

Directory

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations in Mexico range from hammocks and huts to hotels of every imaginable standard, including super-luxury resorts. This book divides accommodations into three price ranges: budget (where a typical room for two people costs under M\$425), midrange (M\$425 to M\$1050) and top end (above M\$1050).

Budget accommodations include camping grounds, hammocks, palm-thatched *cabañas*, backpacker hostels, guesthouses and economical hotels. Recommended accommodations in this range will be simple and without frills but generally clean. Hotel rooms usually have a private bathroom containing hot shower, WC and washbasin.

Midrange accommodations are chiefly hotels, ranging in comfort, atmosphere and

facilities according to price. In some areas of Mexico even M\$450 can get you an attractive room in a friendly small hotel. Many of the country's most appealing and memorable lodgings are in the midrange price bracket. In some places you'll also find apartments, bungalows and more comfortable *cabañas* in this price range.

Top-end hotels run from the classier hotels in the cities to deluxe coastal resort hotels and luxurious smaller establishments catering to travelers with a taste for comfort and beautiful design.

Room prices given in this book, except where stated otherwise, are high-season prices. Dates of the high season vary from one place to another, but in most of Mexico it typically means Semana Santa (the week before Easter and a couple of days after it), most of July and August, and the Christmas–New Year holiday period of about two weeks. Outside the high seasons, many midrange and top-end establishments in tourist destinations cut their room prices by 10% to 40%. Budget accommodations are more likely to keep the same rates all year. Through this book we note major deviations from the normal seasonal pattern; in many places on the Pacific coast, for example, high season runs from December right through to Easter.

In this book 'single' (abbreviated to 's') means a room for one person, and 'double' ('d') means a room for two people. Mexicans sometimes use the phrase *cuarto sencillo* (literally, single room) to mean a room with one bed, which may be a *cama matrimonial* (double bed); and a *cuarto doble* often means a room with two beds, which may both be *camas matrimoniales*.

In popular destinations at busy times, it's best to reserve a room in advance or go early in the day to secure a room.

Accommodations prices are subject to two taxes: IVA (value-added tax; 15%) and ISH (lodging tax; 2% or 3% depending on the state). Many of the less expensive establishments only charge you these taxes if you require a receipt, and they quote room rates accordingly (ie not including taxes). Generally, though, IVA and ISH are included

in quoted prices. In top-end hotels a price may be given as, say, 'M\$1500 *más impuestos*' (M\$1500 plus taxes), in which case you must add 17% or 18% to the figure. Prices given in this book are those you are most likely to be charged at each place.

The air-con icon (❄) and nonsmoking icon (☒) mean that the establishment offers at least some air-conditioned and nonsmoking rooms respectively.

Apartments

In many resort areas you can find tourist apartments with fully equipped kitchens. Some are comfortable and attractive and they can be good value for three or four people, especially if you're staying more than a few days. The internet, local ads and tourist offices are good sources of information on these.

B&Bs

Mexico has a growing number of B&Bs, and they're usually small, comfortable, midrange or top-end guesthouses, often beautifully designed and offering friendly, personal attention.

Cabañas

Cabañas are usually huts (of wood, brick, adobe, stone or other materials) with a palm-thatched roof. The most basic, costing around M\$100 to M\$200, have dirt floors and nothing inside but a bed, and you provide the padlock for the door. At the other extreme, some *cabañas* are positively deluxe, with electric light, mosquito nets, large comfy beds, bathroom, decor, hammock-strung deck and even air-con and kitchen – though they'll usually still have an agreeably rustic, close-to-nature ambience. The most expensive *cabañas* are on the Caribbean, where some luxury huts cost well over M\$1000.

Camping & Trailer Parks

Most organized campgrounds are actually trailer parks set up for RVs (recreational vehicles, camper vans) and trailers (caravans) that are open to tent campers at lower rates. Some are basic, others quite luxurious. Expect to pay between M\$100 and M\$200 to pitch a tent for two, and M\$250 to M\$300 for two people with a vehicle, using full facilities. Quite a lot of restaurants and guesthouses in beach spots or country areas will let you pitch a tent on their patch for around M\$30 to M\$40 per person.

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

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

Hammocks

Hammock space is available in many of the more low-key beach spots in the southern half of the country. A hammock can be a very comfortable, not to mention cheap, place to sleep in hot, southern areas (keep mosquito repellent handy). You can rent one and a place to hang it, usually under a palm roof outside a small *posada* or beach restaurant, for M\$30 or M\$40 in some places, though it can reach M\$100 on the more expensive Caribbean coast. With your own hammock, the cost comes down a bit. It's easy enough to buy hammocks in Mexico, especially in Oaxaca and Chiapas states and on the Yucatán Peninsula.

Hostels

There are now budget hostels in most towns and cities where budget travelers congregate. Hostels provide dormitory accommodations for typically between M\$100 and M\$200 per person, plus communal kitchens, bathrooms, living space, usually internet access and, in many cases, economical private rooms too. Some of the best hostels have pools, bars, gardens, sun decks and even design and charm. Cleanliness and security do vary, but popular hostels are great places for meeting fellow travelers. **Hostelworld** (www.hostelworld.com) and **HostelBookers** (www.hostelbookers.com) provide plentiful listings and online reservations.

Sixteen hostels are members of Mexico's HI affiliate, **Hostelling International Mexico** (www.hostellingmexico.com, in Spanish), with small discounts for HI members.

Hotels

Mexico specializes in good midrange hotels, where two people can get a comfortable room with private bathroom, and usually air-con, for about M\$500 to M\$1000. The more you pay within that price range, the more facilities, comfort, style and design the place is