



Hotel Fort Des Moines History

1919 The Hotel Fort Des Moines opens on July 15. The hotel was built for about \$1.5 million, and designed by the architectural firm Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. Every room originally had a bathtub, purified, chilled circulating water, and a window.

1922 Helen Keller stays at the hotel over New Year's Eve while in Des Moines for performances.

1927 Aviator Charles Lindbergh stays at the hotel and hosts a banquet that serves boneless squab — described as a rare Des Moines delicacy.

1927 Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig have breakfast here before an exhibition game in Des Moines.

1933 Amelia Earhart visits to talk about her solo flight across the Atlantic.

1938 The hotel announces the "first guest room with air conditioning" in the city.

1939 Police raid the Log Cabin Room on the 11th floor, confiscating liquor and gambling equipment. Tip for the raid reportedly came from some of the men's wives.

1947 Mae West stays at the hotel during her performance of "Come on Up" at the KRNT Radio Theater.

1953 TV sets are installed in 100 rooms — reportedly the largest mass installation of televisions in the state at that time. The rate to operate the TV was 25 cents.

1959 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev stayed in the Presidential Suite during the Cold War.

1960 John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Hubert Humphrey attend dinner at the hotel and host a meeting on farm policy.

1971 President Richard Nixon greets supporters in the lobby during his stay.

1974 President Ronald Reagan attends WHO Radio's 50th anniversary celebration at the hotel.

1975 Jimmy Carter, former peanut farmer and then-President, visits with caucus supporters in the hotel lobby.

1980 Elizabeth Taylor stays at the hotel during a Des Moines appearance.

1982 Governor Terry E. Branstad nominates the Hotel to the National Register of Historic Places.

2003 Cher visits the hotel and requests her own mattress be placed in room #1025.

2008 Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton both stay at Hotel Fort Des Moines during the Iowa caucuses.

2021 Renovations are completed and The Hotel Fort Des Moines re-opens as part of Curio Collection by Hilton.



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& BIRD

• HOTEL FORT DES MOINES •



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