

TripAdvisor Announces Top 10 Quirkiest Hotels in the World Ice Hotel in Quebec Freezes Out Competition

PRNewswire-FirstCall
NEEDHAM, Mass.

TripAdvisor(TM), the largest travel community in the world, today announced the top 10 quirkiest hotels from around the globe, according to traveler popularity and TripAdvisor editors.

1. Have an Ice Stay: Ice Hotel Quebec-Canada, Quebec, Canada

Breathtaking hotel made of ice, features an ice chapel, theme suites, an ice bar, and an art gallery -- with ice sculptures, of course. Activities include cross-country skiing, ice fishing, archery, snowmobiling, snow tubing and even dogsled driving. As one TripAdvisor traveler described, "It's like sleeping in a 5-star igloo." The "icetablishment" is only open from January to April, just don't forget your parka and long johns.

2. Jail House Rock: Malmaison Oxford Castle, England, U.K.

Everything about the Malmaison Oxford Castle is authentic enough to make you feel as if you are in the confines of an actual prison, but with better company. Can a jail hotel be romantic? According to one TripAdvisor traveler, "My husband and I decided to 'honeymoon' at the Malmaison Oxford Castle, feeling that this magnificent converted prison would make a grand setting to begin our 'life sentence' together. It certainly did not disappoint." The first U.K. prison to be converted into a hotel, rest assured the property was renovated to ensure for more comfortable accommodations.

3. Smooth Sailing: Imperial Boat House, Ko Samui, Thailand

With 34 authentic teakwood rice barges converted into land-locked luxury suites, the Imperial Boat House on the beach is nautical nirvana. The lavish outdoor pools are surrounded by a lush and lovely garden. As described by one TripAdvisor traveler, "The resort is really impressive -- beautiful landscaping and accents throughout." A final touch-the remarkable beach-front, boat-shaped pool, features cannons -- no doubt, to keep the pirates at bay.

4. Entertainment Extravaganza: Fantasyland Hotel & Resort, Edmonton, Canada

With over-the-top fixtures and themed rooms, the Fantasyland Hotel and Resort is a shock to the senses. According to a TripAdvisor traveler, "It gives you the feeling that you're somewhere totally different, and when it's -30 C and there is tons of snow, this is the perfect escape." Great for families, it boasts a 217,800 square-foot indoor water park, an indoor ice rink, indoor golf and you guessed it, indoor roller coaster ride. Why all the indoor activities? Remember this is Edmonton, not Ibiza.

5. Tree-Top Tableau: Ariau Amazon Towers Hotel, Manaus, Brazil

Seventy feet up into the tree-tops of the Amazon, the Ariau Amazon Towers Hotel features catwalks connecting the entire complex. Activities include a jungle walk, swimming with dolphins, a caiman hunt and even piranha fishing. The rooms are rustic, but in the opinion of one TripAdvisor traveler, "Wouldn't some towering monstrosity of modern conveniences be somewhat incongruous in this setting?" Don't be surprised to see a wide variety of flora and fauna in this authentic jungle environment, where it's okay to hand-feed the monkeys and parrots.

6. Desert Rose: Al Maha Desert Resort, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Unique in its setting in the middle of the Dubai Desert, the Al Maha Desert Resort is an oasis with luxurious accommodations, including private pools and an authentic "Bedouin" encampment design. Activities that might be hard-to-find anywhere else include sand dune driving, falconry and camel trekking, and the panoramic views of the Hajar Mountains are a sight to be seen. Oryx and gazelles are known to come around the rooms at night and drink water from the private swimming pools. As one TripAdvisor traveler noted, "There are lots of wild oryx roaming the grounds, which is nice, but also a bit scary when they're blocking the path to the room."

7. Chief Light-Wallet: Wigwam Motel, Holbrook, Arizona

Operating along the historic U.S. Route 66, the Wigwags are actually teepee-style, cement tents. The bargain motel features the authentic feel of a 50s desert town -- from the furniture, to the vintage cars in the parking lot, to the sounds of the old locomotive passing through town. The rates are also a blast from the past -- the average room costs about \$45 a night. According to one TripAdvisor traveler, "By the way, the rate is for real ... the youngest son of the builder commented to me that they don't make money operating the motel, they do it 'as a sort of public service.'" Cash and credit only, wampum not accepted.

8. Caveman's Delight: Yunak Evleri, Urgup, Turkey

Carved out of a stunning mountain-side cliff, the honeycombed hotel includes six cave houses, with rooms connected by narrow, maze-like passageways and stone stairways (think Land of the Lost, without the creatures). Decorated in Ottoman style, Yunak Evleri provides private patios offering dramatic views of the Turkish Mesa. As described by one TripAdvisor traveler, "You are then whisked to this serene land with its 7th century caves, outdoor archeological museums, and the best baklava ever."

9. Toro! Toro!: Quinta Real Zacatecas, Zacatecas, Mexico

Built around a 17th century bullfighting ring, it's no longer operational, so leave the red cape at home. The Quinta Real Zacatecas incorporates the feel of "Old Mexico," with its colonial architecture. Beautifully illuminated at night, the hotel also faces the city's ancient arched aqueduct and the local village's quaint shops complete the unique experience. Be sure to enjoy the comfy robes ... as one TripAdvisor traveler suggested, "Do yourself a favor and buy their robes to take home, I didn't and I have regretted it for seven years now."

10. Inn Vogue: Madonna Inn, San Luis Obispo, California

Most often referred to as kitschy, perhaps the best description for the Madonna Inn comes from a recent TripAdvisor traveler, "It's what happens when Barbie moves in with Barney Rubble, all pink and rock." But that's part of the charm of the Madonna. A garish, chalet-style inn, the hotel features 45 rooms with varying themes and color schemes. To many travelers, an indescribably unique experience, perhaps the only thing you need to know is that there is a famous waterfall urinal in the men's room.

About TripAdvisor LLC

TripAdvisor.com(TM) is the largest travel community in the world, with more than 5 million unbiased reviews and opinions, covering 220,000+ hotels and attractions. With more than 20 million unique monthly visitors worldwide (source: comScore Media Metrix, March 2006), TripAdvisor(TM) was the second most visited travel web domain in March, featuring real advice from real travelers and easy access to major online travel sites, including Expedia.com(R), Orbitz, Hotels.com(R) and American Airlines, for great deals. TripAdvisor(TM), which operates sites in the U.S. (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>) and in the U.K. (<http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/>) provides travel suppliers a graphical advertising and cost-per-click marketing platform. Winner of dozens of awards, including PC Magazine's Top 100 Web Sites and Forbes Best of the Web, TripAdvisor(TM) is an operating company of Expedia, Inc. .

"TripAdvisor" and "TripAdvisor.com" are trademarks or registered trademarks in the U.S. and/or other countries of TripAdvisor LLC. Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

According to comScore Media Metrix, the top five worldwide travel domains in March 2006 were Expedia.com, TripAdvisor.com, Orbitz.com, Priceline.com and Travelocity.com.

SOURCE: TripAdvisor LLC

CONTACT: Brooke Ferencsik of TripAdvisor LLC, +1-781-444-1113, ext. 275,
brooke@tripadvisor.com

Web site: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/>
<http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/>

