



A Timeline of Hilton History

Over the last century, Hilton has grown from a single hotel in Cisco, Texas, to more than 5,600 hotels and 17 brands in 113 countries and territories, with a portfolio that offers a variety of ideal experiences for every type of traveler and trip. Browse the timeline for notable milestones in our 100 years of hospitality.

1890s – 1930s

1893 At the direction of Bertha Palmer, the brownie is created by the hotel that would go on to become The Palmer House Hilton.

1919 Conrad Hilton enters the hotel business by purchasing his first hotel. On his way to buy a bank, Hilton instead purchases a local hotel, The Mobley in Cisco, Texas.

1925 Conrad Hilton builds the first hotel to carry the Hilton name: Hilton Dallas in Texas. The setting summer sun can be brutal in Dallas, especially prior to air conditioning, so the elevators, laundry shoots and other non-customer facilities are built along the west side of the building so no guest rooms face the western sun.

1927 Hilton opens the Waco Hilton, its first Hilton hotel with cold running water and air-conditioning in the public areas.

1930s – 1940s

1931 The Waldorf Astoria is relocated and rebuilt on Park Avenue at 50th Street. The new building, an Art Deco masterpiece that would go on to become part of the Hilton portfolio, is the largest hotel in the world, contains telephones and radios in every room and is even wired for the advent of television. The hotel becomes the first to popularize room service.

1943 Already operating hotels in California, Hilton becomes the first coast-to-coast hotel chain in the United States with the purchase of the Roosevelt and Plaza hotels in New York.

1946 Hilton Hotels Corp. is formed and becomes the first hotel company post-World War II to sell stock in New York. Hilton is listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 1947.



1947 The Roosevelt Hilton in New York City becomes the first hotel in the world to install televisions in guest rooms.

1948 Hilton becomes the first hotel company to introduce a multi-hotel reservations system, the Inter-Hilton Hotel Reservation System. This is the beginning of the modern day reservation system.

1948 Hilton Hotel Corp. merges the various credit records and cards from its separate hotels into one uniform system. The first uniform credit card that can be used at any Hilton Hotels property is mailed to the previous 175,000 plus cardholders.

1949 The first Hilton outside of the continental United States opens, the Caribe Hilton in Puerto Rico.

1949 Conrad Hilton, who for many years kept a photograph of the Waldorf Astoria under the glass on his desk with the phrase "The Greatest of them All" written on it, purchases the hotel.

1949 Conrad Hilton becomes the first hotelier to appear on the cover of Time Magazine. He later becomes the first hotelier to make Time's cover twice when he appears in the July 19, 1963 issue.

1950s - 1960s

1950 The Stevens Hotel, now Hilton Chicago, creates its first special amenity for female travelers: a folder containing social note paper, a sewing kit and a booklet with names and telephone numbers for babysitters, places to get a dress hemmed or ironed and gift shops. Many male travelers take these hotel kits home to their wives as gifts.

1951 The Stevens Hotel in Chicago is renamed the Conrad Hilton by the hotel's board of directors in honor of the hotel's visionary owner. It remains the Conrad Hilton hotel until 1985.

1953 The first Hilton opens in Europe, The Castellana Hilton in Madrid.

1954 The iconic Piña Colada is created at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In 1954, the hotel's bartender, Ramón "Monchito" Marrero experimented with a new recipe that blended rum, coconut cream, and pineapple juice in an icy beverage. After three months of perfecting the recipe, Marrero felt that the drink finally captured the



flavors of Puerto Rico and named it the “Piña Colada.” The new cocktail was served by Marrero for 35 years, and became the official drink of Puerto Rico in 1978.

1954 Hilton purchases the Statler Hotel chain for \$111 million dollars, the largest real estate deal in history at the time.

1955 Hilton Istanbul, the first modern hotel built from the ground up in post-World War II Europe, opens in June. It is a development involving Hilton, the U.S. Department of State and the Turkish government.

1955 Hilton begins a multi-million dollar program to air condition every hotel in the chain and HILCRON, Hilton's first central reservation office, opens. Reservations can be made at any domestic or international Hilton hotel and by telephone, teletype and telegram.

1958 Barron Hilton introduces the new Hilton Carte Blanche credit card, the premier travel and entertainment card owned by Hilton Hotels.

1959 Hilton opens its first airport hotel, Hilton San Francisco Airport, pioneering the airport hotel concept. The same year, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II attends a dinner in her honor at The Conrad Hilton, now Hilton Chicago, with Conrad Hilton.

1959 The 1st Annual GRAMMY Awards dinner ceremony was held on May 4th, 1959 at The Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. Hilton has remained the official hotel partner of Music’s Biggest Night® for more than 30 years.

1961 Elvis stays at the Hawaiian Village while filming “Blue Hawaii” in 1961.

1963 Hilton establishes its first department of women's services to stimulate greater interest amongst women traveling either in connection with a convention, or independently for business or pleasure. These services evolve into the Lady Hilton concept.

1964 Hilton International is spun off as a separate corporation, with Conrad Hilton as President. Two years later, Conrad Hilton's son Barron succeeds him as president of the domestic Hilton Hotels Corp.

1965 Hilton begins franchising hotels in the United States, becoming the first upscale lodging company to develop the concept of franchising hotels. Lady Hilton, Hilton's first concept designed for women travelers is introduced, offering female-only floors or rooms and special amenities at select hotels.



1967 Conrad Hilton becomes first hotelier to be featured in a syndicated cartoon, "Batman." The same year, Hilton establishes an in-house vodka brand, Darnoc, or "Conrad" spelled backwards.

1969 John Lennon and Yoko Ono host their famous "Bed-In" for peace on their Honeymoon in a Presidential Suite at Hilton Amsterdam, beginning March 25.

1969 Doubletree Hotels opens its first hotel in Scottsdale, AZ.

1970s – 1980s

1970 Hilton becomes first NYSE-listed company to enter domestic gaming business with the purchase of the Flamingo Hotel and the Las Vegas International later named Las Vegas Hilton.

1971 John Lennon handwrites the words to No. 1 hit single "Imagine" on a piece of Hilton New York stationery while at the hotel.

1973 Hilton launches HILTRON, the most sophisticated computerized hotel reservation referral and reporting system in the industry.

1973 Elvis Presley stays on the 14th floor of the Ocean Tower, now Ali'i Tower, at Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa while in Hawaii for his "Aloha From Hawaii" concert. Dr. Martin Cooper makes the first cellphone call while walking past Hilton New York, now New York Hilton Midtown, on April 3. A press conference held at the hotel the same day marks the milestone.

1979 Conrad Hilton dies at age 91.

1982 Conrad Hotels is founded as Hilton Hotel Corp.'s new international operating subsidiary offering a world of style, connections and flawless service.

1983 Embassy Suites hotel division is created by Holiday Corporation. The next year, the first Embassy Suites opens in Kansas City-Overland Park, Kansas.

1984 The first Hampton Inn hotel opens in Memphis, Tennessee.

1986 Conrad Jupiters Gold Coast, the Conrad brand's first property, has its grand opening in Queensland, Australia. DoubleTree introduces the brand's signature recipe of freshly-baked chocolate chip cookies to welcome guests at check-in at all hotels.



1987 The Hilton HHonors guest loyalty program is launched.

1989 Hampton becomes the first hotel brand to offer 100% Satisfaction Guarantee.

1989 Homewood Suites opens its first hotel in Omaha, Nebraska.

1990s – 2000s

1990 The Promus Companies, Inc. is launched following the sale of the Holiday Inn brand.

1990 The first CrestHil by Hilton opens in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Conrad brand debuts in Asia with the opening of the Conrad Hong Kong, and the Conrad Dublin is named one of the Best New Hotels in the World by the UK's Business Traveler magazine.

1991 Embassy Suites announces the acquisition of the Park Suites hotel chain. The same year, Embassy Suites Lake Buena Vista is the first major hotel to offer state-of-the-art construction and service devices to meet needs of travelers with disabilities.

1992 The first international Embassy brand property opens in Canada.

1992 A joint venture between Hilton Hotels Corporation and Grand Vacations, Limited establishes Hilton's entry into the vacation ownership market.

1993 The Waldorf Astoria becomes an official New York City landmark. Embassy Suites together with its sister brand Homewood Suites, becomes the first national upscale hotel chain to offer 100% Satisfaction Guarantee.

1993 Hampton introduces new "blended" hotel product, Hampton Inn and Suites. The same year, the first Hampton branded international property opens in Canada.

1994 Hilton Grand Vacations Club at the Flamingo opens in Las Vegas, NV.

1995 Hilton enters cyberspace as its first website, www.hilton.com, is launched. Computer users worldwide can now make room reservations and find out about hotel programs and special offers 24 hours a day.

1995 The first South American Embassy Suites opens.



1996 CrestHil by Hilton is renamed Hilton Garden Inn and a new product line of the Hilton brand is created. The same year, DoubleTree acquires Red Lion Hotels. One year later, the DoubleTree merger with Promus Hotel Corporation is approved by shareholders.

1996 Hilton Hotels Corporation purchases the Grand Vacations, Limited partnership interest, and Hilton Grand Vacations Company, LLC becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of Hilton Hotels Corporation. The same year, the Conrad brand expands its presence to the Middle East with the opening of the Conrad Cairo.

1998 Hilton spins off gaming operations into separate publicly held company.

1999 Hilton Hotels Corporation acquires Promus Hotel Corporation, expanding its family of brands to include DoubleTree, Embassy Suites, Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites.

1999 On the night of the Golden Globes, hosted each year at The Beverly Hilton, actress Angelina Jolie promises the press that if she wins an award, she will jump into The Beverly Hilton pool. Jolie is victorious and dives into the Aqua Star pool – Randolph Duke gown and all.

2000 Hilton Hotels Corporation and Hilton Group plc form a joint venture company to expand Conrad Hotels on a worldwide basis. Owned equally by both companies, the joint venture company is operated from Brussels.

2000 Hilton Grand Vacations debuts its first developed resort in Hawaii. Hampton celebrates its 1,000th hotel opening.

2001 Homewood Suites by Hilton celebrates its 100th hotel opening. The 100th Hilton Garden Inn opens in Orlando at SeaWorld International Center.

2003 All hotels now have complimentary high-speed internet access, and DoubleTree expands into Canada.

2004 The first international Homewood Suites by Hilton property opens in Canada. The same year, Conrad Hotel's first newly built hotel in North America, the Conrad Miami, opens, and soon two more open in Chicago and Indianapolis.

2005 Hilton Garden Inn opens its 250th hotel in Times Square, New York City, NY.



2006 Lodging assets of Hilton International are acquired, reuniting the Hilton brand worldwide. The same year, Waldorf Astoria Collection brand is born.

2006 Hilton Garden Inn opens its first European hotel in Stuttgart, Germany, meanwhile the first Latin American Embassy Suites opens and Homewood Suites by Hilton launches Suite Selection, the hotel industry's first interactive, web-based room selection tool.

2006 Six movies, including "Spiderman III," "Michael Clayton," and "American Gangster," film at Hilton New York. Hampton by Hilton is presented with the National Preservation Honor Award for its Save-A-Landmark program, the first time a hotel brand has been recognized.

2007 Merger agreement between Hilton Hotels Corporation (HHC) and affiliates of The Blackstone Group is finalized. The same year, the first Homewood Suites by Hilton opens in Mexico.

2008 Hilton Vancouver Washington becomes first hotel to be both Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and Green Seal certified. The same year, the first Waldorf Astoria branded property opens in Europe and Hampton celebrates its 1,500th hotel opening.

2009 Hilton's global headquarters relocates to McLean, Virginia, and a new logo and corporate name – Hilton Worldwide – are launched. Hilton launches its mobile app, enabling guests to make reservations, check-in, search hotels, view honors account activity, book honors rewards stays and order Hilton Requests Upon Arrival amenities.

2009 Home2 Suites by Hilton, a new concept in the extended stay market, is officially launched – the first new brand introduced by Hilton Worldwide in 20 years. The brand quickly clears development milestones with 50 signed franchise applications, receives approval to develop in Canada and breaks ground on first hotel in Fayetteville, NC.

2009 DoubleTree by Hilton debuts in Africa. Hampton by Hilton launches global expansion with the brand's first opening in the United Kingdom. Hilton Garden Inn opens its first Asian hotel in New Delhi/Saket, India.

2009 LightStay, Hilton Worldwide's proprietary sustainability measurement program, launched as a brand standard across the globe.



2010 - Present

2010 Already one of the world's largest spa providers with 123 spas in operation across its portfolio, Hilton Hotels & Resorts introduces its first global spa concept: eforea: spa at Hilton.

2010 Hilton introduces a new brand logo and name - Hilton Hotels & Resorts. Embassy Suites celebrates opening its 50,000th suite, while Homewood Suites by Hilton celebrates its 300th hotel opening.

2011 Hampton by Hilton becomes the first hotel brand to ever be ranked #1 in Entrepreneur Magazine's annual Franchise 500, known as the world's first, best and most comprehensive franchise ranking. The same year, Home2 Suites by Hilton opens its first property in Fayetteville, NC.

2012 Home2 Suites by Hilton and Hampton Inn & Suites break ground on first dual property in Huntsville, AL, catering to diverse market segments and offering enhanced amenities. DoubleTree by Hilton celebrates the brand's 300th hotel opened and 250,000,000th chocolate chip cookie served at check-in.

2013 Hilton returns to the New York Stock Exchange, to trade under the same ticker symbol, HLT.

2014 Hilton launches two new brands: a collection brand, Curio – A Collection by Hilton, and a lifestyle brand, Canopy by Hilton. The same year, Hilton is the first hotel brand to live stream a concert on YouTube, from Hilton Times Square.

2016 Hilton launches new brand Tru by Hilton, which goes on to achieve the fastest growing pipeline in the history of the hospitality industry. The same year, Hilton Worldwide expands its footprint to 100 countries and territories around the world with the opening of Hilton N'Djamena in Chad.

2018 Hilton announces a strategic alliance with Playa Hotels & Resorts, with plans to nearly double our all-inclusive portfolio over the next several years, including two additional all-inclusive resorts by year-end.

2018 The Hampton by Hilton Dubai Airport opens in September, marking the brand's first property in the region and the brand's largest hotel in the world by room count at 420 rooms.



2018 Hilton launches Motto by Hilton, an urban affordable brand that combines the best elements of micro-hotels and urban lifestyle products. Hilton's LXR Hotels & Resorts also welcomes its maiden hotel, in Dubai at Habtoor Palace.

2018 The world's first underwater hotel suite is opened at the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island. Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas and Waldorf Astoria Bangkok are added to the Hilton portfolio, and with plans announced to bring the iconic brand to Miami.

2019 Hilton introduces Signia Hilton, a meetings and events-focused brand of premier hotels in highly sought-after urban and resort destinations.