



## HOW HOTELS ARE KEEPING YOU SAFE

During the global pandemic, resorts are taking your health and safety seriously.

BY BARRY HOY

**A**fter months of lockdown, hotels are reopening and incorporating big changes to the way they operate in order to make your stay safe and relaxing. From big chains like Marriott to boutique hotels like the Betsy in Miami Beach, the industry is doing everything in its power to assure a safe experience for their guests and staff. Here's a quick guide to what changes you can expect.

Improving resort safety in the face of a global pandemic starts with planning for social distancing in all public spaces (via signage and rearrangement of furniture), masking staff, and employing deep cleaning throughout the property. But the changes don't stop there.

Many venues are reducing contact between staff and travelers, offering virtual check-ins and allowing guests to opt out of staff entering their room (you



**Left:** The Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel. **Below:** Marriott's The W Maldives

terrace as an extension to the resort's popular Clockwork Lobby Lounge. The flower-bedecked terrace offers contactless menus and ordering through QR codes. "We are thrilled to welcome our friends, family and community back to dine with us again," says Megan van Der Baars, social media manager at Royal York.

Smaller chains and boutique hotels have also implemented their own safety guidelines. **The Betsy South Beach**, a high-end LGBTQ+-friendly beachfront hotel, ([TheBetsyHotel.com](http://TheBetsyHotel.com)) postponed its reopening in the interest of guest safety. "It's a marathon and not a sprint [to reopen]," says Jonathan Plutzik, owner of The Betsy. "We need to give guests the confidence to visit again." With that in mind, hotel staffers remapped the hotel so that each guest room can be accessible without ever getting into an elevator. A stairway poetry program, creates a more pleasurable environment and encourages guests to take the stairs. The poetry and focus on design fit in perfectly with the Betsy, known for hosting many art events throughout the year, including Pride Poets Light the Night.

Call ahead and ask what measures a specific hotel is doing to protect your health. The good ones will be happy to share. (@asianmapleleaf)

can arrange to put linens out to be cleaned). Pools that were previously chlorine-free must now be treated. Dining is changing, with more space between guest tables, and "Buffets are now a thing of the past," as Mike Garrow, director of sales for **Meadowood Napa Valley** ([Meadowood.com](http://Meadowood.com)), told attendees at the New Travel Conference (a virtual event bent on helping the travel industry navigate the new normal).

Brands and properties have had to innovate on the fly during the past few months, introducing new services such as delivery and take-out options from in-hotel restaurants and bars. For example, NoMo Kitchen in the **NoMo SoHo Hotel** in NYC ([NoMoSoHo.com](http://NoMoSoHo.com)), is now NoMo ToGo, offering take-out orders and quarantine-themed cocktails.

With nearly a century as a leader in the industry (and as an LGBTQ+-welcoming brand), **Marriott** has a long history of setting high standards around cleanliness and guest relations. So in some ways, preparing to host guests again hasn't been a huge challenge for Marriott hotels (including W Hotels, the Ritz-Carlton, Sheraton, and Aloft) around the globe.

But guests will find a new cleaning regimen, that uses enhanced technologies, including electrostatic sprayers and the most powerful disinfectants recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization. Electrostatic disinfection technology, which uses a sprayer to apply disinfectants, was originally developed for facilities where bacteria outbreaks had been

documented or suspected. It can kill both viruses and bacteria, and can neutralize the coronavirus.

**Fairmont Hotels and Resorts** ([Fairmont.com](http://Fairmont.com)), as part of the Accor group, launched an "All Stay Well" campaign throughout its hotels worldwide. Like Marriott's, Fairmont's protocols have been developed following the guidance of the WHO, the CDC, and other national and local health authorities, and include an extensive list of procedures such as social distancing, an increase in hand sanitizing stations, mandatory screenings for guests and employees, providing masks, enhanced cleaning, and COVID-19 education and training.

The Fairmont Royal York in Toronto recently opened an outdoor

