

I Slept in an Ice Hotel and Was NOT Prepared — Here's What It Was Really Like

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If sleeping on an ice bed sounds tempting to you (or maybe you're just insanely intrigued by the idea of anyone doing it), then stay tuned. On a recent trip to Quebec City, Canada, I had the opportunity to sleep in at the [Hotel de Glace](#), the only ice hotel in North America. The hotel has 44 guest rooms and an ice bar, both only open from the end of December until March.

Never one to give in to a challenge — especially ones that come with incredible bragging rights — I jumped at the chance without a second thought in my head. Well, until it was time to meet with the person who would be training us to sleep.

Wait, what? Yes. We needed a trainer to teach us how to get comfortable enough to sleep. And that wasn't the only surprise we were in for.

After going through the steps, I realized that sleeping in the hotel was a process. First, she said, we would put our luggage away in a locker . . . yes, a locker. The hotel is made completely of ice and snow, and therefore has nowhere for you to put your luggage. Oh, and there are no outlets for your phone. No showers, no hairdryers, and no bathrooms. HELP.

Allow me to elaborate further before you judge my mental state and stop reading.



The ice bed in the ice hotel. We slept on this.

The Hotel de Glace is behind the Hotel Valcartier. In the Hotel Valcartier, there are lockers and dormitories. Each room in the Hotel de Glace is given a coordinating locker to put luggage in. In the dormitories are coffee machines, plugs, water, showers, bathrooms, and hair dryers. If you have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, you need to put on your coat and travel back to the dormitories to do so. In the morning, you shower and get ready to go in the dormitories.

So, said our sleep coach, after we found our lockers and were ready to snuggle into our Nordic sleeping bags, we would change into swimsuits. (Um, what?) From there, we would spend some time in the hot tub and sauna, bringing up our body temperature. Then we would go back to the locker room, change into our pajamas, bundle up, and make our way to our room in the ice hotel where our Nordic sleeping bags would be waiting.

Thinking of sleeping in an [ice hotel](#)? Here are a few things you should know.

Overpack

If you think you're not going to need it, bring it. I hate [overpacking](#) and my staff is usually perplexed as to how I pack a carry-on for a six-day business trip, so if I'm giving you this advice, please just take it. I didn't pack a bathing suit – hello, I was going to Canada in February, so why would I pack a bathing suit? Little did I know I needed one for the hot tub. (Let's just say we made this situation work for us!) Bring extra socks. Pack a pair of shower sandals and an extra towel. And be prepared with a hat, scarf, and gloves to sleep in.

Tip: Make sure your hat doesn't have any metal on it. In an attempt to look cute, I brought one hat adorned with rose gold studs. Yea, the colder it got in the room, the colder the studs got, and it felt like stabbing pains in my head. I eventually took it off and buried myself in the sleeping bag.

Beware of Cotton

Our sleeping coach told us that the best way to sleep in the Nordic sleeping bags is to sleep naked. However, there was no way I was getting naked in a room full of ice (even the floor was ice, so come on – where was I stripping?), but she did tell us that if we were going to sleep in clothes, cotton was the worst choice. She also told us not to double up on pajamas because getting too warm in the sleeping bags would cause us to sweat and sweat would cause us to get cold. Well, since I only packed cotton, I doubled up on my pajamas and slept very comfortably.

Eat Really Well

When we were trying to figure out whether we wanted to eat on the premises or go out to eat, our sleeping coach suggested that wherever we eat, we have a very heavy meal.

"You're going to need the energy – it's like hibernation mode," she told us. While we tossed around the idea of finding some poutine, we ended up at an amazing Nordic farm-to-table restaurant called [Legende](#). A glass of wine, cricket pasta, and a few pieces of venison later, we were set for sleeping.

Tire Yourself Out

We had a full agenda on very little sleep – we went sightseeing in Le Petit Champlain, took a dogsled ride, played with Husky puppies, went to a winery, explored the ice hotel, and finally went and had a late dinner. We were so exhausted by the time we got back to Hotel de Glace to sleep that, honestly, just thinking about the entire process of going to sleep was tiring us out. But let me tell you – by the time we zipped up those sleeping bags, we were so tired that the cold didn't bother us one bit. The next thing we both remember was the hotel guard giving us our wake-up call. Yes, they literally stand outside your room and call to you to wake you up.

Relax . . . It's Going to Be OK

At one point, I was almost sold on staying at another hotel (we were exhausted and all I wanted was the really comfortable, plush bed at Hotel 71, where we stayed the previous night), but we decided to stick it out. At the end of the day, I'm really glad we did. The worst part of the whole experience was putting on my cold coat the next morning to walk back into the locker room.

The experience may seem daunting, but it's going to be fine. And if you decide that it's too much in the middle of the night, there are usually indoor accommodations available for you.

At the end of the day, sleeping in a hotel made of ice is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Don't turn it down if you get the opportunity!



Here I am in my Nordic sleeping bag. Sexy, right?