



# Serenity NOW

AMID THE CAPTIVATING CHAOS THAT DEFINES INDIA'S CAPITAL CITY, SHANGRI-LA'S – EROS HOTEL, NEW DELHI IS A PERFECT POCKET OF PEACE.

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I'm convinced that drivers in Delhi are taught to place their hands on the steering wheel not at 10 and two, but at 10 and horn. The beep-beeping of cars, tuk tuks, motorcycles, mopeds and pedicabs formed a relentless soundtrack during my recent visit to the teeming metropolis (population: more than 20 million), which is as notorious for its traffic-snarled streets and smog as it is famous for its colorful bazaars, spicy street food and centuries-old mosques, monuments and forts. Exploring this culturally rich and chaotic city means experiencing sensory overload, but I found sweet serenity at Shangri-La's – Eros Hotel, New Delhi, a five-star property where you can tune out the rest of the world while dining, drinking, sleeping and luxuriating like a Mughal emperor.

Centrally located, yet cloistered behind a manicured lawn and guarded grand entrance, the hotel is convenient for both business and leisure travelers. It's close to historical sites, including India Gate, Lotus Temple and the Jantar Mantar observatory; all government buildings, foreign embassies and Rashtrapati Bhavan, the presidential palace; and premier shopping and dining at Connaught Place. For sightseeing further afield, the gracious staff will promptly hand you bottled water (a necessity for visitors who want to avoid a nasty case of "Delhi belly") and summon a clean, comfortable taxi (or the hotel's own courtesy car, if available). You'll be whisked off to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Qutub Minar; Humayun's Tomb, the burial site of the second Mughal emperor; the 17th-century Red Fort; Jama Masjid, one of India's largest and most impressive mosques; or bustling Chandni Chowk, the jam-packed market area where you can buy everything from tiny carved elephants to elaborate wedding clothes, and where personal space isn't really a thing.





Crowds and chaos disappear, however, the moment you enter the gleaming white marble lobby of Shangri-La's – Eros Hotel, New Delhi, with its enormous floral displays and air-purifying plants, glittery chandeliers and signature art piece—a mural intricately inlaid with onyx, mother-of-pearl, lapis lazuli, tiger's eye and seashell. Here, the Hong Kong-based multinational hospitality group Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts takes great pride in its state-of-the-art air and water filtration systems, not to mention green initiatives, such as replacing all plastic (straws, stirrers, packaging) with biodegradable paper and bamboo. What a joy to find this tranquil, eco-friendly oasis in one of the most populous (and, sadly, one of the most polluted) cities on the planet!



Refurbished in 2018, 320 spacious guest rooms and suites are furnished in soothing hues of silver, dove gray and muted beige. Beds are firm, sheets are supersoft and a pillow menu satisfies all personal preferences. In most rooms, a glass-enclosed shower acts as a room divider, separating the sleeping area from the marble bathroom; for privacy, shower curtains are lowered with the touch of a button. Powerful water pressure, plenty of fluffy bath towels and moisturizing bath products further elevate the comfort level.



On the top two floors of the hotel, Horizon Club rooms come with additional perks, such as cushioned window seats, so you can gaze out at the city's leafy diplomatic district, iconic landmarks, and swooping birds of prey; L'Occitane toiletries; late checkout privileges; complimentary suit pressing and shoe shine service; use of a meeting room for two hours per day; and access to the chic Horizon Club Lounge, a private lounge where power breakfasts, evening cocktails and canapes are served amid an aura of exclusivity. The most opulent accommodation of all is the lavish, 2,345-square-foot presidential suite, a two-bedroom, two-and-a-half bathroom pied-a-terre with a deep soaking Jacuzzi, living room, dining area, guest washroom and kitchenette.



The hotel’s food and beverage program is also exceptional. High-end street food and soothing glasses of warm masala chai are the specialty at Mr. Chai, a lobby level café/tea shop that’s open 24/7. Barrel-aged cocktails and negronis raise spirits nightly in the lively Grappa Bar. And three on-site destination restaurants mean there’s really no reason to leave the property for lunch or dinner.

A full day of feasting begins at Tamra, a big, bright dining room with quirky design elements (rolling pins, dangling ropes), where the concept is “the world on your platter.” Breakfast offerings range from light and wholesome (coconut water, bircher muesli) to rich, heavy and spicy (sweet lassi, mutton stew, wok-fried chicken in Szechuan sauce). At lunchtime and dinnertime, food from every region of India, as well as Southeast Asia, Japan, Europe and the United States, is prepared and served at a multitude of buffet tables and interactive cooking stations. The air is fragrant with curry and tamarind, and the number of choices, each one more tantalizing than the last, is mind-blowing. Fortunately, smiling servers are always on hand to help you navigate the tandoors, chaats, parathas and naans, dim sums, pastas, grilled meats, sushi rolls, soups, salads and, for dessert, vast display of pastries and Indian sweets.

Another marquee dining room, Sorrento is the recipient of the Golden Q award from Ospitalita’ Italiana, ensuring compliance with the highest-quality standards for Italian hospitality. Artisanal fresh pastas, Neapolitan pizzas and rustic family-style dishes are specialties of the house.

Nearby, diners savor the best of Yunnan, Cantonese and Szechuan cuisine at Shang Palace, the Shangri-La brand’s signature Chinese restaurant. Chef Ye Hai Jun, the resident dim sum master, makes magic with delicate little dumplings filled with such things as prawns and Qiandao Lake caviar. Beijing duck is artfully carved, sliced and plated tableside; in keeping with tradition, its crisp golden skin is accompanied by a dish of sugar for dipping. And when my deep-fried mud crab in pixan chili sauce arrived at the table, the shells coated with spicy fermented chili bean paste proved too slippery and messy for me to crack in public (licking each entire finger wouldn’t be polite), so our charming server came to the rescue. Within seconds, he skillfully extracted every morsel of succulent claw and leg meat, then presented it to me in the crustacean’s hollowed-out body. Bravo.



Fitness and beauty routines need not be interrupted while staying at Shangri-La’s – Eros Hotel, New Delhi. You can use free weights, strength and cardiovascular training equipment in the gym around the clock. There are indoor and outdoor Jacuzzis, separate saunas and steam rooms for men and women, and a full-service beauty salon. Plus, a 25-meter outdoor swimming pool, encircled by gardens and greenery, provides refuge from the heat and humidity.

On a personal note, my stress was totally vanquished and inner peace was restored at Chi, The Spa at Shangri-La, a 20,000-square foot den of Zen with soft lighting, the sound of trickling water, and a menu of massages, facials, body treatments and Ayurvedic rituals designed to free your chi (life force).



After a welcome cup of green tea, I began my Taste of India Retreat, a two-hour wellness journey that led me straight to, well, Shangri La. First, a body scrub with crushed coconut shells left me with the feeling that every past, present and future patch of dry skin was sloughed away. Then came a soothing, herbal-oil-scented abhyanga massage, a traditional Indian technique of long and short strokes and pressure point manipulation. “To increase circulation and lymphatic flow,” whispered my therapist. All I know is that I was lulled into dreamland. Finally, I floated into an adjacent room for a shirodhara treatment. I laid down on a table and, above my head, a big copper pot was dangling. From this shiny vessel, warm oil began drizzling onto my chakra—my third eye—and continued for the next 30 minutes, literally melting away every single thought, both good and bad, that popped into my mind. It was miraculous. I entered the spa feeling jet-lagged and preoccupied. I left relaxed, rejuvenated, alert and ready to tackle another fascinating day in Delhi.

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