



Cold as Ice

Keeping a cool head

All hotels have a few standard amenities that guests can rely on. These include ice and, often, bibles (although the latter are slowly disappearing, God knows why 😊).

Ice, ice baby (to a familiar tune)

1755: water was artificially frozen

1830: scientists in London and Florida found a way to make it.

- 1860: four artificial ice factories in the U.S.

- 1889: two hundred

- 1909: two thousand.

For the first time, ice came from factories, not ponds or lakes, and was transformed into 300-pound blocks. Today, some of these factories still exist, and it is from them that ice sculptors, including those who make the Ice Hotel Quebec-Canada (in Quebec city) get their supplies.

Early ice makers used heated wires or saws to cut some blocks of ice into cubes, while other blocks were delivered in bulk to individuals and to the fishing, chemical and brewing industries. On the railroads, wagons carrying fruit and vegetables were fitted with compartments filled with blocks of ice at each end to limit waste.

When industrial-scale ice machines were introduced, hotels were among the first businesses to adopt them.

Kemmons Wilson, the founder of Holiday Inn, didn't like being charged extra for ice when he traveled, so he decided that ice would be free for all his hotel guests. He was innovative by being the first to offer this service in his very first Holiday Inn in 1952 in Memphis.

Did you know that I once owned a hotel???



In 2001, I co-founded the Ice hotel Quebec-Canada, the One and ONLY ice hotel in America. Made of 30,000 tons of snow and 500 tons of ice, the hotel has been attracting tourists from all over the world for over 20 years. Note that the ice hotel has no ice machines. Instead, drinks are served on the rocks 😊 Also there are no Bibles in the rooms of the Ice Hotel. There is, however, a chapel where some 40 weddings are celebrated every year!

Literature

1899: two Christian salesmen from Gideon International (an evangelical organization) share a hotel room and come up with the brilliant idea of putting a Bible in every hotel room. Whenever a new hotel opened in town, a member of the group would meet with the manager, present him with a free copy of the Bible and offer to put one in every room.

By the 1920s, every hotel room had its own Bible in America.

Later, other religious groups, like the Mormons, saw an opportunity to stock the drawers of hotel room night tables.

However, over the past 15 years, we've seen a decline in this practice.

- 2006: 95% of hotels had a bedside Bible.

- 2022: 79% (although personally, I doubt it given that I haven't seen a Bible in a hotel room for at least 10 years).

One might think that this decline is due to the fact that hotels are now trying to attract millennials, the least religious generation in history.

Beyond the few free amenities offered by hotels, guests benefit from many other services provided by staff (housekeepers make sure that clean ice buckets are available in every room). Tipping employees with an electronic solution like **Tip&Go** significantly increases staff income, a necessity in a world where the hotel industry is facing a severe staff shortage.

Francis Léonard, CEO



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