



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO STAY IN A WINDOWLESS CABIN? MY REVIEW OF YOTEL GATWICK AIRPORT

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The YOTEL at Gatwick Airport opened about a decade ago and despite it being right inside the South Terminal, we've never paid much attention to it. The idea of sleeping in a windowless tiny cabin seemed a bit odd – though it turned out to not be an issue at all.

YOTEL offered *Head for Points* a free stay in a Premium room to give it a try and as I had an early morning Vueling flight to Barcelona (that fun story will follow tomorrow), I checked in at the YOTEL Gatwick.

WHAT IS YOTEL?

Founded by Yo Sushi creator Simon Woodroffe, YOTEL is based on Japanese capsule hotels. **YOTELs have rather small rooms, called cabins, and are designed for short stays.** You can pay by the hour and stay as little as four hours.

The YOTEL brand consists of two different hotel concepts

- YOTELAIR – airport hotels
- YOTEL – city hotels

The YOTEL New York which opened in 2011 was the first city hotel offering small and functional rooms at an affordable price in a central location. With most people spending the majority of time in the city and not the hotel room, this concept does make sense for people who want a particular level of quality but are less concerned about space.

The airport hotels are a similar design but with less communal space. Most guests will only want to book the rooms to sleep and take a shower.

THEY HAVE A LOYALTY SCHEME – SORT OF...

Club@YOTEL is the loyalty scheme for the chain, although it doesn't offer much in the way of benefits. Members get 10% off stays at the YOTEL New York, YOTEL Singapore and YOTEL Boston – and that's it!

You can also Virgin Flying Club miles when you stay with YOTEL, as long as you are also a member of Club@YOTEL:

- Earn 500 miles for a single stay of at least 3 nights at YOTEL New York
- Earn 100 miles for a single stay at YOTEL Heathrow, Gatwick, Amsterdam Schiphol and Paris Charles de Gaulle airport

Club@YOTEL is also a partner with Flying Blue, the Air France / KLM frequent flyer scheme.

MY NIGHT AT YOTEL GATWICK

There is only one other hotel which is closer to the departure gates than the YOTEL and that is the BLOC hotel. The YOTEL is literally a 5 minute walk from the train station and around 7 minutes from airport security.

For clarity, **YOTEL Gatwick is landside and not airside**. (BLOC is also landside – there are no airside hotels at any UK airport as far as I know, except for the ‘by the hour’ rooms at No 1 Lounge in Heathrow T3.) If you are in transit through Gatwick, you will need to clear immigration and, the next day, pass back through security to get to your connecting flight.

YOTEL is in the Gatwick South Terminal which is used mainly by British Airways. There is a free monorail linking the North and South Terminals so you shouldn’t be put off if your flight is from North. Trains from London arrive at the South Terminal so you are likely to pass through it irrespective of where you are flying from.



As you come out of the station you turn right, walk towards Costa and take the lift down. The YOTEL is next to the Regus Express business centre.



CHECK-IN

Mission Control, the hotel's reception, was to the right and as the hotel is very small and there was no one else waiting, check in was super quick.

I was offered a complimentary hot drink and asked if I needed a hairdryer as there were none in the rooms.

If you need anything from a coffee cup to pyjamas or a toothbrush, you can purchase it at Mission Control. You can also pre-order a quick breakfast for £6.95, buy a curry for £4.95 (ready in 15 minutes) or get a bottle of wine for £12.



THE CABIN

The cabins are along a hallway and it felt a bit like walking along the cabins on a cruise ship – probably, as I've never been on a cruise



The occupied cabins had the curtains closed and the empty ones didn't which means you could look inside the cabin from the hallway. I was in Premium cabin number 7:



The pink light was a bit irritating, but it only took me a minute to find the light control centre by the bed. After I shut the curtains (you just pull them down) I turned the pink light off and the normal light on. The bed was in sofa-mode by default:



Next to the bed was the 'bathroom'. You could shut the curtains and there was a sliding door which needed to be closed when taking a shower as otherwise the smoke detector might apparently go off.

The shower was larger than average, which you might find surprising given the small size of the cabin overall. There was a handheld shower head as well as a rainfall shower.



There was one bottle of combined bodywash and shampoo in the shower. Whilst I'm not the biggest fan of these '2 in 1' products, it was actually decent.



The design of the cabin is very clever I must admit. A table and chair are stored within the wall storage unit (see below) which also had a TV and four UK sockets.



The table could be flipped up and when the bed was in sofa mode there was enough room to sit at the table.

WiFi was complimentary and didn't need a password.



As most guests only stay for a few hours or overnight, there was no proper wardrobe. There was one lonely hanger for a jacket or a shirt. There was also some storage underneath the bed which should fit two cabin bags or one regular suitcase.



There was a button to turn the sofa into a full sized double bed. The mattress was very comfortable and I slept well.



Due to its location inside the airport the YOTEL is a great choice for early morning flights or when landing very late.

I believe the most important things an airport hotel has to offer are a comfortable bed, a good shower and easy access to the airport itself.

The YOTEL Gatwick does tick all three boxes and I can see myself booking a cabin again in the future. The only downside could be storage as with two people and more than two suitcases in the cabin, it could feel a bit cramped.

For stays longer than a few hours, do shop around. You're unlikely to beat the YOTEL pricing if all you are doing is passing the time during a long stopover or arriving late for an early flight the next day.