

## Hotels & Hostels

Want more sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to [lonelyplanet.com/hotels](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels) and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

# SLEEPING

## top picks

- Imperial Palace Hotel (p155)
- Westin Chosun (p152)
- W Seoul Walkerhill (p158)
- Ibis Myeong-dong (p153)
- Metro Hotel (p153)
- Hotel Sunbee (p150)
- Noble Hotel (p150)
- Hotel D'Oro (p153)
- Seoul Guesthouse (p149)
- Beewon Guesthouse (p151)

# SLEEPING

Seoul is bursting with accommodation, from five-star suites to five-bed dorms – including backpacker guesthouses, budget motels under ₩50,000, homestays and a stack of midrange and top-end hotels and serviced apartments. Accommodation is invariably charged per room, with little or no discount for singles, although homestays and guesthouses can be a little more generous. Backpacker guesthouse dorms offer the cheapest option for singles. Hotel rooms with Western-style beds are common, but for the same price you can often opt for a *ondol* room, a Korean-style room where you sleep on a *yo* (padded quilt) on the *ondol* (heated) floor. These rooms are ideal for groups. Plenty of accommodation in all price ranges can be found in very central areas such as Gwanghwamun, Insadong and Myeong-dong. Only a handful of top-end hotels are not near a subway station. Guests in these places must rely on hotel shuttle buses, and the city's reasonably priced taxis.

Prices don't normally change with the seasons although midrange and top-end accommodation may offer special deals at quiet times and some relate prices to occupancy. All accommodation options listed offer air-con, a private bathroom and fast internet access unless otherwise indicated.

## ACCOMMODATION STYLES

### Backpacker Guesthouses

Seoul has a growing number of small, friendly backpacker guesthouses that cater specifically to budget-conscious foreigners. They appeal to older travellers as well as youthful ones. Rooms – dorms and doubles – tend to be small and budget-looking, but are nearly always en suite. A big plus is that the young staff speak English and can give advice about getting the most out of your stay in Seoul. Communal facilities usually include a satellite TV and DVD lounge, a kitchen, a free breakfast, free use of a washing machine, and broadband internet computers.

### Motels & Love Motels

Motels (older ones are called *yeogwan* but these are almost extinct in Seoul) are small, family-run budget hotels, and there are thousands of them scattered throughout Seoul. Don't be put off by cluttered lobbies and the proprietor napping in a cubicle at the entrance. The rooms are always on the small size but they are packed with facilities – en suite, TV, DVD or video, telephone, fridge, drinking water, air-con and heating, even toothbrushes, skin lotions and hairdryers. Some have computers. Nearly all the rooms have beds, but some are Korean-style rooms with a *yo* on the floor, which can cater for groups of three or more. The downside of the motels is that staff rarely speak any English and, for sociable types, they have no communal facilities.

Sometimes looking like fairyland castles, love motels cater for daytime, pay-by-the-hour couples, but they also accept conventional overnight guests. They're easy to spot by the plastic curtains shielding the parked cars from prying eyes. Dimly lit corridors are another giveaway. A big drawback of some love motels is that they require a late check-in, around 9pm. But they can be a good option, especially if you fancy a two-person whirlpool bath, a round bed, satin sheets, purple velour and a boudoir decor with stars painted on the ceiling. While some love motels have extravagant-looking rooms, most have smart, regular rooms, and are used by both local and international tourists as they are reasonably priced, clean and modern.

New or renovated motels are always the best and charge no more or only a little more than the older, unrenovated ones.

### Hotels & Serviced Apartments

Seoul has no shortage of midrange and luxury hotels, and a dozen serviced apartments have sprung up to provide competition, offering more home conveniences such as kitchen and laundry facilities. Broadband internet access is always available, as is air-con and heating. Luxury rooms can be plain, but the gym/sauna/spa/pool facilities and the restaurants (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Western) are usually excellent. A number of Seoul's midrange hotels are old-fashioned, with clunky TVs and carpets that need cleaning or dumping, so it's best to avoid the unrenovated ones.