



Hotel Classification System

**Summary of articles and Information on
Hotel Classification System**

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Hotel Classification Systems

The grouping together of hotels providing a given range of services and facilities is an inexact science. The distinction between availability and quality is often blurred.

Early hotels and inns were little more than an available bed and something barely palatable to eat. The emergence of tourism in the latter half of the 19th century brought with it an improvement of the standards of the early inns. Some pressure was placed on these facilities to offer some minimum standards where the consumer was able to identify a property with specific amenities. The rating system emerged out of efforts by the Automobile and cycling clubs in Europe, who in their tour books displayed hotels, which they recommended to their membership, based on the guaranteed facilities which these hotels/inns offered.

This led to the establishment of rating systems such as the Automobile Association (AA) and its American counterpart the (AAA) and the Michellin tyre company's – Michellin Red Guide and other mobile guides.

After World War II National Tourist Boards began to consider some form of hotel registration/classification system. There was some difficulty in doing so. By 1970 only five European countries had national classification systems, by 1980 this number increased to 22 European countries and 60 countries worldwide.

The criteria applied by the classification systems were, and still are not uniformed. There were various meanings attached to registration, classification and grading.

Registration: Form of licensing which, may or may not demand a minimum standard. Signifies some conformation with health fire safety legislation. Implies a minimum criteria.

Classification: separation of different types and ranges of accommodation into several categories based on a range of criteria. Hotel accommodations can allow for five to seven categories to be applied. – Other forms of accommodation e.g. motels, guest-houses and self catering apartments seldom justify more than two or three classes.

Grading: Often combine with classification, this is a quality assessment awarding a symbol to denote an above average service to an accommodation facility. E.g Green globe classification systems for environment

Popular Classification Systems

Official Hotel and Resort Guide (OHRG)

Travel Industry classification system ratings are deemed as being comparable around the world, making it easier for professionals in the travel trade.

Ten Quality levels which can be divided as follows

Deluxe:

Super Deluxe, Deluxe, Moderate Deluxe,

First Class

Superior First Class, First Class, Limited Service First Class, Moderate First class

Tourist

Superior tourist class, tourist class, moderate tourist class

These rating combine two elements

1. quality of quest accommodations
 - a. room size, quality of furnishings
2. Extent of hotel facilities
 - a. Number and size of public rooms and meeting facilities.

Refer to the copy of the ORG rating system

What the OHRG Ratings Mean

● **SUPERIOR DELUXE:** An exclusive and expensive luxury hotel, often palatial, offering the highest standards of service, accommodations and facilities. Elegant and luxurious public rooms. A prestige address. Establishments in this category are among the world's top hotels.

● **DELUXE:** An outstanding property offering many of the same features as Superior Deluxe, except in some cases (mainly in Europe), a small number of minimum rated accommodations may be of inferior grade. May be less grand and offer more reasonable rates than the Superior Deluxe properties, yet in many instances may be just as satisfactory. Safe to recommend to most discriminating clients.

● **MODERATE DELUXE:** Basically a Deluxe hotel, but with qualifications. In some cases the hotel may be well-established famous name, depending heavily upon past reputation. In other cases some accommodations or public areas may not be up to Deluxe standards. If modern, the hotel may be heavily marketed to business clients, with fine accommodations and public rooms offering Deluxe standards in comfort, but lacking in atmosphere or personal service. May be overpriced. Recommend with caution to fussy clients expecting full Deluxe facilities or much pampering.

● **SUPERIOR FIRST CLASS:** An above average

hotel. May be an exceptionally well-maintained older hotel, more often a superior modern hotel specifically designed for first class market, with some outstanding features. Accommodations and public areas are expected to be tastefully furnished and very comfortable. May be a good value, especially if it is a commercial hotel. May be recommended to average clients and in most cases will satisfy the discriminating ones.

● **FIRST CLASS:** An average, comfortable hotel with standardized rooms, amenities and public areas. Dependable, but usually nothing special. May have superior executive level or wing. May be safely recommended to average clients not expecting Deluxe facilities or special services. Should also be satisfactory for better groups.

● **LIMITED-SERVICE FIRST CLASS:** A property offering full first-class quality accommodations, but limited public areas, food service and facilities. Usually moderate in size, the hotel often utilizes a residential scale and architecture. Many offer complimentary breakfast and evening cocktails in the lobby or in a small, informal restaurant. Geared to the individual business/pleasure traveler.

● **MODERATE FIRST CLASS:** Basically a First Class establishment, slightly below average. Generally has comfortable, simple accommodations and

public areas, though not always kept up to standards. May be lacking in some features (e.g., restaurant). Some of the rooms or public areas may tend to be small and functional. Usually suitable for cost-conscious clients, but should not be recommended to the fussy or complaining ones unless the OHRG description implies otherwise.

● **SUPERIOR TOURIST CLASS:** Primarily a budget property with mostly well kept, functional accommodations, some up to the First Class standards. Public rooms may be limited or non-existent. Often just a place to sleep, but may have some charming or intimate features. May be a good value. Will satisfy clients on a budget (sometimes even discriminating ones), groups or students.

● **TOURIST CLASS:** Strictly a budget operation with some facilities or features of Superior Tourist Class, but usually no (or very few) First Class accommodations. Should under no circumstances be recommended to fussy or discriminating clients. Should generally be used with caution.

● **MODERATE TOURIST CLASS:** Low-budget operations, often quite old and may not be well-kept. Should only be used in a pinch if no others are available. Clients should always be cautioned what to expect.

AA rating system (British System)

This system focuses on a consumer's perspective on accommodation properties. The objective was to introduce a classification system easily understood by the consumer. This system is part of the description of properties seen in travel books. The American version is the AAA system.

Minimum Requirements for AA Recognition

★ One Star Hotels

Hotels in this classification are likely to be small and independently owned, with a family atmosphere. Services may be provided by the owner and family on an informal basis. There may be a limited range of facilities and meals may be fairly simple. Lunch, for example, may not be served. Some bedrooms may not have en suite bath/shower rooms. Maintenance, cleanliness and comfort should, however, always be of an acceptable standard.

★★ Two Star Hotels

In this classification hotels will typically be small to medium sized and offer more extensive facilities than at the one star level. Some business hotels come into the two star classification and guests can expect comfortable, well equipped, overnight accommodation, usually with an en-suite bath/shower room. Reception and other staff will aim for a more professional presentation than at the one star level, and offer a wider range of straightforward services, including food and drink.

★★★ Three Star Hotels

At this level, hotels are usually of a size to support higher staffing levels, and a significantly greater quality and range of facilities than at the lower star classifications. Reception and the other public rooms will be more spacious and the restaurant will normally also cater for non-residents. All bedrooms will have fully en suite bath and shower rooms and offer a good standard of comfort and equipment, such as a hair dryer, direct dial telephone, toiletries in the bathroom. Some room service can be expected, and some provision for business travelers.

★★★★ Four Star Hotels

Expectations at this level include a degree of luxury as well as quality in the furnishings, decor and equipment, in every area of the hotel. Bedrooms will also usually offer more space than at the lower star levels, and well designed, coordinated furnishings and decor. The en-suite bathrooms will have both bath and fixed shower. There will be a high enough ratio of staff to guests to provide services like portage, 24-hour room service, laundry and dry-cleaning. The restaurant will demonstrate a serious approach to its cuisine.

★★★★★ Five Star Hotels

Here you should find spacious and luxurious accommodation throughout the hotel, matching the best international standards. Interior design should impress with its quality and attention to detail, comfort and elegance. Furnishings should be immaculate. Services should be formal, well supervised and flawless in attention to guests' needs, without being intrusive. The restaurant will demonstrate a high level of technical skill, producing dishes to the highest international standards. Staff will be knowledgeable, helpful, well versed in all aspects of customer care, combining efficiency with courtesy.

Red Star Awards

AA star classifications are usually depicted in black on signs and in the AA's guides and electronic products. However, at each of the five classification levels, the AA recognizes exceptional quality of accommodation and hospitality by awarding Red Stars for excellence.

A hotel with Red Stars, therefore, has been judged to be the best in its star classification and recognizes that the hotel offers outstanding levels of comfort, hospitality and customer care.

Country House Hotels

Country House Hotels offer a relaxed, informal atmosphere, with an emphasis on personal welcome. They are usually, but not always, in a secluded or rural setting and should offer peace and quiet regardless of location.

Town House Accommodation

This classification denotes small, personally run hotels which afford a high degree of privacy, concentrate on luxuriously furnished bedrooms and suites, with high-quality room service rather than the public rooms or formal dining rooms usually associated with hotels, but they are usually in areas well served by restaurants. All fall within the Four or Five Star classification.



Travel Accommodation (Lodges)

This classification denotes budget accommodation, suitable for an overnight stay usually in purpose-built units close to main roads and motorways, often forming part of motorway service areas. They provide consistent levels of accommodation and service, matching today's expectations.

Guesthouse/Private Hotels

The term guest-house can lead to some confusion, particularly when many include the word hotel in their name.

For AA purposes, small and private hotels are included in this category when they cannot offer all the services required for the AA hotel star rating system. The term does not imply that guest-houses are inferior to hotels, just that they are different. Many, indeed, offer a very high standard of accommodation.

It is not unusual to be offered en suite bathrooms, for instance, or to find a direct-dial telephone and a colour television in your room. Some guest-houses offer bed and breakfast only, so guests must go out for the evening meal. These facilities should state clearly if there are any restrictions to your access to the house, and whether they offer any meals. This should be communicated to the customer when booking.



Farmhouse

Farmhouse accommodation is particularly noted for being relatively inexpensive and cosy, with good home-cooking where appropriate. Some are working farms, Guest are at times allowed to participate or view farm activities, there are cases where guest accommodation is run as a separate concern from the farm, and visitors are discouraged from venturing on to the working land. Standards will vary considerably, Some of farmhouses are grand ex-manor houses furnished with antiques and offering a stylish way of life, whereas others offer more simply furnished accommodation, and in others guests may have to share the family bathroom and sitting/dining room.

Pubs and Inns

We all know what we can expect to find in a traditional inn a cosy bar, a convivial atmosphere, decent beer and pub food. Nevertheless, there are a few extra criteria which must be met for the AA classification: breakfast is a must, in a suitable breakfast room, and the inn should also serve at least light meals during licensing hours. A number of small, fully licensed hotels are classified as inns, and the character of the properties will vary according to whether they are traditional country inns or larger establishments in towns.

AA Rosette Awards

The AA makes annual rosette awards on a rising scale of one to five for the quality of food served in restaurants and hotel restaurants. Only those offering the highest international standards of cuisine and service will merit the AA's top awards of four or five rosettes.

Outstanding Quality (5 and 4 Rosettes)



Five rosettes is the supreme accolade, made to chefs at the very top of their profession. This award recognizes superlative standards of cuisine at an international level, evident at every visit in every element of the meal. Creativity, skill and attention to detail will produce dishes cooked to perfection, with intense, exciting flavours in harmonious combinations and faultless presentation. Menus may be innovative or classical, and may use luxury ingredients like lobster, truffles, foie gras, etc. often in unexpected combinations and with secret ingredients that add an extra dimension of taste and interest.



At this level, cuisine should be innovative, daring, highly accomplished and achieve a noteworthy standard of consistency, accuracy and flair throughout all the elements of the meal. Excitement, vibrancy and superb technical skill will be the keynotes.

High Quality



Only cooking of the highest national standard receives three or more rosettes. Menus will be imaginative; dishes should be accurately cooked, demonstrate well developed technical skills and a high degree of flair in their composition. Ingredients will be first-class, usually from a range of specialist suppliers, including local produce only if its quality is excellent. Most items - breads, pastries, pasta, petits fours - will be made in the kitchens, but if any are bought in, for example, breads, the quality will be excellent.

Good Quality (2 and 1 Rosettes)



Two rosettes denote cooking that displays a high degree of competence on the part of the chef. The menus should include some imaginative dishes, making use of very good raw ingredients, as well as some tried and tested favourites. Flavours should be well balanced and complement or contrast with one another, not over-dominate.



One rosette denotes simple, carefully prepared food, based on good quality, fresh ingredients, cooked in such a way as to emphasize honest flavours. Sauces and desserts will be home-made and the cooking will equate to first-class home cooking.

General Information should be clearly stated

Restricted Service

Some hotels operate a restricted service during less busy months. This may be a reduction of the restaurant service, or some leisure facilities may be unavailable. Please check when booking.

No Dogs

No dogs allowed in bedrooms. Guide dogs for the blind may be accepted as an exception to this rule. However, even where hotels allow dogs, they may exclude some breeds, and may exclude dogs from certain areas of the hotel, especially the dining room. It is essential to check the conditions before booking.

Night Porter

At some hotels, the night porter may be there only between certain hours or on certain nights . However, four and five star hotels must have a night porter always on duty.

Entertainment

Indicates that entertainment should be available at least once a week throughout the year. However, some hotels may provide entertainment in the summer season or at other specified times, so even if the entry indicates nothing, it is worth checking when you book.

No children

This indicates that children cannot be accommodated. A minimum age may be specified (e.g. No children 4yrs - no children under four years old). If this does not appear in the entry, it means that the hotel will accommodate children, but may have no special facilities for them (e.g. no cots or high chairs). It is essential to check when booking.

Special Facilities for Children

Indicates establishments with special facilities for children, which will include baby intercom or possibly baby-sitting, playroom or playground, laundry facilities, drying and ironing facilities, cots, high chairs and special meals.

Conference Facilities

Denotes that conference facilities are available with maximum numbers that can be accommodated theatre style; classroom style; boardroom style and the minimum overnight delegate rate.

Facilities for Travellers with Disabilities

Intending guests with any form of disability should notify proprietors in advance so that arrangements can be made to minimize difficulties, particularly in the event of an emergency.

Meals

Details of the style of food, last dinner orders, and likely price range are given. If there is a fixed-price menu or menus, this is the price range quoted.

V meals indicates that a choice of vegetarian dishes is normally available (it is advisable to check before booking).

In some parts of Britain, particularly in Scotland, high tea (i.e., a savoury dish, followed by bread and butter, scones, cake, etc.), is served in the early evening instead of dinner. However, the alternative of dinner may be available on request. The last time at which high tea or dinner may be ordered is shown, but there may be some variation at weekends. On Sunday some hotels serve the main meal at lunch time, and only a cold supper in the evening.

Morning Coffee/Afternoon Tea

Indicates that morning coffee and/or afternoon tea are served to chance callers. All four and five star hotels serve morning coffee and, normally, afternoon tea to resident guests.

Credit and Charge Cards Other Payment

The payment policies of hotels should be made clear to patrons on the point of booking. Not all hotels will accept travellers' cheques, even those from leading banks and agencies. If a hotel accepts credit or charge cards, the information is shown in its entry. It is advisable to publish and notify customer the policy regarding the use of credit cards.

Booking and cancellation procedures

These should be noted to all customers, inclusive of confirmation numbers. The cancellation policy of the facility also have to be clearly stated.

Complaints

Crisis management procedures is a must especially in the case of guest complaints. Fire and bad weather

Smoking Regulations

Hotel should state clearly its policy on smoking. Ensure that where smoking is allowed there are designated areas for non-smokers inclusive of rooms away from smokers.

Licence to Serve Alcohol

Most Hotels and other accommodations with bars are licensed to serve alcohol. On many properties this permission is clearly stated on entry to the bar area. Where there are exclusions for minors under 18 or 21 this should be pointed out to the relevant patrons

The AAA system has some variation in its classification system from the English system. There are some notable conditions for the rating system of the AAA.

Only establishments which are non-residential (transient) operations qualify for AAA approval. Other specifications are as follows;

- A responsible person must always be readily available. While a management representative is not required to be in office around the clock there should always be a notice where someone can be reached.
- If the office is closed at night a night bell or similar device is required outside the office door. The exception is in a B and B or a country inn.
- In-coming telephone calls should receive and deliver messages immediately to guest 24 hours a day.
- If an answering machine is used after hours, an alternative number must be available so that emergency messages can be immediately relayed to guest.
- B&B home stay properties that are exclusively time share operations would not be listed.

Caribbean National/ Regional Classification Systems

The advantage of adopting international classifications system is that the travel trade and international consumers can easily recognize the codes and or ranking systems developed. Consumers expect certain accommodation standards regardless of the locations of the property. Another arguments point to the difficulty of regional properties to receive top international rankings because of the geographical/climatic location of their properties. For example beach front properties may find it more durable and rational to have tiled floors rather than plush carpets. For those destinations challenging themselves to adopt a national classification system the following guidelines can prove useful.

Classification systems developed by governments are usually designed to set

1. minimum operational standards
2. counteract generalizations in international standards which sometimes ignore difference in climate, geography, variance in hotel legislation,
3. offset the cost of training and maintaining inspectors who qualify to international standards and ensure standardization in inspection

National Systems are designed to be

1. Simple
2. Assist government planning by supplying statistics on occupancy of varying classes of accommodation and identifies the need to develop more of a particular category of establishment
3. Aid in the marketing strategy as it provide a profile of the tourist who stay are particular establishment (small hotels vs resorts)
 - a. Assist hotels to target their promotions to selected groups
 - b. Encourage hoteliers to improve standards and range of facilities by pinpointing weaknesses in their operating systems and services
 - c. Eliminates bad properties which impacts negatively on the reputation of the destination and of the better hotels

For national systems to be effective the systems

- Should be designed in close collaboration with government agencies, National Tourism Organizations and Hotel Associations.
- The requirements of the system should be clear and periodically reviewed
- Provisions should be made for special types of accommodations e.g (Paradores, guest-houses, and villas, camps and apartments.
- The establishment of penalties for non-compliance
- The independence of the classification systems from the system of hotel taxation (best that taxation systems be based on performance rather than on categories)
- Establishment of methods inspection and classification
- A separate assessment for the standard of cuisine.