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Choose Eco Friendly Hotels

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Although many people would rate **environmental friendliness** as a big factor in deciding their hotel stay, it can be hard for most to sort through all of the green-hype to find which hotels are genuinely going green and which ones are simply overstating their practices to gain publicity points. Hotels take up more than 5 billion square feet of space in the US alone and massive buildings with temporary stays can produce a ton of waste and pollution.^[i]

Luckily, there are some sound ways to find a good room without doing too much damage to your environmental footprint. Check out the Hearts top green hotel certifications to make your next work trip or family holiday as green as it can be.

Quick Guide: The Impact of Hotel Waste

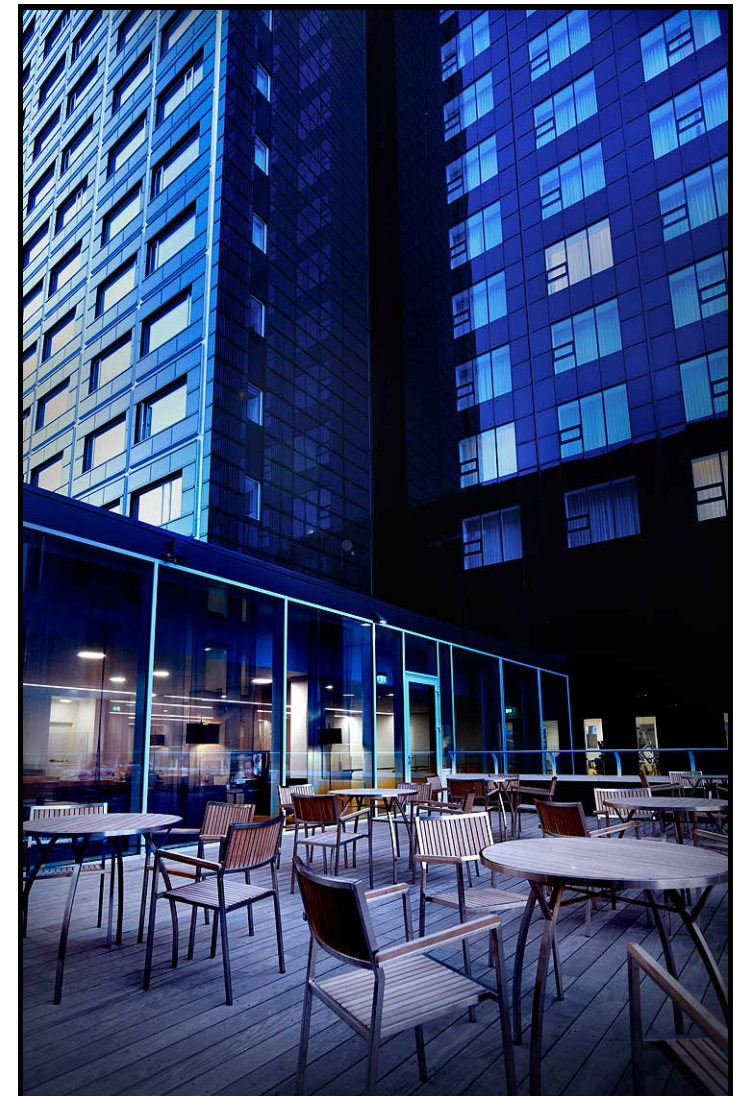
- **3 million hotel stays per night:** On any given summer night, there are more than 3 million occupied hotel and motel rooms in the United States.^[ii] That's more than 3 million sheets, towels, and everything else being cleaned and replaced every day.

- **65 billion gallons of potential water savings:** Hotels in the US use 219 billion gallons of water each year for food preparation, showers, and laundry.^[iii] If the entire hotel industry went green we would save more than 65 billion gallons each year.

- **10% hotel CO2 reduction = 1 million tree acres:** American hotel buildings are incredibly inefficient, producing 60 million tons of CO2 emissions each year.^[iv] Reducing that by 10% would be like planting 22 new national parks of trees (over 1 million acres).

- **10% hotel energy = DC's energy for 1 year:** Hotels use nearly 85 billion kWh per year. In fact, 10% of that could power the entire city of Washington, DC for more than a year. If hotels went green, it would be the equivalent of taking 1 million cars off the road.^[v]

- **Where is the world's greenest hotel?** **Hotel Crowne Plaza Copenhagen** seems to hold the distinction of the world's greenest hotel. It is the biggest solar panel building in Europe with its exterior and roof covered in panels and has a special ground-water based heating and cooling system that allows it to use 90% less energy.^[vi]



Take Action! Finding Reliable Hotel Eco-Certification Systems

1. **Green Key:** Whether traveling in the US or outside of the country, Green Key is the most trusted international certification system and has certified 1,123 hotels in 17 different countries ranging from Europe to Africa to Asia. The criteria used to determine certification includes water and energy waste, making guests aware of how they can be more environmentally friendly during their stay, environmental management, staff involvement in green initiatives, the use of chemicals and other more specific determinates.
2. **Green Seal:** Green Seal ranks sustainability standards for everything from hotels to paper products and light bulbs. They use a scientific evaluation and formula that considers everything from the impact of building the hotel (including raw materials extraction, transport, manufacturing, etc.) to the energy and water efficiency of the hotel and even to how much environmental impact their marketing and promotional materials have. Green Seal Hotels are only available in the US, but check out their certified [Lodging Properties \(listed alphabetically by state\)](#).
3. **Leadership for Environmental and Energy Design (LEED):** It can be tough to sort through the many eco-certification systems out there, knowing that many of them are for-profit companies that simply charge a fee to be certified. The system most widely accepted as credible for sustainable buildings is LEED, the eco-certification system run by the US Green Building Council. Though not specifically for hotels, if a hotel building meets LEED standards, it means it is significantly more energy and water efficient than conventional buildings and was built with eco-friendly materials and processes.
4. **Travelocity:** Travelocity does not have its own eco-certification system but, just as with hotel room prices, it brings together **22 different environmental ranking systems** in one and gives you the most eco-friendly ones average. The idea behind this is that if you can't know for sure if one system is reputable, you can get a better idea by seeing all of the systems. To find their greenest options, choose their [Green Vacations](#) search feature.



Dig Deeper: Becoming an Eco-Friendly Traveler

- Learn which hotels around the country are LEED-certified by the [US Green Building Council](#).
- Find out even more about how much resources hotels are wasting each year and how you can be more environmentally friendly on your next trip with this [EcoTraveller infographic](#).
- Learn about Greenwashing and the sometimes-shady practices of the tourism industry at [Mercury News](#).

The Future of Hotels is Green. (2012). Retrieved from EcoTravellerGuide: <http://www.ecotravellerguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/The-Future-of-Hotels-is-Green-e1339511930445.jpg>

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