

Premium Europe Study:

- **Travel behaviour of Muslim guests - Facts and Figures**
- **Survey of Swiss luxury hotel regarding specific Islamic-friendly amenities**
- **Swiss hotels in international comparison**

As part of a project to improve customer services for Muslim travellers, luxury travel company Premium Europe AG has undertaken a survey to discover the hotel services that are sought by Muslim customers and the extent to which hotels across Europe are presently meeting these requirements.

Premium Europe AG questioned 163 customers from among its clientele of predominantly wealthy individuals. The customers who responded came from the GCC countries, specifically Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and all identified themselves as practising Muslims. More than 85% of those questioned were repeat customers of Premium Europe AG for services including hotel bookings, private clinic appointments, spa and wellness bookings and travel tours in Switzerland, France, Italy and elsewhere.

Premium Europe AG asked for suggestions of hotel services and amenities that would allow customers to maintain their religious or cultural practices while travelling outside their country. Customers were also asked to identify instances when they had encountered examples of excellent service or innovative product offers in this area.

The suggestions included facilities that contributed to customer's opportunity to observe religious practices, including the availability of the Quran, prayer mats, prayer times in the local time zone and the marking of the Qibla, the direction of prayer towards Mecca. Other common suggestions included the availability of halal food or guarantees of a pork-free kitchen and an alcohol-free minibar in hotel rooms.

Female travellers noted the importance for strict Muslim travellers of female-only areas in hotel spas, female-only swimming times, female room staff and the availability of female spa therapists. Extra amenities suggested included having Muslim swimwear – eg. the "burkini" – available for purchase

Survey participants also suggested further amenities that are not required for strict adherence to Islamic religious requirements but were appreciated for cultural reasons. These included everything from the availability of bidets in hotel bathrooms to having Middle Eastern menus and Arabic TV channels, something that one survey participant noted could sway his choice of hotel.

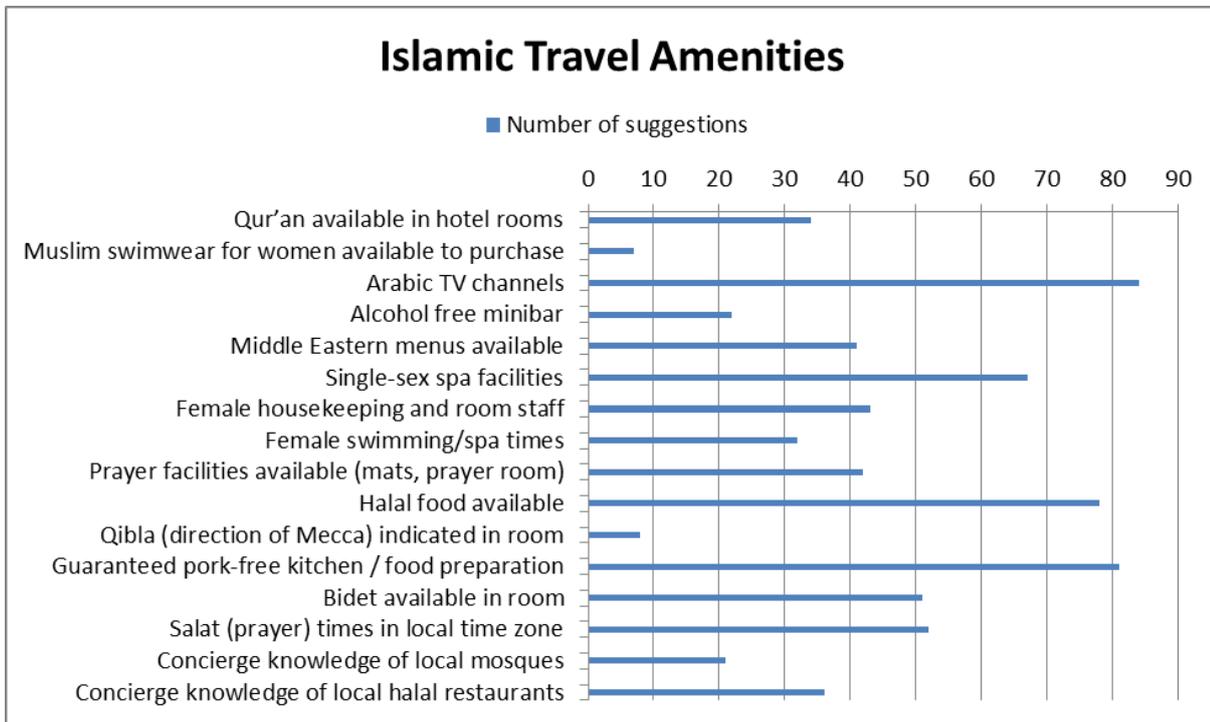
Premium Europe AG then consulted a wide-ranging survey of all the hotels it works with to ascertain the extent that hotels were able to supply amenities and services that meet these needs. In Switzerland, most 5 star hotels were able to respond to the majority of these needs. Some specific hotels with Muslim ownership or those located in Swiss cities were generally found to have made a proactive effort to incorporate some or all of these amenities into their services already. Others could organise everything in advance or on request but do not offer these services as part of their normal menu of amenities.

Swiss hotels were only surpassed by London and Paris hotels in terms of the availability of amenities and services aimed at the Islamic travel market. This could be expected from the multicultural nature of these cities and the international clientele they attract. Hotels in Germany could offer some Muslim-specific amenities, but this was usually confined to city hotels or advance request bookings. In general, hotels in Italy were the least likely to respond to Muslim travelling requirements: very few had services available to meet them without special provisions being made on the part of the guest well in advance.

FACTS & FIGURES

1. Customers

- Number of customers surveyed: 163
- Country of origin of customers: Bahrain, Saudia Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates



2. Hotels

- Number of hotels surveyed: 127
- Hotel locations: France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, London

