



## Ready to Dive?

When I stay at a hotel, ending my day with a swim is rejuvenating. It helps me transition smoothly from work to personal time. For young families, having access to a swimming pool can be a life saver when the weather is bad, keeping kids busy and happy 😊. Whatever the reason, swimming pools are one of those amenities that everyone enjoys when residing at a hotel.

### Once upon a time<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro in Sindh (Pakistan) is likely the first pool ever made by man. It was constructed about 3000 years BC. The pool's sides and floor were made of bricks that were then sealed with layers of tar. Discovered in 1926, it was thought to be used for spiritual bathing by the ancient Indus Valley people, who lived in the south of modern-day Pakistan.

Ancient Greeks and Romans built artificial pools for athletic training, nautical games and military exercises. Roman emperors had private swimming pools in which they kept fish, hence one of the Latin words for a pool was piscina (in Latin, the word piscis means fish, and piscīna fishpond. In modern-day French, a swimming pool is a 'piscine').

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<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.intheswim.com/who-invented-pools-a-history-of-swimming-pools/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-swimming-pools-1991658>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.backyardpoolsuperstore.com/History-of-the-Swimming-Pool\\_b\\_42.html](https://www.backyardpoolsuperstore.com/History-of-the-Swimming-Pool_b_42.html)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming\\_pool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming_pool)

The first heated swimming pool was built by Gaius Maecenas in Rome, likely sometime between 38 and 8 BC. Gaius Maecenas was a wealthy imperial advisor to Augustus and considered one of the first patrons of arts.

Ancient Sinhalese built a pair of pools called "Kuttam Pokuna" in Sri Lanka, in the 6th century AD. They were decorated with flights of steps, pots of abundance and scroll design. Recently, an antique pool was discovered in Petra, located in modern-day Jordan. You may know Petra as the location of the Indiana Jones movie *'The Last Crusade'*.

## America

Fast forward to the 1930s in the United States, when hotels began having pools built as marketing tools. The *Biltmore Hotel* in Florida was one of the first and most historic hotel to do so. The *Biltmore* typified the South Florida lifestyle and was host to the social elite, including movie stars Judy Garland, Ginger Rodgers, Bing Crosby and many others. Other hotels followed suite with success<sup>5</sup>.

In 2014, Hotels.com surveyed the 10 most popular hotel amenities among travelers. Along with continental breakfast and free Wi-Fi, swimming pools made the TOP 10 list, ranking higher than the bar and even air conditioning.<sup>6</sup>

Still, in 2015, only 26% of U.S. travelers cited swimming pools as a must have amenity for accommodation<sup>7</sup>. In addition, between 2014 and 2016, the *American Hotel & Lodging Association* found that the proportion of hotels with swimming pools dropped significantly (from 42% to 36% for indoor pools, and from 48% to 43% for outdoor pools).

## Fun facts<sup>8</sup>

- Quebec (Canada) boasts more swimming pools per capita than California, with one swimming pool for every 26 homes!
- The world's largest swimming pool is the *Citystars Sharm El Sheikh* in Egypt. It is just over 1 million square feet, and it takes 21 days to fill...
- The *Lexic Hibiscus Port Dickson* in Malaysia holds the record for the highest number of swimming pools in a resort, at 643 pools.
- President Gerald Ford built the 50-foot by 20-foot White House outdoor pool in 1975.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://gohlkepools.com/history-swimming-pools-united-states/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hotel-swimming-pools-burden-opportunity-alex-lorenz>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/500191/swimming-pool-as-a-must-have-accommodation-essential-by-country/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://poolresearch.com/statistics/>

On my side, and I'm sure it is the case for many hotel guests, one of the pleasures of using the swimming pool is to have access to one of those fluffy white towels that make me feel like a VIP 😊! It is also essential for me to have a clean environment around the pool. These additional benefits can only be enjoyed because of the great work done by housekeepers. Given that guests are less and less likely to carry cash, it makes a lot of sense for hotels to offer an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go** which allows to show our gratitude to staff.

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**Francis Léonard, CEO**



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