

Your next hotel stay will include drinking water in paper sealed glass bottles instead of plastic ones!

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The drinking water will be served free of cost for customers. (Image: Pixabay)

The next time you check into a hotel, don't be surprised to find paper-sealed glass bottles instead of plastic bottles for drinking water! Soon, this is likely to be implemented across most hotels in the country, as per an HT report. You travel for unique experiences, preferably environment-friendly too.

The plastic waste problem is also a serious concern for frequent Indian travellers who stay in hotels. Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has come forward with a notable direction to promote paper-sealed glass bottles to replace plastic bottles in hotels. With a mandate that water safety standards are met and these glass bottles are not meant to be sold by the hotel, a circular has been issued by the FSSAI. Clearly, plastic waste management is no longer a buzzword because the country's top hotels are keen to lead the way forward with eco-friendly and sustainable solutions.

Also, the FSSAI's circular has mandated that hotels will be required to follow quality specifications for drinking water and set up in-house drinking water bottling systems right there on their premises. Note that the drinking water will be served free of cost for customers.

For frequent Indian travellers, this brings good news. You already know that most hotels in India serve drinking water in plastic bottles. Now, with the recent FSSAI circular, this plastic wastage by the hotel industry is soon to be done away with. More importantly, it is the right step forward for a sustainable and environment-friendly stay.

Now, as a traveller, how do you opt for environmentally friendly hotels in India? What 'green' practices do you need to consider when you book your stay?

To start with, a perusal of the 2018 study titled 'Green Initiatives Practices in Indian Hotels' by Shreeya Singhal, Archana Deepak and Vijayalakshmi Marwaha may be a handy reference.

You can check out the best practices across some of India's best 'trendsetter' hotels.

Notable trendsetters include:

- With its 'WelcomEnviron' initiative, ITC Hotels has implemented environmental-friendly policies based on the principles of 'Recycle, Reuse and Reduce.'
- Mumbai's Orchid Hotel has been ranked as the first Ecotel Certified five-star hotel in the country. It reduces food waste daily using its vermicomposting unit. The hotel has installed solar panels to use sunlight as an alternative power supply solution. LED and CFL lights are used to save electricity for the hotel. Taps and water-using devices are specially designed to save water.
- With its "EARTH" initiative, the iconic Taj Hotels group have adopted sustainable practices across all its properties.
- Chennai's Raintree Hotels have several best practices worth emulating such as the eco-friendly materials like rubberwood and bamboo used for its construction. Installation of a flushing system that uses only six litres per flush as compared with 15 to 20 litres in a traditional flushing system is a noteworthy innovation. More interesting to note that the heat generated through the use of ACs in its rooms are utilised smartly to warm water for the kitchen and bathrooms!

Worldwide, the move towards waste reduction is catching up as more and more travellers are conscious about the harmful effects of plastics.

Some hotels, for instance, are offering unique drinking water options to customers by placing filtered water dispensers that are conveniently located on the premises instead of storing water in plastic bottles. Complimentary refillable bottles are also placed so that guests can stay hydrated at their own convenience.

Put the environment first is the new mantra for responsible travel. So, when you are thinking about where to stay during your next vacation, spend your money smartly and opt for hotels that not only respect the environment but they also offer you sustainable services with smart plastic waste management solutions.