

EUROPE GOES FOR TINY HOTEL OPTION



On a global scale, the hotel industry is following the same trends as the airline industry. Whereas many travellers used to save up money all year in order to afford some luxury onboard an aircraft or in the en suite facilities of a plush hotel, leisure travellers and business travellers now tend to view these amenities totally differently. Airplanes are now seen as means of getting from A to B, stewardesses as mere waitresses and flight tickets are now as affordable as bus fares. Similarly, many people now see hotels as simply a place to put one's head on the pillow.

This change in attitudes, along with fierce competition, have forced the prices of rooms down by such an amount that today's differences between hostels and hotels are getting smaller and smaller. In order to accommodate the more budget-minded travellers, many European hotels have copied budget airline policies and are now able to offer clients the bare minimum for appropriate prices. The latest trend is the so-called 'tiny' policy.

Travellers in Britain, looking for modest shelter, are now able to sleep for L25 per night in some hotels. Americans would describe such rooms as closets, yet for those with not-so-deep pockets, the scheme seems ideal. The rooms are generally without windows and offer nothing more than a place to sleep, a toilet and a shower.

The leading company for offering such rooms is Easyhotel, which hopes to have 200 locations in 10 years time. It currently has two Swiss locations, one in Budapest and five in and around London. Other chains offering tiny rooms are Formule 1 or Premiere Classe. Apart from the sleeping, everything else comes at an extra charge, for example changing bed linen, cleaning the rooms during the stay, etc. This sounds familiar - like the budget airline policy of charging for drinks and extra luggage.

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