**ICE HOTELS**

Ice hotels are dependent upon sub-freezing temperatures (colder than 0 °C or 32 °F) during construction and operation. This imposes time constraints on construction and makes the hotel's season short. Construction typically begins between November and March when snow can be compacted and thick levels of ice form. Although constructing an ice hotel is more labor-intensive than a regular building, building materials are cheaper. Ice hotels have to be reconstructed every year. This is not entirely detrimental to the operators; if an ice hotel does not meet its financial goals, the owner can simply let the building melt in the spring and is left with no building to permanently upkeep.

The walls, fixtures, and fittings are made entirely of ice or compacted snow, and are held together using a substance known as snice, which takes the place of mortar in a traditional brick-built hotel. Sometimes steel framing is used in their construction.

Sweden Icehotel Jukkasjärvi

Each year between December and April, the Icehotel in the village of Jukkasjärvi is open. It is about 17 km from Kiruna, Sweden, and it was the world's first ice hotel. 80 rooms and suites are available. In addition to the entrance hall, the hotel has a chapel and an ice bar named Absolut Icebar. In 1989, Japanese ice artists visited the area and created an exhibition of ice art. In spring 1990, French artist Jannot Derid held an exhibition in a cylinder-shaped igloo in the area. One night there were no rooms available in the town, so some of the visitors asked for permission to spend the night in the exhibition hall. They slept in sleeping bags on top of reindeer skin.

The entire hotel is made out of snow and ice blocks taken from the Torne River; even the glasses in the bar are made of ice. Each spring, around March, Icehotel harvests ice from the frozen river and stores it in a nearby production hall with room for over 100,000 tons of ice and 30,000 tons of snow. Some of the blocks of ice weigh two tons, and cranes are used to place them. The ice is used for creating Icebar designs and ice glasses, for ice sculpting classes, events and product launches all over the world while the snow is used for building a strong structure for the building. About 1,000 tons of what is left is used in the construction of the next Icehotel.

Each year, for the past 24 years now, the ice hotel has accepted applications from artists around the world to design the world-famous hotel's art suites. In 2013 there were more than 200 applications submitted from a wide range of artists to design and build an Art Suite. These included artists from a variety of creative backgrounds - including theatre and photography, to interior design and architecture. Around 15 applications are accepted with their designs and head there in November to build the suites.

Customers have to be prepared to sleep in beds made of snow or ice, but in the warmth of furs, blankets and sleeping bags designed to withstand extremely cold temperatures. Temperature in the rooms is below zero Celsius, but much warmer than outside. Staying at an ice hotel is expensive as prices for a night range from around US$300 to $3,000. Some ice hotels may be destination hotels.

Lobbies are often filled with ice sculptures, and food and drinks are specially chosen for the circumstances. For instance, glasses in an ice bar can be made of ice and people sit on benches made of ice. An ice bar, sometimes associated with an ice hotel, is a drinking establishment primarily made of ice.



