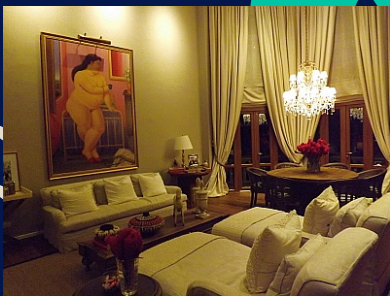


How to Score a Luxury Hotel Room Upgrade



HOTEL UPGRADE STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Sure, you can plead with the front desk clerk or shout "Do you know who I am?!?!" But here are more civilized paths to upgrading your luxury hotel room.



Loyalty

Get elite status with your favorite hotel chain and you'll score automatic upgrades. Or return to an independent hotel you've done business with before and ask.



Virtuoso and Amex

Agents that belong to the Virtuoso program can often score their clients automatic room upgrades at the time of booking. Booking through American Express can often accomplish this as well.



The Right Credit Card

American Express Platinum, Visa Signature cards, and hotel cards from Hilton, Marriott, and IHG get you automatic status and upgrades.



A Well-Placed Tip

Tipping the bellman will get you a nice smile. Tipping the front desk clerk can get you a better room or even a suite. Put your money where the power is.

HOTEL LOYALTY PROGRAMS FOR LATIN AMERICA

Latin America isn't as inundated with international chain hotels as the USA is, so some of the biggest players don't have much of a presence there. The best bets:



Marriott

After taking over Starwood, Marriott ended up adding Luxury Collection, W, and St. Regis to its existing Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott brands. Plus they've rolled out Autograph Collection options.



Accor

The other goliath with more brands than you can count is relatively anemic here. But the properties are excellent: a few Sofitels, two Swissotels, a Fairmont, and a couple of Banyan Trees..



Hilton Hotels

Hilton has a major presence in Latin America, but only a few luxury properties under the Waldorf-Astoria and Conrad brand names. More are opening under the Curio Collection banner though.

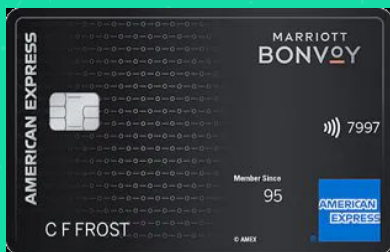


Hyatt Hotels

Hyatt's luxury properties in the region include a few Park Hyatt locations, some prize Andaz resorts, and after an acquisition, Thompson Hotels in Mexico.

LOYALTY CREDIT CARDS WITH AUTOMATIC STATUS

With the right hotel credit card in your wallet, you can get instant elite status and get automatic space-available upgrades, no pleading necessary.



Marriott Bonvoy Brilliant

Get Gold Elite status with Marriott if you pay the hefty annual fee for this one. The sign-up bonus should more than offset that when you redeem for a few free nights.



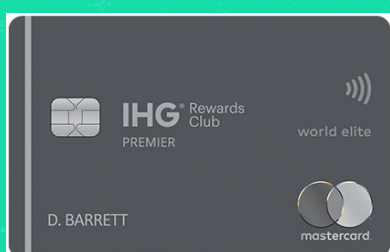
Hilton Aspire Amex

The regular Hilton Honors Amex card gets you on the fast track to points earning, but the Aspire version gets you automatic Diamond status for automatic upgrades.



Amex Platinum

American Express Platinum has one of the highest annual fees out there, but besides airport lounge access it gets you Gold status with Hilton and Gold Elite with Marriott.



IHG Rewards Chase

Luxury choices are limited to Intercontinental or a rare Kimpton in Latin America, but the card gives you Platinum status with automatic space-available upgrades.