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In ancient Greece in the 1st millennium BC taverns were an important element of social and religious life. Although taverns had accommodations for travelers, they were more designed to provide food services. The development of trade and the associated long journeys required the organization of not only food, but also overnight. This circumstance predetermined the emergence of another type of enterprise - inns.

The most extensive network of inns was created on the territory of the Roman Empire. Inns, especially on the main roads, were built by the Romans with skill and for their time were quite convenient. After the fall of the Roman Empire, a new, qualitatively new era in the development of the hospitality industry began.

Later, Marco Polo talked about them, that here "and the king does not shame to stop." They were located about 25 miles apart, so that government officials and messengers did not get too tired on the road, resting in each of them. They could be used only by showing a special government document that testified to the special status of their bearers, and therefore such official papers were often stolen and tampered with. By the time Marco Polo went on his journey to the Far East, there were about ten thousand such inns in the country.

In the early Middle Ages, religious institutions began to provide hospitality services for ordinary people, and the emphasis in service became different. In England, for example, inns were now focused not so much on travelers as on drinkers. If in those years people traveled, then usually their journeys were associated either with the royal court or with the church. Most travelers were missionaries, priests, and pilgrims traveling to holy places. In this regard, inns in which people stayed for the night began to be built closer to temples and monasteries. Living conditions remained rather primitive, while the inns were managed by slaves who were in the service of priests and priors of the temples.

In the Middle Ages, people began to travel more and the number of roadside inns increased accordingly. By modern standards, they were still primitive. Guests often slept on mattresses laid out on the floor of one large room. Everyone ate what he had with him, or bought something edible from the owner of the inn. Usually they ate bread and meat (sometimes fish or chicken), washing it all down with beer. Some taverns were places of noisy drinking parties, and their regulars, especially if the tavern was in the port area, were often forcibly recorded as sailors.

In rural areas, one inn served all visitors, although wealthy people traveling in their own carriage or on horseback rarely visited it, and poor people who traveled on foot tried not to let them go at all. In any case, clear social differences in the treatment of each guest were strictly observed. Wealthy people were served in the dining room or in their room. The poor usually ate with the innkeeper and his family in the kitchen. They were served simple food with no choice, but at a minimal price. The French called this service table d'hôte (table d'ot), i.e. "master table". Wealthy guests could order for themselves special dishes from the host's products - a la carte (a la carte) - and go into the kitchen to make sure that everything was prepared as it should. Trying to please the guest, the owner usually offered some local dish, which was famous for the area. Food prices were also different, primarily depending on the region where the inn was located.

In the XII-XIII centuries, inns - the forerunners of the first hotels - appeared in Russia. They provided shelter and food for all categories of travelers and were not particularly comfortable. Here it was also possible to place horses and vehicles of travelers, that is, the so-called "standing" services were offered.

In the XV century, inns were created at the "pits" - post stations located one from another at the distance of the horse passage. At this time, the "Yamskoy service" was established in Russia, which was under the jurisdiction of the Yamsky order. The accommodation and catering services provided at the inns in the Yamskoye villages logically supplemented the basic services provided by the coachmen — keeping horses and transporting “by sovereign's decree” to anyone who had special permission (“deed”) or paid money.

Inns along the roads existed quite a long time, until the middle of the XIX century, and in some places longer. Their development was sharply suspended in connection with the emergence and spread of railways. And only after a certain time, the development of road transport again made it necessary to return to traditional hotels along the roads, presenting them in a new look - a motel.

This is only a small part of the history of horeca, however, to this day, this industry continues to develop in new directions, providing a variety of different services.