

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

- **Aberdeen Lodge** (p221)
- **Four Seasons** (p220)
- **Grafton Guesthouse** (p214)
- **Herbert Park Hotel** (p221)
- **Irish Landmark Trust** (p216)
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SLEEPING

If you're looking for concrete evidence of what happens when a buoyant economy gets the beating of a lifetime, book a hotel room in Dublin. For more than a decade Dublin's room rates have hovered near the top end of the scale, making this one of Europe's most expensive capitals to sleep in and rarely (if ever) offering value for money.

No more. The city's hoteliers have been forced to scramble in the face of the economic crisis and the resultant dip in tourist numbers, and their primary response (in 2010 at least) was cheaper beds – as much as 40% cheaper in the middle and upper brackets – as they desperately sought to guarantee their hotels' futures, so many that were built or renovated during the boom at huge costs. Although it is difficult to predict what will happen, it is clear that not every hotel will survive the lean years.

Which isn't bad news for you, as everyone competes for your dime and is willing to try virtually anything to make sure that you dribble on their pillows: there are so many deals on offer that room rates can vary wildly from day to day, never mind season to season. Always check online (see Booking Services, p212) and query the rack rate: discounts are more available now than ever before.

The pillows in question are pretty snazzy, too: Dublin has hotels that can stand up to any of the European greats, while a host of others has cottoned on to the fact that the contemporary traveller doesn't think worn sheets are part of the charm and that grapefruit isn't some kind of exotic fruit that has no place at the breakfast buffet. Those that haven't just don't get a mention, least of all in these pages. As ever, we've only selected for your enjoyment what we consider the best options in each category.

So where to stay? If you're only in Dublin for the weekend, you'll want to be in the city centre or a short stroll away. The prices are higher, but pay the money. Believe us, it's worth it. Besides the obvious advantage of being central, you will avoid the potential nightmare of transport to and from the suburbs. The construction of the Luas tram line has made some suburbs far more accessible, but public transport more or less disappears shortly after midnight, with the exception of hourly night buses packed full of drunken youngsters (an experience that can often be a cutting-edge anthropological experiment). Get a taxi, you'll think, and we say good luck: there's you and thousands of others all queuing up in the wee hours for the same thing. Still, some of our favourite properties – the ones with all the charm and character – are just outside the city centre in the outlying suburbs south of the Grand Canal, so you may have to rely on some kind of motorised transport if you can't handle the 20- to 30-minute walk.

So, what exactly is available in this fair city?

ACCOMMODATION STYLES

Top-end and deluxe hotels fall into two categories – period Georgian elegance and cool, minimalist chic. No matter what the decor, you can expect luxurious surrounds, king-size beds, satellite TV, in-room DVDs, full room service, broadband or wi-fi and discreet, professional pampering. While the luxury of the best places is undeniable, their inevitable affiliation to the world's most celebrated hotel chains has introduced the whiff of corporate homogeneity into the carefully ventilated air.

Dublin's midrange accommodation is more of a mixed bag, ranging from no-nonsense but soulless chains to small B&Bs in old Georgian townhouses. These days, hotel connoisseurs the world over have discovered the more

intimate, but equally luxurious, boutique hotel, where the personal touch is maintained through fewer rooms, each of which is given lavish attention. Dublin's townhouses and guesthouses – usually beautiful Georgian homes converted into lodgings – are this city's version of the boutique hotel, and there are some truly outstanding ones to choose from.

These are beautifully decked out and extremely comfortable, while at the lower end, rooms are simple, a little worn and often rather overbearingly decorated. Here you can look forward to kitsch knick-knacks, chintzy curtains, lace doilies and clashing floral fabrics so loud they'll burn your retinas. Breakfast can range from home-baked breads, fruit and farmhouse cheeses to a traditional, fat-laden fry-up.