

TOP UNUSUAL HOTELS OF THE WORLD - CITY CENTRE WOW



Those familiar with unusual properties expect them to be tucked away in hard to reach or far away places. Some properties however have city centre locations in mainstream destinations, within easy reach of us all. Perfect for a weekend break, these properties also offer some amazing mid week bargain packages and for those who book early, a fantastic place to stay in major cities at the weekend.

Steve Dobson picks some of his favourites.

London - Pavilion Hotel

This inspired art hotel attracts models and musicians and is right in the centre of London. Sourcing fabrics, wallpaper, room fixtures and fittings from around the world, Danny and his sister Noshi converted a once neglected London townhouse hotel into an artistic and funky place to hang out. From minimalist décor in some rooms, to funky 70's, their 30 rooms cater for a variety of tastes. Rooms are eccentrically crammed with delicate artifacts with for small but functional en-suite facilities. The sizes and styles vary, from the tiny 'Quiet Please' single room, to the opulence of 'White Days Soul Nights'.

Your friendly hosts have built a reputation with TV and music industry stars keen to sample somewhere with character at very affordable prices.

The hotel is a five minute walk from Edgware Road underground station and 20 minutes on foot to Hyde Park and the shops at Oxford Street.

Pavilion Hotel
Hyde Park
London W2 UK

Photo: (c) Pavilion Hotel

Dublin - Schoolhouse Hotel

Dublin is a great city, full of beautiful terraces of Georgian houses mixed with some terrible 1960's concrete hotels. The Schoolhouse hotel offers something different, with character, history and charm. The hotel originally opened in 1861 as St Stephen's Parochial School. The school closed in 1969 and lay derelict until it reopened as the Schoolhouse Hotel in 1998.

Each of the rooms is named after a famous Irish writer, linking the hotel back to its educational past. Bedroom décor is good, having been refurbished in 2006 and facilities are in line with quality hotel chains.

You're only 10 minutes from either Grafton Street for retail therapy, restaurants and bars, or Lansdown Road for concerts and sport. Food is better than you'll remember at school, with the award winning Schoolhouse restaurant gaining a reputation for good Irish and French cooking. It would be a rare school indeed that also provided a bar!

The Schoolhouse Hotel
Ballsbridge
Dublin, Ireland

Photo: (c) Schoolhouse Hotel

Paris - Hotel St Merry

Next to Beaubourg and the Centre George Pompidou, in the historic Marais district of Paris, Hotel St Merry provides a historic backdrop to a weekend trip to Paris. Above a convenient café and reached through an unremarkable glass door, this 17th century church is filled with fancy gothic stonework and intricate wood carvings. With wrought iron fixtures and high backed chairs you really are transported into the medieval past of Paris. Character exudes from every corner and crevice of this hotel.

Rooms are spacious and filled with beautiful carvings, religious artifacts and simple furnishings. One room has the church buttresses towering over the bed. Visually amazing, they'll be painful if you wake up suddenly in the middle of the night!

The hotel is in a great location right next to the Pompidou-Beaubourg centre and only seconds from the Marais - one of the most vibrant areas of Paris, with easy access to major rail and airport connections through the excellent French underground system.

Hotel St Merry
PARIS, FRANCE

Photo: (c) Hotel St Merry

Quebec - Hôtel de Glace

Sister of the original Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden, the Hôtel de Glace Quebec - Canada offers probably the easiest access to ice room accommodation of any snow or ice property today. Situated just outside Quebec City, with easy road and public transport connections, this resort is built next to Station Duchesnay, an existing tourist centre. Architecturally it is stunning, with vaulted ceilings held up by ice columns, ice carvings and snow sculptures in the different rooms, bar and chapel. Consider staying in one of the theme suites, especially one of the two with its own fireplace. These suites have ice sculptures and carvings inside and are lit by candle light.

The Hôtel de Glace Quebec-Canada, is only 30 minutes west of downtown Quebec City, the complex has easy access by car, bus or taxi.

Hôtel de Glace Quebec-Canada
Sainte-Catherine-de-la-Jacques-Cartier
Quebec City, Canada

Photo: (c) Hôtel de Glace

Berlin - Propeller Island City Lodge

Berlin is a thriving city with a great culture that embraces the unusual. From an upside down room with a bed on the ceiling, to coffin and prison-cell rooms, Propeller Island is no ordinary designer hotel. Originally created to pay for the musical interests of artist Lars Stroschen, the hotel grew from a couple of rented rooms to the 31 individually designed rooms of today.

Some rooms are minimalist in their decoration - Therapy is completely white, with a variety of room colouring possible by using a series of coloured lights. The big mirror above the bed allows you to literally see yourself in a different light.

Other rooms offer an increasingly surreal experience, with the Gruft / Coffin room offering a pair of coffins for beds, and the Freedom room a recreation of a prison cell, complete with escape through

the wall. The Upside Down room has a bed, table and furnishings suspended from the ceiling - and you sleep by opening a loft hatch in the floor. Not recommended after a night enjoying the many bars of Berlin! Once you've tried one room, you'll want to sample them all.

You're 25 minutes away by bus from the central Tegel airport, or 45 minutes from the larger Schonefeld. The nearest U-Bahn stop is Adenauer Platz, a 10 minute walk from the hotel.

Propeller Island City Lodge
Berlin, Germany

Photo: (c) Propeller Island

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They have recently published a top rated Unusual Hotels of the World book, available from www.gounusual.com with 50 favourite properties, available in English, French, Italian and Spanish.

For more details of the hotels suggested, comments and rating, check out their website www.unusualhotelsoftheworld.com

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