

# History of commercial hospitality industry



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**ABSTRACT**

This essay speaks about the commercialisation of the Hospitality Industry from its very early days till the 19th century and how hospitality has changed over the centuries.

**KEYWORDS**

Caravanserais, inns, hospices, staging posts.

**BACKGROUND**

As known to everyone hospitality has been present ever since the beginning of the human race. But it is to be seen that how it is evolved since the time when hospitality was just a meagre way to express an emotion towards family and friends when they visit ones place and make them feel comfortable and at home all the time and at times even going the extra mile to make them feel comfortable and happy. To a time when everything changed and hospitality was no more just an expression but became something which was much more professional, much more personalised, catering to every guests personal needs and making them feel comfortable and this came to be known as the Hospitality Industry. As time progressed, slowly but steadily the Hospitality Industry has been able to make its presence felt in the Service Sector, and today the Hospitality Industry is one of the major contributors in the Service Sector. So, basically we are going to talk about the history of the commercial hospitality industry from the antiquity to the 19th century and how it evolved around this time.

**FROM ANTIQUITY TO MIDDLE AGES**

The history of the Hospitality Industry has always in some way or the other connected with different cultures and customs or it has been a part of their  
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history. For example, the Greeks were the first to develop thermal baths in villages to provide the villagers with a place where they can rest and relax as and when required. The Romans were the first to build mansions so as to provide travellers with accommodation who were on government duty. In the Middle East, caravanserais were built, so as to provide shelter and a resting place for caravans on the Middle Eastern routes. It was during the Middle Ages when the abbeys and monasteries became the first establishments to provide refuge to travellers regularly some religious groups also built inns, hospices and hospitals to cater to those who were travelling. As time progressed, more and more inns sprung up but it only provided the guests with lodging facilities but not providing them with any food. Many staging posts were constructed during this time for government transport and rest stops, providing shelter and travellers could also change the horses easily. This led to the rise in the number of people going on pilgrimages to Holy places, and this led to the rise of inns and staging posts along these routes during this period which is known as the Middle Age. During this time in Europe the concept of inns started picking up momentum, couple of the inns which are still famous are, l' Auberge des Trois Rois in Basle, Auberge Cour Saint Georges opened in Gant in Belgium and Angel Inn was built at Grantham in Lincolnshire, England. And also in China and Mongolia around 1200 staging posts for travellers and station for couriers were set up.

### **THE START OF THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

In the beginning of the fifteenth century, in France, a law was passed that all hotels should maintain a register. During the same time around 600 inns were constructed in England and the English also introduced laws for inns.

Also around 1500 spas were developed in Carlsbad and Marienbad. The English architecture in these times generally consisted of a paved interior court with access through an arched porch. The stables and storehouses were at the back, the kitchen and the public rooms at the front and the rooms were situated on the two sides of the courtyard. During this period the first guide books for tourists were published in France. The hotel industry was at its early stages of development in Europe during this period.

Establishments famous for its cuisines hung distinctive signs outside their structures. Around the end of the 1600s, the first stagecoaches started operating regularly in England. In the mid 1600s clubs similar to the English gentlemen's clubs and Masonic lodges began to make their presence felt in America. During the reign of Louis XIV in Paris, the very first example of a multiuse architectural complex could be seen in the Place Vendôme, it accommodated boutiques, offices, apartments and also hotels.

### **IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

The industrial revolution which started around the mid 18th century provided many opportunities in the construction of many hotels, in mainland Europe, in America and in England. City centres were established first in New York and then in Copenhagen. At the beginning of the 1800s, the Royal Hotel was constructed in London and also during the same time along the French and Italian rivieras were the hotspots where holiday resorts began to flourish.

During this industrial revolution, many countries started developing with respect to the hospitality industry like Japan which came up with the idea of Ryokan guest houses. In India, the government-run Dak bungalows provided good accommodation to the travellers during this period. This was the period

when the concept of hotels started spreading to other countries and not just countries like France, Italy, mainland Europe and America and people also started implementing various concepts and trying to improvise as time progressed. As time progressed hotels like the Tremont House in Boston, which was the first deluxe hotel, which provided its guests with in-room toilets, locks on the doors and an “À la carte” menu, this kind of menu provided the guest with choice as to what he/ she would like to eat rather than going for a fixed menu set by the hotel themselves, which in those was a privilege for any individual to have. The Holt Hotel was the first to provide guests with a lift service for their luggage. As times started changing, trains started to replace the old horse-drawn transport, highway inns for stagecoaches also started to decrease and this was the time when the number of hotels increased in these regions as even the travellers were opting for more comfortable options to stay in. During this time the Shepherds Hotel in Cairo was founded, the result was a complete transformation from the traditional city-centre harem, these harems were accommodations made especially for women in a Muslim household.

## **HOTELS**

The Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York was the first of hotel in that period to provide lifts for its guests. In 1869, the Mena House was inaugurated near Cairo, it was a luxurious place situated at the foot of famous pyramids like Cheops, Chephren and Mikerinos. The Palmer House Hotel in Chicago in 1870 was the first fire-resistant luxury hotel and had a unique structure in those days. In 1880, the Sagamore Hotel on Lake George in the state on New York was the first to provide electricity to all its rooms.

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