



# A star is born

Staying at a five-star hotel can be quite the experience. Not only are these properties luxurious, but their staff also pampers you. A dream come true!



## Star rating systems<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

A hotel star rating system is a method used to classify hotels based on their location, overall quality, amenities, services, and facilities. The number of stars of an hotel indicates the level of luxury and comfort it offers. A one-star hotel is not unclean or unsafe. It simply has no frills in the form of extra amenities or services. In contrast, five-star hotels are the best you can get:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.siteminder.com/r/hotel-star-rating-systems/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.littlehotelier.com/blog/running-your-property/hotel-star-rating-system/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/blog/3566/hotel-star-explained.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kayak.com/news/what-do-hotel-stars-mean/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/12/11/what-do-hotel-star-ratings-mean-heres-a-breakdown.html>

attention to detail is unparalleled, customer service is personalized, and the list of amenities is long. They are also beautifully decorated and maintained, and often located in historic buildings.

Unfortunately, there is no universal rating system. Each organization that rates hotels has its own criteria. A project called “World Hotel Rating” was meant to standardize ratings around the world but that was more than a decade ago, and nothing has materialized yet. Below are a few well-known organisations that assign stars:

- **AAA** (American Automobile Association, North America). In the United States, AAA is one of the most well-known organisations for hotel ratings. It uses a diamond rating system, ranging from 1 to 5 diamonds, to evaluate the quality of hotels based on numerous criteria.
- **Forbes Travel Guide** (global) is renowned for its rigorous and independent inspection process. It awards ratings from 1 to 5 stars, focusing on luxury hotels. Their criteria emphasise not just the quality of facilities but also the level of service provided.
- The **Hotelstars Union** (Europe) uses common criteria to unify star ratings across Europe. So far, 20 countries have signed on and more than 22,000 hotels have been classified. But Europe’s most popular countries — France, Spain and Italy — are not among member countries; each has its own rating systems run by national or regional governments.
- The **MICHELIN Guide** (global), best known for rating restaurants, also rates hotels, particularly in Europe and Asia. Its focus is on luxury and boutique hotels.

Star rating systems are not the only way to assess a hotel’s quality. Most travellers turn to online platforms like Google Hotel Finder and TripAdvisor to find their next stay. Getting positive reviews on these platforms can be just as important, if not more, than earning a particular star rating through traditional rankings.

## History<sup>6,7,8,9,10,11</sup>

In 1900, there were fewer than 3,000 cars on the roads in France. To increase the demand for cars and car tyres, car tyre manufacturers and brothers Édouard and André Michelin published a guide for French motorists, the **Michelin Guide**. Nearly 35,000 copies of this first, free edition of the guide were distributed. It provided information to motorists, such as maps, tyre repair and replacement instructions, car mechanics listings, hotels, and petrol stations throughout France.

In the US, the Forbes star rating system was created in 1958 by Mobil, an oil and gas company, to mirror the Michelin guide. Marion and Alden Stevens, authors of *The Stevens America, a Traveler's Guide to the United States*, contacted publishers Simon & Schuster about doing another travel book. Schuster offered them an opportunity to create a Michelin-style guide for the United States. After much negotiation, Magnolia Oil (later incorporated into Mobil) agreed to finance the project. Since Magnolia's territory included Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, the first pocket-sized 1958-59 Mobil Travel Guide only covered that region. Once the Stevenses signed on to produce the Mobil Travel Guide, they hired and trained nine people, paying them \$1.75 per inspection. As the operation grew, field inspectors—generally teachers and graduate students who worked during their summer break—got a three-day crash course and were sent on their way. In 2009, the original Mobil Travel Guide was relaunched as the Forbes Travel Guide. The guide stopped being published in print form in 2011 and is now entirely online. Today, Forbes incognito inspectors visit nearly 1,000 hotels, restaurants, and spas around the world, using up to 900 standards to determine ratings.

In 1937, the first AAA field representatives were hired to inspect lodgings and restaurants, and in 1963, AAA began assigning lodging ratings from

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<sup>6</sup> <https://hoteltechreport.com/news/hotel-star-ratings>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.waldenu.edu/online-masters-programs/master-of-business-administration/resource/the-history-behind-the-hotel-star-system>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.quora.com/Who-invented-the-star-rating-system-Why-is-it-used-to-evaluate-hotels-restaurants-movies-and-plays-but-not-books-or-works-of-art#:~:text=The%20star%20rating%20system%20for,the%20best%20service%20and%20amenities>

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelin\\_Guide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelin_Guide)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.escoffier.edu/blog/world-food-drink/a-brief-history-of-the-michelin-guide/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://media.oregonlive.com/travel\\_impact/other/DiamondRatingGuidelines.pdf](https://media.oregonlive.com/travel_impact/other/DiamondRatingGuidelines.pdf)

‘good’ to ‘outstanding’. In 1977, AAA introduced the Diamond Rating System, using a diamond to mark the association’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and it began rolling out Diamond Ratings for restaurants in 1985.

## Fun facts<sup>12</sup>

- According to the 2023 Forbes Travel Guide Star Award, there are 95 five-star hotels and resorts in the US.
- As of 2023, the city with the most five-star hotels in the world was London, with 75, followed by Dubai (61), New York (59), Paris (56), and Miami (46).
- Talking about five-star hotels: *The Royal Mansion*, located in the Atlantis, *The Royal* in Dubai, and the *Empathy Suite*, in *Palms Casino Resort* in Las Vegas, tie as the most expensive rooms in the world at \$100,000 per night!!!

Whether staying at a one- or five-star hotel, guests expect their surroundings to be clean and comfy. To make it easier for clients to tip staff for their hard work, why not put in place an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go**? **Tip&Go**, the face behind your comfort !

**Francis Léonard, CEO**

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0410/navigating-the-hotel-star-system.aspx#:~:text=Also%20known%20as%20superior%20hotels,bedding%20and%20fine%20bath%20products>

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