

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Luxury travelers prefer high-quality service, comfort over flashy additions: report

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*Simple comforts executed to perfection are the biggest draw for luxury travel. Image credit: Travelzoo*

By DANNY PARISI

While luxury travel providers may be tempted to add as many bells and whistles to an experience as possible to impress guests, new research shows that by far the most important things for individuals seeking luxury travel are comfort and the ability to just relax.

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This data comes from a new survey conducted by Travelzoo and the Global Hotel Alliance, which found that the ability to comfortably sleep on a flight is the number one priority for customers seeking luxury travel accommodations. The findings from the survey suggest that the simplest way to ensure guests have a luxury experience may be the best.

"It's easy to assume that consumers are looking for sophisticated perks and indulgences when seeking a luxury travel experience," said Richard Singer, president of [Travelzoo Europe](#), London. "What our research suggests is that people really value getting the basics spot-on."

### Simple comforts

Luxury travel calls to mind a specific set of images: personalized service, complimentary meals and drinks of the highest caliber and other high-class amenities.

But Travelzoo's study suggests that really the main thing customers want out of luxury airlines and hotels are simple comforts executed to perfection.

For example, when talking about luxury airlines, few respondents cared at all about the quality of food. Only 2 percent of British respondents said gourmet food would make a difference in choosing a luxury airline, and the same goes for only 4 percent of Germans and 10 percent of Americans.



*Emirates was one of the highest rated luxury airlines. Image credit: Emirates*

Instead, all respondents, across wealth sectors and nationalities, said that comfort and the ability to sleep through the flight were the two main things that influenced their decisions.

Many respondents are open to mix and matching their travel experiences between luxury and common travel. Some people might fly economy only to land and check in at a 5-star hotel.

The desire for comfort extends to hotels as well, with thin walls and loud noises being one of the main problem areas respondents had with hotel rooms. Hospitality brands need to understand that luxury travel is about relaxation and customers place utmost importance on R&R.

#### Middle Eastern airways

One of the most notable findings of Travelzoo's report was the increasing prominence of Middle Eastern airlines and hotels in the luxury travel industry.

Among all the countries where respondents came from, all of them cited United Arab Emirates-based Emirates Airline as the most representative of what they think of when they imagine luxury travel.

In the United States, 21 percent of respondents thought Emirates did the best job providing a luxury travel experience, far surpassing U.S. airlines such as United or American Airlines.

This was the same in other countries, with Emirates routinely coming out on top.



*Qatar Airways faces trouble during the diplomatic crisis. Image credit: Qatar Airways*

Many newer Middle Eastern airlines have risen to prominence, each with their own brand of luxury travel.

Some of those airlines, such as Qatar Airways, were forced to close down or shutter all traffic to Qatar based on the ongoing diplomatic crisis.

Airlines from around the region have had to cancel flights to Qatar for the foreseeable future, including UAE-based Etihad Airways and Emirates ([see story](#)).

Travelzoo's report may surprise some readers, but the findings are clear: customers prefer high-quality services over flashy additions. If luxury travel brands want to truly connect with their customers, that is where the focus should be.

"The ability to properly recharge in a restful environment far exceeds other considerations, such as endorsements from famous people or high-tech gadgets," TravelZoo Europe's Mr. Singer said. "We can also see just how important

gold-standard service is when it comes to luxury.

"In a commoditized world, travel brands should focus on this and on creating spaces for people to relax properly and switch off."

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