

Capsule Comfort: Innovative Travel Lodging

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Fancy (Verb) /'fænsi/ To like or want; to have a preference for.
Example: I fancy watching a movie tonight.
2. Lean Towards (Verb) /li:n tə'wɔ:rdz/ To incline or have a tendency toward a particular option or choice.
Example: I lean towards eating out rather than cooking tonight.
3. Simplicity (Noun) /sɪm'plɪsɪti/ The quality of being simple, easy, or uncomplicated.
Example: The beauty of this design lies in its simplicity.
4. Innovative (Adjective) /'ɪnə'veɪtɪv/ Introducing new ideas, methods, or features; characterized by innovation.
Example: The company is known for its innovative approach to technology.
5. Equipped (Adjective) /ɪ'kwɪpt/ Having the necessary tools, skills, or resources for a particular purpose.
Example: The kitchen is well-equipped for cooking large meals.
6. Reminiscent (Adjective) /,rɛmɪ'nɪsənt/ Tending to remind one of something; suggestive of a memory.
Example: The old house was reminiscent of my childhood home.
7. Inspire (Verb) /ɪn'spaɪər/ To fill someone with the urge or ability to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.
Example: The beautiful sunset inspired her to start painting.
8. Transcend (Verb) /træn'send/ To go beyond the usual limits; to surpass or exceed.
Example: His art has the power to transcend cultural boundaries.
9. Novel (Adjective) /'nɒvəl/ New, original, or unusual in an interesting way.
Example: The scientist proposed a novel solution to the problem.



When you travel, do you like **fancy** places, or do you prefer keeping it simple and cheap? If you **lean towards simplicity**, how about a "capsule" barely big enough to lie down in? Capsule Inn Osaka, now called New Japan Umeda, is where this unique experience began in 1979, making it the world's first capsule hotel. Located near Osaka and Umeda stations, it was designed by Kisho Kurokawa, a renowned Japanese architect. Kurokawa, known for **innovative** designs, also created Tokyo's Nakagin Capsule Tower, a building with replaceable capsule apartments.

Built by sauna operator New Japan Kanko, Capsule Inn Osaka originated from office workers napping in saunas after late shifts. Opening on February 1, 1979, it featured 415 capsules, each **equipped** with a bed, TV, and radio. The capsules were arranged in two levels along the halls, **reminiscent** of sleeper trains with steps leading to the upper level. Priced at 1,600 yen per night (around \$8 then), it aimed to be less than half the cost of typical business hotels, making it an economical choice, especially for workers missing the last train home.

The success of Capsule Inn Osaka **inspired** similar facilities in big cities across Japan, resulting in nearly 35,000 capsule hotel rooms nationwide by 2019. This unique concept **transcended** Japan's borders, with capsule hotels now found in various global locations, including Hong Kong, South Korea, India, Iceland, and even Canada. The capsule hotel trend has become a global phenomenon, offering travelers a **novel** and cost-effective way to experience a night's stay.

DISCUSSION

1. If you were designing your own dream capsule hotel, what unique features and themes would you include to make it stand out?
2. In a futuristic world, how do you envision capsule hotels evolving, and what technological advancements could enhance the guest experience?
3. Imagine a capsule hotel in an unusual location, like the top of a mountain or under the sea. What challenges and exciting opportunities might come with such a setting?
4. If you could time-travel and experience the very first capsule hotel in 1979, what aspects would you be curious to explore or compare to today's capsule hotels?
5. Capsule hotels are known for their efficient use of space. How would you maximize the functionality and comfort of your own capsule design?
6. Discuss the pros and cons of staying in a capsule hotel versus a traditional hotel.
7. If you were to organize a themed capsule hotel for a special event or celebration, what theme would you choose, and how would you design the capsules to fit the occasion?