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Girls just wanna have fun



Asia has plenty to offer the ladies. **TTG Asia** reporters offer their tips



The Fleming Hotel, Hong Kong: the first in the city to launch a women-only floor.

Hong Kong

THE “spa-ification” of the Asian hotel scene is one indication female travellers are being taken seriously.

Aside from five-star pampering, the biggest hotels in Hong Kong – considered by some as Asia’s culinary capital – have started offering cooking classes led by their brand-name chefs. From making Japanese sushi to whipping up an Italian feast at Langham Place, aspiring “chefs” can also apply at InterContinental – home of Nobu and Spoon by Alan Ducasse – and Shangri-La Kowloon.

Thanks to Hong Kong’s compact size and safe streets, the city has no dedicated travel agency for women travellers. While that signals “business opportunity” to an enterprising agent, it does not mean female tastes are not catered for.

The Fleming Hotel in Wan Chai made Hong Kong hotel history when it launched Her Space last year. Managing director, Mr John Hui, said: “The Fleming has its finger on the pulse of the specific expectations of the modern female traveller, in particular those travelling alone, and made the decision to establish Hong Kong’s first and only dedicated floor for ladies based upon feedback and research conducted during the development of the hotel.”

The floor can only be accessed with a unique keycard, and all rooms feature fresh flowers, aromatherapy oil, throw cushions, silk draperies and extra inroom amenities, such as a jewellery box, a leg massage machine and a facial steamer. The 66-room property also features branded toiletries from L’Occitane, a selling point that MasterCard highlighted in an Asia-Pacific travellers’ survey as a must-have for females.

Wyndham Worldwide, which launched a women’s programme in 1995, has an online resource for business and leisure travellers at www.WomenOnTheirWay.com.

Feedback from customers has resulted in the global chain adding coffeemakers and full-length mirrors to rooms, while room service menus have healthier options.

Ramada Kowloon features the programme in Hong Kong. In mainland China, Women on Their Way highlights are available at Days Inn, Super 8 and Ramada branded properties. – **Michael Hoare**



Women can get inspired by venerable buildings such as Mumbai University.

India

FOR shopaholics, Fashion Street in the business district of Mumbai has many small shops selling trendy clothes and accessories at reasonable prices. But those looking to polish their bargaining skills can duel with vendors.

It is the best place to pick up gifts to take home, but be prepared to spend at least two hours to walk the entire stretch of the street.

Those interested in discovering the city's history and culture will find interesting colonial buildings such as Mumbai University, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus and Crawford Market in the vicinity.

For die-hard shopaholics, there is a day tour with an Indian lunch at Rasoi, plus shopping for traditional and trendy memorabilia at Crawford Market, where tropical fruit galore can be sampled. – **Anand and Madhura Katti**

Malaysia

YOU do not have to be super-fit or sporty to make it up the world's highest via ferrata (meaning iron road in Italian) at a World Heritage Site by climbing Mt Kinabalu in Sabah. Mountain Torq's via ferrata enables amateurs to experience the thrill of mountain climbing in complete safety.

The via ferrata is located above the cloud line and consists of a series of steel rungs, rails and cables embedded into the rock face. It opens up routes to the average hiker that were previously only accessible to experienced rock climbers and mountaineers with specialised equipment.

Located at the Pana Laban rock face, Mountain Torq's via ferrata begins at 3,400m and ends at 3,800m, providing an alternative access to ascend or descend from the summit at 4,095m. – **S Puvaneswary**

China

Travellers craving the party scene, will find the nightlife in Shanghai second to none, with Ladies Night promotions easy on the wallet and on tap nearly every day.

For those in search of more sophisticated settings, many lounges are embracing the emergence of China's female executives by providing its patrons a break from the noisy club scene with free drinks and first-class giveaways in a "female-centered" setting. Some even leave the men at the door.

Shanghai's art, dining and music scenes are constant and impressive with more than enough ways to fill after-hours, but so much more remains. Thursday nights are Quiz Nights for a variety of pubs downtown. Friday's Muslim Bazaar is a great way to start the weekend early with its exotic selection of snacks and goods – also a good fuel-up for the evening ahead.

For a more laid back experience, discover old Shanghai on a historic walking tour led by city experts, and later mingle with fellow bookworms over coffee and the latest bestseller at the Shanghai Book Club.

Also gaining popularity among locals and visitors who crave a bit of sport are the city's many bike treks – from low-impact riding to overnight stays.

The more adventurous types can break out their sneakers to discover hidden city streets via the Shanghai Treasure Hunt.

On offer every Saturday, rain or shine and organised by off-the-beaten track specialists YANA Adventures (www.withyana.com), it is a great way to make new friends over fun tasks, good food and a bit of exercise.

China's legendary foot massages and shopping are always a welcome treat for some. – **Stephanie Thomas**

Singapore

DAY spas are common. So instead of hitting the bars and painting the town red, spend an evening of luxurious pampering at the award-winning Spa Botanica, located on the grounds of The Sentosa Resort & Spa.

The Spa By Night programme includes a one-hour treatment followed by a four-course dinner in an outdoor spa pavilion.
– **Karen Yue**

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