

Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	479
Activities	482
Business Hours	482
Children	482
Climate	482
Customs	483
Dangers & Annoyances	484
Discount Cards	485
Embassies & Consulates	486
Festivals & Events	486
Food	487
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	487
Holidays	488
Insurance	488
Internet Access	488
Legal Matters	488
Maps	489
Money	489
Post	490
Solo Travellers	490
Telephone	490
Time	491
Travellers With Disabilities	491
Tourist Information	491
Visas	492
Volunteering	492
Women Travellers	492
Work	493

ACCOMMODATION

The East Coast is a well-trodden route with plenty of accommodation options to suit all budgets. Endowed with Australia's largest cities and most famous holiday resorts, the coast boasts abundant motels, guesthouses, B&Bs, hostels, pubs and caravan parks with camp sites. There are also lots of less conventional possibilities such as farm-stays, houseboats and yachts.

The listings in this guidebook are ordered from budget to midrange to top end, with the cheapest options within each category listed first. Any place that charges up to \$100 per room has been categorised as budget accommodation. Midrange prices are from \$100 to \$160 per room, while the top-end tag is applied to places charging more than \$160

PRACTICALITIES

- Plugs have angled pins; voltage is 220V to 240V, 50Hz.
- Broadsheet dailies include the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Melbourne's *Age* and the national *Australian*.
- The metric system is used for weights and measures.
- Free-to-air TV is provided by the government-sponsored Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and multicultural SBS, and three commercial stations, namely Seven, Nine and Ten.
- Video players use the PAL system.
- Most interior spaces in the ACT, NSW, Queensland and Victoria are nonsmoking.

per room. As Sydney is a more expensive destination, our price ranges for it differ slightly, with budget stretching to \$120 a double and midrange places going up to \$180 a room.

In many regions prices don't vary dramatically from season to season, and we have simply listed the prices that are charged for the majority of the year. In other areas there are dramatic seasonal price variations; in these cases we have listed high-season prices but not the short peak season around Christmas, when many coastal resorts have a short-lived price spike in the middle of the high season. Along the southeastern coast, the summer months (December to February) are high season, particularly the school holidays that begin just before Christmas. The southern winter coincides with the mild northern dry season, and the northern migration (particularly during school holidays) keeps prices high in the north.

B&Bs

In country areas, guesthouses and B&Bs are the fastest-growing segment of the accommodation market. New places are opening all the time, and the options include everything from a room in a restored Victorian-era mansion or a rambling Queenslander to a contemporary purpose-built cottage.

FAVOURITE CAMP SITES

Here's some favourite camp sites of this book's authors:

- Cape Conran Coastal Park, Gippsland, Victoria (p135)
- Murramarang National Park, South Coast NSW (p163)
- Myall Lakes National Park, Central Coast NSW (p238)
- Bundjalung National Park, North Coast NSW (p267)
- Fraser Island Beach, Fraser Coast, Queensland (p377)
- Dunk Island, North Queensland (p444)
- Frankland and Fitzroy Islands, Far North Queensland (p460 and p460)

Tariffs cover a wide price range. They're typically in the \$80 to \$150 (per double) bracket, but can be much higher in areas that attract weekend getaways and romantic escapes from the cities.

Local tourist offices usually have a list of places.

Online resources:

Australian B&B (www.australianbandb.com.au)

Bed & Breakfast (www.babs.com.au)

OZ Bed and Breakfast (www.ozbedandbreakfast.com)

Camping

If you want to explore the East Coast on a shoestring, camping is the way to go. Camping in national parks can cost from nothing to \$14 per person – nights spent around a campfire under the stars are unforgettable. Tent sites at private camping and caravan parks cost around \$12 to \$30 per couple per night, and a few dollars more with electricity.

National parks and their camping areas are administered by each state. Contact details include:

New South Wales www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Queensland www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests

Victoria www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

When it comes to urban camping, remember that most city caravan parks are a long way from the centre of town. Most caravan parks are good value, with almost all of them equipped with hot showers, toilets and laundry

facilities, and usually a pool. Many have on-site cabins. The size of these cabins and the facilities offered vary but expect to pay \$50 to \$90 for two people in a cabin with a kitchenette – about the same as a cheap motel. If you intend to do a lot of caravanning or camping, it's not a bad idea to join one of the major chains such as **Big 4 Holiday Parks** (☎ 03-9421 0100, 1800 632 444; www.big4.com.au). It gives you discounts on accommodation at member parks as well as various other tourist discounts.

Note that all camping and cabin rates quoted throughout this guide are for two people.

Farm-stays

Many coastal and hinterland farms offer a bed for the night and the chance to see rural Australia at work. At some you sit back and watch other people raise a sweat, while others like to get you involved in day-to-day activities. Check out the options on the website for **Australian Farmhost Holidays** (www.australiafarmhost.com). For travellers who don't mind getting their hands dirty, there's **Willing Workers on Organic Farms** (WWOOF; ☎ 03-5155 0218; www.wwof.com.au). Regional and town tourist offices should also be able to tell you what's available in their area.

Hostels

Hostels or 'backpackers' are a highly social, low-cost fixture of the East Coast accommodation scene. There is a staggering number, ranging from family-run places in converted houses to huge, custom-built resorts replete with bars, nightclubs and a party attitude. Standards range from outstanding to awful, and management from friendly to scary.

Dorm beds typically cost \$20 to \$30, with single rooms hovering around \$50 and doubles costing \$60 to \$90.

Useful organisations:

Nomads Backpackers (☎ 02-9299 7710; www.nomadsworld.com) Membership (\$39 for 12 months) entitles you to numerous discounts.

VIP Backpacker Resorts (☎ 07-3395 6052; www.vipbackpackers.com) Membership (\$43 for 12 months) entitles you to various discounts.

YHA (☎ 02-9261 1111; www.yha.com.au) Membership (from \$32 for 12 months) entitles you to discounts at YHA and many independent hostels.

A warning for Australian and Kiwi travellers: some hostels will only admit overseas back-