



Clean as a whistle

(Part II)

As I mentioned in Part I on bathrooms, cleanliness is essential for hotel guests. In fact, surveys show that the vast majority of guests would walk out if their hotel bathroom was unclean. Here, I investigate other benefits for hotels of having nice and well provided bathrooms. Enjoy!

Bathroom Accessories^{1,2,3,4,5}

One fun thing about staying at a hotel is getting all sorts of goodies like bathrobes and slippers, a shower cap, a sewing kit, etc. Some of these items can even be brought back home 😊!

So, what is the 21st century traveler looking for in a hotel bathroom?

- Several good towels in different sizes (body, face, hands, etc.).
- Complimentary toiletry basics like soap, shampoo, conditioner, and ideally toothpaste - it's funny how hotels seldom provide toothpaste! In the first set of Diamond Rating Guidelines that AAA published (in September 1987) toothpaste barely earned a mention. A five-diamond, ultra-luxury hotel was expected to provide two kinds of soap, shampoo, an additional bottled item (such as suntan lotion), a hair dryer, a sewing kit, and a shower cap. And toothpaste? A "suggested" amenity, not required.
- Extras. The average hotel guest tends to value establishments that 'surprise them' with little extras during their stay, like a robe and slippers. Small electronic appliances like hairdryers and irons are also appreciated, especially by those who are traveling for business and need to look their best!

The New Bathroom^{6,7,8}

Many hotels are removing their bath and shower combinations and replacing them with shower-only setups because that's what guests want.

¹ <https://www.amenitiesdepot.net/en-ca/blogs/news/hotel-bathroom-amenities-what-to-provide-how-to-choose#:~:text=Every%20hotel%20bathroom%20should%20be,a%20hairdryer%20are%20also%20essential>

² <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bath-amenities-hotels-why-matter-north-east-hotel-supply/>

³ <https://www.aorbis.com/blog/hotel-bathroom-accessories/>

⁴ https://www.hotels4humanity.com/blog/what-todays-guest-expects-to-find-in-their-hotel-bathroom/?srsltid=AfmBOoqMT663g8wwL8am2VKBsIvs8ObNIs_7_N3rV7_IRrQFS7A39-vl

⁵ <https://slate.com/human-interest/2013/07/toothpaste-in-hotels-why-do-they-provide-shampoo-soap-and-high-end-toiletries-but-no-toothpaste.html>

⁶ <https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Hotel-News/Evolution-of-the-hotel-bathroom>

⁷ <https://thepointsguy.com/guide/shower-only-bathroom-hotel-trend/>

⁸ <https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/new-york/hotels-will-no-longer-be-able-to-provide-small-bottles-of-shampoo-or-lotion-beginning-2025/71-00a37d01-64bf-43f3-9435-81d91ec2ad2b>

In high-end hotels, designers and developers are seeking to turn what has long been a mostly functional space into an oasis. Among the trends are:

- Much larger bathrooms, up to 50% of the total room space.
- An "open" feeling so that the bathroom is seen as part of the overall space, made private, when necessary, with sliding doors, blinds, and lighting techniques.
- Fixtures that emulate a spa experience, such as rainfall showerheads and fountain faucets.
- Special effects. For instance, at the Sanctum Soho in London, bathtubs sit on islands of glowing pebbles with "starry lighting" overhead so that, according to the hotel's designer, "guests feel they are in a little spaceship."

Eco-Friendly Hotels^{9,10,11}

In 2023, Washington state legislators became the latest to pass a bill banning single-use plastic packaging in hotel rooms. Washington's law will begin Jan. 1, 2027, for 50-plus room hotels and the following year for smaller establishments — plus a \$500 per day fine for those in violation (although fines max out at \$2,000 a year). The first such law came from California in 2019. Those rules specify that containers 6 ounces or smaller now can only be offered by customer request. Like in many other states, starting in January 2025, hotels in New York with more than 50 rooms will also no longer be able to provide small bottles containing 'hospitality care' products.

Reusable soaps¹²

One of the first things that many of us do when we settle into a hotel room is reach for the packaged bar of soap on the bathroom counter. These soaps are the single most-utilized hotel amenity (86% of guests use it). But

⁹ <https://www.packagingdive.com/news/hotel-marriott-plastic-washington-law-refill/651512/>

¹⁰ <https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/new-york/hotels-will-no-longer-be-able-to-provide-small-bottles-of-shampoo-or-lotion-beginning-2025/71-00a37d01-64bf-43f3-9435-81d91ec2ad2b>

¹¹ <https://onemileatatime.com/news/new-york-bans-hotel-toiletries/>

¹² <https://thehustle.co/the-surprising-afterlife-of-used-hotel-soap>

they come with a big problem: most guests leave behind sizable chunks of soap. On average, US hotels go through ~3.3m bars of soap every day that are only half used. What happens to leftovers? Fourteen years ago, Shawn Seipler asked that very question. And the answer led him to launch *Clean the World* to get the wasted soap to children in need.

Hotels pay a small fee (\$0.50 to \$1 per room, per month) to participate in a soap recycling program. They're provided with everything they need to get rid of their waste: storage bins, shipping, staff training. They also get impact reports detailing the social and environmental impact of their donations.

For hotels, this serves 2 purposes: 1) it's a relatively affordable way to get rid of all their waste, and 2) it helps them meet sustainability goals. Today, *Clean the World* partners with more than 8,000 hotels — roughly 1.4m rooms in total — around the world. Its clients include major chains like Hyatt, Marriott, InterContinental, Walt Disney Resorts, and Hilton, in addition to cruise ship lines, casinos, and airlines.

An interesting idiom 😊^{13,14}

In closing, have you ever heard the expression: "*Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater*"? It derives from a German proverb (*das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten*) meaning to discard something valuable along with other things that are not essential.

Where does it originate? Up until the 19th century, it was difficult to have access to safe water and, people did not often bathe. It was customary for a family to clean in the same bath following a certain sequence: the father would come first, followed by sons, women, and finally the baby (imagine how dirty the water was by then...). So, the family needed to make sure not to leave the youngest family member in the bath when throwing the water out!

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_throw_the_baby_out_with_the_bathwater

¹⁴ <https://www.cnews.fr/culture/2013-04-30/pourquoi-dit-jeter-le-bebe-avec-leau-du-bain-455148#:~:text=Cette%20locution%20imag%C3%A9e%20puiserait%20ses,en%20suivant%20la%20hi%C3%A9rarchie%20familiale.>

Housekeepers are doing great (and hard!) work keeping hotel bathrooms clean and comfy for guests. *Did you ever come across an exceptional employee who made the difference during your stay at an hotel?*

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