedding or funky armchairs. It's this design and detail that makes boutique hotels different from all other traveller accommodation.
- Facilities - large hotels have pools and spas, but they're impersonal. The facilities at small, individual hotels are designed to make you feel at home whilst indulging in treatments or taking advantage of concierge services.

The experience

The low number of rooms at most boutique hotels defines your experience: you're one of a small number of guests who are benefiting from the great designs and flawless service that these hotels provide. You immediately feel more relaxed and you're able to enjoy your holiday as an all-round experience. Book again for next year, so that you can tell everyone how much you're looking forward to staying in the hotel.

Chic Retreats is a collection of small, individual hotels around the world that offer the traveller a true taste of luxury and service. Visit our website now by clicking on

<http://www.chicretreats.com>



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