

IN-STORE

Hotels make lasting impressions with food, service on Mother's Day

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Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul Aqua Italian restaurant

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Mother's Day may not be a holiday for travel, but that does not mean hotels sit the day out.

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Although everyone looks for an item they know their mom will love, a brunch is never out of the question, meaning hotels have a chance to attract locals. Being present for an important day will endear hotels to their clients, helping them maintain their stature and draw future business.

"Unlike other holidays, Mother's Day tends to be a single day observance," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, SC. "Rarely do people make a weekend out of it.

"While that makes it difficult for hotels to form travel packages and draw out of town guests, it makes it a prime holiday to work on local activation," he said. "Mother's Day allows properties to deepen their connection to the community and foster brand affinity among their local audience, which will ideally lead to future business."

Mother's Brunch

In the retail world, helping the consumer pick a gift for Mother's Day is as commonplace as helping her select a gift for Christmas. However, because the day is generally not celebrated as a holiday, hotels cannot count on a family getaway.

[Cafe Studio at Four Seasons Shanghai 400](#)



Cafe Studio at Four Seasons Shanghai

More likely, Mother's Day is an occasion for a family brunch, and brunch plans have figured heavily into Mother's

Day planning for hoteliers this year. High-end hotels incorporate culinary excellence into their brand identity, meaning that this coming Sunday, May 8, is a chance to introduce or remind mother's and children of what great service entails.

Hotel Shangri-La Santa Monica is offering a Latin Jazz brunch buffet, with homemade carrot and chocolate cake desserts, complimentary Champagne and a red rose for mom. Making the occasion family-friendly or ideal for longer, larger celebrations, poolside cabanas are available for rent and children 12 and under will dine for half price.



Poolside Cabana at Shangri-La Santa Monica

Just as popular as brunches are spa treatments. The Mandarin Oriental, Boston, is offering a "Mother's Indulgence" session, available all through the month of May for \$200 on weekdays and \$220 on weekends.

"The majority of Mother's Day activity properties see comes from the local market," Mr. Rains said. "Short-term travel can be difficult to orchestrate, but you are still able to treat the mothers in your life to the travel experience. Mother's Day typically features single-day, on-property offerings aimed at drawing in that local market, the most popular being meal- or spa-based."



Mandarin Oriental Boston Spa

Spas and brunches may seem like ordinary, even expected offerings, but they also allow properties to showcase their amenities and service to clients who may not be familiar with them. Mother's Day is a treat, meaning it aspirational consumers may be getting their first taste of a luxury brand.

As a result, great food and service can go a long way toward making a brand a defining element of a cherished memory.

Stealing hearts

Although the chance to attract locals and let the property and employees themselves paint a picture of luxury, some venues are going the extra mile.

At Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong, June's Dragon Boat Festival is being leveraged alongside Mother's Day. Aside from a Sunday brunch, a Carol Joy London Crowning Glory spa treatment and a Mother's Day scent from Penhaligon's, the hotel is helping consumers get in the spirit for the festival with a gift set, available for collection

from June 1-9.

The gift sets include a choice of two kinds of rice dumplings, each of which is accompanied with a box of oolong tea, for \$30 or \$45.

The Ritz-Carlton's Asian properties have also gotten creative, teaming with local charities to organize Smile Asia Week. Consumers can order cakes, unique to each hotel to have delivered on Mother's Day, with the cost of the cake going to help children with cleft lip ([see story](#)).

While the nature of the business necessitates hotels be sparer, retailers often get more creative with Mother's Day offers.

With Mother's Day fast approaching in the United States, retailers are tapping into nostalgia to reach consumers' heartstrings and wallets.

The universality of Mother's Day has turned it into a noteworthy shopping occasion, with consumers all trying to say thank you to a person who has meant so much. The competitive field ensures that marketers are operating at the top of their game for the occasion ([see story](#)).

"Mother's Day promotions in luxury hospitality tend to be less at-large experiential and more about enjoying on-property amenities," Mr. Rains said. "These promotions typically utilize a number of the hotel's marquee offerings, from a relaxation day at the spa to a specialized menu-celebrating mom.

"In essence, Mother's Day promotions mirror how the holiday is typically celebrated at home - treating the mothers in your life with a day of pampering as a way to thank them for all they do."

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