



Between the sheets

Why do we stay at a hotel? Because we like to eat in a 5-star restaurant? Because the lobby is luxurious? Because we want to spend \$50 per night for parking or we want to see a porn with someone? Maybe sometimes. NO! We go there to sleep. The worst experience for a guest is to have their bed not done perfectly or even worse, to find that their sheets are dirty (is this still happening?). Today, we dive between the sheets to investigate this topic 😊 but first, let's start with a bit of history...

A Bed Story^{1,2}

Early beds were little more than piles of straw or some other natural material (e.g. a heap of leaves or animal skins). An important innovation was raising them off the ground to avoid drafts, dirt, and pests.

Fast forward to medieval times. In Europe, sleeping arrangements were dependent on your position in life. If you were wealthy, your bed was an opportunity to show off your status. Typically made of heavy wood, the beds of the affluent were often ornately carved or encrusted

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bed>

² <https://www.thespruce.com/the-history-of-the-bed-4062296>

with gold or jewels and raised high off the floor, sometimes so high that a step stool was required to reach them. As these beds were very expensive, they were treasured belongings passed down through generations. It even became common for royal or wealthy owners to remain in bed to receive visitors, eat meals and do business. In sharp contrast, if you were poor you would likely sleep with your family on a hay-stuffed bag on the floor or on a simple platform. Before turning in for the night, you would have to “hit the hay” to dislodge bugs from your mattress.

In the 18th century, beds became simpler in style and the concept of the bedroom as a private space for sleep became firmly entrenched throughout all classes of society. While beds were still usually made of wood, metal bed frames started to become popular. Cotton-stuffed mattresses replaced down or hay.

In the 19th century, bedrooms became more like the ones we enjoy today, mostly devoted to sleep or sex, although women also used them to give birth. One striking advance was the invention of metal bedsprings to support the mattress, instead of ropes or wool straps.

The 20th century saw many innovations, among which the waterbed and the two most common types of mattresses today—innerspring and memory foam. By the 1960’s, mattresses and pillows were often made of foam instead of cotton or wool. In 1992, Tempur-Pedic sold the first memory foam mattress in the U.S.

Why are hotel beds so comfortable?³

Hotel beds are comfy because the hospitality industry puts a lot of research and money into it. Most top tier hotels invest in high quality, luxury mattresses that are between medium to firm range, provide excellent support for the back and relieve pressure points.

Hotels also use mattress toppers to adjust firmness and improve the quality of rest, in addition to luxurious bedsheets. They will use pure, crisp whites or light tones to create a feeling of tidiness, calm, and harmony. *Westin Hotels & Resorts* found that using white for bedding creates a feeling of serenity and makes everything appear extra clean and tidy, which increases relaxation during sleep. In fact, hotel linens are so famous that ‘hotel quality’ is used as a trademark by those that sell bedsheets.

³ <https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/why-are-hotel-beds-so-comfortable/>

