



AS IT IS

## Polar Bear Hotel Opens in China

March 20, 2021

A hotel that calls itself the world's first "polar bear hotel" has opened in northeastern China.

The Polar Bear Hotel is part of the Harbin Polarland **amusement park** in Harbin, the capital and largest city in Heilongjiang province. It opened earlier this month and promised that guests would be able to see live polar bears from all 21 guest rooms.

"Whether you're eating, playing or sleeping, polar bears will keep you company," Harbin Polarland said in a statement on the WeChat messenger service.

Photos and videos from Chinese state media showed people watching two polar bears in a closed, indoor space with **artificial** ice and small pools of water.

Yang Liu is a spokeswoman for Harbin Polarland. She told Reuters that the indoor area is only part of the bears' total living space. She said they are also let outdoors when temperature and air quality permit.

Liu added there has been "very high" interest in staying at the hotel, where rooms cost from about \$290 to \$351 a night.

But some animal rights activists have criticized the hotel.

Jason Baker is vice president at animal rights group PETA. He told Reuters, "Polar bears belong in the Arctic, not in zoos or glass boxes in **aquariums** – and certainly not in hotels."

He added, “Polar bears are active for up to 18 hours a day in nature, **roaming** home ranges that can **span** thousands of miles, where they enjoy a real life.”

In 2016, a shopping center in the southern city of Guangzhou drew worldwide criticism after videos showed a polar bear named Pizza lying on her side in a glass-walled area.

Harbin Polarland was established in 2005. It calls itself the world’s first polar performing arts amusement park.

I’m Jonathan Evans.

*Andrew Galbraith reported on this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Bryan Lynn was the editor.*

---

## Words in This Story

**amusement park** – *n.* large park designed for fun, often with rides

**artificial** – *adj.* not natural, but made by people

**aquarium** – *n.* a building people can visit to see water animals and plants

**roam** – *v.* to move around a place without any purpose

**span** – *v.* to reach or extend across