



Ready for a road trip?

When you were young and free (😊) did you ever leave on a whim for a road trip? I did. What a nice way to enjoy different places and make new friends! While on the road, did you come across motels? This kind of accommodation is the perfect fit for such a trip.

Origins of the word 'motel'^{1,2,3}

The word 'motel' is a combination of 'motor' and 'hotel'. It was created by Arthur Heineman, a US architect and one of the first people in Pasadena to own a car. Heineman saw how cars were changing the way people traveled which led him to create what we now know as motels, accommodations tailored towards motorists with each room entered directly from the parking area rather than through a central lobby (like hotels). Heineman opened the very first motel in the world in 1925, in San Luis Obispo (California, USA). He abbreviated 'motor hotel' to motel after he could not fit the words "Milestone Motor Hotel" on his rooftop 😊.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motel#:~:text=The%20term%20%22motel%22%20originated%20with,Motor%20Hotel%22%20on%20his%20rooftop>

²<https://www.revfine.com/hotel-industry/>

³<https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/swimming-pools-and-movie-stars-a-history-of-the-worlds-first-motel>

History^{4,5,6,7}

At the turn of the 20th century, nearly all long-distance travel was by train. Destinations were dictated by rail routes. As a result, most hotels were located close to train stations. The advent of the automobile changed all that. The first Model T rolled off the line in late 1908. Designed by Henry Ford to be reliable and inexpensive, it was the first car made by mass production and cost \$825.

In the early days of motoring, people packed tents in their cars and pitched them by the side of the road when they got tired. By default, the farmer's fields or lake shores became known as "tourist camps." This brought many auto-tourers in conflict with local landowners, and led several towns to ban roadside camping and establish auto-parks where tourers could camp legally.

Municipal camps were expensive to maintain. Only larger towns could afford them. The growing popularity of auto-touring and inability of every town to provide services for these tourers created an opportunity for entrepreneurs, who began building crude cabin camps, motor courts and motor lodges that offered overnight stays in permanent structures that were only marginally cozier than tents.

As cars became more sophisticated and county roads gave way to highways, interest in auto-camping faded away. By the 1920s, automobile travelers wanted hotel-like accommodations with the ability to park their cars. In 1925, the first motel opened in San Luis Obispo at a cost of \$2.50 per night.

If tourism declined during World War II, the 1950s and 1960s saw a boom of motels that offered luxuries previously available only at expensive hotels, like swimming pools. This was also the age of the "Tiki" craze, inspired by soldiers returning from World War II with tales of exotic lands, food and women. Motels appeared in the middle of nowhere causing whole towns to spring up, simply because they were a day's drive from major population centers.

In the 1980s, traditional motels were squeezed out of the market as they were forced to compete with chains that had a much larger number of rooms. Today, there are about 33,000 motels left in the United States⁸, a sharp drop from the 61,000 peak of 1964⁹.

Fun Facts¹⁰

- At the beginning of the 20th century, many auto camps (precursor of motels) were used as hide-outs for criminals. For instance, Bonnie and Clyde had a shootout in the infamous *Red Crown Tourist Court* near Kansas City on July 20, 1933.

⁴ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/twilight-mom-and-pop-motel-180963895/>

⁵ <https://www.danielmilowski.com/the-astonishing-hidden-history-of-the-motel/>

⁶ <https://medium.com/dose/the-bizarre-history-of-americas-motels-4a4d265dfcd4>

⁷ <http://www.jimmcluskey.com/history-of-the-motel/>

⁸ <https://rentechdigital.com/smartscraper/business-report-details/united-states/motels>

⁹ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/twilight-mom-and-pop-motel-180963895/>

¹⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motel#:~:text=The%20term%20%22motel%22%20originated%20with,Motor%20Hotels%20on%20his%20rooftop>

- Post-war motels often featured eye-catching colorful neon signs with themes from popular culture, ranging from cowboys and Indians to atomic era iconography. U.S. *Route 66* is the most popular example of the "neon era". Many of these signs remain in use to this day.
- In Portuguese, "motel" (plural: "motéis") commonly refers to an "adult motel" or love hotel with amenities such as whirlpool baths, in-room pornography, candles and non-standard beds in various honeymoon-suite styles. These rooms can be rented for a few hours at a time.
- The Bates Motel was an important part of *Psycho*, a novel adapted by Alfred Hitchcock for his 1960 movie. More recently, a run-down motel was used as the new residence of the unfortunate Rose family in the Emmy Award-winning series *Schitt's Creek*.

Like hotels, motels employ housekeepers to ensure the comfort of their guests. While we used to have cash to tip employees, nowadays most of us don't. This is why offering an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go** makes a lot of sense, allowing us to show our gratitude to staff while increasing the earnings of housekeepers.

Francis Léonard, CEO



The face behind your comfort

www.tip-go.com