

Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodations	272
Activities	274
Business Hours	274
Children	274
Climate Charts	275
Courses	276
Dangers & Annoyances	276
Discount Cards	277
Festivals & Events	277
Food	278
Gay & Lesbian Travelers	278
Holidays	279
Insurance	279
International Visitors	279
Internet Access	281
Legal Matters	281
Maps	282
Pets	282
Solo Travelers	283
Time	283
Tourist Information	283
Tours	283
Travelers with Disabilities	283
Volunteering	284
Women Travelers	284

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging in Coastal California is expensive and reservations are recommended year-round. Accommodations in this book fall into one of three categories: budget (double-occupancy rooms less than \$100); midrange (\$100 to \$185); and top end (over \$185). Rates are generally highest in summer. They spike even higher around major holidays such as Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day, when minimum-night stays often apply. Prices listed in this guide reflect peak-season rates but don't include accommodation taxes of 10% to 16%, unless otherwise stated.

You can almost always do better than the published rates, particularly midweek or during the off-season (ie winter). Always ask about discounts, packages and promotional rates. Also check the web: some lodgings give better rates if you book

online. Auto-club members (p289) get discounts at many motels and some hotels, which may also publish discount coupons in flyers available at highway rest areas, gas stations and tourist information offices (or online at www.roomsaver.com).

More and more properties are providing wireless-internet access (☺), handy if you travel with a laptop. Accommodations that provide internet access for travelers without their own computers are indicated in this guide with an internet (☺) icon. Lodgings that cater to families are marked with the child-friendly (♫) icon. For eco-friendly accommodations, turn to the GreenDex (p302).

If you smoke, ask about the availability of smoking rooms. Many lodgings in California are exclusively nonsmoking. In Southern California, nearly all lodgings have air-conditioning but in Northern California, where it rarely gets hot, the opposite is true. If it matters, inquire when making reservations.

If you book a room over the phone, get a confirmation number, and always ask about the cancellation policy before you give your credit-card number. If you plan to arrive late in the evening, call to reconfirm on the day of arrival. Hotels may overbook but if you've guaranteed the reservation with a credit card, they should accommodate you somewhere else. If they don't, squawk.

Where available, we have listed a property's toll-free reservation number. If you're having trouble finding accommodations, consider booking online with travel agencies like **Orbitz** (www.orbitz.com), **Travelocity** (www.travelocity.com) and **Expedia** (www.expedia.com), or travel discounters **Hotels.com** (www.hotels.com), **Hotwire** (www.hotwire.com) and **Priceline** (www.priceline.com).

BOOK ACCOMMODATIONS ONLINE

For more accommodations reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- AC 110V is standard; you'll need adapters to run most non-US electronics.
- Major daily newspapers include the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Jose Mercury News*.
- For news, National Public Radio (NPR; www.npr.org) and Public Radio International (PRI; www.pri.org) are at the lower end of the FM dial.
- Major broadcast TV channels include: ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and PBS (public broadcasting). Major cable channels include: CNN (news), ESPN (sports), HBO (movies) and the Weather Channel.
- NTSC standard is incompatible with PAL or SECAM. DVDs are coded Region 1 (US and Canada only).
- The imperial system is used for weights and measures; see the inside front cover for conversions.

B&Bs

If you want an atmospheric, often romantic, alternative to impersonal motel or hotel rooms, stay at a B&B. They're typically in restored old houses with floral wallpaper and antique furnishings, and charge well over \$100 per couple. Rates normally include breakfast, but rooms with TV and telephone are the exception, not the rule; some may share bathrooms. Most B&Bs require advance reservations, though some will accommodate the occasional drop-in guest. Smoking is prohibited. A two- or three-night minimum stay usually applies. Many belong to the **California Association of Bed & Breakfast Inns** (☎ 800-373-9251; www.cabbi.com).

Camping

Campgrounds abound in Coastal California, with most open year-round. Facilities vary widely. Primitive campgrounds usually have toilets, fire pits, picnic benches and sometimes drinking water; they're most common in national forests and on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. State and national park campgrounds are usually better equipped, featuring flush toilets and sometimes hot showers and RV hookups. Overnight fees range from under \$5 for walk-in, tent-only 'envirosites' up to \$65 for developed beachfront campsites with hookups. For a complete list of state-park campgrounds and overnight fees, browse www.parks.ca.gov.

You can usually camp in national forests and on BLM land in any area where you can safely park your vehicle next to a road

without blocking traffic. You are not allowed to park off undesignated roads (ie roads not shown on maps that do not have signs identifying a road number). Campfires may require a permit, usually available for free from any ranger station. Dispersed camping is not permitted in state or national parks, except for backpackers holding the appropriate permits. Check with a ranger station or visitor center if you're unsure about where to camp.

For camping reservations, which are strongly recommended in summer, try: **Kamgrounds of America** (KOA; ☎ 888-562-0000; <http://koa.com>) National network of full-service private campgrounds.

Recreation.gov (☎ 518-885-3639, 877-444-6777; www.recreation.gov) Camping reservations for national parks, national forests and BLM land.

ReserveAmerica (☎ 800-444-7275; www.reserveamerica.com) For state-park campgrounds that accept reservations.

Hostels

At the time of writing, Coastal California has 20 hostels affiliated with **Hostelling International USA** (HI-USA; ☎ 301-495-1240, reservations 800-909-4776; www.hiusa.org; annual membership adult/child/senior \$28/free/18). You don't need a membership card in order to stay at an HI hostel but having one saves you \$3 per night. You can buy one at the hostel when checking in.

There are a growing number of independent hostels, particularly in cities, which have more relaxed rules and typically no curfew. Most independent hostels are convivial places, often with organized events and activities. Some include a light