

West Baden Springs Hotel Script

OC (Veranda): Few places still exist that symbolize the extravagance of the rich and famous from the early 1900s, and fewer still invite you come inside and poke around. Today, we're not only being invited in, we're staying the night. We're at the West Baden Springs Hotel, in French Lick Indiana!

VO: Join me as we explore this magnificent, century old hotel, visit some relics from a bygone era, and try our best to relax like the rich and famous of the early 20th century. The hotel was once called the "Eighth Wonder of the World", and it's not very hard to see why! From the iconic 200 foot atrium, to the resort's tranquil grounds, you'll see why this luxury hotel offers guests a truly extraordinary stay.

PLAY INTRO

The Lobby -

VO: The atrium of the West Baden is far and above the most incredible feature of the hotel. Complete with 360 degrees of rooms, statues of Roman Goddesses, and a fireplace that burns 14' logs, the atrium is the perfect place to relax. The enjoyable ambiance is often underscored by live music, and it's a great place to grab a drink, or to hang out with your family.

OC (Atrium): With balconies surrounding the atrium, chances are someone is always on their watching you. But in such a luxurious setting, it just adds to the feeling of being famous. Please, no photos!

VO: Beyond the atrium you'll find several smaller rooms perfect for chatting around a warm fireplace, catching up on the day's news, or even a nice game of pool.

OC (Atrium): Just off to the side of the atrium you'll see some restaurants and bars, the lobby where you actually check in to your room, but one of my favorite areas to explore is the small room that used to be the barber shop. Now, it houses antiques and pictures from the past showing this place through the ages.

The History -

VO: As magnificent as the hotel looks these days, it's easy to forget that just over a decade ago, the hotel was in almost complete disrepair. The fascinating history of the West Baden begins back in 1855, when the original hotel, the Mile Lick Hotel, was built to capitalize on the abundant

mineral springs in the area. The hotel burned down in 1901, but a gentleman by the name of Lee W. Sinclair used that as a catalyst to build a new, more spectacular hotel in the style of the grand spas of Europe. Incredibly, the monumental new hotel opened just one year later, complete with the giant dome we see today. The hotel was a playground for the wealthy elite who vacationed here during the early 20th century, and the property was soon dubbed, "The 8th Wonder of the World." After the stock market crash of 1929, the hotel fell on hard times, and in June of 1932, it closed its door. In 1934, the hotel was sold to the Jesuits for one dollar, and they proceeded with turning the once lavish hotel into a seminary. The Jesuits ran the West Baden College until 1964, before the building found itself in the hands of another private college, the Northwood Institute, which operated there until 1983. (MAY REPLACE IF TOO LONG WITH - Two colleges operated on the property from 1934 through 1983, including the West Baden College, operated by the Jesuits as a seminary, and the Northwood Institute.) After a series of failed attempts to reclaim the hotel's former glory, the hotel was closed to the public in 1989 due to safety concerns. In 1991, a buildup of snow and ice on the roof caused part of the exterior wall to collapse. The hotel was a shell of its former self and was quite literally falling apart at the seams. Finally, in 2006, the hotel got the love it deserved and was given a multi-million dollar renovation that brought back much of the original grandeur that had been stripped from the hotel through the years.

OC: I could go on and on about the history here, I didn't even go into the period when this place operated as an army hospital during WWI, which is really quite fascinating because...see, there I go again! Just look up the history when you have the time. Assuming I haven't scared you away with (scary voice) "historical dates", then it's time to see what the hotel has to offer in the 21st century!

The Room -

OC: Oh look at this, isn't this amazing? One of the things I love about this hotel is that during the renovation they kept so much of that old world opulence, and yet made the rooms very comfortable. Complimentary bottles of water, that's nice! Oh, and you know it's a classy hotel when they have complimentary robes! I want to be sure to wear this when the room service guy comes in, that should make everyone comfortable. Ah, but here is what makes this room...(walk to balcony) ta-da! Look at this balcony above the atrium. See, didn't I tell you someone was always watching?

VO: The hotel has 243 rooms, which is less than half included in the original structure. Rooms face either the atrium, or outside of the building. During the renovation, hotel rooms were doubled in size to accommodate the needs of the modern traveller, complete with TV, refrigerator, and an extra large bathroom.

The Grounds -

VO: The grounds of the West Baden are immaculate, with plenty of hidden surprises for those who don't mind a little walking. If the weather cooperates while you're here, take a few hours to

stroll the property. With everything from hiking trails to a small cemetery, there is always something to discover. And views like this make it well worth the hike.

OC: These small buildings around the grounds were once where the mineral springs were located. When the Jesuits took over the property they actually brought in rocks and filled these springs before topping them off with concrete and using the buildings as shrines.

VO: There are small buildings littered throughout the grounds, and romantic little gazebos like this one, which is actually where I proposed to my wife.

The Hoosier National Forest -

VO: Twenty minutes down the road is the entrance to the Hoosier National Forest. This massive park encompasses 200,000 acres, and with 260 miles of trails, it is the only National Forest in Indiana. Situated among the rolling hills of southern Indiana, it's in stark contrast to the generally flat landscape of Indiana.

OC: While the park is beautiful year-round, Autumn is far and above the most colorful time of year! There is a ton of wildlife here that is wonderful to see, but remember the oath of the great outdoors, "take nothing but pictures and leave nothing but footprints".

VO: When visiting the Hoosier National Forest, don't miss the Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest, an 88-acre archeological site, the Hemlock Cliffs, a box-shaped canyon with seasonal waterfalls, and the Rickenbaugh House, a stone house built in 1874 that was used as a post office and a church meeting house. For those wanting even more of the great outdoors, the park offers four campgrounds and cabins for overnight stays.

The Pool -

VO: Back at the West Baden, we've barely begun to scratch the surface of what the hotel has to offer. The hotel's pool area was rebuilt using historic photographs as a blueprint, and great care was taken to get all the details as close as possible to the original natatorium.

OC: It's quite nice, because even though it's autumn outside and is really quite chilly, the indoor pool is still here for relaxing! After a long day of hiking at the Hoosier National Forest, the indoor hot tub is definitely calling my name! This, I could get used to!

Recreation

VO: The hotel's recreation options don't stop there! There are 45 holes of golf, two world class spas, a casino with Vegas-style gaming, horseback riding, and even a 165,000 square foot event center. This place has it all!

OC (Rocking Chair): So no matter what you're looking for, whether it's relaxation, activation or uh hem, a little inebriation, the West Baden Springs hotel should definitely be on your travel bucket list. Now, if you don't mind, I'm going to sip this lovely glass of brandy and enjoy this beautiful evening! I'm Tyler from TylerTravelsTV. Thanks for watching and let travel surprise you!